

Chapter 4: Revising and Editing



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“Substitute ‘damn’ every time you’re inclined to write ‘very’; your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be.” —**Mark Twain**

Revising and Editing: One and the Same?

Although many writers and instructors use the terms interchangeably, it is helpful to see revising and editing as two different activities. For our purposes, revising is an ongoing process and occurs throughout the writing of the essay when a writer attempts to make the changes. These changes may be ones suggested in a peer review but also ones you decide on as you write. Think of revising as “re-visioning” your writing to make the content clear, focused, descriptive, and detailed.

Editing happens after you are satisfied with the overall content of the writing. Editing means going through a piece of writing and making comments and suggestions about how it could be better—or even whether it’s appropriate at all. Editing also includes proofreading for grammar, punctuation and spelling errors. Editing *identifies* the changes needed, and revising *incorporates* the changes needed. For example, a reviewer might suggest that you tweak your introduction to make it better fit the rest of the paper. The actual process of changing the introduction is called revising.

Differences between Revising, Editing, and Proofreading

It is important to note that revising, editing, and proofreading are very different processes. Despite the differences, however, they often overlap. They are being separated here for ease of explanation.

Revising

- Revising is done throughout the writing process, with special emphasis on the first few drafts.
- Focus = big issues
- Audience
- Organization
- Content
- Evidence
- Conclusion

Editing

- Editing is done throughout the writing process, with special emphasis on the middle and final drafts.
- Focus = technical issues
- Flow
- Word choice
- Grammar
- Transitions
- Textual inconsistencies

Proofreading

- Proofreading is reserved for the final draft.
- Focus = mechanics and presentation
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Format
- Typographical errors

Overview of Revising

“Rewriting is when writing really gets to be fun.... In baseball you only get three swings and you’re out. In rewriting, you get almost as many swings as you want and you know, sooner or later, you’ll hit the ball.” —**Neil Simon**

Successful writers understand that revising is an integral part of the writing process. It is important for authors to spend the majority of their time revising their texts. That revising is a time-consuming and practiced skill surprises many beginning writers because they often describe revision as changing particular words in a sentence or scanning a text for misspelled words or grammatical errors. Such changes correspond more appropriately to the term *proofreading*. To revise, however, is to significantly alter a piece of writing.

Revising and editing are two separate processes. Revising requires a significant alteration in a piece of writing, such as enriching the content or giving the piece clarity. Although editing can be a part of

this process, revising generally involves changes that concern bigger issues, such as content and organization. While revising, a writer might notice that one idea needs to be developed more thoroughly and another idea omitted. The writer might decide that rearranging paragraphs will provide clarity and support for the essay, strengthening the paper as a whole. Granted, writers should also change grammar and punctuation while revising, but if that is all they are doing, then they are simply editing.

A Change for the Better

“I write one page of masterpiece to ninety-one pages of sh*t. I try to put the sh*t in the wastebasket.” —**Ernest Hemingway**

Writing is an intellectually challenging, and draining, activity—writing well, that is. Putting ideas on paper is a good start, but revising those ideas so that they are persuasive, cogent, and form a solid argument is the real work of writing. As you review what you have written, you will undoubtedly see holes in your logic, sentences that confuse rather than clarify, and sentences and paragraphs out of place. Below are some helpful hints to consider as you analyze and transform your paper.

- **Take a break.** Looking at your paper later will help you see it from the point of view of the audience. A good rule of thumb is to wait at least a day before revising. Often, writers look at their prose a day later and recognize significant flaws they would not have noticed had they written their paper in one night.
- **Be your own critic.** You are obviously your own best critic. When writing, most people do not (and should not) turn in their first drafts. So take advantage of your first, second, and third drafts to write your opinions in the margins. Highlight the things you really like and circle the things you would like to change.
- **Read and re-read your paper.** In the first read-through consider the clarity of both the focus and the purpose of the paper. Does every supporting statement agree with the thesis? In the second read-through analyze organization, logical development, and correctness. Often, reading your text aloud reveals awkward phrasing, missing information, weak points, and illogical reasoning.
- **Put yourself in the shoes of your reader.** Look at your work through their eyes. Keep in mind that while you may know something about a topic and write about it with supported research, your audience may be new to the topic. Being specific in your writing helps clarify your message to audiences. Do not assume that your audience already knows what you know.
- **Understand that revising your paper should not be the last thing you do**—revision should be ongoing throughout the creation of a document.

