

Revising for organization within a section exercise

Find a five to eight paragraph passage in need of reorganization. This passage could be from your own writing or someone else's, and could be any sort of scientific writing—a book chapter, a review, a discussion from a primary paper, a background section of a proposal, etc.

Reverse outline the passage, following these instructions and referring to the examples analyzed above for ideas on how to summarize and group paragraphs, reflecting on each step as you go:

Write a summary of each paragraph

- 1) Why were certain paragraphs more difficult to summarize than others? How similar were the summaries to one another? How will this inform your revision?

Determine which sentences belong in which paragraphs and determine the most logical order of sentences within paragraphs

- 2) How did you make these decisions? For which sentences was it difficult to find an appropriate paragraph? What do you plan to do with these sentences in your revision?

Revise the passage based on the previous steps. In addition to re-ordering sentences, delete sentences that are redundant and identify paragraphs that need further evidence or explanation. Finally, arrange paragraphs in a logical order.

- 3) How did you decide how to order the paragraphs? For which paragraphs was it difficult to determine the ideal position? How will your observations as you made these decisions affect later revisions?
- 4) Reflect on the whole revision process. Explain the concrete aspects of how you did it (e.g. did you compose a new outline? Did you make notes in the margins of the draft? Did you draw connectors or color code?). Which steps were easiest and which were most challenging? How did it improve your draft? How likely are you to use it again? Why?

Turn in:

- The original passage (with citation if it's published)
- Your summaries of the paragraphs and notes on how you determined sentence order
- Your answers to questions 1-4
- Your revision of the passage (no need to go beyond organization in your revision; i.e., don't rewrite sentences)