SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1 **Discuss the value of careful revision, and describe the tasks involved in evaluating your first drafts and the work of other writers.** Revision is an essential aspect of completing messages because it can nearly always make your first drafts tighter, clearer, and more compelling. Revision consists of three main tasks: (1) evaluating content, organization, and tone; (2) reviewing for readability; and (3) editing for clarity and conciseness. After you revise your message, complete it by using design elements effectively, proofreading to ensure quality, and distributing it to your audience.

When asked to evaluate, edit, or revise someone else's work, recognize the dual responsibility that doing so entails: remember that your job is to help the other writer succeed at his or her task, and make sure you understand the writer's intent.

2 **List four techniques you can use to improve the readability of your messages.** Four techniques that improve readability are varying sentence length, keeping paragraphs short, using lists and bullets, and adding headings and subheadings. Varying sentence length helps make your writing more dynamic while emphasizing the most important points. Paragraphs are usually best kept short to make it easier for readers to consume information in manageable chunks. Lists and bullets are effective devices for delineating sets of items, steps, or other collections of related information. Headings and subheadings organize your message, call attention to important information, and help readers make connections between related pieces of information.

3 **Describe the steps you can take to improve the clarity of your writing, and give four tips on making your writing more concise.** As you work to clarify your messages, (1) break up overly long sentences, (2) rewrite hedging sentences, (3) impose parallelism, (4) correct dangling modifiers, (5) reword long noun sequences, (6) replace camouflaged verbs, (7) clarify sentence structure, and (8) clarify awkward references. To make messages more concise, include only necessary material and write uncluttered sentences by (1) deleting unnecessary words and phrases, (2) shortening overly long words and phrases, (3) eliminating redundancies, and (4) recasting sentences that begin with "It is" and "There are."

4 **Identify four software tools that can help you revise messages, and explain the risks of using them.** Software tools that can help with revision include a spell checker, a thesaurus, a grammar checker, and style checker. Although these tools can be quite helpful, writers need to remember that the tools aren't foolproof, and writers shouldn't count on them without verifying their suggestions.

5 **List four principles of effective design, and explain the role of major design elements in document readability.** Four key principles of effective design are consistency, balance, restraint, and detail. Major design elements for documents include white space, margins and justification, typefaces, and type styles. White space provides contrast and balance. Margins define the space around the text and contribute to the amount of white space. Typefaces influence the tone of the message. Type styles—boldface, italics, and underlining— provide contrast or emphasis. When selecting and applying design elements, be consistent throughout your document; balance text, art, and white space; show restraint in the number of elements you use; and pay attention to every detail.

6 **Explain the importance of proofreading, and give six tips for successful proofreading.** When proofreading the final version of your document, always keep an eye out for errors in grammar, usage, and punctuation. In addition, watch for spelling errors and typos. Make sure that nothing is missing and no extraneous elements are included.

7 **Discuss the most important issues to consider when distributing your messages.** Consider cost, convenience, time, security, and privacy when choosing the method to distribute your messages. Always consider security and privacy issues before distributing messages that contain sensitive or confidential information.

KEY TERMS

descriptive headings Headings that simply identify a topic

heading A brief title that tells readers about the content of the section that follows

informative headings Headings that guide readers to think in a certain way about the topic

multimedia document Electronic document that contains a combination of text, graphics, photographs, audio, animation, video, and interactivity

sans serif typefaces Typefaces whose letters lack serifs: typeface

serif typefaces Typefaces with small crosslines (called serifs) at the ends of letter strokes: typeface

subheadings Titles that are subordinate to headings, indicating subsections with a major section

type style Any modification that lends contrast or emphasis to type, including boldface, italic, underlining, color, and other highlighting and decorative styles

typeface The physical design of letters, numbers, and other text characters

white space Space (of any color) in a document or screen that doesn't contain any text or artwork

TABLE 5.4 Proofreading Tips

Look for Writing and Typing Errors

- ☑ Typographical mistakes
- ☑ Misspelled words
- ☑ Grammatical errors
- ☑ Punctuation mistakes

Look for Design and Layout Errors

- ☑ Violation of company standards
- ☑ Page or screen layout errors (such as incorrect margins and column formatting)
- ☑ Clumsy page breaks or line breaks
- ☑ Inconsistent font usage (such as with headings and subheadings)
- ☑ Alignment problems (columns, headers, footers, and graphics)
- ☑ Missing or incorrect page and section numbers
- ☑ Missing or incorrect page headers or footers
- ☑ Missing or incorrect URLs, email addresses, or other contact information
- ☑ Missing or incorrect photos and other graphical elements
- ☑ Missing or incorrect source notes, copyright notices, or other reference items

Look for Production Errors

- ☑ Printing problems
- ☑ Browser compatibility problems
- ☑ Incorrect or missing tags on blog posts

Evaluating your content, organization, and tone

First, evaluate the content of your message to make sure it is accurate, relevant to audience's needs, and complete.

Second, review your organization by asking these questions:

- Are all your points covered in the most logical and convincing order?
- Do the most important ideas receive the most space and greatest emphasis?
- Are any points repeated unnecessarily?
- Are details grouped together logically, or are some still scattered through the document?

Third, consider whether you have achieved the right tone for your audience.

Evaluating, editing, and revising the work of others

Make sure you understand the writer's intent before you start to edit. Ask yourself these questions:

- What is the purpose of this document?
- Who is the target audience?
- What information does the audience need?
- Does the document provide this information in a well-organized way?
- Does the writing demonstrate the "you" attitude toward the audience?
- Is the tone appropriate for the audience?
- Can the readability be improved?
- Is the writing clear?
- Is the writing as concise as it could be?
- Does the design support the message?

Checklist for revising business messages

A. Evaluate content, organization, style, and tone.

- Make sure the information is accurate, relevant, and sufficient.
- Check that all necessary points appear in logical order.
- Verify that you present enough support to make the main idea convincing and interesting.
- Be sure the beginning and end are effective.
- Make sure you've achieved the right tone.

B. Review for readability.

- Consider using a readability index but be sure to interpret the answer carefully.
- Use a mix of short and long sentences.
- Keep paragraphs short.
- Use bulleted and numbered lists to emphasize key points.
- Make the document easy to scan with headings and subheadings.

C. Edit for clarity.

- Break up overly long sentences and rewrite hedging sentences.
- Impose parallelism to simplify reading.
- Correct dangling modifiers.
- Reword long noun sequences and replace camouflaged verbs.
- Clarify sentence structure and awkward references.

D. Edit for conciseness.

- Delete unnecessary words and phrases.
- Shorten long words and phrases.
- Eliminate redundancies.
- Rewrite sentences that start with "It is" or "There are."