Revising Your Paper Checklist

1. Revising the entire paper

   a. **tone and style** - are they appropriate to audience and purpose? consistent?
   b. **unity** - are all the parts relevant to your purpose?
   c. **omissions** - have you left anything out that your reader might need to know? have you explained everything sufficiently?
   d. **accuracy** - have you put anything in as fact that is questionable?
   e. **order** - are your points in the best order? opening point interesting? closing point climactic?
   f. **main points** - are your main points sufficiently emphasized? are they clear?

2. Revising the individual paragraphs

   a. **paragraph length** - are there any paragraphs that are too short or too long? (some useful parameters are 4 to 9 sentences or 75 to 225 words)
   b. **unity and coherence** - does each paragraph stick to a topic?
   c. **structure** - is the paragraph well developed? does it go somewhere? is the structure appropriate for the method of development?
   d. **topic sentence** - does it:
      (i) introduce the main idea?
      (ii) begin developing or narrowing the idea?
      (iii) refer to the overall topic of the paper?
      (iv) provide a transition from the preceding paragraph?

3. Revising the sentences

   **Note:** the best way to check sentences is to read your draft backward. That way you won't get caught up in the flow of meaning, and you'll be able to inspect each sentence individually, and see what needs revising.
a. **fragments** - are all of your sentences complete, with subject and predicate?
b. **clarity** - does your sentence make sense? do the subject and verb go together? what about the subject and its modifiers? - its complement?
c. **modifiers** - are your modifiers close enough to what they are modifying for clarity? are there any dangling modifiers? have you split any infinitive verbs with modifiers?
d. **reference** - check your draft to see if you've used the words **which**, **this**, or **it** - if you have, is it clear what they're referring to?
e. **agreement** - verbs must agree in **number** with their subjects (be appropriately singular or plural); pronouns must agree in **number** and **case** with their antecedents.
f. **comparisons** - make sure your comparisons are complete and make sense
g. **coordination** - have you used appropriate conjunctions to show the relationship between clauses in a sentence?
h. **economy** - do you have unnecessary relative clauses and prepositional phrases? unnecessary words? can you combine any of your sentences to be more streamlined?
i. **emphasis** - have you varied the length and structure of your sentences? used structure to emphasize your most important points?
j. **parallelism** - have you used parallel syntax whenever listing series of words, phrases, or clauses?
k. **active and passive voice** - have you used the passive voice too much? can you change examples of passive voice to a more vigorous active voice?

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