

A Guide to Writing a College Paper

Prewriting

- ! Decide what to write about by selecting a topic.
- ! Focus your topic by narrowing and defining it.
- ! Ask some questions to help you establish what you already know and what you need to learn.
- ! Invent additional ideas by brainstorming, listing, reading and reflecting, writing, discussing, listening, observing, and interviewing.
- ! Pay attention and use the ideas and connections made by your subconscious mind.
- ! Shape and plan your paper with lists and outlines.

Writing

- ! Write the first draft. Use the method that is best for you. Write fast and keep on writing, or write, reread, and rewrite as you go along.
- ! Incorporate your source material into your first draft if you are using outside sources.
- ! Make sure you are using a thesis statement, topic sentences, supporting details, and transitions appropriately.
- ! Get someone to read your paper and give you ideas for revision. You have the option of doing this by making an appointment at the Writing Center to see a tutor. Please proofread it first so the tutor can focus on more important issues.

Rewriting

- ! Revise your paper by improving the organization, clarifying the ideas, adding supporting detail and transitions, sharpening the introduction and conclusion, and improving the sentences.
- ! Proofread for surface errors if you haven't already done so.
- ! Read your paper out loud and do a final check for errors.
- ! Prepare the final copy.

About Writing on the Computer...

Computers can be a great aid in revision. Corrections and changes can be made in the machine. Paragraphs can be moved, words changed, sentences rewritten, passages deleted, spelling checked. Then a copy can be printed and more changes can be made if needed. Erasers, liquid correction fluid, manually cutting and pasting, typing and retyping and illegible handwritten drafts can become a thing of the past. Most students who use the computer type in the first draft, print a copy of it, edit the printed copy with a pen or pencil, enter the corrections into the machine, and then print the final draft.

