

The Writing Process – A Checklist

Because writing is a complex task, effective writing involves more than just sitting down and writing something. To do your best writing, work on your writing assignments in stages. Use this checklist to understand the process.

Prewriting – plan content and organization of the paper

- Review and understand assignment instructions.
- Do initial research and thinking and choose topic.
- Create a tentative thesis.
- Do further research.
- Organize ideas.

Drafting – write the ideas in sentences and paragraphs

- Make a draft outline including thesis and topic sentences.
- Develop body paragraphs each with a main point and evidence.
- Write introduction to interest reader and establish focus of paper.
- Write conclusion to summarize paper and explore implications.
- Create a basic reference list.

Revising – further develop content and organization

Focus

- Evaluate the thesis statement. Does it clearly state the focus you've identified?
- Mark parts of the paper that do not directly relate to the focus.
- Review the introduction and conclusion to ensure the focus is clear.

Organization

- Identify the topic sentence of each paragraph.
- Create an outline of the paper using the topic sentences.
- Analyze the outline to make sure each section is relevant and linked to the one before and after
- Revise the order based on your review.

Support

- Mark up each body paragraph to identify the topic sentence and supporting points, specific evidence and the links back to the topic sentence.
- Evaluate the specific evidence linked to each point to make sure it is sufficient.
- Make sure all evidence is linked back to the supporting points and topic sentences.

Editing and Proof-reading – last checks before submission

Language

- Read the paper aloud, slowly, to yourself. Listen to the wording.
- Underline any part that sounds awkward or causes you to stumble while reading, and then review again to analyze those areas.
- Review and eliminate any biased language, shorthand, internet abbreviations and casual language.

Grammar

- List the most common types of errors that you know you have made in your writing previously.
- Read through the paper looking for each error type on your list.

Formatting

- Revisit the assignment instructions concerning the required format. Check your page setup.
- Go through all citations checking order of information, capitalization, spacing and punctuation with the style guide.
- Check that the format fits with the assignment and style instructions.

Congratulate yourself! You've put in a lot of time and effort to get to this final draft.