Planning & Drafting
How to Begin the Writing Process

Planning Methods
Brainstorming
Freewriting
Listing
Clustering/Mapping

Access the Writing Situation
Develop writing habits and routines
Set a specific writing goal

Why Plan?
Writing a paper without a plan is like going into battle without a strategy.

What is a Working Title?
A working title is a tentative heading that guides the direction of your writing but is subject to change.

A Working Title is:
A working title is:

Planning the Draft

Drafting

Editing
Why Plan?

Writing a paper without a plan is like constructing a building without a blueprint.
Assess the Writing Situation

Consider audience: professor, client, investor, supervisor, etc. – knowing your audience helps you determine how much information to provide and what tone and style to use.

Purpose - Ask yourself: Am I writing to: inform, evaluate, explain, analyze, summarize, recommend/propose, persuade, etc.?

Consider available sources for information: don’t limit yourself by choosing a very specific topic with little information or resources to draw from.
Planning Methods

Talking & Listening: Utilizing conversation allows for: bouncing ideas off of peers/instructor and hearing different perspectives which can develop and strengthen your argument.

Reading & Annotating Texts: Active reading fosters a deeper understanding of information and allows for highlighting of key points and noting of possible contradictions in an argument. It also provides the opportunity to raise questions for further investigation on a topic.
Common Brainstorming Methods

Freewriting
Listing
Clustering/Mapping
What is a Working Thesis?

First let's define a thesis as the central message of your paper. It accomplishes one or more of the following:

A thesis is the answer to a question you have posed.

A thesis is the solution to a problem you have identified.

A thesis is statement that takes a position on a debatable topic.

A tentative or working thesis is a general idea of what your central message is. It can be modified as you refine/focus your ideas. A working thesis will help you organize your draft.

Example:

Problem:
Americans who earn less than $25,000 earn too little to effectively raise political contributions.

Working thesis:
Congress should pass legislation that would make it possible for Americans who are not wealthy to be viable candidates in national political campaigns.
Example:

Problem:
Americans who earn average incomes cannot run effective national political campaigns.

Working thesis:
Congress should pass legislation that would make it possible for Americans who are not wealthy to be viable candidates in national political campaigns.
Sketching Outlines

Once you have drafted a working thesis, listing and organizing your supporting ideas is a good next step. Creating outlines can make sure your writing is credible and logical.

Informal Outline: Working thesis followed by a list of major ideas. Utilized at the beginning of the writing process.

Formal Outline: Can be utilized later in the writing process, after you have written a first draft. It can help you see whether your essay’s structure is logical.
Drafting an Introduction

Engage the reader with a hook (fact/stat, quote, anecdote, personal experience, question or analogy – to grab the reader’s attention)

Present topic/subject or relevant background information

Clear statement of thesis/purpose of paper

*Note:
Some cultures prefer an indirect writing approach. Stating a thesis early in an essay may be considered unrefined or even rude. However, in America, readers appreciate a direct approach. In the United States, asserting a point as directly as possible shows that you understand your topic and value your reader’s time.
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Reworking a Thesis

A thesis must require proof or further development through facts and details; it cannot itself be a fact or description.

A thesis should be an answer to a question, not a question itself.

A thesis should be a sufficient scope for your assignment; it should not be too broad.

A thesis should not be too narrow.

A thesis should be focused, not too vague. Avoid fuzzy, hard to define words such as interesting, or good.

*See handout*
Drafting the Body

The body of your essay develops support for your thesis.

Utilize your outline to determine the number of paragraphs and paragraph order based on how the body paragraphs' main ideas relate to the thesis.
Drafting a Conclusion

The concluding paragraph does not have to be long.

It should be decisive and unapologetic.

Never introduce new ideas in a conclusion.

In order to make your conclusion memorable, it can include a detail from the introduction to bring the whole paper “full circle.”

Always:

Echo your main idea or thesis in a new way

Briefly summarize your key points

Propose a course of action, offer a recommendation, discuss the topic’s wider significance/implications, and/or pose a question for future study.
References

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**Planning Methods**
- Mind Mapping 
- Freewriting 
- Listing 
- Clustering/Mapping

**Common Brainstorming Methods**
- Freewriting 
- Listing 
- Clustering/Mapping

**Planning**
- What is a Working Thesis?
- What are the goals of the writing?
- Do you have a sense of your audience?
- What are the constraints and requirements of the writing?

**Assess the Writing Situation**
- What is the topic or subject of the writing?
- What information is relevant to the topic?
- What are the constraints and requirements of the writing?

**Why Plan?**
- Writing a paper without a plan is like starting a journey without a map.