THE WRITING PROCESS
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- Understand the Assignment
- Plan
- Outline
- Write Body Paragraphs
- Write Introduction and Conclusion
- Edit, Revise, Re-write
Make sure you understand the assignment
- Analyze, Compare, Explain, Argue
- Paper Details: Length, Due Date

Choose your Topic
- Define your writing purpose. Why am I writing? What do I want to write?
- Get familiar with the topic: Perform basic research or re-read/skim if writing about a book, play, article, etc.
- Brainstorming: Take 15 minutes to write down every idea you have.
- Organize related ideas into categories. This will help you with ideas for paragraphs later.
- Select your overall paper topic (e.g. The Civil Rights Movement)
Gather Information About Your Topic

- Library Resources (Homer, ProQuest, JSTOR, Google Scholar)
- Return to text (article, book, poem, etc.) & pull out specific quotes and ideas

Narrow down your topic if necessary (e.g. The role of women in the Civil Rights Movement)

- Library Resources (Homer, ProQuest, JSTOR, Google Scholar)
- Return to text (article, book, poem, etc.) & pull out specific quotes and ideas

Keep researching until you feel that you have the information you need to write a preliminary thesis statement.

- Use a system to keep track of any research you’ve done or information gathered
  - Source Cards, notecards, excel spreadsheet, etc.
Your thesis is the argument that you will be proving in your paper
- 1-2 sentences
- Clear and Concise

Use your own, unique point of view when constructing a thesis
- Your thesis is the way you see things based on class, text, and lectures.

Work backwards: Write about things that stand out to you based on what you’ve learned
- Often, an argument will form itself.
- You can always go back and edit out the unneeded text.

Keep at it!
- Your thesis does not need to be worded perfectly the first time, but you should not begin writing the rest of your paper until you have a clear argument that you know you can prove.
OUTLINE YOUR PAPER

- Outline Each Paragraph
  - Remember: Every paragraph should be backing up your thesis and furthering your argument. Ask: What purpose does this paragraph serve? What am I trying to do in this paragraph?
  - Order: Every paragraph should build on itself

- Adjust your thesis if necessary

- Outline Styles (words, diagrams, charts, webs, etc. are great. Do what works for you)

- Remember: Every paragraph should be backing up your thesis and furthering your argument.
OUTLINE TIPS

- **1 hour at the very most**
  - Details will help you write, but too much detail and you might as well just start writing!

- **Keep it organized**
  - Opportunity to have all of your information in one place
  - Indicate what quotes/ideas you’re going to use in each paragraph

- **Establish a flow**
  - Order your paragraphs
  - Order ideas within each paragraph
TIME TO WRITE!

- Write body paragraphs 1st
  - Feel free to skip around if you need to

- Write your Introduction
  - The thesis is the main event!
  - Write your hook
  - Introductory information (facts and figures, statistics, etc.)
  - Okay to save it for last

- Write your Conclusion
  - Say something new, but still related to thesis
  - Do not simply restate your thesis in different words
  - Leave the reader with a final, interesting thought or revelation
  - Sometimes easiest to write immediately after finishing body paragraphs
What to do when you can’t get started or you’re stuck

- Don’t let perfectionism prevent you from writing. Allow yourself to write badly or take a chance. Bad writing is a good starting place! Just get your thoughts out on paper or the computer.

- Don’t worry as much about language and style. Even writing stream of consciousness is okay. The most important thing is to express your ideas through writing.

- If you are stuck, write down anything you can think of, even the words, “I am trying to argue __________ here.” Then move on to another paragraph and come back later.

- Take breaks if you can.
Leave time to edit your draft. Even professional writers benefit from editing.

Print out your paper and edit the physical paper. It is easier to catch mistakes on paper than it is on the computer.

Try reading your paper aloud to catch mistakes.

If possible, take a day (or at least an hour or two) away from your paper before editing. You will catch more errors and provide better edits when you are fresh.

If you have time, read through your paper one last time after making any revisions so that you can catch any typos or missing words resulting from the changes you just made.
Be sure to include all sources that you used in your Reference or Work Cited list.

Check your in-text citations, and make sure that you cite all ideas that are not yours. You need to give credit for any ideas that did not originate with you. When in doubt...cite!

Refer to your manual (APA, MLA, etc.) for any citation questions.

- These are excellent online sources:
  - MLA: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/)
  - APA: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)
MORE WRITING TIPS

- Getting started is the hardest part. The earlier you start, the better.

- Establish a Writing Plan with Deadlines
  - The Kortschak Center’s Writing Plan worksheet is a great source

- Have your sources with you as you write so you can look up any necessary quotes
MAKE A WRITING PLAN

- Be realistic: Writing a strong paper will take time. Allow yourself enough time to complete the assignment.

- Develop a writing plan that details each step of the writing process
  - Write down everything you need to do to complete each step of the writing process. Be as specific as possible. (Ex: Find three sources discussing Queen Elizabeth’s public persona)

- Work backwards from the due date and establish deadlines.
  - Estimate the time you will need to complete each step.
  - Working backwards from the paper due date, establish deadlines for each task.
  - Break up tasks into mini-tasks and decide what day and time you will work on each mini-task.
REFERENCES

http://www.crlsresearchguide.org/

Ho, C. V. (2011). Steps of the writing process. USC Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity.

