



Douglas College

Douglas College Learning Centre

The Writing Process – A Checklist

- A. Prewriting – plan content and organization of the paper
- Understand assignment instructions
 - Do initial research/thinking and choose topic
 - Come up with a tentative thesis
 - Do further research/thinking
 - Organize ideas
 - Make an outline including thesis and topic sentences
- B. Drafting – write the ideas in sentences and paragraphs
- 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 reference list
- C. Revising – further develop content and organization
- Do the content and organization fit the assignment instructions?
 - Are the thesis and topic sentences a good fit with the content?
 - Are the ideas in the best order?
 - Are relationships clear between paragraphs and between points?
 - Is each point supported with evidence and explanation?
 - Can a reader follow the logic and flow of your ideas?
 - Do I have ideas I didn't use that I should add in?
- D. Editing – clean it up for handing in
- Check that the format fits with the assignment instructions and the required style (APA? MLA? Chicago?).
 - Create title page.
 - Check for language and mechanics errors you often make.
 - Check consistency (verb tense, pronoun reference).
 - Read paper aloud.
 - Get rid of shorthand, internet abbreviations and casual language.
 - Check details of referencing.

Why is using a good writing process so important?

Effective writing involves more than just sitting down and writing something in one sitting. To do your best writing, you need to work on your writing assignments in stages. This is because writing is a complex task. When you write, you need to figure out what to say, how to organize it and how to say it. If you try to do all these things at the same time, you won't do any of them very well. It is too much for your brain to handle. Trying to do it all at once can lead to:

- Writer's block and procrastination– the task feels overwhelming so you can't get started.
- Poor quality writing – content, organization and language are all weaker than they could be.

Some students think using a good writing process is too time-consuming. However, using a good writing process can actually save you time. Because each task is more straightforward and focused, it is very efficient. Trying to do everything at once is so cumbersome that doing a reasonable job can take a long time.

Writing Process Learning Centre Handouts

Prewriting

- WR2.14 The Research Paper
- WR2.32 Prewriting Strategies for Exploring Ideas
- WR2.34 Prewriting Questions for Exploring Ideas
- WR2.38 The History Research Essay: Getting Started
- WR2.50 Prewriting Strategies for Organizing Ideas
- WR2.42 Finding a Strong Thesis
- WR2.46 The History Paper: Developing your Thesis
- WR2.52 Outline Example
- WR2.54 Making an Essay Outline from the Top Down
- WR2.56 Outlining a Multipoint Paragraph

Editing

- WR2.80 A Self-Editing Guide
- WR2.84 The Error Log