

Activity Type

Reading and writing exercises

Focus

Revising and editing an essay

Aim

To learn the differences between revising and editing and practice techniques to identify problems in the first draft of an essay.

Preparation

Make one copy of the three-page worksheet for each student.

Level

Intermediate (B1-B2)

Time

90 minutes

Introduction

In this revising and editing worksheet, students learn the differences between revising and editing. The students then use revising and editing techniques to identify problems in the first draft of an essay.

Procedure

Give each student a copy of the three-page worksheet.

Students begin by reading information about revising and editing.

The students then use the reverse outlining technique to identify needed revisions in an essay first draft.

Exercise A - Answer key

Thesis statement: ?

1. Topic sentence: 2 stand out causes
 - a. Supporting idea: state of economy
 - i. Detail: recessions = less demand
 - ii. Detail: protracted recession = financial erosion
 - b. Supporting idea: social inequality
 - i. Detail: concentrated economic growth = uneven wealth distribution
 - ii. Detail: ?
2. Topic sentence: ?
 - a. Supporting idea: vulnerable to illness
 - i. Detail: HIV/AIDS and TB widespread in developing countries
 - ii. Detail: most deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa
 - b. Supporting idea: increased crime
 - i. Detail: joblessness = people turn to crime
 - ii. Detail: ?

After creating the reverse outline, students review it to make notes about necessary revisions.

Exercise B - Possible answers

The reverse outline shows that the essay is missing some key components such as a thesis statement, a topic sentence and some supporting ideas are not sufficiently developed with detail. The essay could improve coherence and cohesion by making more use of sentence connectors and transitions. For example, the second sentence in the introduction could start with 'In fact' and the third sentence with 'However'.

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Procedure continued

In the final exercise, students read another version of a body paragraph from the essay. The students scan it twice, once to identify errors with grammar and punctuation, and once for vocabulary use and spelling. The students then fix the errors by re-writing the paragraph.

Exercise C - Answer key

Poverty, in its more extreme (1) from, has very negative impacts on (2) individual and societies. Perhaps the most serious consequence of poverty is being more vulnerable to serious illness. This is particularly true in less developed countries. (3) While diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS are not considered public health issues in wealthier countries. They are widespread in poorer (4) region. For example, about 750,000 people died of HIV/AIDS and 400,000 of malaria last year, with most deaths occurring in Sub-Saharan (5) africa. The other effect of poverty is increased crime. Joblessness is one of the main reasons why some engage in criminal activity. This is mainly because (6) lazy people need (7) a alternative source of income for survival. In turn, increased crime (8) lead to more violence in communities along with other (9) socail problems such (10) illicit drug use.

1. Spelling
2. Plural form
3. Sentence structure – fragment
4. Plural form
5. Capitalisation
6. Word choice
7. Word form
8. Grammar – subject-verb agreement
9. Spelling
10. Missing word

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Procedure continued

Complete revised and edited essay.

In recent decades, the world has made significant progress in reducing poverty. In fact, global poverty has been halved in the past twenty years. However, over 20% of the world's population still lives on less than three dollars per day and struggles to survive.

Thus, understanding why the problem persists is important. This essay will outline some of the main causes and effects of poverty. There are many causes of poverty, but perhaps two stand out. One of the more obvious causes of poverty is the state of the economy. When economies contract and enter recessions, there is less demand for goods and services, which can mean job losses or reduced earnings for a large percentage of the population. In many cases, these negative conditions are only temporary, and most people are able to survive and maintain a reasonable standard of living. However, if an economic downturn is protracted, it can shift many people below the poverty line as their finances erode. Another cause of poverty is social inequality. It is possible for poverty levels to increase even in a healthy economy. This happens when economic growth is concentrated in certain industries and companies, resulting in an uneven distribution of wealth. The result is a smaller number of people becoming more prosperous and a larger number of people with a declining standard of living. In fact, the US has seen an increase in poverty during the 21st century as a consequence of both recession and growing inequality.

Poverty, in its more extreme form, has very negative impacts on individuals and societies. Perhaps the most serious consequence of poverty is being more vulnerable to serious illness. This is particularly true in less developed countries. While diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS are not considered public health issues in wealthier countries, they are widespread in poorer regions. For example, about 750,000 people died of HIV/AIDS and 400,000 of malaria last year, with most deaths occurring in Sub-Saharan Africa. The other effect of poverty is increased crime. Joblessness is one of the main reasons why some engage in criminal activity. This is mainly because disadvantaged people need an alternative source of income for survival. In turn, increased crime leads to more violence in communities along with other social problems such as illicit drug use.

