



Revise texts

A guiding principle: *Don't be satisfied with the first version!*

Keep writing!

Good texts are not created in one go. Write, write, write - even several versions of important passages. Especially key passages such as the introduction and conclusion must be spot on. This is where you need to attract and win over your readers. In addition, keep getting feedback at different stages of the writing process - from very different readers. And, last but not least, learn to read your respective versions through the eyes of a reader. Try to put yourself in the shoes of a potential reader of your text: How will they read your text? Will they be able to comprehend it, will they understand it? Distancing yourself from yourself as the author of your own text and switching to the role of a reader is only possible with difficulty and only approximately. But try it. And revise the current version of your text in this way.

Guiding questions for revising

There are two different areas for revising a text:

1. Higher order concerns: the content and structural level

At the content level:

- At what points are statements unclear or ambiguous?
- Where is something missing? Where does something need to be added?
- What is contradictory?
- Where is it repetitive, insignificant or distracting?
- Where could descriptions, case studies or comparisons make the text clearer?
- Are key terms defined?
- Are there passages in which something is claimed without being substantiated?
- Are sources referenced wherever necessary?





On the structural level:

- Is a common theme recognisable in the text? Could transitions, an introduction or conclusion be added?
- Is the sequence of statements/paragraphs comprehensible? Should the sequence be changed? Is a mental step / statement missing?
- Do all parts of the text refer to each other?
- Could additional headings and subheadings structure the text more clearly?
- Could an enumeration in list or table form improve readability?
- Are quotations used sensibly, are they introduced and integrated into the text?

2. lower order concerns: the linguistic level

At the sentence level:

- Are there sentences in the text that are too long? Are there too convoluted sentences?
- Are there too many “that” sentences?
- Are there too many passive sentence constructions that make the text cumbersome?
- Are main subjects in the main clause and subordinate subjects in the subordinate clause?

At the word level:

- Are there words that are repeated?
- Are there so-called filler words that are superfluous to the meaning of the sentence (e.g. eigentlich, durchaus, quasi, ziemlich, wohl, eben, schließlich)?
- Are there too many words that end in -ung, -heit, -keit or -ismus?
- Are there too many abbreviations?
- Are there overlong and cumbersome words?
- Are there too many “paper verbs” (e.g. erfolgen, bestehen, befinden, erwiesen) and auxiliary verbs (e.g. können, mögen, sollen, dürfen, würden, möchten)?
- Are there any technical terms that may be unclear or unfamiliar to the reader?
- Is scientifically appropriate language used?

