

Planning Your Paper

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Adapted from the
 Azusa Pacific
 University
 Writing Center

Sometimes the most difficult aspect of writing a paper is scheduling your time. This handout is for those of us who struggle with time management. The time frame for each stage of the writing process (50% prewriting, 20% drafting, and 30% revising, editing, and proofreading) is just a general guideline. You also don't have to follow each step in order. Do whatever works best for you!

Prewrite (50%)	Drafting (20%)	Revise, Edit, and Proofread (30%)																		
<p>Prewriting is planning and gathering ideas before writing. This process includes developing a topic, researching, brainstorming, outlining, and in general, thinking about what you want to write.</p> <p>Start Date: _____ (This is the date the paper was assigned or you plan to start.)</p> <p>Prompt: Spend some time reading the assignment and thinking about what you would like to write about. Decide what topics you would like to explore through further thought and research.</p> <p>Prewriting Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Find and read potential sources. Keep a running references list. <input type="checkbox"/> While reading, keep track of interesting ideas and persuasive arguments that you could use as supporting evidence while drafting your paper. <input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm your paper. This can be done in many ways such as listing, clustering, and freewriting. <input type="checkbox"/> Narrow your topic. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a preliminary thesis. Make sure it describes both <i>what</i> you will be writing about and <i>why</i> that topic matters. <input type="checkbox"/> Assess your audience: Who are you writing for? It might not be the professor, so pay close attention to the prompt. <input type="checkbox"/> Assess your purpose: It helps to know what the directions are telling you to do. Circle the verbs that are used or implied in the prompt: <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Analyze</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Compare/Contrast</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Identify</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Summarize</td> <td>Argue</td> <td>Discuss</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Explain</td> <td>Apply</td> <td>Criticize</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Evaluate</td> <td>Review</td> <td>Illustrate</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Classify</td> <td>List</td> <td>Integrate</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Others _____</td> </tr> </table> <p>Some helpful handouts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reading a Scholarly Text <input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorming, Outlining, and Organizing Your Paper <input type="checkbox"/> Conventions of Academic Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Analysis vs. Summary 	Analyze	Compare/Contrast	Identify	Summarize	Argue	Discuss	Explain	Apply	Criticize	Evaluate	Review	Illustrate	Classify	List	Integrate	Others _____			<p>Drafting is the stage to organize your ideas into full sentences and paragraphs.</p> <p>Draft Due Date: _____ (This date should be halfway between your start date and your final due date.)</p> <p>Rough Draft Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Write quickly, without hesitation. Save revisions until later. <input type="checkbox"/> Feel free to leave blank spaces and come back to them later. Don't get stuck. <input type="checkbox"/> While/after writing your first draft, assess how well the paper follows the assignment instructions. <input type="checkbox"/> Assess the tone of your paper. Make sure it is appropriate to your audience. <p>Take a break: Take some time after your first draft to clear your head and prepare for revision.</p> <p>Some helpful handouts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Moving Past Writer's Block <input type="checkbox"/> Introductions and Conclusions <input type="checkbox"/> Quotations and Using Credible Sources <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis Statements and Topic Sentences <p>Now is a good time to visit the Writing Center, but you can come in for any stage of the writing process.</p> <p>My Writing Center Appointment: Date/Time: _____ Location: _____</p>	<p>Revising: Think of revising as "re-visioning." It looks at the way the paper works as a whole.</p> <p>Editing: Examine your ideas on the sentence level, focusing more on detail than big picture revisions.</p> <p>Proofreading: The last check of your paper to catch any errors.</p> <p>Final Due Date: _____</p> <p>Revise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reverse Outline: Write what each paragraph does in the margin. See if you have any holes, repetition, or need to reorganize. <input type="checkbox"/> Do I have enough support/evidence? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there an introduction, body, and conclusion? <input type="checkbox"/> Are paragraphs cohesive and ordered logically? <input type="checkbox"/> Do I have transitional statements/topic sentences? <input type="checkbox"/> Do I repeat myself? How is my style? <p>Edit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do I vary my sentence structure? <input type="checkbox"/> Is my word choice appropriate to my audience? <input type="checkbox"/> Does my paper use the correct format/documentation? <input type="checkbox"/> Read aloud to look for ways to make your paper sound better. <p>Proofread:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do I have correct grammar, spelling and usage? <input type="checkbox"/> Read your paper one sentence at a time starting from the last sentence and moving backwards to the title. <p>Some helpful handouts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ten Writing Priorities and Revising, Editing, and Proofreading <input type="checkbox"/> Transitions Words and Phrases <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies for Proofreading <input type="checkbox"/> Sentence Variety
Analyze	Compare/Contrast	Identify																		
Summarize	Argue	Discuss																		
Explain	Apply	Criticize																		
Evaluate	Review	Illustrate																		
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Others _____																				