

Revision 5 – Revise by Ear

With the third and fourth revisions done, you can now do the final revision. Take 'Essay 3 – Content Revised' and read it through paying particular attention to those things listed in the checklist below. Your main concern is how it sounds. You're interested in its flow and rhythm. Hopefully, it should read like talk in print, with light effortless prose that glides across the page with a pace and rhythm that holds the reader's attention. You should be able to identify any clumsy sentences or where you think the arguments need to be reorganised, because they seem to deal with the ideas in an illogical order.

The other thing to look for is where you think it might be better to change the pace of the essay in order to make the points more effectively. You may want to speed up or slow down in some sections by varying the length of sentences. Long sentences are very comforting and reassuring. They may be best suited to the development of the core elements of the arguments, which need to be analysed and elaborated carefully. But when you want to be abrupt, to grab the reader's attention with a vivid piece of detail, or an insight that you feel is a key point to get across, use a short sentence – don't let it get drowned in the words that surround it.

Once you've done this, check your version against 'Essay 4 – Revised by ear' to see the changes I have made. Then compare the unrevised essay you used for the first revision with this final form of the essay, so that you can get a clear idea of how much you have improved the essay as a result of these revisions.

Fifth revision

Checklist

1. Does it read well for someone reading it for the first time?
2. Is the pace and rhythm right for the arguments I want to make?