Pearson New International Edition

The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers

Daniel E. Seward Maxine E. Hairston
John J. Ruszkiewicz Christy E. Friend

Ninth Edition

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What Does Writing Involve?

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a Why write?

Writing is not a mysterious activity at which only a talented few can succeed. Nor is it a purely academic skill that you will leave behind at graduation. On the contrary. In our information-based society, virtually everyone writes.

Through writing, people share what they know, debate issues, accomplish tasks, and advocate change. Whether you are drafting a letter to your senator, making a PowerPoint presentation at work, or reading an original poem at a local coffeehouse, writing gives you a public voice. Writing is also a rich medium for intellectual inquiry. Many people use writing to think through their ideas on an issue or to help organize complex material they learn in school or on the job. In fact, in almost every field, those people who write well are the ones most likely to achieve their goals.

The ability to write has become even more important with the integration of electronic media into our daily lives. People once could get along in school by writing papers that would be seen only by their teachers, or at work by writing an occasional memo to the boss. But now, as text messaging, email, and social networking sites become primary modes of communication, we are all writers who address diverse audiences throughout the course of a typical day.

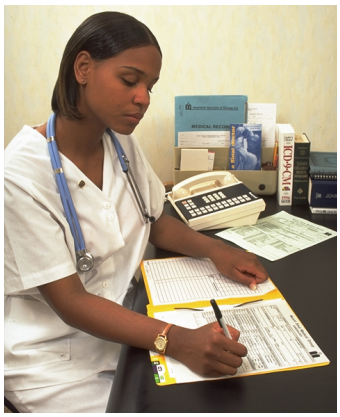
Years ago, some futurists predicted that computers would make writing obsolete. How wrong they were! Now, more than ever, writing matters.

b What does it take to write well?

Can writing be intimidating? Yes. But it is a craft that can be learned by almost any literate person willing to invest the time and energy. Don't let the following common myths about writing discourage you:

What Does Writing Involve?

Christy Friend



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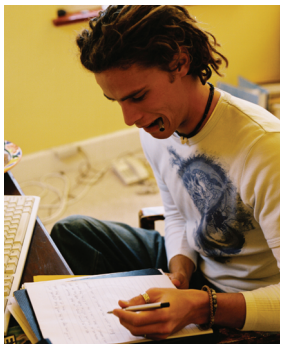
What activities in your everyday life require writing? What steps or processes do you go through to produce a written document? With whom do you communicate when you write? Do you do most of your writing in or outside school?



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- **Myth:** *Good writers are born, not made. Writing takes talent.*
  Fact: People become good writers by working at it, through study and practice.
- **Myth:** *Good writers know what they want to say before they start writing.*
  Fact: Many good writers generate ideas as they work.
- **Myth:** *Good writers get it right the first time.*
  Fact: It's rare for even experienced writers to produce polished work on the first try. Like you, they usually work through several drafts.
- **Myth:** *Good writers work alone.*
  Fact: Even if they do much of the actual composing alone, experienced writers ask editors and friends for help and suggestions.

- **Myth:** *Good writers have to know all the rules of grammar.*
  Fact: Although learning the conventions is important, knowing grammar rules alone won't make anyone a good writer.
- **Myth:** *Writing means putting words on a page—nothing more.*
  Fact: Visual and multimedia elements are integral parts of many documents, such as presentations, proposals, and Web sites. Good writers learn to incorporate these elements when appropriate.
- **Myth:** *Only professional writers publish their work.*
  Fact: Advances in networked computing and publishing software have changed what it means to publish. Today anyone with Internet access can publish his or her writing instantaneously on social networking sites, Web pages, or blogs.

EXERCISE 1 When you hear the term *writer,* what kind of person comes to mind? Many people reserve the terms *author* and *journalist* for those who make their living solely by writing. But can you think of other people who write frequently? What kinds of writing do they do? Discuss your answers with your classmates.

C How does writing work?

It's tempting to believe that there's a secret formula for writing well and that if you could just discover it, your life would be much easier. Unfortunately, there's no foolproof way to turn an initial idea into a polished final text. However, researchers do agree that most people, when they write, follow general thinking patterns similar to those that occur in other creative activities. Chart 1 lists these stages and describes some of the activities writers engage in during each.

Remember, though, that any formal diagram can only hint at what writers really do. A chart can't show nuances in the process, nor can it differentiate among individual writers and writing situations. Some successful writers shift freely among the preparing, researching, planning, and revising stages as they work. Others delay major revisions until they have a first draft. Still others revise as they go along.

Writers must also adjust their work patterns to their purpose, their audience, and the specific demands of the project. An instant-messaging exchange

among friends will require little planning or revision; yet a job application letter or academic research paper may go through several cycles of researching, revising, and editing. So don't think of the writing process as a lockstep march from outlining to proofreading. It's a flexible network of choices and skills.

Chart 1 Stages of Writing

- **Preparing:** Read, brainstorm, browse online, and talk to people in order to decide what you want to write about and to generate ideas about it.
- **Researching:** Gather facts or examples from reading, conversations with others, field research, laboratory research, or your own experiences to support your ideas.
- **Planning:** Develop and organize your ideas further, perhaps preparing working lists, outlines, or sketches of visual elements.
- **Drafting:** Begin to put words (and images or other visual elements, if you're using them) onto a page or screen. Compose one or more drafts, rethinking and reshaping your materials as necessary.
- **Incubating:** Take time off to let your ideas simmer. New ideas may come to you after you've taken a break.
- **Revising:** Critically review what you have written and make any large-scale changes you need in topic, organization, content, design, or audience adaptation.
- **Editing:** Critically review your draft to make smaller-scale changes in style, clarity, and readability.
- **Proofreading:** Read carefully to rid your project of mechanical problems such as spelling, punctuation, and formatting errors.

EXERCISE 2 Think back to a piece of writing you were proud of— perhaps a letter to the editor that was published, a personal statement that won you a scholarship, or an *A* paper in a difficult class. Write a paragraph describing the preparation you put into the project, how many times you revised it, and why you think it was successful.

EXERCISE 3 Write a paragraph or two candidly describing your most hectic writing experience, when you were most pressed to get a project done. What did you have to do to finish the project? Was it successful? Why or why not? What, if anything, would you do differently if you had the chance to do it again?

d How do you define a rhetorical situation?

Writing is a social activity, a way of interacting with others. Every time you write, you enter into a *rhetorical situation* in which

- *you*
- say *something*
- to *somebody*
- for some *purpose.*

For each writing project you undertake, think carefully about your purpose, your audience, and how you want to come across to your readers. Probably no other single habit will do more to strengthen your writing.

e How do you define your purpose(s) for writing?

When you begin a project, ask why you are writing in the first place. Do you need to show an instructor that you've mastered a difficult concept or reading assignment, or to document observations or procedures you've performed in a laboratory course? Is there a political debate you wish to enter? Of course, not everything you write must aim at a serious and lofty goal—perhaps you're writing a blog simply to share your opinions about current films. In any case, keeping a purpose in mind will help you to focus and to decide what kinds of supporting materials you will need.

1 Decide what you hope to accomplish. Centuries ago, theorists of *rhetoric*—the art of persuasive communication—identified three basic purposes for writing:

- writing *to inform*, or writing that teaches readers new information;
- writing *to persuade*, or writing that convinces readers to believe or act in new ways;
- writing *to entertain*, writing that diverts and engages readers.

Often you may want to achieve more than one of these goals within a single paper. To review a restaurant for a campus magazine, for example, your primary aim might be to *evaluate* the food and service, but you would

also want to *persuade* readers to visit or avoid the restaurant and perhaps to *entertain* them as well.

Sometimes you may not be completely sure of your purpose until you've explored the topic by writing a first draft. You may explore several angles on an idea as you figure out what you want to say. Eventually, though, you must articulate a purpose that's clear both to you and to your readers. Use Checklist 1 to think about your goals.

