

# Editing the Thesis

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## Reviewing & Revising your Thesis

Adapted from Szuchman (2008)

Outline the thesis by writing down the topic of each chapter, and within it, each section; the flow of your argument is in the flow of the chapters, sections, and paragraphs

- Is this the best possible organization of your thesis by chapter and by section?
- Move chapters, sections & paragraphs where needed; add chapters or sections where there are holes in the argument, or delete them

Sequencing of sections within chapters:

- Outline each chapter by writing down the topic of each section
- Each section has its own heading or subheading
- Review the order to see if it's correct in terms of the flow of your argument: this makes up the coherence of your paper
- Make changes to the order of sections when needed: move, add, or delete sections as needed
- Is this sequencing of sections the best possible organization of your argument in this chapter?

Paragraphs

- Each paragraph starts with a topic sentence
- Each sentence in the paragraph elaborates on the topic sentence
- If a sentence does not elaborate on the topic sentence, move it to a new paragraph with its own topic sentence
- If a sentence repeats what has already been said, delete it
- Check to make sure you define a term the first time it is used, italicize it, and provide a reference for it

Sequencing of paragraphs within sections:

- Review the purpose of each paragraph within each section: write down the purpose of each paragraph
- Review the order to see if it's correct in terms of the flow of your argument: this makes up the coherence of your paper
- Make changes to the order when needed: move, add, or delete paragraphs as needed
- Is this the best possible organization of paragraphs in your argument in this section of the chapter?

Check for 1 (or 2) sentence paragraphs

- Elaborate on the 1 sentence paragraph with more details / more sentences
- If no elaboration is called for, consider deleting the 1 sentence paragraph: it may not be needed

Transitions: The Flow of Ideas

- Write a transition paragraph at the beginning of each chapter that summarizes the chapter that follows
  - Make transition sentences or paragraphs between sections of the chapter, so that the ideas flow clearly
  - Write a transition sentence or paragraph at the end of each chapter that leads into the next chapter
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## Headings

- Review your outline and insert headings where you start new topic areas (can't have only 1 heading); these are sections
- Make sure your headings use simple declarative language that clearly state the topic of the section
- Headings are in bold
- Level 1 Heading is centered, bold, main words capitalized (Chapter title)
- Add subheadings as needed (can't have just 1 subheading)
- Level 2 Subheading is flush left, bold, main words capitalized
- Level 3 Subheading is bold, indented 5 spaces, main words capitalized, period, text same line

## Sentences

- Review for no gender bias: no use of his/her; use "the," plural, "one" instead
- Use active voice ("securely attached children show...") instead of passive voice ("lack of confidence is the result of...")
- Look at the subject and object of each sentence and make sure they agree in number
- Look for run-on sentences (longer than 2 or 3 lines): break a long run-on sentence into 2 or 3 sentences
- Look for sentence fragments (no subject or no verb): Rewrite these with subject and verb
- Check for parallel construction: elements in a series and verbs that share a function must have the same form (see APA manual for parallel construction)

## Citations

- Define your terms the first time you use them, with a citation/s for the source/s of your definition
- Make sure that whenever you state a fact about your topic you cite the source of your information
- If a paragraph includes information from one source only, citing source at beginning of paragraph is enough
- Go through each citation in the text and make sure that the reference is in your References
- Translated sources show the original publication date and the translated version publication date in citation

## References

- Go through each reference in References and make sure it is cited in the text; if not, delete it
- Each reference published originally in another language shows the translator and original publication date

## Punctuation & Spelling

- Go through and examine your commas, semicolons and colons in each sentence: are they needed? Delete if not
  - Use spellcheck
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