Levels of Revision:

- **The Document**: Revision and rewriting take place on many levels. The first step of revision is *not* to edit the document line-by-line for “errors,” but rather to look at the document as a whole in order to explore the main ideas, patterns, and structures.

- **The Paragraph**: What is this paragraph proving? How is evidence used? Is my evidence as effective as it could be? Is my analysis strong enough? Should I add to it or remove parts of it? How does this paragraph relate to my main idea?

- **The Sentence**: How does this sentence relate to my main idea and to my paper as a whole? Does this sentence advance or explore my main idea? If not, is it necessary? Could this sentence be clearer or more effective? Am I being redundant? Could I combine sentences? Does this sentence need more explanation?

- **The Word**: Is this particular word consistent with the tone of my paper? Does this word need defining for my audience (such as discourse specific words or jargon)? What other definitions does this word have?

Strategies for Revision:

- **Addition**: Select key ideas to explore further (e.g., use examples or draw on other sources to illustrate your point). Expanding and adding to your document has the potential to increase the detail of your writing, which often makes the document more interesting.

- **Subtraction**: If some part of your paper is unnecessary (i.e., does not contribute directly to your paper’s argument), then perhaps it should be taken out or changed. Tangential information may be interesting, but it might not contribute to your overall point.

- **Substitution**: Instead of cutting sections out completely, consider what you might replace them with that would make it clearer, more concise, or more illustrative. Perhaps you need additional evidence or a statement that reconnects the paragraph to your thesis.

- **Re-Ordering**: Notice how the paper is arranged or organized. Part of the writer’s purpose is to keep the reader interested. Ask yourself: What should come first? Does the ordering make sense? You might try writing an outline of your existing paper to see what you’ve created.

- **Revising for Discovery**: Revising for discovery may be helpful in expanding the content of an early draft. In every sentence, there is the potential for discovery and rediscovery, expansion or contraction. It is also helpful as a safeguard: you may remember something that you forgot to write, or you may discover something new that could strengthen your argument. This strategy may be useful if you are getting bored with the material or have gotten to a point where further revision seems impossible. This strategy is most appropriate for writers who are still early in the process of creating a document.

- **Revising for Audience**: Ask yourself what your audience expects and values. Here are some questions to consider: How familiar with the material is my audience? How much explanation is required? Is there a lot of jargon that would make it difficult for a layperson to understand? What questions might the reader ask? What are the expectations in my writing community (e.g., how does APA, MLA, or Chicago influence my writing style)?

- **Revising for Voice**: When revising for voice, read your paper several times in order to identify the tone of the piece. It may be helpful to have it read aloud by yourself or a friend. What kind of voice do you hear? Is the language formal or informal? Is it chatty or serious? Is the voice of your paper appropriate to the content and to your audience? Does it sound authentic: does it sound like you?