Checklist 1 Purpose

1. If you are writing a paper for a course, what cues does the assignment provide about purpose? Read the assignment sheet carefully. Target words like *explain, define, argue, evaluate*.
2. What do you want readers to get from your paper? Do you want to inform, persuade, or entertain them? If you have multiple goals, which is the most important?
3. What supporting materials will you draw on to achieve your goals? What research, examples, or personal experiences will you need to discuss?
4. How will you present material in your paper? Will you narrate, describe, compare and contrast, or argue, for example?
5. What form will the project take? Will you write a letter, a report, a Web page, or a research paper, for example? Will you incorporate images, tables, or other visual elements?

2 Consider how other elements in the rhetorical situation shape your purpose(s). Although we discuss each aspect of the rhetorical situation separately in this chapter, in practice it's difficult to consider any single element in isolation. For any project, your purpose(s) will help you define your audience, the form in which you present your ideas, and the impression you want to make. Suppose, for example, that you are angry about a proposal to stop offering evening courses at your college. If you want to convince people that these courses should continue, you have a choice of audiences. Here is where your purpose becomes important.

If you want direct action, you need to write to the person in charge of scheduling courses, perhaps the campus registrar. For this audience, your

purpose might be to construct a calm, well-supported letter explaining the harmful effects of cancellation—graduation delays for working students who can attend class only in the evening, shrinking enrollment if evening students transfer to other local colleges, and so on. If, however, you want to get fellow students to join your cause, you might draft a petition and circulate it on a campus electronic mailing list, blog, or social networking site such as Facebook.

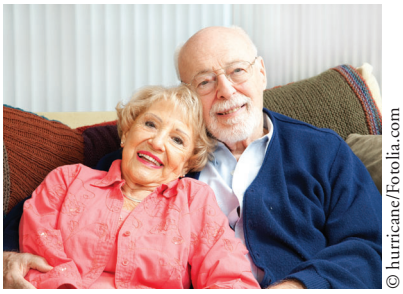
f How do you write for an audience?

Each time you write, think carefully about who your readers might be and how they will respond to your project. Doing this can be a challenge. Writers often have to contend with multiple and possibly conflicting audiences: men and women; young, middle-aged, and older people; liberals and conservatives; teacher and classmates. In some cases, identifying an audience at all seems nearly impossible. When you create a Web page, for example, literally anyone in the world who has access to the Internet might read it.

Learning how to appeal to an audience takes time and practice, but it is a skill that any writer can master. As you begin to think about your readers, consult Checklist 2. If within a single project you will reach several potential audiences, run through the checklist for each group.

Checklist 2 Audience

1. Who is your primary audience? If you are writing a paper for a class, does the assignment specify a particular audience? What will that audience expect from you?
2. What does your audience need to know? What background information do you need to give them? What details, examples, or information might interest or persuade them?
3. What values and beliefs are important to your readers? To what kinds of examples and arguments are they likely to respond?
4. What kind of approach will they expect? Formal? Informal? Casual? What kind of formats, layouts, or visuals will appeal to them?



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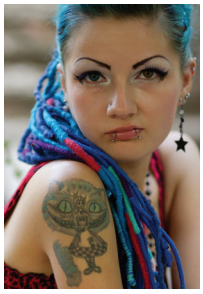

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How might a paper on sex education in public schools differ if it were written to appeal to each of these three audiences? How might you approach a paper that needed to simultaneously reach all three?

EXERCISE 4 Briefly analyze what you think readers would want to know if you were writing

1. a personal statement for a scholarship application.
2. a letter disputing a charge on your credit card account.
3. a description of an experiment you carried out for a chemistry class.
4. a flyer advertising a benefit performance by your best friend's bluegrass band.

EXERCISE 5 Working with a classmate, look through a magazine—some possibilities are *Sports Illustrated, Spin, The New Yorker, Maxim, Money, Wired, Newsweek, Source*—and study the advertisements and the kinds of articles it

Getty Images

Spin Magazine

This asset is intentionally omitted from this text

carries. Then write a paragraph describing the kinds of people you think the editor and publisher of the magazine assume its readers to be. Use Checklist 2 to guide your work.

g How do you present yourself to readers?

Readers respond most favorably when they trust and respect the person sending the message. But presenting an effective image to an audience isn't just about "selling" your ideas. It's also about showing readers that you are a person whose ideas are worth listening to.

1 Show readers that you are credible. Would you take driving lessons from someone whose license has been revoked? Or let someone with no computer expertise replace your hard drive? Of course not. It's a question of credibility. Readers expect you to show that you know what you are talking about before they will give your ideas serious consideration.

One way to achieve credibility is to learn everything you can about a topic before you begin writing. Do your homework. Browse through background sources to get a sense of key terminology, concepts, authorities, and ongoing debates about the subject. Research in detail the particular issues you want to focus on in your project. Once you have this knowledge, you will write with confidence—and you will project this confidence to readers.

Your personal experiences can also build credibility. If you are writing about immigration policy and your family came to the United States from India, for example, don't hesitate to share your story. Even though your experience doesn't make you an authority on every aspect of the subject, it gives you knowledge that is richer and in some ways more powerful than what you can learn from books. Of course, there are forums—such as scientific writing—in which personal expression is generally inappropriate. But when the assignment allows it, readers will respect your close involvement with a topic.

Finally, to win readers' respect, you must come across as a professional. Use an appropriate format, edit carefully, and proofread thoroughly to show

Checklist 3 Presenting Yourself to Readers

1. How can you show readers that you are knowledgeable about your subject? What research, reading, or personal experience will you draw upon?
2. How will you show readers that you are trustworthy? What will you do to present information accurately and fully?
3. How will you show readers that you are reasonable and fair? What tone will you adopt, and how will you talk about opposing views?

your audience that you are serious about your work. Checklist 3 will help you to credibly present yourself to readers.

2 Present material fairly and honestly. Readers believe writers whom they perceive as trustworthy, so you'll need to present material accurately and fairly in a writing project. Base your arguments on reputable sources, and be truthful about gaps or limitations in what you know.

You will also need to cite the sources of your information, to show that the materials you've consulted are reliable and authoritative. When readers see that you treat your subject honestly, they'll be more open to your ideas.

3 Use a civil tone. Being polite to those who disagree with you may seem a bit naive given the hostile tone of much public discussion in our society. But don't be fooled—the loudest voices aren't always the ones that people end up listening to. You will project the most credible image when you treat different viewpoints fairly and generously. It's fine to disagree strongly with another's ideas. But confine your criticism to the issues rather than attack your opponent's worth as a human being. Avoid name-calling, inflammatory language, and ethnic or gender stereotypes. Not only will you sound more professional, but your fairness will lay the groundwork for ongoing conversation with readers who hold different views.

Writing Processes

What qualities make musician Sheryl Crow an effective spokesperson for an advertising campaign promoting milk? If you were asked to design a new ad in this campaign, what spokesperson might you choose? Why? Visit <www.whymilk.com> and compare your choice to the celebrities featured in past "Got Milk" ads.

EXERCISE 6 Select a subject that you know a lot about, and imagine that you have been asked to write about it for several different venues: a college research paper, a televised public-service announcement, and an editorial for your campus newspaper. Which of these three venues appeals to you the most? How would each element of the writing situation—your purpose, your audience, and the image you want to project as a writer—affect the written product?

How Do You Find and Explore a Topic?

a How do you find a topic?

Sometimes you will start a writing project knowing exactly what you are going to write about—perhaps an instructor has assigned a specific paper topic, or you're writing in response to a particular issue or situation. When you don't have to find your topic, you can begin immediately to generate ideas, plan, and start a draft.

Occasionally, however, an instructor may ask you to choose your own topic for a paper, believing that students write better when they can investigate subjects that interest them. An interesting topic by itself won't guarantee that a paper is successful. But selecting workable topics is an important skill for any writer.

1 Think beyond broad, traditional topics. Many college students think that they should always write about issues of earthshaking importance. Does this list look familiar?