Overview of Editing

Editing is a technical process and includes proofreading to fix typos and grammatical errors. You can (and should) edit your own work in addition to relying on a peer review or trip to the writing center. This means going back over what you’ve written and finding ways to improve it. Most writers frequently switch between drafting new sentences and paragraphs and editing ones they’ve already written.

As previously mentioned, revision concerns large sections of text, while editing concerns individual sentences. Below is a list of potential errors to consider while editing.

- Fragments
- Run-on sentences

- Dangling or misplaced modifiers
- Adjective and adverb use
- Verb usage and tense
- Subject/verb agreement
- Pronoun/antecedent agreement
- Sentence balance
- Comma use
- Spelling
- Word choice (connotation vs. denotation)
- Format/presentation

Sentence Structure

Use active verbs.

Be-verbs (is, am, are, was, were, be, has/have been) indicate condition and often require an extra sentence or clause to be sound. **Active verbs** allow you to compose sharply without numbing the rhythm of your writing. Read your writing with an objective eye and think: “How can I make every sentence and paragraph straightforward and simple?” Below are examples in italics of wordy and confusing verbiage. Below the italics are the same sentences that have been simplified.

The sharp rise in fuel prices is a serious challenge to trucking firms. It makes it hard for them to provide timely service to customers and to meet payroll expenses.

Sharply rising fuel prices **challenge** trucking firms by causing delays in customer service and payroll.

Primary causes of the rise in fuel prices are an issue of confusion for many citizens.

They don't know how to fight the rise because they don't know its cause.

Primary causes of rising fuel prices **elude** many citizens, making them unaware of how to fight the increase.

Name the people. Directly state **who or what group** is acting in your sentences. Note the contrast in power and clarity among the sentences below.

Without people: *A citywide ban on indoor smoking in Duluth originally caused a marked drop in bar patronage.*

With people: *When the Duluth City Council passed a citywide ban on indoor smoking, many people stopped going to bars.*

Eliminate wordy phrases. Certain stock phrases are weak and wordy. They can make you sound stuffy or as though you're just trying to fill up space. Use the simple bolded words below instead of the empty and cumbersome language in italics.

Because, Since, Why: *the reason for, for the reason that, owing/due to the fact that, in light of the fact that, considering the fact that, on the grounds that, this is why*

When: *on the occasion of, in a situation in which, under circumstances in which*

About, Regarding: *as regards, in reference to, with regard to, concerning the matter of, where ABC is concerned*

Must, Should: *it is crucial that, it is necessary that, there is a need/necessity for, it is important that, it cannot be avoided that*

Can: *is able to, has the opportunity to, has the capacity for, has the ability to*

May, Might, Could: *it is possible that, there is a chance that, it could happen that, the possibility exists for*

Luckily, Internet users can find numerous websites about how to eliminate wordiness.

Use parallelism in sentences. Parallelism sounds difficult but is easy to write or edit. Parallelism uses the same pattern in words and structure to show equal importance or provide balance in sentences.

Incorrect: John likes reading, *his studies*, and talking.

Corrected: John likes reading, studying, and talking.

Incorrect: We were asked to calculate scores, record them, and *putting them* on the bulletin board.

Corrected: We were asked to calculate scores, record them, and post them on the bulletin board.

Incorrect: The science class had to dissect frogs or *were experimenting* with gases.

Corrected: The science class had to either dissect frogs or experiment with gases.

