Checklist for text revision and editing

Once you’ve finished the first draft of your text, it’s time for revision. This process can be exhausting if you don’t approach it with a proper structure in mind. Hence, we’ve prepared a checklist for you to use as a guideline when revising your text.

**Step one: Large-scale text revision**

1. **Crucial statements**
   - Does your introduction clearly state the aim of the experiment (the research question)?
   - Is the research question adequately addressed in the discussion?

2. **Information/Data**

   Are your information and data...
   - ... complete?
   - ... correct?
   - ... relevant to the research question and/or the topic?
   - ... attributed to the appropriate source?
   - ... precise and as detailed as necessary?
   - ... presented clearly and unambiguously, with a competent reader in mind?
   - ... presented graphically (with accompanying text) where needed/possible?

3. **Text structure**

   - Does the text follow the appropriate structure (IMRaD)?
   - Are the statements arranged in a reader-friendly way, i.e. by ascending complexity/level of detail?
   - Do the headers and titles facilitate reading comprehension?

4. **Graphic elements**

   - Are the graphs, tables and figures named appropriately?
   - Are the relevant statistical data (errors, uncertainties) represented clearly?
   - Are the variables, units and axes named appropriately?
   - Are the numerical data presented precisely and uniformly?

5. **Formatting**

   - Does the text fulfil the given formatting guidelines?
   - Does the text look appealing and legible?
   - Do the graphic elements fit in neatly and are they legible?
   - Is the document saved in the appropriate format and titled appropriately?

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1 IMRaD stands for *Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results and Discussion*, and poses the most prominent text scheme in the modern natural sciences.
Step two: Section-by-section editing

1. In every large section (e.g. introduction, discussion etc.)...
   - Are the paragraphs arranged in a logical way?
   - Is there an analytical/logical step missing?
   - Could the text benefit from a different paragraph structure (joining paragraphs together, dividing an existing paragraph)?
   - Are any paragraphs redundant, unnecessary or out of place?
   - Is the Works Cited section appropriately structured?
   - If necessary, is an appendix and/or an abstract included?

2. In every paragraph...
   - Are the sentences arranged in a logical way?
   - Are the sentences appropriately linked?
   - Are any sentences redundant or unnecessary?

3. Sentence structure
   - Are the sentences phrased clearly and unambiguously?
   - Are the sentences easy to understand and reader-friendly?

4. Diction
   - Have you used the most precise words and expressions?
   - Can any words or modifiers be skipped without altering the quality of the statement?
   - Is the language formal and appropriate for the topic?
   - Are special terms defined precisely and sufficiently?

Literature:
Haffmann, Nora: Überarbeiten – mehr als Korrigieren. In: Herfurth, Sarah; Kaufholz-Soldat, Eva (Hrsg.): Schreiben in den MINT-Fächern. (i. Dr.).

Concept: Schreiblabor der Universität Bielefeld. Adapted and extended by the Writing Center of Goethe University Frankfurt and the Writing Center am Riedberg.