

Revising your Paper

APSU Writing Center Handout

When reviewing your paper, start with **Higher Order Concerns**, the big-picture elements that shape the paper's overall effectiveness. Once these are solid, move to **Lower Order Concerns** such as sentence structure, grammar, and formatting. Consider the questions below as a guide while reviewing your work.

Higher Order Concerns (HOCs)

Always read your assignment sheet first. These requirements represent a high level of concern.

Thesis

- Is there a clear central thesis?
- Can you summarize the purpose of the paper in one sentence?
- Ask a peer to read the introduction and predict the paper's topic after.

Audience

- Is there a clear audience? Can you describe them?
- Who will be reading this paper?
- Does the audience match the assignment and purpose?

Organization

- Does the paper progress logically?
- Jot down topics for each paragraph and check the order.
- Make a brief outline. Should any section be moved or rewritten?
- Are transitions clear between paragraphs and sections?

Development

- Are details, examples, or evidence sufficient to support the thesis of the paper?

- Are any paragraphs too short or underdeveloped?
- Try to free write for 20 minutes to see if you have any new ideas or areas to discuss.
- Review notes and outline how to integrate new evidence.
- Consider library resources for additional research.

Argument

- Is every claim presented in the paper supported by evidence?
- Are there gaps in reasoning or unaddressed counterarguments?
 - Consider speaking with a friend or peer to check for gaps.

Citation Style

- Are citations consistent and correct (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.)?
- Are sources integrated smoothly into the argument?
- Do references support claims effectively and credibly?

Lower Order Concerns (LOCs)

These represent priorities for improving writing on a smaller scale such as word choice.

Sentence Structure

- Identify recurring sentence-level problems and track them on a checklist.
- Read aloud to notice awkward or unclear sentences. Check punctuation carefully.

Word Choice

- Are words precise and appropriate for your audience?
- Avoid repetition, vague language, or overly complex sentences.

Spelling and Formatting

- Proofread for spelling errors (proofreading backwards can help).

- Ensure headings, margins, and paragraph spacing are consistent with citation style.

References

Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). *Higher order concerns (HOCs) and lower order concerns (LOCs)*. Purdue University.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/mechanics/hocs_and_locs.html

Southwestern University. (n.d.). *Higher-order concerns vs. lower-order concerns* [PDF].

chrome-

extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfindmkaj/https://www.southwestern.edu/live/files/3

233-higher-vs-lower-orderpdf