

The Writing Process

Writing is a process that is best accomplished in steps. Even the most experienced writers do not expect to produce a flawless paper on the first draft. By planning ahead and completing the following steps slowly and thoughtfully, you can create a quality paper that fulfills your assignment and reflects your voice/style.

1. Generate Ideas/Brainstorming

- Read through your assignment directions to completely understand the requirements, audience, and goals of the paper. Will you be presenting research, arguing a point, comparing pieces of literature, and/or stating a personal opinion?
- Gather all of the necessary information you will need to write your paper. This may include your textbook, assigned readings, class notes, and/or outside research.
- Begin to jot down ideas related to the topic. Focus on getting your ideas on paper.
- Ask yourself questions:
What is the topic? Who is this important to? When or where is this problem occurring? How or why should the audience be aware of this topic?

2. Organize Ideas and Write 1st Draft

- Review your ideas and identify connections or patterns.
- Develop a tentative thesis – a statement that indicates your main point. It will include your topic and the claim you are making about that topic.
- Organize your ideas visually on paper using an informal outline or cluster/bubble technique.
- Determine if you have enough evidence to support your thesis. If not, do the research!
- Begin drafting body paragraphs with topic sentences and supporting points. Do not worry about proofreading for grammar or punctuation errors. Rather, focus on writing clear and complete sentences.
- Draft introductory and concluding paragraphs.

The Writing Center

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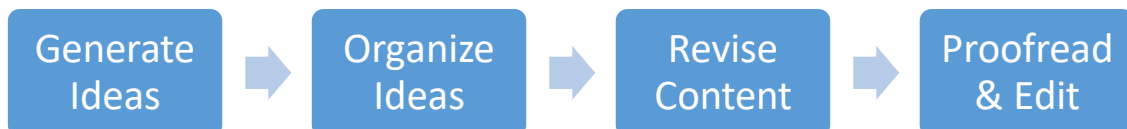
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3. Revise

- Read through your draft. Ask yourself:
Have I included all of the necessary information listed in the assignment directions?
Are my thoughts presented in a logical sequence?
Have I supported my thesis with credible evidence?
Did I select appropriate vocabulary and terms for my topic?
When I summarized, paraphrased, or quoted information from sources, have I cited the source in the proper format (MLA or APA)?
- Make changes as needed to the content of your draft.

4. Proofread and Edit

- Set aside your paper for a while (preferably a day or two) before you proofread, so that you can look at your writing with a fresh eye.
- Read your draft carefully and look for errors – missing words, incorrect punctuation, and grammar mistakes.
- Be sure to create a Works Cited (MLA format) or References (APA format) page.
- If you need help with editing or formatting, consult *The Little Seagull Handbook* or the Writing Center handouts.
- Remember, it helps to read your draft S-L-O-W-L-Y and aloud. You will hear the mistakes that your eyes might not see.
- Feel free to use the grammar and spelling features in your application, but do not rely on them to catch all of your mistakes.
- Be prepared to proofread and edit your paper several times.



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