To check for parallelism, first circle or highlight every **and** or **or** to check for balance in the sentence. List the phrases from your sentence on a separate piece of paper. Example: **reading, his studies, and talking**. Make corrections to your list to create balance: **reading, studying, and talking**.

Once you fix a few sentences, problems with parallelism become easier to recognize and to correct.

Editing Tips

“Bad spellers of the world, untie!” —**Graffito**

Editing is like going over your writing with a fine-toothed comb, scanning the surface and the depths for errors, misstatements, and a lack of clarity.

First, **keep resources close**. Gather your writing handbook, dictionary, thesaurus, handouts, and any other editing resources and *keep them close*. This way, you will not be tempted to guess at the correct way to do something. Instead, use your resources when you need them. Spelling errors can be avoided if you have a dictionary nearby. Don't rely on spell check. It will only correct the spelling, not the proper usage of a word. For example, the word **they're** is a contraction of the words “they are.” Additionally, the word **their** means possession of something as used in the sentence, “We sat in *their* chairs.” And finally, **there** expresses an area or place as in the sentence, “We sat over *there*.” A full distinction can be made in the following sentence: “*They're* over *there* working on *their* writing.” Looking up these words in a dictionary will prevent unnecessary errors from occurring.

Second, **know your errors**. Keep a list of the errors you tend to make next to a corresponding list of corrections. No writer makes unique mistakes all the time; instead, our mistakes are habitual. Know what yours are by looking at your instructor's comments on past papers or by working with a writing tutor. That way, you can enhance your editing strategies by watching specifically for these types of errors. If there are grammar rules you find yourself looking up more frequently than others, write them down for future reference.

Third, **break it down**. Edit one thing at a time. Instead of reading your paper through from start to finish once or twice and trying to catch everything, try searching for one thing at a time. For example, you might go through your paper once to tighten up wordiness. Then, read through a second time, while looking for one type of error which you frequently make, such as comma splices. Then, try reading a third time looking for words that may have been misspelled when you ran a spell check. Read a fourth time for another characteristic error, such as subject-verb agreement.

Next, **reduce visual clutter**. Use two pieces of blank paper to cover up everything but one sentence at a time. This forces you to pay closer attention to the words because they are the only thing you see. Normally, our eyes move all over a text as we are reading; this trick will prevent that tendency.

Work backwards. Read from the end of your paper to the beginning, one sentence at a time. When we read in the conventional manner—top to bottom or left to right—we tend to read quickly and are constantly leaping ahead without really focusing on the words. We tend to see what isn't there because we know what it is supposed to say. Reading backwards forces us to slow down, thereby allowing us to catch more errors within individual sentences.

Finally, **cut unnecessary words.** Inexperienced writers should be able to cut 20 percent (or more) of their prose. Look hard at each word, each phrase, and each sentence. Does each and every one help you achieve your purpose? Does each sentence in a paragraph relate to the main idea? If you are like most people, you will find unnecessary repetition rampant in your writing. Pruning the verbiage will result in leaner, tighter, and more forceful writing. Remember E.B. White's mantra: "Omit needless words. Omit needless words. Omit needless words."

When reviewing your work, it is also important to ensure that the tense you choose remains consistent. **Tense** refers to the relation of details in the past, present, and future. For example, one writer may tell a story about going to the mall in the present tense by saying, "I **am** walking around the mall and I **see** my third grade teacher." Another writer may choose to relate this story in the past tense by saying, "I **was** walking around the mall when I **saw** my third grade teacher." Although it is important to select the tense that best suits the particular context a writer is using, it is equally important to remain consistent with whatever tense is chosen. Inconsistency within tense is extremely confusing for readers. It is important to review your use of tense to ensure that your language is clear. For example, if you were to say "I **was** walking around the mall and I **see** my third grade teacher," your audience would be very confused, wondering if you were seeing your teacher in the present or last week. By keeping your tense consistent, your reader will always know when you experienced what you're writing about.