Abortion	Terrorism	Global Climate Change
School Choice	Capital Punishment	Euthanasia

These subjects *are* important. And if you feel passionately enough about one of them to do the research that will add to the debate, then go for it. But because so much has been written about these issues, you risk bogging down in generalizations and clichés. If you do choose a well-worn topic, look for a new or local angle to investigate. For example, rather than writing a general paper on global climate change, you might explore the effects that recent tropical storms have had on your hometown's economy.

2 Choose a topic in your world. When you write about a subject with authority and passion, your readers will respond. So choose a topic that interests you, preferably one you know well. Brainstorm a list of possibilities: activities you enjoy, interesting experiences you've had, or subjects that

have always sparked your curiosity. For example, do you play blues guitar, teach first-aid classes, or volunteer at a local animal shelter? Then decide which topic on your list best fits your assignment. Checklist 1 will help you to discover such topics.

You can also make a paper unique by spotlighting issues in your own community. For example, an assignment to research the civil rights movement for a history course could lead you to inquire about local concerns. Was your campus or community ever segregated? How did your city react to civil rights initiatives or legislation? Do contemporary concerns for women's or gay rights have roots in this earlier political movement? Any one of these issues would make a promising paper topic.

Because local topics connect to your everyday life, you're bound to have a strong interest in finding out more about them. You will find it easier to do original research, since expert sources—newspapers, community organizations, and local leaders—are close at hand. And you may discover opportunities to publish your writing on such topics outside the classroom, perhaps as a letter to the editor or to a public official.

Checklist 1 Finding a Topic . . .

- **What three subjects do you enjoy reading about or are you curious about?** What magazines do you pick up? What kinds of books do you browse through? Which news headlines catch your eye? When online, what blogs do you check regularly or discussion forums do you participate in?
- **What three subjects do you know the most about?** What topics could you discuss for half an hour without notes? What problems lead people to seek your advice or expertise? What could you teach someone else to do?
- **What three subjects do you enjoy arguing about most?** On what subjects can you hold your own with just about anyone? What opinions do you advocate most strongly?
- **What three issues in your community do you care about the most?** What issues affect you or people you know? For what causes do you volunteer? What opinions or ideas would you like to communicate to government officials or to the community at large?

3 Browse in the library and online. Look in the library catalog or in the directory of the Library of Congress (better known as the *Subject List*). Just the way a broad subject is broken down into headings and subheadings should suggest many topic possibilities. Consult such reference sources as specialized encyclopedias too. If you want to learn about endangered animal species in your state, for example, a glance at the *Encyclopedia of the Environment* might provide several topic ideas.

Even when you don't have a general subject area to direct your library search, try browsing in the new book section or through the op-ed and analysis pages of national publications like *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal*, or *Slate* for current topics that spark your curiosity. An online search engine such as *Google* or *Yahoo!* will help you identify innumerable subject areas, but you may also find yourself led down stray paths. Consider using a Web directory (see Figure 1), which lists Web sites by category and often employs editors who consider the categories a site is best suited for—unlike search engines, which perform automated searches based on keywords. A librarian at your campus library can also help you direct your online research to reliable, manageable sources.

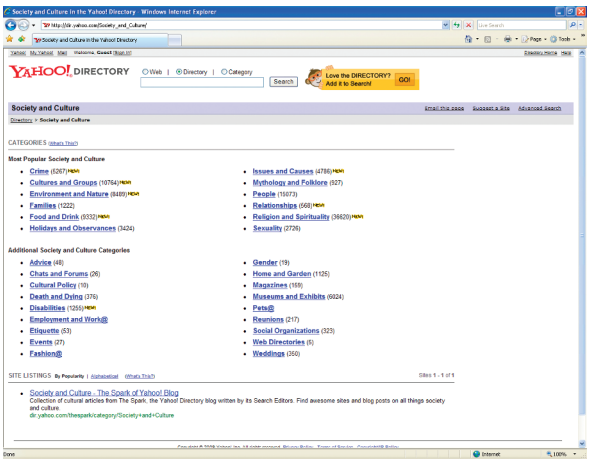


Figure 1 *Yahoo!*'s "Issues and Causes" page offers dozens of general topic ideas and thousands of supporting links. You can find it under the "Society and Culture" heading in the *Yahoo!* directory.

4 Talk with others. There's no reason to search for a topic in a vacuum. Discuss possibilities with everyone who has a connection to the project, including your instructor. He or she may be willing not only to suggest interesting areas, but also to steer you away from topics that won't work. Classmates working on the same assignment may also spark your imagination; talk with them outside of class or share ideas via a social networking site or email.

b How do you refine your topic?

Once you have found a promising topic, you'll probably need to narrow it down. If you don't focus your efforts, you may end up trying to cover more material than you can within the parameters of the project—for example, attempting to present a comprehensive account of the "evolution versus intelligent design" debate in a five-page paper. This kind of overreaching can result in a project long on generalities but short on lively details and thoroughly developed ideas.

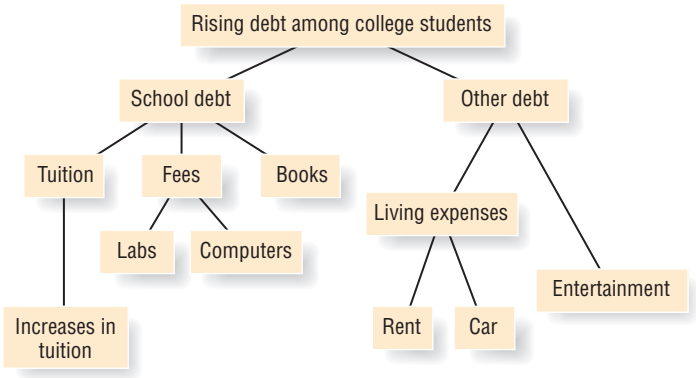
1 Don't try to cover everything. Remember that your time to develop a paper is limited. You can't discover all there is to know about a topic in a few weeks. Even if you could, you wouldn't be able to fit all that material into one paper. Narrow your research to something manageable, an aspect of your topic that you will be able to discuss thoroughly. Any paper you write should contain only a portion of what you know about its subject.

Ulrike Welsch/ PhotoEdit Inc.

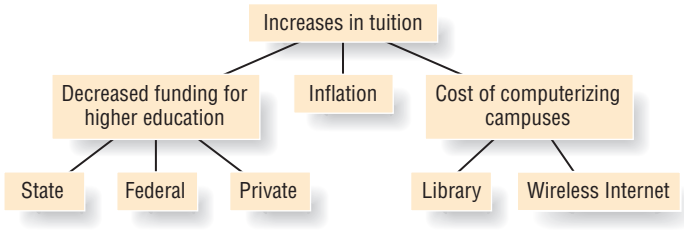
If you needed to write a five-page paper about an issue in U.S. high schools, what might you choose as your focus and why? How narrow would your topic need to be? Discuss and compare your choice with a group of classmates, noting the range of possibilities. Then compare your group's choices with Tallon Harding's topic proposal, featured at the end of this chapter.

2 Make a tree diagram. One way to narrow a topic is to create a tree diagram that divides it into smaller components. Make a chart on which you divide and subdivide your subject into smaller and smaller parts, each of which branches out like an inverted tree. The upside-down tree helps you see many potential areas within each division as well as the relationships among them.

