Editing vs. Revising

What does it mean to Edit?

- The writer focuses on sentence level issues, addressing problems with:
  - Spelling
  - Grammar
  - Punctuation
  - Word choice
  - Sentence Structure
- The writer keeps the majority of the paper the same, merely trying to go through and “fix” overlooked mistakes.

Pro tip:
Try reading your paper backwards, starting with the last sentence and moving up from there. Doing so will force you to focus on only one sentence at a time, meaning you’ll be more likely to catch the small issues that can sometimes be overlooked when we read normally.

What does it mean to Revise?

- The writer deals with the paper as a whole, considering overall strengths and weaknesses and focusing on improving elements like:
  - Argumentative strategies
  - Thesis strength
  - Focus
  - Organization
  - Clarity
  - Supporting points
  - Evidence
  - Voice
- The purpose of revision is to ask critical questions about the writing in order to expand ideas and challenge assumptions in order to strengthen the argument on a large scale.

Pro tip:
You should always revise before you decide to edit. The reason is if you choose to edit first, you may end up wasting a lot of time fixing a bunch of small issues in a paragraph, but then end up deleting that paragraph entirely in the revision stage because you find it off-topic. Starting with the revision process, on the other hand, allows you to take care of the biggest problems first so that your time spent editing afterward will make more of a lasting impact.
Try It!

Directions:

1. Circle or underline each mistake you find in the paragraph.
2. Next, identify each mistake as needing a revision (mark it R) or editing (mark it E) or both (mark it R/E)
3. What sort of things in this paragraph need revision as opposed to editing?

Thanksgiving Dinner

My family looks foreward to Thanksgiving dinner every year. Not just because we all get together but because dinner is so great. The best cooks’ in the family work on it, starting early in the morning. Smells come out of the kitchen all day. By the time dinner rolls around, we’re all as hungry as a bear. There are ten places set at the table that has been extended, and the best china is used. There are even lit candles in nice candel holders. The food is wonderful. The turkey is brown in color and the gravy smells really good. The stuffing is a special one made by my mom. It tastes good to and is pretty warm from the oven. We have lots of potatos to go with it. With additional items like cranberries and green beans to eat, we get full. Then their’s desert. Pumpkin pie and pecan pie with whipped cream. When we’re all finished, we go into the den and watch football, which is on pretty loud. You can here it all over the house. And that’s our Thanksgiving dinner!