After going through the steps above and making changes as necessary, you should feel your paper is nearly complete. The content should be in place, and your text should make your case clearly and forcefully. If you feel this is the case, you are ready to closely analyze your text.

"Books aren't written; they're rewritten. Including your own. It is one of the hardest things to accept, especially after the seventh rewrite hasn't quite done it." —**Michael Crichton**

Analyze Each Part of Your Paper

As part of revising, you now need to revisit the parts of your essay: introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions.

Introduction

When you look over the draft of your paper, the first thing you should focus on is your introduction. Whether it is one paragraph or an entire chapter, the purpose of the introduction is to grab your readers' attention and make them want to know more about your subject. Does it? Make sure you draw your readers in from the beginning and follow with interesting and supportive information. If readers are not intrigued from the very beginning of the piece, they will quickly become distracted and avoid reading any further.

Thesis Statement

A thesis is not only an idea, but it is also a theory that provides direction and guidance on what one is talking about. It is a theory because it is an abstract type of generalized thinking that binds the whole piece of writing together and also provides a goal and a standard for the paper. Make sure you have a clear thesis. Simply put, a thesis is your main point, the line of argument that you are pursuing in your essay. It should answer two simple questions: What issue are you writing about, and what is your position on it? A thesis statement is a single sentence (or sometimes two) that provides the answers to these questions clearly and concisely. Ask yourself, “What is my paper about, exactly?” to help you develop a precise and directed thesis, not only for your reader, but for you as well.

Most readers expect to see the point of your argument (the thesis statement) within the first few paragraphs. This does not mean that you have to place it there every time. Some writers place it at the very end, slowly building up to it throughout their work, to explain a point after the fact. Others don’t bother with one at all, but feel that their thesis is “implied” anyway. Beginning writers, however, should avoid the implied thesis unless certain of the audience. Almost every professor will expect to see a clearly discernible thesis sentence in the introduction. Remember: The harder it is for you to write your thesis statement, the more likely it is that your entire essay is incoherent and unfocused. If you are having real problems crafting a good thesis statement, you may need to start over, narrow your topic, or dig even more deeply into what you are trying to say and write.

A good basic structure for a thesis statement is “they say, I say.” What is the prevailing view, and how does your position differ from it? However, avoid limiting the scope of your writing with an either/or thesis under the assumption that your view must be strictly contrary to their view.

Following are some typical thesis statements:

- Although many readers believe *Romeo and Juliet* to be a tale about the ill fate of two star-crossed lovers, it can also be read as an allegory concerning a playwright and his audience.
- The “War on Drugs” has not only failed to reduce the frequency of drug-related crimes in America but actually enhanced the popular image of dope peddlers by romanticizing them as desperate rebels fighting for a cause.
- The bulk of modern copyright law was conceived in the age of commercial printing, long before the Internet made it so easy for the public to compose and distribute its own texts. Therefore, these laws should be reviewed and revised to better accommodate modern readers and writers.
- The usual moral justification for capital punishment is that it deters crime by frightening would-be criminals. However, the statistics tell a different story.
- If students really want to improve their writing, they must read often, practice writing, and receive quality feedback from their peers.
- Plato’s dialectical method has much to offer those engaged in online writing, which is far more conversational in nature than print.

You will know your thesis statement is finished when it contains the basic information for your argument without any major in-depth descriptions.

Position

Make sure that your reader knows *your* position on the issue. This should be properly expressed in your thesis, but check your entire introduction for “wishy washy” sentences. Unless you’re only writing a summary, your introduction should make it clear how you feel about the issue at stake. This is not, however, accomplished by stating your position in the introduction prior to your thesis. Employ recommended introduction strategies to illustrate your position.

Avoid sentences or thesis statements such as the following:

- Abortion is a very controversial issue in America.
- Capital punishment is both good and bad.
- This paper will present the pros and cons of modern copyright law.