Suppose you've become interested in writing about college student debt after watching your roommate run up several thousand dollars in credit card bills during a single semester. Your tree diagram might look something like this:



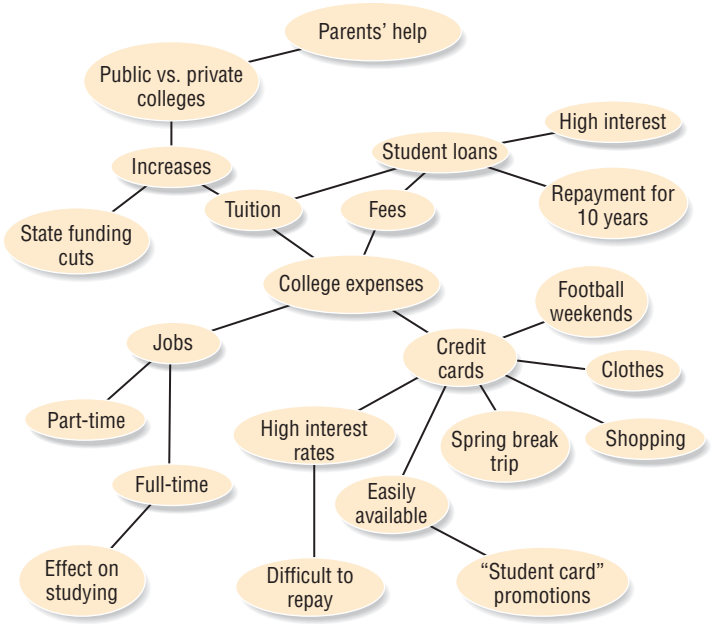
Now select the most promising branch from your first diagram and make a new diagram to refine that idea further.



3 Make an idea map. Another way to narrow a topic is to make an idea map that shows patterns of related ideas worth exploring. In the middle

of a blank sheet of paper, write down a phrase that describes your general subject. Circle that term—say, *college expenses*—and then, for about ten minutes, attach every word you can think of either to that original term or to others that you have linked to it. Circle all additional words as you write them, and draw lines connecting them to the words that triggered them.

Your finished map might look like the one below. When you're done, examine the map to see whether any clusters of words suggest topics you might develop. For example, one group of ideas (tuition—increases—state funding cuts—fees—student loans) suggests a paper about government funding for higher education. Another (credit cards—"student card" promotions—spring break trip—football weekends—shopping) might lead you to explore the kinds of luxuries that easy credit allows students to purchase. As with tree diagrams, you can use any promising concept from your first idea map as the focal point of a second exercise, starting again with the narrowed subject to develop more ideas.



Various types of mind-mapping software are available to help writers and thinkers brainstorm and arrange ideas for their projects. Such programs allow you to generate idea maps that you can easily expand, rearrange, and save as you continue to explore your topic.

4 Investigate an interesting question or hypothesis. Another way to narrow a topic is to pursue an interesting problem involving your topic for which you do not yet have a satisfactory answer—much as investigative reporters look for "leads" that will turn into breaking news stories.

Sometimes a promising issue will take the form of a question. Reading a headline about the scarcity of young women in science-related professions, for example, might spur you to ask this question.

QUESTION Why are young women underrepresented in the scientific professions, despite the fact that they attend and graduate from college in greater numbers than men?

Or you might start a project with a *hypothesis*, a statement that tentatively proposes a claim to be tested. Scientists often begin research projects with these kinds of educated guesses. Here is an initial hypothesis on the topic of women in science.

HYPOTHESIS Many young women are discouraged from taking advanced math and science courses during high school, which may decrease the likelihood that they will pursue science careers in college.

A guiding question or hypothesis will help you focus your topic. But at this stage it is probably too early to commit to a definite position. Until the evidence comes in and you have more information, remain flexible in your thinking and be willing to revise your focus and approach.

How can you find a promising question or hypothesis to focus on? In your preliminary reading and discussion about the topic, look for clues.

- Titles and focal points of published pieces on the topic
- Names of important people, experts, events, or institutions related to the topic
- Issues or questions that come up repeatedly
- Issues about which people disagree

EXERCISE 1 Suppose you want to write a short paper for a composition course on one of the following subjects. Write down several promising subtopics that you might focus on; then use a tree diagram or an idea map to generate ideas about the subtopic that you find most interesting.

- Health insurance
- Scandals in professional sports
- The popularity of cosmetic surgery
- Organic foods
- Domestic violence
- Political involvement among college students

C How do you explore and develop a topic?

You have a topic. What's next? Now you need to explore its implications, find supporting evidence, and fill in specific details. Experts on rhetoric use the term *invention* to describe the techniques writers use to generate subject matter for a paper.

Invention techniques can help you explore and develop a thesis. You can use these techniques at any point in your writing process. Return to them anytime you need to expand and develop your ideas.

1 Freewrite about the topic. Freewriting is writing nonstop for ten to fifteen minutes on a topic to explore what you already know and to discover areas you'd like to learn more about. Don't worry about grammar, spelling, or other niceties while you're freewriting—the point is to generate ideas. Continue to write as long as ideas come, and don't cross out anything. Be alert for phrases and concepts that extend your thinking in promising directions.

WRITER AT WORK **Freewriting**

Here is an excerpt from a freewriting that student writer Tallon Harding did before writing a paper. Notice that she has not always capitalized, that she doesn't always write complete sentences, and that her style is informal. But also notice how many ideas even this short excerpt articulates.

I definitely want to write about how high schools are pushing students to take too many AP and other college level courses to the point that they don't have time for a lot of the things young people are supposed to do in high school. The move towards college level education in the public high school system is becoming a big problem. Academics have become the main focus, what happened to rounding out the student? Sports and extracurricular activities get sidelined at the expense of the student. Too many AP and IB courses result in stress overload that many high schoolers are not prepared to face. Educators need to focus more on the needs of the students. High school students shouldn't work as hard as college students do, they have less time. . . .

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2 Use the journalist's questions. Beginning journalists are taught to keep six questions in mind when writing a news story.

Who?	What?	Where?
When?	Why?	How?

Simple as they seem, these questions can help you be sure you have covered all the bases, especially when you are writing an informative paper (though not every question will apply to every topic).

3 Look at your topic from different perspectives. Classical rhetoricians used four broad questions to explore topics: questions of *fact, definition, value*, and *policy*. Originally designed to develop speeches for the law courts, these questions move from simple to more complex ways of examining an issue.

- Questions of **fact** involve things already known about your topic: What has already happened? What factual information is already available? What policies are already in place?
- Questions of **definition** interpret these facts and place them in a larger context: What category does your topic fit into? What laws or approaches apply?
- Questions of **value** ask you to make a judgment: Is the idea you're talking about a good thing or a bad thing? Is it ethical or unethical? Is it workable or unworkable?

- Questions of **policy** allow you to consider specific courses of action: What exactly should be done in response to the issue? Are old solutions working, or is a new approach needed?

You won't be able to answer all these questions in a single paper, but they are useful for comprehensively examining a topic. Below, for example, are ways a writer might use these questions to find material for a paper on whether the fashion industry's use of thin models in advertising indirectly encourages eating disorders among young women. Once you've run through all the questions, decide which one(s) you want to treat most fully in your paper. For example, an editorial on this topic might focus on the definitional question "How does our culture define 'beauty'?" A report, however, might gather information that answers the factual question "How many fashion ads feature unusually thin models?"

Highlight **Looking at a Topic from Different Perspectives**

AP/Wide World Photos

Fashion and Body Image Among Young Women

- **Questions about the facts:** To what extent do young women draw their beauty ideals from fashion ads? How many fashion ads feature unusually thin models? How many young women have eating disorders?
- **Questions about key definitions:** How does our culture define "beauty"? How preoccupied with thinness must one be to be defined as having an eating disorder?
- **Questions about values:** Is it ethical for fashion designers to display their clothes on models who are much thinner than most women can ever be? Does the artistic value of fashion trends outweigh any harmful social effects they may cause?
- **Questions about policy:** What could the fashion industry do to promote a healthier ideal of beauty? How might young women be discouraged from trying to look like models?

4 Write a zero draft. Just start a draft. The very act of writing will often get the creative juices flowing and help you to organize your thoughts. Think of this first try as a "zero draft," a trial run that doesn't really count. Zero drafts are easy to write, and after they're complete, you can select the best material to use in your next draft. Try writing several zero drafts of a paper to test possible approaches to a topic.

