

English 1301

Essay of Revision: Self-Analysis

Any new approach, any new way of seeing the world or one's work, is what we're after. That's the hallmark of creation, after all. If we only teach our certainties, then we might as well just record our lofty thoughts and prescriptions and hit "play" at the beginning of the term. —Robin Hemley

Introduction

Often one of the hardest things to do in writing is to look back at a work and find ways to take a different approach to it. It is important that we fix our errors and spruce up the details of sentences and mechanical issues; however, getting to true revision, the point where you really re-see your work in a clearer, more crystallized way, is tough but primary.

Alan Ziegler notes in *The Writing Workshop* that looking back on previously published pieces of writing is often difficult; "faults jump out . . . awkward sentences demand to be reshaped, a word looks embarrassingly out of place . . . an image falls flat, or a hole exists which I could now fix easily." "But," he continues, "it is these very errors that serve as indications that I have become a better writer."

The Writing Task

For this assignment, you will write *an essay about* what you like and what you'd change in the [MLA Format Assignment](#) we wrote in the course, as well as ways you'd capitalize on your successes there. You may imagine you were going to turn it into a longer essay. In short, you will analyze your own writing and work to identify things that work and places and ways you can strengthen it even more.

Do not revise the essay. Instead, analyze it and discuss what you would do if you were going to revise.

I expect you to quote from your original essay, point out specific paragraphs or sections, and talk about how the quote or section it represents works now, as well as how the changes you suggest making will improve it. I also expect to see analysis and discussion of moments that work well. How do they contribute to the strengths of the essay? Could you extend them or use the techniques elsewhere?

Remember, this too, should be a well-developed essay. It must discuss these things:

- What strengths does your essay have?
- What is a specific example of that?
- Why is it a strength, how does it add to the essay, or how could it be used elsewhere in the essay?

- What improvements can be made to your essay?
- What is a specific example of that?
- Why does it need improvement?
- How might it be strengthened? Discuss and give a specific example.
- How will that improve it?

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