Are these examples stating an issue and taking a position, or merely stating what everyone knows already? Again, your reader should already know that the issue you're writing about is controversial; otherwise, there would be little reason to write about it. Unless you've been instructed to merely write a report or summary of an issue, assume that your professor wants you to take a position and defend it with the best evidence you can muster. However, you should not forget to fairly analyze all positions and debate opposing viewpoints. Even if you only cater to other opinions in order to disprove them, you will have strengthened your argument as a result.

Body Paragraphs

As you build support for your thesis in the body paragraphs, always ask yourself if you are spending your readers' time wisely. Are you writing unnecessarily complex and confusing sentences, or using 50 words when five would do? If a sentence is already plain and direct, there's no need to fluff it up. Flowery words and phrases obscure your ideas: when writing, being *concise* is key. For example, why write, "Cats have a tendency toward sleeping most of the day" when you could simply write, "Cats usually sleep most of the day"? How about changing "The 12th day of the month of April" to "April 12th"? Try to pick out such sentences and substitute simpler ones.

But wait—don't you need to inflate your text so you can meet the minimum word count? Wouldn't it be better to use "due to the fact that" for "because" and "in addition to" for "and," since these phrases use far more words? Answer: No. Any experienced reader will instantly see through such a pitiful scheme and will likely become irritated by the resulting "flabby" prose. If you are having trouble meeting the minimum word count, a far better solution is to add more examples, details, quotations, or perspectives. Go back to the planning and drafting stage and really ask yourself if you've written everything useful about a topic.

Other students worry that their sentences don't sound smart enough. Compare these two sentences:

- Do not ask what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.
- Do not submit a query concerning what assets and benefits your country can bestow upon you and yours, but rather inquire as to what tasks or activities you yourself can perform and carry out that will be useful for the citizens of your own country.

Although the second sentence is longer and harder to grasp, that doesn't make it more intelligent. In fact, it's far more impressive to write a complex thought in simple prose than vice versa. Beware, however, that you do not lose meaning when you make a sentence simpler; cut out only the most unnecessary "fluffy" adjectives, but don't sacrifice being descriptive.

How about your organization? From sentence-to-sentence, paragraph-to-paragraph, the ideas should flow into each other smoothly and without interruptions or delays. If someone tells you that your paper sounds choppy or jumps around, you probably have a problem with organization and transitions. The addition of quotations from a text that relates to your topic can be an excellent way to refocus your writing and avoid unrelated ideas.

Keep in mind that very few writers can write a well-organized paper in one draft. Instead, their first drafts are disorganized and even chaotic. It takes patience to sort through this mess, consolidating related ideas into coherent paragraphs and helping the reader to follow their train of thought without derailing.

Compare:

- Proofreading is an important step in the writing process. Read your paper aloud to catch errors. Use spell check on your computer.
- Proofreading is an important step in the writing process. One technique is to read your paper aloud, which will help you catch errors you might overlook when reading silently. Another strategy is to use spell check on your computer.

The second example has better transitions between ideas and is easier to read. Note that the example with better transitions is also longer. Good transitions can improve your style and help you reach the minimum word count.

Conclusion

After all the work you have exerted on your paper, you want to end with a good conclusion. Your conclusion should do more than summarize the essay; it should “drive the thesis home.” It is the last opportunity to make an impression on your audience, convince them of the sincerity of your efforts, and leave them with the satisfaction of learning something new.

“Chapter 6: Effective Paragraphs and Their Elements” offers suggestions to develop solid paragraphs in each stage of your essay. Refer to this chapter during the writing process.

Why Discuss Style in a Section on Editing?

“Style is knowing who you are, what you want to say, and not giving a damn.” —**Gore Vidal**

As you write, you make choices. As you revise and edit, you examine the effectiveness of those choices. Some choices are more effective than others and may reinforce your message. It all depends on your goal, your purpose, and your audience. Are you writing a birthday greeting or a dissertation? An instant message or a public address? Your choices determine your text's effectiveness; they help relate meaning.

