Even the best writers can improve their work by reviewing and improving their words and sentences. In this exercise you will review your essay to identify places where you can improve the language and style of your writing.

When writers use effective word choices and an appropriate writing style for the occasion, they can express their ideas more clearly and persuasively to readers.

Select one of the techniques below to assess your essay draft and begin planning your revision. If time allows, try more than one.

**Step 1: Read your text aloud.**

* Listen for the overall flow of ideas from one paragraph or sentence to the next.
* Listen for sentence run-ons and fragments.
* Listen for slang, abbreviations, and contractions.

Mark your essay when you find these or other problems that cause you to slow down or pause. You can return later to clean these areas up.

**Step 2: Read your text backwards.**

* Read each sentence separately, starting with the last sentence, analyzing the sentence-level language and word choices, rather than the larger ideas.
* Look for sentence run-ons and fragments.
* Look for slang, abbreviations, and contractions.
* Look for errors in grammar and punctuation.

Mark your essay where you find errors or poor word choices. You can return later to rewrite those portions.

**Step 3: Roleplay with a Peer.**

Partner with a classmate to role-play the identity of an audience member who has an alternative or opposing viewpoint.

* Each partner will take a turn reading.
* As you listen, you may hear words or phrases that the audience who holds a different point of view might find off-putting, impolite, or too casual for the occasion.
* The audience can also ask questions where he or she finds your meaning unclear, such as “who are you talking about here?” or “what do you mean by ‘it’?”

Mark your essay where your partner provides input or where you find other errors or poor word choices. You can return later to rewrite those portions.