

# Seven Days to a Sensational Paper

Adapted from models created by Brooke Partner, Agnes Scott College Center for Writing and Speaking, and Cori Ross, Brenau University Writing Center.

## Day One: Select your topic

What interests you?

What do you want to learn more about?

Do you have a strong opinion about a particular topic or issue?

Review the assignment and the available literature. Discuss possible topics with your instructors or classmates. Begin to formulate some ideas about how to approach the paper by reviewing your reading journal and class notes.



## Day Two: Be Creative

Brainstorm about your topic by listing possible ideas and approaches. Jot down anything that comes to mind. Note images, ideas, and characters that seem interesting. Review the list and circle items that seem significant.

Free write for five minutes on your topic. Never let your pen stop or fingers rest on the keyboard. Do not worry about the final product – just begin writing. Ideas and possible approaches will reveal themselves.

Map your ideas out on paper by grouping similar ideas. Start with a circle in the middle of a blank page. Draw radiating lines from the center and write major subdivisions of your topic and circle them. From the subdivisions, radiate outward with more specific categories. Keep adding circles until you run out of ideas.

## Day Three: Develop a working thesis statement

Choose the strongest points from your brainstorming, free writing, and mapping exercises.

Develop a sentence that incorporated all of these points into a single idea. This will serve as your working thesis. Do not agonize over word choice or sentence structure. You can revise and edit as you continue to work on paper.

Make sure that your working thesis is interesting and specific enough for the essay's length.

Draft a preliminary outline that addressed the main points you want to cover.

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## Day Four: Prepare a rough draft

Review your notes, outline, and preliminary thesis statement and begin writing.

Some students find it easier to begin in the middle of the paper and work their way out.

Write, write, write. Do not worry about carefully crafting each sentence at this stage. Try to organize your ideas into coherent paragraphs that adhere to your overall framework.

## Day Five: Take a break

Leave your paper alone for a day. This will give you a new perspective on your work.

Do something nice for yourself and relax while your ideas "simmer."

## Day Six: Revise

Read your draft aloud and ask yourself the following questions:

Does my paper fulfill the assignment?

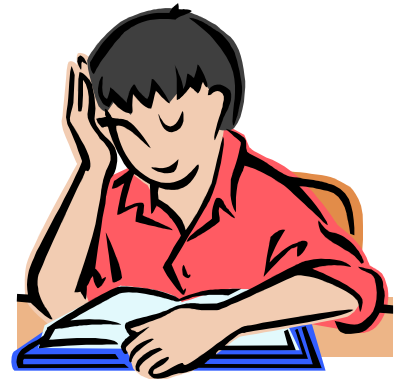
Are my points clearly stated?

Does each paragraph have a workable topic sentence?

Is my organization logical?

Does the essay support and follow my thesis?

Visit the Writing Center (Gamble Hall 109) with your draft.



## Day Seven: Edit and proofread

Check verb tenses, passive voice, grammar, spelling, and word choice.

Check sentences for fragments.

Vary your sentence structure.

Review your introduction and conclusion to ensure that they are not repetitive.

Review "The Writing Process," "Thesis Statements," and "Writing Tips" handouts.