

YOUR WRITING PROCESS

Writing is a process, and it doesn't happen all at once. It takes time and often involves returning to earlier steps throughout the process. Many writers find themselves writing and thinking through their ideas multiple times. This is because writers discover ideas and learn more about what they want to say as they write.

Each writer has her or his unique writing process: a way of prewriting, drafting, and revising. Some would also say that a writer's process is different for each piece of writing. As you practice writing, you are also developing an understanding of your individual writing process. Paying attention to this process can help you identify what you've done so that you can plan what you need to do next.

Where are you in the process? **1.** Take a look at the list of potential steps in the writing process on the back and at the bottom of this handout. (Please note that this is not an exhaustive or a complete list, but rather a list of examples to help you figure out where you are in your writing process.) **2.** Check off the steps that you feel you have completed. **3.** After reviewing what you've checked, underline the steps you think you still need to do, including any steps you might need to do again. Feel free to add steps that we have not included. **4.** If you like, you might go back and make a number next to the steps you underlined to help you plan. **5.** Once you have finished marking what you have done and what you need to do, you may make a list in the boxes below.

What steps in the writing process have I done?	What steps in the writing process do I need to do?

Throughout the writing process **USE RESOURCES** and **GET FEEDBACK** Use a thesaurus Use a dictionary Use a writing handbook like *The Writer's Resource* Use a collocation dictionary See a writing tutor See my Gateway tutor or a subject-area tutor Peer Review Use the ESL lab tutors Communicate with the instructor Consult course materials including the syllabus Talk to a computer tutor to learn how to format a paper in my word processing program Have my roommate/sister/friend read my paper

Additional steps in the writing process for **RESEARCH** Come up with a research question Learn how to find sources Do preliminary research Find sources Make sure I have the right kind of sources for the assignment Evaluate the quality of my sources Look through my sources to see which ones are the most useful Take notes from my sources Talk to a librarian Make sure that I quote all my sources the right way Put all my citations where they belong Make sure that I cite all the direct quotations and the places where I paraphrase Make sure that I use the right citation format Create a works cited or reference page.

PREWRITE Read the assignment closely Understand the assignment Think about what I want to say Brainstorm Ask the instructor questions about the assignment Talk to a tutor or other students about the assignment Read the text(s) I need to write about Make notes on the text(s) Look around for things that might inspire me Freewrite Journal Cluster Use a graphic organizer Make a list Make an outline Integrate my notes into my outline Pick out evidence and/or examples for my paper

DRAFT Write through my ideas Draft a thesis Draft my body paragraphs Draft my introduction Draft my conclusion Write a first draft to learn more about what I think Re-read the assignment to make sure I'm on the right track Decide to change my thesis Draft a new thesis Draft my argument Write a second draft Make my ideas more focused Make sure I include an explanation and analysis of my evidence Argue with someone about my position to make it even stronger See if my thesis has both a topic AND a comment Ask my instructor about parts that I'm not sure about Review my instructor's comments Write a third draft

REVISE Look at my paper with fresh eyes Consider my writing from the reader's point of view Revise my thesis to be more specific Revise my thesis so that it can be a map for my reader See how my introduction works with my thesis See if the body of my paper matches my thesis Review my body paragraphs Consider the order of my body paragraphs Check the order of the sentences in my paragraphs Identify the topic of each paragraph Make sure I have topic sentences See if my topic sentences relate to my thesis Evaluate my argument Evaluate the evidence in my paragraphs Confirm that my evidence relates to my topic sentence Make sure I have enough evidence Make sure that it is good evidence for my argument Add evidence Make sure I include analysis and/or explanation(s) Add analysis or explanation Get rid of things that don't really work with my paper Change the order of things to make it flow better Make sure I include a summary of my main point in my conclusion Ask someone to read my paper and tell me what they think Replace weak stuff with stronger stuff

EDIT Check my sentences Change words in my sentences Read my whole paper out loud by myself Read the paper into a voice recorder and then play it back Read my writing out loud to someone else Have someone else read my paper to me Read the sentences in reverse order Check for errors I know I make a lot Look up the meaning of words I am not sure about Make sure my words are specific See if I use the best words to express my idea Check for active verbs Review the order of the words in my sentence Change the order of the words in a sentence Make sure I'm not repeating any words too frequently Replace or delete repetitive language Look to see if I included transitions where I need them Add transitions Make sure sentence structure is varied Make sure that sentence structure is not too short or simple or repetitive Check for common grammar errors Make sure my writing is clear

PROOFREAD Check punctuation, spelling, and capitalization Check for sentence fragments, run-ons and comma splices Make sure I format the paper properly Look it over one last time