5 Read. Look up your subject in the library or on the Internet and read. Read to find facts. Read to discover how other writers have approached topics like yours. Perhaps you want to write about a bicycle trip you took across the American Northwest. Look up some travel literature. Your eyes may be opened by the sheer variety of approaches available to record your adventures, everything from serious field accounts written by anthropologists to the rollicking narratives in travel magazines. Seeing others' work will suggest possibilities for your own.

6 Talk to others about your topic. From the start, invite others to join in exploring your topic. Look for information about lectures, films, or community meetings where you might meet people interested in your work. And when you find such people, network with them to find more people and organizations tied to your subject.

Social networking Web sites, online discussion forums, and electronic mailing lists offer instant access to an even wider network of contacts. Once you have a good sense of the issues you want to write about, consider posting to one of these forums a short description of your project and a request for input.

Classmates and friends are also useful resources. Utilize a class team, or talk and email with classmates who share an interest in your topic. You'll find that as you start to explain your ideas to others, more ideas will come to you. You may see arguments you hadn't considered and learn about new examples or sources.

7 Visit your campus writing center. Many colleges and universities have writing centers designed to help students with their writing projects. Many students misperceive these facilities as emergency rooms that fix papers in trouble. In fact, the tutors and consultants who staff them are

usually eager to help writers at every stage of the writing process—including finding a workable, challenging topic and focusing and narrowing it. Chart 1 offers some tips for getting the most out of a writing center session.

Chart 1 Getting Help at a Writing Center

- Use a writing center at every stage of the writing process. The consultants there can help you find a topic, formulate a thesis, and evaluate a draft in progress.
- Don't treat a writing center as a one-stop fix-it shop. The consultants are there to help you become a better writer, not to edit your papers for you.
- Bring the assignment sheet with you to a writing-center appointment. The assignment may help a tutor better understand your paper.
- Bring to your session any comments you have received from your instructor or peer editors. Read the comments carefully yourself.
- Be on time for your appointment.
- Decide whether you want a report of the session sent to your instructor. Many writing centers will give you this option.

EXERCISE 2 Choose a current controversy in your neighborhood, campus, or city. (If no ideas come to mind, consult a local or campus newspaper.) Use the four categories outlined earlier in this chapter to identify questions about facts, definitions, values, and policies regarding that issue. Which questions generate the most disagreement? Which ones could provide the focus for an interesting paper?

EXERCISE 3 Use any two of the techniques described in Section c to generate ideas about one of your writing projects in progress. Then discuss your experience with your classmates: Which strategy yielded the best ideas? Which are you likely to use again?

d How do you write a topic proposal?

Occasionally an instructor may ask you to write a preliminary proposal defining your topic and analyzing the writing situation for a paper. Even when it's not assigned, such a proposal can help you refine your ideas about

your topic, audience, purpose, and tone at an early stage, so that your decisions can guide your research and shape your first draft.

A topic proposal typically includes the elements listed in Checklist 2. Check with your instructor to find out if he or she has additional requirements.

Checklist 2 Writing a Topic Proposal

1. Identify your topic.
2. Articulate a working thesis statement, research question, hypothesis, or key issue that you plan to focus on in the paper.
3. Indicate what kinds of supporting materials you will use.
4. Briefly analyze your writing situation.

WRITER AT WORK **A Topic Proposal**

In the following sample proposal, first-year composition student Tallon Harding describes her plan for a paper. The assignment asked her to write a researched argument on a topic relevant to her and her classmates. Harding begins by describing her topic and purpose, and then she identifies her audience. She ends by considering the kind of impression she wants to make on readers.

Although she has thought carefully about her topic, at this point in the process Harding is still refining and developing her ideas. She hasn't yet developed all the supporting points for her position or located her research materials, and her approach is less formal than her instructor will expect to see in the finished paper.

Tallon Harding
Professor Rollins
English 101
30 October 2009

Today's High Schools Are Failing to Meet Student Needs

School has just let out but the library is packed. Each one of us is studying, working frantically to finish the next day's assignments. The Advanced Placement Tests will be given on Monday; the pressure is almost unbearable. This scene is becoming common in high schools across the nation, as more and more students are encouraged to enroll in college-type courses that are offered in the high school classroom. Do these kinds of courses help students prepare for the demands of college? Or are they robbing students of the well-rounded education that they will need to become mature and well-adjusted adults?

My paper will argue that a good high school education involves more than just academics. It should also include extracurricular activities that help students to mature both physically and socially. However, under the current system, many students have to eliminate extracurricular activities to account for the heavy course loads resulting from a doubled academic burden. I plan to discuss examples showing the sacrifices students make to keep up with heavy academic loads, and I will do research to find statistics to document the size of this problem. I will also briefly explore the reasons why schools are pushing students to overachieve, including the pressures caused by high-stakes testing and federal funding requirements.

My audience will be my classmates, many of whom, I anticipate, experienced a similar environment at their high schools and probably have a strong opinion on this issue. I hope to write a paper that will interest them and give strong support for my position.

Take Control

How Do You Focus and Organize a Writing Project?

Now you have an interesting, workable topic for your writing project. You've thought carefully about it and gathered information. What's next? It's time to make some decisions about the shape the project will take.

a How do you craft a thesis statement?

Most college instructors expect a *thesis statement* in the papers they assign. A *thesis statement* is a sentence (or sometimes two or three sentences) that explicitly identifies the main idea of a paper. Depending on the project, it may be a conclusion you draw as a result of doing research, your answer to a puzzling question about your topic, or a claim you will spend the rest of the paper explaining or supporting.

You'll find explicit thesis statements most often in reports, arguments, and research papers. But constructing a thesis is a useful exercise for any project. If you are building a Web site or designing a newsletter, you'll benefit from being able to state your purpose in one or two precise sentences—even though that statement may not appear in your final document.

Try to construct a working thesis statement early in your writing process and use it as a framework for developing your first draft. By keeping your thesis in mind, you can be sure of covering all the important points.

1 Make a strong point. A thesis statement is more than just an observation; it is a strong, focused statement that might be questioned or challenged. It should offer a clearly stated analysis, critique, or position on your topic that readers will find new and significant.

INSIGHTFUL The doughnuts in Jester cafeteria are terrible.
Even if true, few readers will find this observation substantial enough to support an entire paper.

MORE SIGNIFICANT University administrators should investigate the impact a Krispy Kreme franchise might have on revenues for the Student Union.

NOT DEBATABLE Domestic violence harms families. Who's going to argue with this claim?

DEBATABLE The state legislature should pass the current bill mandating harsher penalties for second-offense child abuse and spousal abuse convictions.

TOO GENERAL Environmental groups and landowners disagree over many issues, including land use, species protection, and pollution regulations. You won't be able to research and thoroughly analyze more than one or two specific disagreements in a typical academic paper.

MORE SPECIFIC The debate over whether wolves should still be protected as endangered species, now that wild populations are thriving in the Northwest, raises questions about how to balance individuals' property rights with the long-term viability of the species.

Once you've written a thesis, ask yourself how a member of your audience might react to it. If you can envision a polite yawn ("So what?") or a blank stare ("What's your point?"), revise your thesis, using the "Taking Control: What Makes a Strong Thesis?" guidelines.

Taking Control

What Makes a Strong Thesis?

It should be easy to know when you have a workable thesis, but many writers struggle to write one. Once you've drafted a tentative thesis, check it against the following criteria:

- **A thesis should be a complete sentence (or two).** If all you have is a word or phrase, you may have a topic, but you haven't said anything about it. A thesis, moreover, shouldn't be a question—in most cases, it should *answer* some important question about a topic.
- **A thesis should tell readers what your paper is about.** That means no waffling, vague abstractions, or unspecific pronouns as the subject of the sentence.
- **A thesis should make readers notice your paper.** It should say something substantive, argumentative, and current. It shouldn't restate the obvious.

