

## RATIOCINATION

### 1. Circle the "to be" verbs.

- Am
  - Is
  - Was
  - Were
  - Are
  - Be
  - Being
  - Been
  - Contractions such as: isn't, aren't, weren't, ain't (lol), etc.
- Eliminate half of your "to be" verbs.

#### Revision Strategies

- Leave the "to be" verb whenever changing it would NOT improve the piece.
- Improve the composition by replacing the "to be" verbs with active verbs which have more impact and help show not tell
- If the "to be" verb is a clue to the passive construction:
  - Change it to active to improve the sentence.
  - Leave it if you want to emphasize the complement.
  - This construction may provide a clue to a generally weak sentence that needs to be repaired. What did you intend to say? Write that down.

### 2. Make a wavy line under all repeated words.



#### Revision Strategies

- Leave the repeated word for emphasis.
- Leave the repeated word for continuity and flow.
- Leave the repeated word for parallelism.
- Leave the repeated word for function.
- Omit or exchange the repeated word when the word choice is careless.
- Omit or change the repeated word when it is homonym or a homophone.  
Example: She has a run in her stocking and just run home.
- Do not include articles (a, an, the).

### 3. Underline every sentence with a color pen, breaking the line at the end of each sentence.

#### Revision Strategies

- When all sentences are the same length, shorten or lengthen some of them.
- When the sentences are short and choppy, use sentence combining.
- When sentences are stringy, fix them by using main and dependent clauses, main clauses in a series, or a combination of coordination and subordination.

\* The key is VARIETY!

4. [Bracket] sentence beginnings by marking the first word or phrase.

**Revision Strategies**

- A. If you have the same word or words, experiment with a variety of beginnings.
- B. This may overlap codes for other problems such as choppy sentences or repeated words.



5. Draw an arrow from the subject (noun) to the predicate (verb).

**Revision Strategies**

- A. If you find a fragment, repair it.
- B. Look for problems regarding subject/verb agreement.
- C. Look for colloquial and dialectical issues.
- D. Use grammar handbooks as reference tools when questioning subject/verb agreement.

6. Place a box around clichés (an overused expression/phrase).

**Revision Strategies**

- A. Try to express the idea in a fresh or more concise way.
- B. If it is used to characterize or to represent an example, leave it.

7. Mark out the all the vague "bad words" such as:



**Revision Strategies**

- A. If it is an adjective (the very thought), it can stay.
- B. If it is an adverb (very pretty), replace it with a more precise adverb or adverbial phrase.

8. Mark all forms of the verb get (get, got, or gotten) with a check



**Revision Strategies**

- A. Use the dictionary and/or a thesaurus as cross reference tools. Words in the thesaurus may not necessarily work as replacements. Carefully consider definitions of replacement word choices.
- B. Replace with words that express your intended meaning more specifically.

9. Place a triangle around the words



**Revision Strategies**

- A. Examine the referent. If it is precise, leave the word "it", "them", or "they".
- B. If no precise referent exists, then replace "it", "them", or "they" with a more precise noun.