This document provides a series of questions to work through when revising and editing your essay. You might want to use it in conjunction with other resources, such as handouts, a writing handbook or online sources.

ARGUMENT:

1. Circle your thesis statement and ask the following questions:
   - Does my thesis answer the assignment question? If a question was not provided, does my thesis give the short answer to my research questions? For a book/article review, does my thesis state my overall assessment (positive and negative) of the text?
   - Is my thesis direct, unified and coherent? Does it make a claim about my topic?
   - How does my thesis differ from my topic? It should say something about my topic.
   - Is it possible to argue my thesis?
   - Is my thesis statement too obvious or vague? If yes, your thesis needs to be re-worked.

2. Underline the first sentence of each paragraph. Write your thesis statement, followed by the first sentence of each paragraph on a separate sheet of paper. Ask the following questions:
   - Is my thesis clear?
   - Does each sentence address one separate idea?
   - What is the relationship between each of the sentences? Is it clear?
   - Does the argument develop from sentence to sentence?
   - Does the argument progress logically from the first to the last sentence?
   - Is there any repetition of ideas? If yes, edit the sentences.

3. Look at the quotations you have used in each of your paragraphs. Underline them in a different colour. Ask the following questions about each quotation:
   - What claim or point does this quotation support? Is it necessary to make my point?
   - Does this quotation add to my argument? How does it support my point?
   - Have I introduced the quotation, provided context for it and commented on its significance?
   - Have I cited this source using a standard documentation style?
   - Do I use the quotations to support my ideas? What is the relationship of the quotations to my topic sentences? Is that relationship clear?
   - Does the quotation merely provide information? If yes, consider paraphrasing.
   - Is the quotation very long? If yes, consider paraphrasing or synthesizing the information.

4. Read your introduction aloud and put a checkmark beside the following parts:
   - Statement and identification of the topic
   - Narrowed topic
   - Introduction of one specific aspect of the topic that is a problem or a question
   - Thesis statement

All of these elements should be evident in your introduction and should appear, usually, in this order.
5. **Read your conclusion aloud. Ask the following questions:**
   - Does my conclusion state the broader significance of what I have written?
   - Does it comment on what I have written?
   - Does it show the relationship of my essay to the themes of the course or of my field?
   - Does it state my thesis in a new way to show how my argument has developed over the course of my paper?
   - Does it answer the question “Who cares”?

You should be able to answer YES to at least one of the above questions. You should answer NO to the ones that follow. If not, you need to amend your conclusion.

   - Does my conclusion simply restate my thesis?
   - Does it repeat all of my main points?
   - Does it provide new information or go in a different direction?

**STYLE:**

1. **Consult a list of transitional words; find and circle those words in your essay.** Does each transitional word adequately express the relationship between the two phrases it joins?

2. **Read each sentence aloud slowly.** Ask yourself the following questions:
   - Is the sentence clear and coherent?
   - Does the sentence sound right?
   - Is there only one main subject and verb?
   - Am I using unnecessarily complex words?
   - Have I eliminated any redundant pairs or modifiers?
   - Is every word in the sentence necessary?

3. **Keep a running list of the common spelling and grammatical mistakes that you make.** Check each sentence for typical mistakes.

**RESOURCES FOR GRAMMAR, EDITING AND PROOFREADING:**

See our handouts on proofreading, wordiness, citing and documenting sources and paragraph structure. As well, you might consult these web resources.


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Handout also available at [http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/webresources](http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/webresources).