In conclusion, several factors contribute to the existence of poverty and the impacts can be grave. For example, poverty can be due to the health of the economy and social marginalization, and this results in communities that are unhealthier and less secure. Thus, while poverty is on the decline, it is still pervasive and requires urgent attention.

A Quick Guide to Revising and Editing

When the first draft of your essay is complete, spend time revising and editing it. Revising and editing are often thought to be the same, but there are some key differences between them.

Revising involves looking at an essay in a more general way. Try to find strengths and weaknesses by asking questions like these:

- Has the essay directly responded to the essay question?
- Is the writing cohesive and coherent?
- Are all ideas fully developed and relevant?

One effective technique to help you revise is to create a reverse outline of your essay by turning the essay back into an outline. This allows you to identify your thesis statement, topic sentences, supporting ideas and details. If anything appears to be missing or out of place, this shows you that some important revisions are needed.

Editing requires looking at an essay after the revision. It is focused at the sentence level. It should answer these questions:

- Are punctuation and capitalisation correct?
- Are spelling and word choice correct and accurate?
- Are grammar and sentence structure correct?



A. Read the essay first draft below. On the next page, create a reverse outline to reveal any broad problems with the essay.

In recent decades, the world has made significant progress in reducing poverty. Global poverty has been halved in the past twenty years. Over 20% of the world's population still lives on less than three dollars per day and struggles to survive. Thus, understanding why the problem persists is important.

There are many causes of poverty, but perhaps two stand out. One of the more obvious causes of poverty is the state of the economy. When economies contract and enter recessions, there is less demand for goods and services, which can mean job losses or reduced earnings for a large percentage of the population. In many cases, these negative conditions are only temporary, and most people are able to survive and maintain a reasonable standard of living. If an economic downturn is protracted, it can shift many people below the poverty line as their finances erode. Another cause of poverty is social inequality. It is possible for poverty levels to increase even in a healthy economy. This happens when economic growth is concentrated in certain industries and companies, resulting in an uneven distribution of wealth.

Perhaps the most serious consequence of poverty is being more vulnerable to serious illness. This is particularly true in less developed countries. While diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS are not considered public health issues in wealthier countries, they are widespread in poorer regions. About 750,000 people died of HIV/AIDS and 400,000 of malaria last year, with most deaths occurring in Sub-Saharan Africa. The other effect of poverty is increased crime. Joblessness is one of the main reasons why some engage in criminal activity.

In conclusion, several factors contribute to the existence of poverty and the impacts can be grave. For example, poverty can be due to the health of the economy and social marginalization, and this results in communities that are unhealthier and less secure. Thus, while poverty is on the decline, it is still pervasive and requires urgent attention.

Thesis statement:

1. Topic sentence:

a. Supporting idea:

i. Detail:

ii. Detail:

b. Supporting idea:

i. Detail:

ii. Detail:

2. Topic sentence:

a. Supporting idea:

i. Detail:

ii. Detail:

b. Supporting idea:

i. Detail:

ii. Detail:

B. In the space below, write notes that summarise the revisions the essay needs based on the reverse outline. At this stage, do not pay any attention to sentence level issues such as spelling and grammar.

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C. Read another version of a body paragraph from the essay. Scan it twice, once for grammar and punctuation, and once for vocabulary use and spelling. During each scan, underline any errors you find. Afterwards, rewrite the paragraph by fixing all the identified errors.

Poverty, in its more extreme form, has very negative impacts on individual and societies. Perhaps the most serious consequence of poverty is being more vulnerable to serious illness. This is particularly true in less developed countries. While diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS are not considered public health issues in wealthier countries. They are widespread in poorer regions. For example, about 750,000 people died of HIV/AIDS and 400,000 of malaria last year, with most deaths occurring in Sub-Saharan Africa. The other effect of poverty is increased crime. Joblessness is one of the main reasons why some engage in criminal activity. This is mainly because lazy people need an alternative source of income for survival. In turn, increased crime leads to more violence in communities along with other social problems such as illicit drug use.

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