The Magic Seven

What to check for in Editing and Revising a Draft

Below are seven tips to help you edit and revise your draft.

1. Change unnecessary passive voice (unless required as a formality in your program) to the active voice in order to emphasize who does what.
   - Original: The crime was committed and the police investigation began.
   - Revision: The suspect committed the crime and the police investigation began.

2. Omit unnecessary expletive constructions and don’t replace them.
   - Original: It is a fact that the global climate is changing.
     - Revision: The global climate is changing.
   - Original: There is evidence that the athlete is taking banned substances.
     - Revision: Evidence shows that the athlete is taking banned substances.

3. Omit deadwood and don’t replace it. (Deadwood is unnecessary words, phrases or exposition).
   - Original: Due to the fact that we owe taxes, we won’t go on holiday.
     - Revision: Because we owe taxes, we won’t go on holiday.

4. Avoid overuse or misuse of vague nouns; use specific nouns instead.
   - Original: People think that the Prime Minister is doing a good job.
     - Revision: Canadians think the Prime Minister is doing a good job.

5. Omit unnecessary relative clauses.
   - Original: The car that was in the accident was uninsured.
     - Revision: The car in the accident was uninsured.

6. Avoid unnecessary adjectives and adverbs.
   - Original: They are truly interested in Canadian comedy.
     - Revision: They are interested in Canadian comedy.
7. Use inclusive rather than exclusive language.
   - Original: Mankind has much to learn about peacemaking.
     Revision: Humankind has much to learn about peacemaking.

Resources
Adapted from the UBC Writing Centre and The Canadian Writer’s Handbook by Ramona Montagne and Judy Brown.