(Continued)

Taking Control *(Continued)*

- **A thesis should make a claim that you can adequately support with evidence** from your research or personal experience. If your thesis statement is so broad that you would need to write a book in order to do it justice, you need to narrow it.

EXERCISE 1 Using the guidelines listed in the Taking Control box on page 28, evaluate the following thesis statements. Revise the statements that don't seem effective to make them stronger.

1. Why are more college students now graduating within four years? Perhaps they are more career oriented and better prepared for college, but the biggest reasons are probably financial.
2. In today's environment of global conflict, should our military restore the draft?
3. Some drivers are so dangerous that they should not be allowed on the road.
4. Movies such as the *X-Men* and *Batman* series show the growing influence of comic books.

2 Preview the direction your paper will take. Write a complete sentence or two that forecasts in some detail the ideas you expect to write about, in roughly the same order in which you plan to address them. Your thesis sentence(s) should be *succinct* yet *comprehensive*—that is, it should be short yet indicate the major points you want to make. Suppose you are writing an article for the business-student newsletter on your campus. This thesis tells readers what to expect:

> When you start looking for a summer internship, think globally: in the past few years, many students on our campus have found lucrative and interesting positions with overseas corporations.

3 Place your thesis effectively. Don't assume that your thesis must be the first sentence of your paper, although it can be. Your decision about

where to put your thesis depends on the writing situation: your audience, your purpose, and the position you want to take on the topic.

If you want to present information or arguments in a straightforward, no-nonsense fashion—as you should in an essay examination or a business letter—then state your thesis early. It may even be your first sentence. At other times you'll need to provide a context for your thesis, by defining key terms or giving background information. That's why, in academic papers, the thesis statement often appears at the end of the introductory paragraph.

In other situations, you may delay your thesis even more. If you're writing to explore an issue rather than to present a settled opinion on it, or if your thesis is controversial, you may want to present your evidence first and then lead readers gradually to your point. In the social sciences, writers often begin research reports by describing their methods and data and end with larger conclusions. In such cases, your thesis may not be stated until the last paragraph. Just remember, a delayed thesis doesn't give you license to write an unfocused paper—readers should understand from its very beginning what central ideas your paper will address.

4 Revise your thesis as your project evolves. Don't be surprised if your thesis shifts as you explore, research, and plan your project. Most writers will revise a working thesis statement to make it more precise or to reflect changes in the paper's direction. Don't worry about such changes. This is the right time to test your preliminary ideas so that your final paper will be stronger. Learn from every part of the process, and don't be discouraged easily. Your final thesis may be nothing like what you imagined at the outset—and that's okay.

GOING PUBLIC **An Opening Paragraph with Thesis Statement**

A thesis statement pulled out of context, like the previous examples in this chapter, can seem pretty bland. Fortunately, in a real paper, a thesis isn't solely responsible for shaping a reader's first impression. Notice how Tallon Harding positions her thesis statement in an opening paragraph designed to capture readers' interest.

School let out an hour ago but the library is packed with students. Each of us is working frantically to finish the next day's assignments. The Advanced Placement Tests will be given on Monday and we all need the weekend to study; the pressure is almost unbearable. A couple of years ago this spectacle—an evening not much different from most during my senior year—would have confounded the average high school librarian, who would have been able to leave as soon as school let out. Recently, however, such scenes have become commonplace. Due to a push by school officials looking to receive government grants, students are increasingly being pressured to enroll in college-level courses offered in the high school classroom. As part of the Education and Economic Development Act passed by the South Carolina state legislature in 2005, all high school students in the state will be required to declare a major by 2011 (Smith). What these ambitious administrators forget is that a good high school education should involve more than just academic study. It must also include extracurricular activities that help students to grow socially and physically, to become well-rounded citizens. As schools neglect these qualitative dimensions in their quest to achieve higher and higher academic standards, they leave gaps in students' education and neglect important student needs.

b How do you avoid plagiarism?

Early in the writing process, you must understand what constitutes plagiarism, particularly if you're writing papers for an instructor who expects you to use outside sources. Doesn't that require you to use someone else's material and ideas? Well, yes it does. The trick is knowing how to incorporate other people's ideas or research into your work while giving them full credit.

The point is always to be up front about where you found the idea, quotation, or conclusion that you're incorporating into your work. You should make it possible for anyone who wants to clarify a point or get more information on your topic to go to the source and check it out.

If in previous years you've attended a school in which teachers expected you to memorize large quantities of material and then demonstrate your mastery of that material, it may seem natural to you to simply repeat information that you've gathered from your reading. You're likely to find, however, that's not what instructors want in most composition courses or in other liberal arts courses for which you write papers or create online documents. Rather, those instructors want you to go beyond mastery of a body of material to synthesize, respond to, and evaluate its ideas and its arguments.

As a Web-savvy student, you know what a wealth of information the Internet can provide on almost any writing topic. You can find anything from a psychological profile of Lady Macbeth, to directions for building a kayak, to an essay about the benefits of Pilates or yoga. Online encyclopedias alone seem to have accurate information on any topic you can think of. You can also find commercial sites that will, for a price, provide you with a finished term paper on just about any topic of your choice. You may have friends who have bought such papers or have done a cut-and-paste job of piecing together a paper from Internet sources. Whatever process they chose, the project they turned in can only be called plagiarism.

When you take a process-centered writing course, you have a special opportunity to master a craft essential for doing well in college and, later on, in most professions—certainly in science, law, engineering, college teaching, public relations, and even in medicine and accounting. A skilled writer has an edge in getting what he or she wants in the everyday transactions of life.You don't want to miss an opportunity to acquire such a powerful tool.

C How do you organize a writing project?

No matter how good your ideas are, if you don't organize them, readers will get lost and blame you. Coherent organization is the foundation of any writing project. Fortunately, you don't have to invent the structure of a paper, a résumé, a report, or project every time you begin one. Instead, you

can study the patterns of organization in existing documents and then apply them to your situation. If you are not sure of how to organize a project, one of the best things you can do is find a successful example of a similar project. If you're writing a college paper, assess the assignment sheet carefully and ask your instructor for sample papers. In writing for a journal or magazine, look at past issues. The document templates included in your word processing or presentation software can also be useful resources. In *Microsoft Word*, for example, look under the Format menu in the "Style Gallery" to find templates for letters, résumés, brochures, newsletters, and more.

Remember that even when you are working with a sample document or organizational template, you are still responsible for the content and effectiveness of your paper: a template can't tell you *what* to write or how to make your arguments persuasive or interesting. Keep your ideas and your rhetorical situation in mind, and when it's necessary, don't hesitate to adapt a pattern to suit your own purpose and audience.

1 Consider an introduction-body-conclusion structure. This basic pattern works for many kinds of projects. Lawyers, scientists, and writers in many academic fields favor this design because it suggests a logical movement from statement to proof.

Chuck Savage/Savage Productions Inc.

Getty Images

How might you organize a description of your last summer job differently if you were composing (1) your résumé, (2) a humorous personal narrative for a composition course, or (3) an interview segment for a documentary film on labor conditions in the industry? What would you talk about first? What points would you emphasize? In what order would you present them? What would you discuss in the most detail?

- In the **introduction** you begin by telling your readers clearly and simply what ideas your paper will cover.
- In the **body** of the paper you follow with examples and explanations for each of your main points.
- In your **conclusion** you tie your points together and leave readers with a sense of closure.

In the first section of a paper that uses this basic structure, a writer promises to cover certain issues or address particular questions. For that reason, this structure is sometimes called a commitment-and-response pattern.

Papers that result from the basic introduction-body-conclusion pattern usually take a simple shape.

Basic Introduction-Body-Conclusion Pattern

Introduction *Present thesis . . .*		I. First-year students need a rep. on the board of the student union.
Body	◆ *First argument* ❒ Support: examples, reasons, evidence, etc. ◆ *Second argument* ❒ Support: examples, reasons, evidence, etc. ◆ *Other arguments . . .*	II. Other years have representation A. All students need a voice B. First-years have special needs III. First-years need to be welcomed A. Student union can be friendlier B. Good to socialize outside dorms IV. Welcoming campus helps retention
Conclusion *Closing summary . . .*		V. An inviting student union can help first-years join campus communities.

