

## TIPS FOR REVIEWING & EDITING

### Reviewing your own work

#### Overall document content

Before asking others to review your work, first review it yourself.

- ✓ Has the scope of your audience changed?
  - If so, what changes are necessary to address all potential audience members?
  - Which parts might need further clarification for that new audience and how will you write that?
- ✓ Has your objective changed? Does the ending match the beginning? In other words did you conclude with what you set out to prove or document or discuss, or did the topic wander into different territory?
  - If so, what modifications are needed to revise your objective and properly address it in the work?
  - It might mean simply changing a thesis statement at the beginning or it might involve reworking larger portions of the copy.
- ✓ Has your understanding of the subject changed?
  - While you were researching and writing this work, did you discover new things that need to be addressed?
  - Maybe you realized that something you thought was important isn't anymore and so should be removed or subordinated.
  - What changes are needed to keep the work focused?
  - What further research might be needed to address an important topic that wasn't fully explored?

#### Sentence level editing

After you've made all the necessary content changes so that your objective is clear and supported, and your readers are appropriately addressed, you're ready for sentence-level editing. Go through your document multiple times, each time checking for different items:

- ✓ Document has minimal use of archaic words, *-ize* words, *-tion* words, noun strings, sentences with lots of prepositions.
  - ✓ Jargon is used sparingly, if at all.
  - ✓ Abbreviations (acronyms, initialisms, shortened words) are properly noted and spelled out where appropriate.
  - ✓ There are no spelling errors, including correctly spelled but mistakenly used words (e.g., "their," "they're," and "there").
  - ✓ Transition statements are in the appropriate places to guide readers from one topic to the next.
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- ✓ There is plenty of white space to give eyes a break.
- ✓ Sections are properly titled or numbered and grammatically identical in relation to the headers in the same level.
- ✓ Bulleted and numbered lists are properly used.
- ✓ Existing cross-references are essential, lead to the correct places, and are used sparingly.
- ✓ All graphical elements are labeled and explained.
- ✓ Sentence length varies to have a mix of short and somewhat longer sentences. Complex sentences focus on a single idea.
- ✓ All grammar, spelling, and punctuation is correct.
- ✓ The document is correctly and consistently formatted in font, style, and pagination.
- ✓ If used, attachments are correctly labeled and referenced.

### **Reviewing the work of others**

Ask the writer to define the following items for you so that you can effectively review the content:

- The document's objective (what do you hope to achieve)
- The audience (who will read it)
- The scope (what the doc needs to cover to achieve your objective and nothing more)
- The premise (what does your audience already know; what's given)
- The rationale (why we're doing this)

When asked to review others' writing, check for overall organization, logic, and flow.

- ✓ The document structure is clearly established so readers can find the information they need.
- ✓ The organization makes logical sense (based on the objective).
- ✓ The objective and scope deliver what's promised.
- ✓ All claims are adequately and correctly supported.
- ✓ All references and graphical elements make sense, are correct, and useful. Each has a purpose that is best displayed graphically, aiding at-a-glance comprehension.