Revising Your Organization & Argument: Overview

Thinking Like a Reader

Analyzing and Revising Your Overall Organization
  Step 1: Identify Your Outer Frame and Main Points
  Step 2: Identify Your Major Sections and Their Points
  Step 3: Diagnose the Continuity of Your Themes
  Diagnose the Whole Again

Revising Your Argument
  Identify Your Argument
  Evaluate the Quality of Your Argument

The Last Step
Thinking Like a Reader

Remember that readers skim and do not follow your arguments word-for-word

Imagine yourself as your reader

Analyzing and Revising Your Overall Organization

Step 1: Identify Your Outer Frame and Main Points
Be sure following are unambiguous:
Separation between introduction & paper body
Separation between paper body & conclusion
Which is the main-point sentence in your introduction & which is the main-point sentence in your conclusion
Elements to Identify Clearly
- Clear paragraph after introduction and clear paragraph for conclusion
- In introduction, underline the sentence that states your main claim
- In conclusion, underline the sentence that expresses the main point of your argument

Step 2: Identify Your Major Sections and Their Points
Be sure the following are unambiguous:
- Where each section of your report begins and where each subsequent section begins
- What the main point of each section is
- Be clear about:
  - Section divisions
  - A short introduction for each section
  - Long sections need a conclusion
  - Every section needs to have a clear key point
  - Section transitions

Step 3: Diagnose the Continuity of Your Themes
- Do points & sub-points hold together?
- Identify theme words & concepts not in introduction & conclusion and add them in (repeat for major sections)

Diagnose the Whole Again
Revising Your Argument

Identify Your Argument

Check that your paper follows the outline.

Test how your discussion reflects the analysis in the argument.

In each section, remove all evidence (summaries, paraphrases, quotations, facts, figures, graphs, tables).

Check for expressions of your analysis, evaluation, and judgment.

Evaluate the Quality of Your Argument

Is your evidence reliable and clearly connected to your claims?

Have you appropriately qualified your argument? (drop into appropriate places a few well-placed hedges like probably, most, often, may etc.)

Check the tone — not a polemic argument but an intellectual discussion.

What needed warrants are missing?

The Last Step

Reread

Get ‘sanity checks’