

Checking Your Essay for Coherence

Here's a strategy you can use to revise your essay: checking for essay coherence. After you've finished composing a rough draft and looked at the comments your peers have offered during the peer review workshop, before you type up the final draft, spend some time thinking about how your whole essay comes together.

- ✓ On the most basic level, you'll want to make sure that your essay has a thesis and topic sentences. The thesis and topic sentences are like street signs that enable your readers to navigate their way through your essay.
- ✓ On a more abstract level, you'll want to think about how all of these parts of the essay relate to each other.

Below are steps that you can follow to check for essay coherence. As you complete each step during your revision process, check off the box next to it.

<input type="checkbox"/>	STEP 1: Underline your thesis. Check that your thesis makes an assertion, not simply describes what your essay will address.
<input type="checkbox"/>	STEP 2: Check for paragraph coherence by "nutshelling." Read one paragraph at a time, then in the margins, in a nutshell, write in four words or less each of the paragraph's main point(s). If your paragraph has more than one main point, then you should consider splitting the paragraph into however number of main points that it addresses, <i>i.e.</i> if your paragraph has three main points, revise so that each point has its own paragraph.
<input type="checkbox"/>	STEP 3: Check that each paragraph has an appropriate topic sentence. Your topic sentence should explicitly state the "nutshell," the main point of each of the body paragraphs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	STEP 4: Write down how each body paragraph is related to the thesis. If a paragraph doesn't relate, then you should either delete it or further explain how that paragraph relates to your thesis.
<input type="checkbox"/>	STEP 5: Write down how each body paragraph is linked to the previous paragraph. Check that it follows the previous paragraph. If it doesn't, figure out an appropriate location.
<input type="checkbox"/>	STEP 6: Write down any changes that you are going to make, if any, for each paragraph.