

Some Suggestions for Revision

Revision means *re-vision*: a re-seeing of the work. Often, it is in revision that the writer first sees the work as a whole, in all its (yet unfulfilled) potential. Revision is not copyediting; instead, it emanates from a deeper understanding of the author's intention. Revision may be as radical as changing the point of view or as simple as removing or changing a line of dialog.

Key questions for revision

Does the piece begin—and end—where it should?

Is the narrator's POV clear? Is it used consistently?

Does each scene earn its place in the narrative? Are scenes fully realized? Are they placed where they should be?

Are characters well developed through block characterization, action, thought, and dialog? Are they believable? Does each character earn his or her place in the story?

Are settings clearly and precisely established? Do the settings further the story?

Are ideas fully realized?

Are transitions logical and fluid?

Are literal facts clear—facts of time, place, and situation?

Do readers know who's who?

Do readers know what's at stake?

Are details unnecessary or excessive? Where are more needed?

Specific questions about language

Is diction consistent? Honest? Exact?

Is the language free of clichés and formulaic expressions?

If you are using metaphors, similes, or other figurative language: does it suit the themes you are dramatizing?

Read your work out loud to answer these questions: are the word choices right? Are the sentences clear and elegant? Is it obvious who is speaking? Are there unintended repetitions or lapses in perspective, POV, or verb tense?