

Writing and Revising (Part I)

As they arrive, meet the people in your group for today. Find out their names (and pronunciation) and something about where they come from (country, state, college, neighborhood, major). Work with them on planning (pre-writing) the background and goals section for this case.

Consulting Proposal: Background and Goals Section

Purpose: Demonstrate to the client that you understand the subject matter and the goals of the study well enough that they will trust you to work with them on it.

Audience: The client.

Form: A prose paragraph (or several).

Planning: As your group gathers, do some planning for the background and goals section for the case study we've been discussing. (Don't draft anything yet!)

Writing: Write 2–3 sentences about the background and goals of this study. (Don't revise!)

Revising (Part I)

Principle 1: Put actions in verbs

Verbs are action words: they describe motion, like to explore, to examine, or to observe. Verbs can be turned into nouns, which changes the word from an action to a thing. This is called a nominalization. Nominalizations are nouns that contain a hidden action. There is nothing inherently wrong with nominalizations, but many scientific writers misuse them by using abstract nouns to convey action. This creates a disconnect between structure and meaning — the intended action is no longer found in the verb. **Most readers expect the main action of a clause to be found in a verb.** If you fail to put your intended action in a verb, your reader must work to determine where the action is.

Revision Technique: Underline all verbs in your draft. For each, ask yourself this question: Does this verb capture the action in the sentence?

Surgical techniques for septic peritonitis, a type of contamination within the abdomen, have been subject to different improvements, modifications, and extensions over the years.

Principle 2: Put characters in subjects.

The character is the actor (the entity performing the action). Readers expect the main character in a clause to be found in the subject. Characters can be (and often are) abstract nouns,

Revision Technique: Underline all subjects in your draft. Is the subject the entity performing the action?

The movement in the liquid medium of the bacteria was accomplished by microflagella.

Principle 3: Keep subjects near verbs

The two primary pieces of information a reader looks for are 1) who is the sentence about? and 2) what are they doing? When these two pieces of information are far apart, that usually means one of them isn't arriving until the end of the sentence. This confuses readers, because they can't piece together the whole picture without answers to these questions.

Revision Technique: How far apart are your subjects and verbs? Can you bring them closer together?

Surgical techniques for septic peritonitis, a type of contamination within the abdomen, have been subject to different improvements, modifications, and extensions over the years.

In dogs, there are several important factors, including platelet count, mean platelet volume, platelet distribution width, and platelet crit, that affect coagulation (clotting).

Name: _____

What planning/prewriting techniques did you use today?

Please leave this sheet, your nametag, and your playing card on the tables by the door when you leave. The other sheet is for you to keep; this sheet will not be returned except by request.

Homework 1 (due Monday February 2):

Plan and draft a document of your choice of at least 10 sentences and 100 words as follows:

1. Determine the purpose, audience, and form of your document. Be sure to use a verb when describing the purpose.
2. Spend at least 10 minutes planning (pre-writing) the document. Use a blank sheet of paper to collect and organize your thoughts.
3. Draft your document. Don't revise yet. Print using double-spacing.

A few ideas for documents are

- Tell a story about something in your past.
- Write a letter to a University or elected official about an issue of interest.
- Learn something new about some topic and summarize your findings
- ... anything else that may interest you

You will add to this assignment and turn it in later; please be done with this step by Monday Feb 2.