**English 111 Online, Summer 2012**

**Ms. Goldstein**

 **USEFUL TIPS FOR REVISION**

1. **Revise big stuff first, make small edits later.**This doesn't mean you should not correct obvious typos and grammar errors as you notice them. However, you shouldn't be actively tinkering with word choice until after you've nailed down the structure of your piece. To make this process much easier, I recommend using an outline for your fiction and nonfiction.
2. **Put the manuscript down and walk away.** Writers need at least a little distance from their manuscripts before jumping into revision. Sometimes it takes a good night's sleep or a weekend-long vacation. Some writers require months of separation before they can look at a manuscript with fresh (and hopefully objective) eyes.
3. **Scan the whole manuscript without reading.** I recommend doing this at the beginning and at the ending of the revision process. Scanning can make big problems more obvious that a writer might not notice when reading closely. For instance, maybe most sections are the same general length--except for one section that is significantly longer or shorter than the rest.
4. **Read carefully.** Take your time and read every word. Then, read it out loud too. This will help you catch obvious errors. In particular, pay attention to transitions from paragraph to paragraph, scene to scene, stanza to stanza, etc. Check for repetition *and* consistency.
5. **Look for ways to be more concise with your language.**Can you turn a 15-word sentence into a 8-word sentence? Can you turn an 8-sentence paragraph into a 5-sentence paragraph? And so on. Less almost always means more for the reader.
6. **Use active voice over passive voice.** There may be occasions for using passive voice, but don't let yourself get drunk on the stuff. Passive writing makes for passive reading.
7. **Vary sentence structure.** Don't fall into the trap of always writing: *Noun + Verb + Noun = Sentence*. Even if it's grammatically correct, using the same pattern over and over again will make your manuscript boring. Don't feel like you have to get crazy creative with your sentence structure; just check that you're not falling into a monotonous pattern.
8. **Save each round of revisions as its own file.** Start with the first draft. Then, the second draft. Then, the third draft. Then, well, you get the idea. Saving these files may help if you realize a path you chose in revision ultimately leads to a cliff without a rope bridge to cross.
9. **Have someone read the manuscript.** The more eyes (otherwise known as "readers") the better, because they'll be more objective when reading, and they're less likely to make "leaps of logic" that a writer might. Ask them for feedback on how the piece reads (fast, slow, awkward, etc.) and if there are any places that didn't make sense.
10. **Print the manuscript for a final edit.**  Most of my edits are on the computer screen. That said, I do have a print out made for me and my proofers when it's time to do the final editing, because there are things I catch on paper that I don't on the screen.

**\*adapted from: robertleebrewer.blogspot.com/2011/06/revision-tips-for-writers.html**