



Higher Order Concerns (HOCs) and Lower Order Concerns (LOCs)

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When you are revising your papers, not every element of your work should have equal priority. The most important parts of your paper, often called "Higher Order Concerns (HOCs)," are the "big picture" elements such as thesis or focus, audience and purpose, organization, and development. After you have addressed these important elements, you can then turn your attention to the "Lower Order Concerns (LOCs)," such as sentence structure and grammar.

Some HOCs

Thesis or focus:

- Does the paper have a central thesis?
- Can you, if asked, offer a one-sentence explanation or summary of what the paper is about?
- Ask someone to read the first paragraph or two and tell you what he or she thinks the paper will discuss.

Audience and purpose:

- Do you have an appropriate audience in mind? Can you describe them?
- Do you have a clear purpose for the paper? What is it intended to do or accomplish?
- Why would someone want to read this paper?
- Does the purpose match the assignment?

Organization:

- Does the paper progress in an organized, logical way?
- Go through the paper and jot down notes on the topics of the various paragraphs. Look at this list and see if you can think of a better organization.
- Make a brief outline. Does the organization make sense? Should any part be moved to another part?
- Ask someone to read the paper. At the end of each paragraph, ask the person to forecast where the paper is headed. If the paper goes in a direction other than the one forecasted by the reader, is there a good reason, or do you need to rewrite something there?

Development:

- Are there places in the paper where more details, examples, or specifics are needed?
 - Do any paragraphs seem much shorter and in need of more material than others? (For more help, see our handout on paragraphing at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_pgrph.html.)
 - Ask someone to read the paper and comment if something is unclear and needs more description, explanation, or support.
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Some LOCs

Sentence structure, punctuation, word choice, spelling

- Are there a few problems that frequently occur? Keep a list of problems that recur and check for those.
- Read the paper aloud watching and listening for anything that sounds incorrect.
- Ask yourself why you put punctuation marks in certain places. Do you need to check any punctuation rules? (For more help see our handouts on punctuation at

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/index.html>.)

- For possible spelling errors, proofread backwards, from the end of a line to the beginning.

The following information must remain intact on every handout printed for distribution.

This page is located at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/general/gl_hocloc.html

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