BECOMING A STRONG SELF-EDITOR

Becoming a good self-editor is all about evaluating your text objectively. This handout discusses some general areas to focus on as well as tips for taking your paper from a rough draft to a polished work. The more you learn about your strengths and weaknesses as a writer, the easier it will become to prioritize areas to revise/edit.

REVISING VS. EDITING

1. REVISING happens when you are perfecting your content.
   - Check your:
     - Organization
     - Thesis Statement
     - Scholarly Sources
     - Potential Plagiarism
   - TIPS:
     - Revise your content before looking for small errors like grammar/awkward wording, etc.
     - Compare the paper to your prompt to make sure you fulfill the requirements.
     - Skim your paper asking yourself the following:
       - What is each paragraph/section about?
       - What is its function within my text?
     - Check that scholarly sources provide evidence for each major point you make.
     - Seek out feedback on your text from another person, your professor, or the writing lab.

2. EDITING occurs when you adjust the finer points of your text.
   - Check your:
     - Formatting (MLA, APA, or Turabian)
     - Spelling
     - Grammar & Punctuation
     - Active Voice
     - Clarity/Flow
   - TIPS:
     - Only edit after you have finished revising your content.
     - Set your text aside before you start editing (anywhere from an hour to a day).
     - Read out loud or with someone.
     - Read the text backwards to catch grammar or spelling mistakes.