Such papers can also incorporate significant variations. When you make a point or support an argument, for example, you must usually deal with opposing views; if you don't address them, the paper will seem to evade key questions. Counterarguments—discussions of opposing views—inevitably make the structure of the paper more complex. They can be addressed immediately, near the beginning of the paper, or they can be dealt with as they arise in the body of the piece. Just don't end with a counterargument; it will only weaken your case.

Here's how the basic model might look when counterarguments are added to the mix.

Introduction-Body-Conclusion Pattern with Counterarguments

Introduction *Present thesis . . .*		I. First-year students need a rep. on the board of the student union.
Body	◆ *First argument* ❒ Support . . . ❒ Counterarguments addressed by rebuttal ◆ *Second argument* ❒ Support . . . ❒ Counterarguments addressed by rebuttal ◆ *Other arguments . . .*	II. Other years have representation A. First-years need a voice B. First-years may not understand the system, but can learn it III. First-years need to be welcomed A. Student union better than dorms B. Dorm rec-rooms are good but not for meeting older students IV. Welcoming campus helps retention
Conclusion *Closing summary . . .*		V. An inviting student union can help first-years join campus communities.

2 Consider a narrative or a process design. When you narrate a story, you usually describe events in the order they occurred. The structure can be quite straightforward. A narrative can also be more complicated—for instance, by moving back in time as a movie does with flashbacks.

Narrative Pattern

Introduction *Present thesis . . .*		I. Our town's public buildings reflect the architectural styles of several different historical periods.
Body	◆ *First event* ◆ *Second event* ◆ *Third event* ◆ *Other events . . .*	II. Colonial town hall (1793) III. Victorian courthouse (1846) and post office (1888) IV. Art-deco library (1932)
Conclusion *Closing summary . . .*		V. These buildings tell a story about our town's gradual development.

A process pattern is essentially the same as a narrative pattern, but instead of telling a story you are explaining how something works. You list and describe each step in the process.

Process Pattern

Introduction *Present thesis . . .*		I. Winning a reality-TV game show requires patience and cunning.
Body	◆ *First step* ◆ *Second step* ◆ *Third step* ◆ *Other steps . . .*	II. First, display trustworthiness III. Second, form a small coalition IV. Third, lie low for a while V. Last, betray coalition members
Conclusion *Closing summary . . .*		VI. To win the big bucks, you need to remember it is only a game.

Be careful to include all the necessary steps in the proper order. You can find good examples of process patterns in instructional and technical manuals.

3 Consider a comparison-and-contrast structure. In many kinds of papers you will have to examine different objects or ideas in relation to each other, especially when you are evaluating or arguing. In organizing such papers you can use one or two basic plans, either describing the things you are comparing one at a time (*subject by subject*) or describing them in an alternating sequence (*feature by feature*). We show both models below.

Comparison-and-Contrast Pattern: Subject by Subject

Introduction *Present thesis . . .*		I. Sport-utility vehicles, though currently more popular than family sedans, have environmental and safety drawbacks that should make potential buyers beware.
Body	◆ *First subject examined* ❒ First feature ❒ Second feature ❒ Other features . . . ◆ *Second subject* ❒ First feature ❒ Second feature ❒ Other features . . .	II. Pros and cons of SUVs A. Popularity B. Environmental impact C. Safety III. Pros and cons of family sedans A. Popularity B. Environmental impact C. Safety
Conclusion *Closing summary . . .*		IV. Buyers who value safety and the environment over style should bypass sport-utility vehicles in favor of traditional sedans.

The subject-by-subject plan works best in short papers involving only a few comparisons; in such pieces readers don't have to recall a large quantity of information to make the necessary comparisons. When you're writing a

longer paper, however, use the feature-by-feature pattern; otherwise, readers may lose track of the features you're comparing.

Comparison-and-Contrast Pattern: Feature by Feature

Introduction *Present thesis . . .*		I. Sport-utility vehicles, though currently more popular than family sedans, have environmental and safety drawbacks that should make potential buyers beware.
Body	◆ *First feature examined* ❒ In first subject ❒ In second subject ◆ *Second feature* ❒ In first subject ❒ In second subject ◆ *Other features . . .* ❒ In first subject ❒ In second subject	II. Popularity A. Of sport-utility vehicles B. Of family sedans III. Environmental impact A. Of sport-utility vehicles B. Of family sedans IV. Safety A. Of sport-utility vehicles B. Of family sedans
Conclusion *Closing summary . . .*		V. Buyers who value safety and the environment over style should bypass sport-utility vehicles in favor of traditional sedans.

4 Consider a division or classification structure. These two ways of organizing a paper are quite different, though both involve creating categories to make material more manageable. A paper organized according to the principle of *division* breaks a topic into its components—its separate parts. A paper on the solar system might devote a section to each planet; a paper on a political candidate might describe her positions on several major issues in an order that seems appropriate.

Division Pattern

Introduction *Present thesis . . .*		I. Candidate Everson's platform is based on four main issues.
Body	◆ *First division* ◆ *Second division* ◆ *Third division* ◆ *Other divisions . . .*	II. Crime prevention III. Local tax rates IV. Traffic control V. Environment
Conclusion *Closing summary . . .*		VI. Everson will devote the most resources to crime prevention.

Classification involves breaking a large subject into categories according to some consistent and useful principle of division. Classification must

follow rules that don't apply to division. First, classifications must be *exhaustive*: every member of the class must fit into a category. Any principle of division you use must also be *consistent*. You can't classify by more than one principle at a time—for example, if you group planets according to the number of moons they have *and* whether or not they have rings, you are not really classifying. Finally, classes *must not overlap*. That means you should be able to place an object in only one category.

Classification Pattern

Introduction *Present thesis . . .*		I. This year's most popular bands represent many musical genres.
Body	◆ *First classification* ◆ *Second classification* ◆ *Third classification* ◆ *Other classifications . . .*	II. Modern rock III. Reggae and ska IV. Hip-hop and "new soul" V. Folk, bluegrass, and country
Conclusion *Closing summary . . .*		VI. Young music fans appreciate a variety of musical styles.

Yet most systems of classification break down at one point or another, like the classification of music types shown above. What do you do with performers who play more than one kind of music? Well, you can create yet another class (Latin-pop or folk-rock), or you can classify by the musician's major body of work. But you won't always be able to eliminate every exception.

5 Consider a cause-and-effect design. This design is appropriate when you write a paper explaining why something has happened. The typical cause-and-effect paper moves from an explanation of some existing condition to an examination of its particular causes. In other words, you see what has happened and you want to know why.

Cause-and-Effect Pattern

Introduction *Present thesis . . .*		I. Animated films have succeeded recently due to good writing.
Body	◆ *Effects explained* ◆ *Least important causes* ◆ *More important causes* ◆ *Most important cause*	II. Animated films have made money and gained critical accolades III. Because animation is better IV. Because scripts have broad appeal
Conclusion *Closing summary . . .*		V. Plots and dialogue of new animated films entertain both young & old.

Typically there is more than one explanation for a given event, so a cause-and-effect paper may examine various causes, from the least important to the most important. You can begin your essay by identifying an effect and then go on to hypothesize about the causes, or you can start by listing a number of causes and then show how they contribute to a particular effect.

6 Consider a problem-and-solution pattern. You can use this pattern effectively for papers in which you argue for change or propose an idea to settle a problem.

The first part of this pattern says, "We've got a problem and we've got to solve it—now." This part of the paper provides background information to demonstrate that the problem exists and is urgent.

The second part of the problem-and-solution pattern steers the reader through proposals for solving the problem. Since most of these ideas will be rejected (or furnish only a part of the recommended solution), the advantages and limitations of each are examined carefully. This section of the essay assures readers that no plausible approach has been ignored.