Prescription and description litter these pages and others. Some writers tell you how to write: how your writing should look, sound, and feel. These writers prescribe rules (writer's handbooks are their Bibles). Should you follow them? Prescription can be limiting. In some instances, it may be profitable or necessary to follow a formula (when writing a legal document or a theme for your fifth grade teacher, for example). It is necessary to learn the rules if only to break them. Rules are not static, however. They evolve. Rules are added, changed, omitted. Current fashion is the only certainty.

Other writers describe how text is actually written. They analyze past and present text, highlighting similarities, differences, and respective efficiency. They define goals and purpose. It may be purposeful to apply rules, yet at other times, it may not. Do not allow yourself to become limited by prescription.

Examine your goal and determine the best approach to reach it.

Before and After Revision Examples

Example Before Revision

Student Name

Professor Name

Course Name

Date

Household Chore Divisions When We Get Married

1 My mom does almost everything at our house. She cooks, cleans, does laundry, vacuums, and when my sisters and I were younger, she did most of the child care – not fair! My father, on the other hand, clips the hedges, waters the lawn, and snow-blows the driveway. He makes more money than my mom. My sisters and I take care of mowing the lawn, washing dishes, cleaning the bathrooms, and scrubbing the floors. I was interested to know how Pete and I will split chores once we are married because there (ideally) will not be as large of an earning gap between the two of us as there is between my parents.

2 Pete and I discussed and debated a lot as we went through the “list of chores.” I tried to stand my ground on percentages of time that I should do a chore unless Pete was able to give me a reasonable explanation of why I should do a greater percentage of something than he does; he did the same, and so this assignment was a great communication tool and gave us the opportunity to confer on possible problems which may occur somewhere down the road.

3 My boyfriend Pete and I talk a lot about getting married. We are now college seniors, so it just seems like the next step in the progression of our relationship. We figure, however, that we will wait until I am done with law school and he has his PhD before we do it. Although that brings us to at least 6 years from now we agree that it will be better if we are financially stable before getting married.

4 Pete and I have decided to split chores almost evenly. I will be doing 44.43% of the total things that will need to get done. He will be doing 43.24% of them. We decided that our son, who will be named Christian, was old enough to help with some of the chores. Some of the other things, we decided, would be worth paying an outside source to do. Income tax returns, for example, we concluded could be better and more efficiently taken care of by a CPA. We found that I will be doing 50.25% of the housework, while Pete will be doing 43.17%. We also found that I will be doing 10% of the occasional work while Pete will be doing 63.33%. I will do 60% of the child care, and Pete will do 40%. I seem to be doing more daily tasks, and Pete seems to be doing more occasional tasks.

I think that this assignment was a good starting point for a discussion between Pete and myself. I am going to be a lawyer and he is going to be a chemist. Both of our schedules will be tight, and we will have to find a better compromise in real life than we did in our imaginary one. If we do not, neither one of us will be truly satisfied.

From the results of this assignment, I will be doing more of the traditionally “female work”, and Pete will be doing more “male work.” I think that our assigned careers play a part in this but not as much as I would like. I think that although we have broken many of the stereotypes that control my parents, we are still following some of them. When I look over the results it seems odd that Pete will be doing more of the ironing than I, but he taught me to iron and his job calls for more ironed clothes than mine. We also figured that he will have a little more leeway on time as a manager than I will as a lawyer. Thus, he will be getting the kids ready for school. We broke a couple of stereotypes, but we still have a ways to go before reaching equality.

Example After Revision

Student Name

Professor Name

Course Name

Date

Household Chore Divisions When We Get Married

My boyfriend Pete and I talk a lot about getting married. We are now college seniors, so it just seems like the next logical step in our relationship. We figure, however, that we will wait until I am done with law school and he has his Ph.D before we do it. Although that brings us to at least six years from now, we agree that it will be better if we are financially stable before getting married. Stability is one goal, but another is understanding our roles in the household.

