I • Getting Started •

a. Figure out what to write about:
   • Take some time to understand the task at hand so you know how best to achieve it. What is your purpose? Who is your reader going to be?

b. Gather information:
   • You may need to do research before you choose your topic. Be sure you choose something that fulfils your task and that you can find enough information about.

c. Brainstorm:
   • Try discussing your topic with a friend, tutor, or professor,
   • Freewriting to see what sorts of ideas you’re interested in,
   • Or listing or mind mapping the information that seems most important.

III • Drafting •

Try not to assume that your first draft will be what you turn in. Let the first draft be rough—just get your ideas down, and you can clean them up later.

a. Introduction:
   • Background information and context
   • Thesis statement – the main point of your whole piece of writing

b. Body Paragraphs:
   • Topic sentence – state the point and how it relates to the thesis
   • Go into detail to support the point

c. Conclusion:
   • Recap the main points you’ve made
   • End on a thoughtful note (see Introductions & Conclusions handout)

II • Outlining •

a. Draft your thesis statement:
   • Begin with a “working” thesis, which states the main point of your writing, but can be flexible and change as you keep writing. Keep brainstorming as you go.

b. Create an outline:
   • Form the main points that’ll support your thesis and begin organizing them into paragraphs. Keep in mind that each paragraph should focus on one idea that directly relates to the main point of your paper.

IV • Revising •

Don’t be afraid to ask for another opinion. It can be very helpful to have another pair of eyes look at your work to see if you’ve really done what you were trying to do.

a. Content and organization
   • After you’ve finished writing, take a look at what’s really on the page. Is it clear what points you were trying to make? Are you answering the prompt fully?
   • Try creating a reverse outline, summarizing the main point of each paragraph and looking at the whole trajectory of your ideas. Is everything clear?

b. Sentence and word-level revisions
   • Once you’ve got the content and organization settled, clean up your writing for clarity. Are the ideas in every sentence clear?
   • Making the connections between your ideas clear will help you make the transitions between sentences and paragraphs.
   • Cleaning up sentence structure, grammar, and word choice is a matter of making sure that your reader won’t get confused.