



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

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When you are revising your papers, there are priorities of concerns in choosing what to look for and work on. Begin with the Higher Order Concerns, the HOCs, which are aspects of the writing most responsible for the quality of the paper. Save the Lower Order Concerns, the LOCs, for the last draft, when you are ready to look closely at specific points of grammar and mechanics. If you want help with the HOCs and LOCs, come to the writing lab and talk with a tutor.

## 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 about 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?
  - 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 to see and hear if there are any missing or wrong words or other errors that you can spot.
  - Ask yourself why you put punctuation marks in certain places. Do you need to check any punctuation rules?
  - For possible spelling errors, proofread backwards, from the end of a line to the beginning.
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