Guidelines for revising text


1 Read through the text asking yourself:
   • Who is the text for?

2 Read through the text again, but this time ask yourself:
   • What changes do I need to make to help the reader?
   • How can I make the text easier to follow?

3 To make these changes you may need:
   • to make big or global changes (e.g. rewrite sections); or
   • to make small or minor text changes (e.g. change the original text slightly).

You will need to decide whether you are going to focus first on global changes or first on text changes.

4 Global changes you might like to consider are:
   • re-sequencing parts of the text
   • rewriting sections in simpler prose
   • adding examples
   • changing examples for better ones
   • deleting parts that seem confusing.

5 Text changes you might like to consider are:
   • using simpler wording
   • using shorter sentences
   • using shorter paragraphs
   • using active rather than passive tenses
   • substituting positives for negatives
   • writing sequences in order
   • spacing numbered sequences or lists down the page (as here).
6 Keep reading through the revised text from start to finish to see if you want to make any more global changes.

7 Repeat this whole procedure on the revised text some time after making your initial revisions (say twenty-four hours), and do this without looking back at the original text.

8 Repeat stage 7 several times, but draw the line eventually!