



Language Arts Lesson 9
Evaluation and Revision (Grades 9-12)

Instruction 9-1
*Revise Text to Highlight the Individual Voice, Improve Sentence Variety
and Style*

Even famous writers work hard to improve their writing. You too can follow some basic steps that will help present your message in the best possible way, so that your audience understands exactly what you were trying to say.

After you have researched and written the first draft of your paper, you will need to **revise** it. When you revise, you step back and look at your work in a different light. This involves your own evaluation as well as the reaction of others. Once you have this feedback in hand, you can rewrite your draft to solve any problems.

It's usually a good idea to set your draft aside for a few days before reviewing it. This will help you to be more open-minded about the changes you might need to make.

When you are ready to revise your paper, read through it once quickly, and write down any ideas or notes in the margins. Don't worry about your spelling or grammar. You are trying to focus on the bigger picture—the meaning of your paper.

You can use these questions to help you as you check for meaning:

1. Think about your **main idea**. Have you presented it clearly?
(If you can't figure out what the main idea is from reading your text, you probably haven't presented it clearly enough.)

2. Think about your **purpose**—the reason you wrote the paper. Did you accomplish your purpose?

3. Think about your **audience**. What type of people are you writing to? Did you write your paper with their needs in mind?

4. Think about your **supporting ideas**. Do you need to give your audience more information in order to support your points or to make your statements clear?

If you have trouble answering any of these questions, you may need to rework your ideas. Even if you have to go back to the prewriting or drafting phases, don't be discouraged. It's all part of the process. Remember, even famous writers have to work hard to improve their writing.

After you are satisfied that you have answered the questions, it's time to ask for a **peer review**. Your friends and fellow students are struggling with the same challenges that you face, and you can help each other. A classmate can serve as



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a peer reviewer, pointing out what works in your draft and what does not. Here are three ways to work with a peer reviewer:

1. Let your peer reviewer read your first draft silently and make comments right on the page.
2. Read your first draft aloud to your peer reviewer, and then discuss it afterwards.
3. Give your peer reviewer an evaluation form to fill out.

A peer reviewer gives you an audience perspective on your paper. Your peer may ask for more information on one point. Or perhaps some of your statements, even though they make sense to you, are difficult for your readers to follow. The way you relate your ideas to each other is very important. **Coherence** is when the ideas you put together make sense—they are logical.

Here are some questions you can ask your peer reviewer to think about:

Peer Reviewer: Unity Checklist

1. Do all of my details support the main idea?
2. Have I organized these details in the most logical way?
3. Are any of my sentences unnecessary? Do I waste words by restating the main point without adding any new information or meaning?
4. Have I made the relationships between my ideas clear?

Ask your reviewer what the strongest part of your paper was. Also, ask if anything at all was not clear.

When you have completed your peer review, you should have several comments to help you in your revision. Use the notes from your reviewer as well as your own notes to revise your paper. At this point, you should focus on the **coherence** of your paper. Your writing is coherent when it has connecting links between the ideas. These links are called **transitions**.

You can use tools like **transitional words and phrases**, **synonyms**, **repeated words**, and **pronoun references** to help your paper be more coherent. Transitional words and phrases show movement in direction, time, or importance. They show how one idea relates to the next. Here are a few examples:



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Movement in Direction	Movement in Time	Movement in Importance
beside among below within to the west	gradually currently then now finally	above all especially most important in particular in fact

Besides transitional words and phrases, you can repeat certain words to emphasize them. Remember the words from a famous J.F. Kennedy speech: “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.” Notice the repeated words. They give this sentence strength and help people to remember it.

You can also use synonyms or pronoun references. Remember that synonyms are words that have the same meaning. Pronoun references are words like “he,” “she,” or “it” that replace the noun you’re referring to. Using synonyms and pronoun references can help you remind the reader about an idea without being too repetitive.