My mom does almost everything in the home where I was raised. She cooks, cleans, does laundry, vacuums, and when my sisters and I were younger, she did most of the child care – hardly fair or equal. My dad, on the other hand, clips the hedges, waters the lawn, and snow-blows the driveway. My sisters and I take care of mowing the lawn, washing dishes, cleaning the bathrooms, and scrubbing the floors. My dad does make more money than my mom, but it seems to me like she is somehow “making up” for her lack of earning by being a servant. I was interested to know how Pete and I will split chores once we are married because there (ideally) will not be so large an earning gap between the two of us as there is between my parents.

3 Pete and I discussed and debated a lot as we went through the “list of chores.” I tried to stand my ground on percentages of time that I should do a chore unless Pete was able to give me a reasonable explanation of why I should do a greater percentage of something than he does. He did the same, and so this assignment was a great communication tool and gave us the opportunity to confer on possible problems that may occur somewhere down the road.

4 Pete and I have decided to split chores almost evenly. I will be doing 44.43% of the total things that will need to get done. He will be doing 43.24% of them. We decided that when our child was old enough to help with some of the chores, he or she will. Some of the other things we decided would be worth paying an outside source to do. Income tax returns, for example, could be taken care of more efficiently by a CPA. We found that I will be doing 50.25% of the housework, while Pete will be doing 43.17% of the housework. We also found that I will be doing 10% of the occasional work while Pete will be doing 63.33% of the occasional work. I will do 60% of the child care, and Pete will do 40% of the child care. I seem to be doing more daily tasks, and Pete seems to be doing more occasional tasks.

5 From the results of this assignment, I will be doing more of the traditionally “female work,” and Pete will be doing more “male work.” I think that our assigned careers play a part in this but not as much as I would like. I think that although we have broken many of the stereotypes to which my parents subscribe, we are still following some of them. When I look over the results, it seems odd, gender-task speaking, that Pete will be doing more of the ironing than I, but he taught me to iron and his job calls for more ironed clothes than mine. We also figured that he will have a little more leeway on time as a manager than I will as a lawyer. Because of this, he will be getting the kids ready for school in the morning. We broke a couple of stereotypes, but we still have a way to go before reaching equality.

6 I think that this assignment was a good discussion starting point for Pete and I. I am going to be a lawyer and he is going to be a chemist. Both of our schedules will be tight, and we will have to find a better compromise in our real life than we did in our imaginary one. If we do not, neither one of us will be truly satisfied.

Notes

With only a few changes made, notice how much nicer the Example After Revision reads than the Example Before Revision.

1. The order of a few paragraphs was re-arranged. Notice how the focus changes perspective from the past to the present. It immediately centers and controls what the author wants the reader to “see” and sets the tone for the rest of the essay. Also, notice the way the author repeats the words “Pete and I” to keep the reader on track. Notice that the paragraph that was moved to the beginning provides a more solid introduction. It immediately tells the reader

- why the rest of the essay is relevant. The writer is considering getting married, so it is a good time to talk about household chores. This puts the rest of the essay into context and helps orient the reader to what will be coming and why the author wrote the essay. The concluding paragraph was also rearranged and now offers a more accurate summary of the essay as a whole. The example before the revision had a concluding paragraph that veered off topic to deal with the idea of gender roles, which, although mentioned, is not the main idea.
2. Punctuation was included **inside** of quotation marks rather than **outside** quotation marks. This makes for easier reading and tells your reader/professor that you are conscious of the proper technique when quoting, and keeps the clarity of the speaker consistent.
 3. The numeral “6” was changed to the word “six.” Be aware of numbers in your writing. Generally, the rule is to spell out numbers one through nine and use numerals for numbers 10 or higher.
 4. Some material was added to the Example After Revision for clarity. When you believe something can be added or taken away to provide your reader with a better idea of your meaning or thought process, do so. Clarity is extremely important when writing a paper. If your reader becomes confused, this will damage the paper’s effectiveness. Do your best to guide your reader, so there will be little to no *re-reading* and a grade to reflect this.