

Notes on the Revision Process

*** The revised version of paper #1 is due April 1.

1. Read through the essay and any feedback on it (mine, your own, your peers'). Take seriously the opinions of others, but also consider your own thoughts about the paper as it stands. Indicate which parts you like and don't like, which parts you don't quite understand or don't think are well supported, and which parts you think deserve more attention and development.
2. Slow down and pay attention to the paper's opening. If you wrote in a more loose style originally, is now the time to introduce a more focused argument? If your paper already has a thesis, is it an effective one? Underline what you take to be your argument and think about it for a moment. Is it clearly expressed? Does it get at what you really consider the strengths of your paper? Are you making an argument or stating something that everyone would agree with? Is more proof required to make your point? Is there some way for you to clarify or expand your original argument so that you are happy with it?
3. While thinking about your paper's strengths and its argument, consider making the following changes: pay more attention to details and to the literary techniques of the text; incorporate other evidence from the text or incorporate more reference to the larger themes of the text; identify counterarguments; pay more attention to potential tensions/problems/ironies in your argument that you could say more about.
4. As you adjust your focus, you will also need to change the subsequent argumentation that develops it. Does your paper now have enough material to support your new argument? Do you need to take some things out and add others? Don't be afraid of the rewriting process. The idea is to be dissatisfied with what you've done, come to some better understanding of why you feel that way, and set about alleviating that feeling. You can't change your ideas without changing the structure you've made for their expression.