REVISION VERSUS EDITING

Proofreading and editing are the finishing touches on your paper. This step occurs after you have revised for content, and it gives you the opportunity to correct errors in grammar or style, citations, and formatting. It also gives you a chance to review your assignment and writing goals to make sure you have met criteria. To help focus your revision and editing, develop a checklist based on your prompt and your knowledge of disciplinary conventions in your study area. Dependent on the prompt, an appropriate   checklist might be the following:

Answers the Prompt appropriately	✔
Writing style exhibits clarity, concision, and specificity; author uses varied sentence structure and avoids redundancy	✔
Diction (word choice) is excellent; author uses strong action verbs, appropriate (rather than flowery) word choice	✔
There are no grammar, spelling, or mechanical errors	✔
Effectively uses scholarly sources and correct citation	✔

A REVISION STRATEGY: THE REVERSE OUTLINE

Either on a separate sheet of paper or in the margins of your draft, write the focus/main idea of each paragraph. This activity gives you a lot of information, for instance

- If you have difficulty selecting one focus for the paragraph—you may have to split up the paragraph
- If you have multiple paragraphs with the same focus—you may need to delete some paragraphs
- If there is no transition from one idea to the next—you will have to address this problem in revision

BEFORE THE EDITING PHASE: REVISION

Before you go through your paper with a fine-tooth comb, make sure that your essay is carefully organized, supported, and argued. Use the following techniques to ensure that your paper is ready for the final touches:

Look at your prompt again
- Make sure that you have met the assignment's requirements: Double-check length, citation style, number of source, etc.

Read your paper out loud
- Read the paper slowly, making sure that you read each word on the page exactly
- Ask a friend to read your paper to you
- Read your paper backwards, beginning with the final sentence

Bring out the red pen/the merciless editor inside
- Cross out paragraphs or sentences if they do not support your thesis/main idea;
- Reorganize paragraphs, sentences, or sections so that there is a logical flow in your text

EDITING

Once you have decided what is going to stay in your paper, ensure that there are no typos, or other errors that might distract from the content of your argument. Here are some common errors:

SEMI-COLONS and COLONS	Semi-colons are used to join two complete, related sentences. Colons are used to set off a list after an independent clause or a clause that provides a further explanation of something that comes before the colon.
COMMA SPLICES OR RUN-ON SENTENCES	Incorrect: The class is very difficult, I am working hard to improve. Correct: The class is very difficult. I am working hard to improve. Or: The class is very difficult, but I am working hard to improve. Or: The class is very difficult; however, I am working hard to improve.
AVOID VAGUE PRONOUNS (pronouns for which the reference is unclear)	"It" must only be used when it is clear to the audience to what "it" refers: Incorrect: It made her sick. Correct: The chocolate cake was so rich that it made her sick. "This" cannot be used to refer to an entire situation, it must be followed by a word that sums up the reference: Vague: This makes a big difference. Specific: This budget cut will make a big difference.
GENERAL COMMA RULES	Use commas before coordinating conjunctions that join sentences (but, and, so, yet, or, for, nor). Use commas in a list or series. Use a comma after an introductory phrase (In addition, However, etc.). Use commas around parenthetical information (The beautiful view, which was slightly obscured by the trees, lifted our spirits.).