

****REVISION CHECKLIST***

After you have completed a draft of your document, review it with these questions in front of you. Use this checklist to revise the document. This checklist focuses on strategies that have proven most effective for clarity and economy of language and should be used in writing objective documents.

Verbs

1. Are the verbs in the active voice unless I have a specific reason for using another structure?
2. Are verbs generally next to subjects and sentences in subject, verb, and direct object order?
3. Have I eliminated “there is” (was, are, were) and “it is” from the beginning of sentences?

Nouns

4. Are my nouns precise?
5. If I use synonyms, is my meaning clear?

Pronouns

6. Are all pronoun referents clear and accurate?

Modifiers

7. Have I kept adverbs and adjectives to a minimum, allowing strong nouns and verbs to carry my prose?
8. Are modifying phrases next to the nouns they describe?

Generally

9. Is every word necessary?
10. Is every legal term necessary and defined (if required)?

Sentences

11. Are most sentences in subject, verb, direct object order?
12. Do sentences rarely exceed twenty-five words?
13. Are long sentences controlled with parallel structure?
14. Do I vary sentence length and type?
15. Are the first and last words in each sentence the most important?
16. Are important ideas in main clauses and less central information in subordinate clauses or phrases?

Paragraphs

17. Have I written a context paragraph telling the reader what the document is about and providing a road map?
18. Does the first sentence of each paragraph contain not only the topic but also the paragraph’s major assertion (if I read only the first sentence of each paragraph, can I understand the point of the document)?

19. Does information in each paragraph move from familiar (to the reader) to unfamiliar?
20. Are paragraphs linked with transitions or echoing words and phrases?

Organization

21. Have I provided my reader with signs along the way by effectively using titles, subtitles, etc?
22. Have I avoided the mystery story syndrome by telling my reader what the document is about in the first paragraph?

Overall

23. Have I proofread several times?
24. Am I proud of the finished product? Knowing that my written work gives an irrevocable impression of me, can I sign it without reservation?

***You may also use “The Basic Principles” as a checklist.**