In the third part of this pattern you propose and defend one solution to the problem. You may then want to discuss the disadvantages and advantages of this proposal, highlighting the advantages while allowing readers to feel that no hidden agendas guide your proposal. You can then conclude by explaining how the change can be put into place.

Problem-and-Solution Pattern

Introduction *Present thesis . . .*		I. All business school graduates should be required to take a course on professional ethics.
Body	◆ *Problem and need for solution established*	II. Public distrust following recent scandals is bad for business
	◆ *Rejected solutions*	III. Threat of punishment not enough
	❒ First rejected solution	A. May deter some illegal actions
	• Advantages	B. But damage is done whether or not crime is punished, and
	• Disadvantages	C. Unethical actions may be legal
	❒ Other rejects . . .	VI. Ethics class prevents problems
	◆ *Proposed solution*	A. Easy to add a new requirement
	❒ Feasibility	B. Some want fewer requirements
	❒ Disadvantages	C. Focus on ethics not legalities
	❒ Advantages	D. Principles addressed via debate
	❒ Implementation	
Conclusion *Closing summary . . .*		V. A discussion of principles will help graduates balance obligations to public, customers, & investors.

7 Use formatting and visual elements to reinforce your paper's organization. When the assignment allows it, don't hesitate to use visual devices such as bulleted and numbered lists, headings, color, and images to help readers see at a glance how you've organized your project.

EXERCISE 2 Working with your classmates, consider what patterns you might use for writing about two of the topics listed below. Give reasons why you think those patterns would work well in each case.

Where to eat out near campus

The popularity of the Harry Potter series

Safety problems in your community

Home-schooling versus public schooling

d How do you outline a paper?

An outline can help you keep a writing project on track, whether you are following one of the patterns described in Section 3c or following one of your own. But a blueprint for your essay doesn't have to be a formal, full-sentence outline. Experiment with several techniques until you find out what works best for you.

1 Try a working list. The working list is the most flexible of all outlining devices. Start by jotting down the key points you want to make, leaving plenty of room under each major idea. Then, working from a brainstorming list or perhaps from freewriting on the subject, select subpoints to fit under these major headings. This strategy works best as a preliminary planning technique, because it allows you to add examples and points (under the main ideas they support) as they occur to you.

EXAMPLE 1 **Working List: Should People Be Allowed to Own Exotic Pets?**

Why the issue of owning exotic pets is getting attention

- Internet makes it easy to purchase exotic wildlife
- International animal trade a multibillion-dollar business (*recent Times article: 5,000-7,000 pet tigers in the US alone*)
- More people interested in owning wild animals (*quote Juan's roommate*)
- Few states have strict laws limiting who can own exotic snakes, big cats, tropical birds, and other wildlife as pets
- Recent safety problems (*give examples: neighbor's escaped boa constrictor, North Carolina case of tiger cubs roaming suburban neighborhood*)
- Animal welfare agencies are calling for stricter rules

Arguments for owning exotic pets

- Many owners are responsible, take good care of animals
- Some take homeless or rescued animals that no one else wants
- Individual property rights (*Florida case*)

Why stricter limits on ownership should be imposed nationwide

- Would ensure that people don't buy dangerous animals on a whim, then get tired of them
- Could prevent neglect and abuse of pets by requiring owners to educate themselves (*Animal Finders Guide site*)
- Would still allow reputable wildlife preserves and parks to operate

When you think you have enough material, look over your list and decide which points you want to treat first and how you can arrange the others. Then start writing and, as you work, refer to your list to check that you are staying on track. Add and delete items as you need to—nothing in a working list is untouchable.

2 Make an informal (scratch) outline. Many writers like working from careful plans but dislike the restrictions of formal outlines. For them the informal or scratch outline—which arranges points into categories and subcategories—provides a happy medium.

A scratch outline should begin with a thesis that states your claim or main idea. Then decide what major points you'll use to support that thesis. For each major point you'll need subpoints that support, explain, or illustrate the main point. However, your statement of points and subpoints can

be quite loose because the conventions of the full-sentence outline need not be followed. Here's a sample scratch outline, following a cause-and-effect pattern of the sort described in Section 3c-5. Note that the scratch outline is considerably fuller than the working list; thus it provides more organizational guidance.

EXAMPLE 2 **Scratch Outline Format**

Working Title	**Who Should Be Able to Own Exotic Pets?**
Working Thesis Statement	**Thesis:** Lawmakers should pass stricter laws governing who can own exotic wildlife and under what conditions, because the increasing popularity of such pets has created problems with irresponsible owners, neighborhood safety, and unwanted animals.
Main point 1	**1.** Exotic pets have become increasingly popular in the United States during the past few years.
Supporting reasons and evidence for 1	• The Internet makes it easy to buy exotic animals from other nations. • Statistics: international pet trade now a multibillion-dollar business. • Few states strictly limit ownership of these pets. • Ordinary people are increasingly owning such pets: my next-door neighbor, tiger cubs in NC suburbs.
Main point 2	**2.** Many exotic pet owners endorse lax ownership requirements.
Supporting reasons and evidence for 2	• Most owners are responsible and caring.

- Many owners are caring for homeless or rescued animals (*Animal Finders Guide* site).
- Law-abiding citizens should be able to choose their pets.

Main point 3

3. However, stricter ownership requirements are needed to prevent serious problems.

Supporting reasons and evidence for 3

- These can prevent owners from buying exotic wildlife on a whim (give examples of abandoned animals).
- Requirements can ensure that owners are educated enough to properly care for animals.
- Requirements can insist on safety precautions so that animals do not become a neighborhood threat.

3 Make a formal (sentence) outline. A formal outline is a fairly complex structure that compels you to think rigorously about how the ideas in a piece of writing will fit together. (That's why instructors sometimes require them.) If your major points aren't compatible or parallel, a formal outline will expose the problems. When your supporting evidence is thin or inconsistent, those flaws may show up too.

In a formal sentence outline you state every point in a complete sentence, and you make sentences within each grouping parallel, according to the format in Chart 1. As you read through the chart, imagine how you would convert the preceding scratch outline into the fuller structure of a formal outline.

Chart 1 Framework of a Formal Outline

Title: Start by stating the working title of your paper.
Thesis: State your thesis fully as a complete sentence.

I. State the first major point in a complete sentence.
   A. Give the first subpoint for I.
      1. This example, evidence, or subpoint develops subpoint A.
      2. This example, evidence, or subpoint develops subpoint A.
   B. Give the second subpoint for I.
      1. This example, evidence, or subpoint develops subpoint B.
      2. This example, evidence, or subpoint develops subpoint B.
      3. This example, evidence, or subpoint develops subpoint B.
   C. Give the third subpoint for I (and so on).
II. State the second major point in a sentence parallel in structure to the first major point (and so on).

4 Outline using word processing or mind mapping software.

What makes outlining on a word processor or using mind mapping software preferable to doing the job on paper is the ease with which an on-screen outline can be expanded, contracted, rearranged, and otherwise altered without waste. Rather than constraining ideas, having a digital outline encourages a writer to be flexible.

EXERCISE 3 Make a working list or scratch outline for a paper you're currently working on. When you are done, make a formal outline of the same project. What additions and changes did you make to construct the formal outline? Which outline will you find most helpful when you sit down to begin your first draft? Why?

e How do you choose a title?

It may seem odd to choose a title while you are still planning and organizing a project. But titles are surprisingly important. Readers want and expect them. In fact, they may be annoyed if they don't find one that helps them anticipate what they will be reading—so craft your title carefully, keeping these tips in mind.

- **Choose a working title early in the process** (one you can change as the work progresses) that will keep you on track as you move through the planning and drafting stages of your project. Check your working title periodically to be sure it still fits the paper and make adjustments if necessary.
- **Be sure your title accurately reflects the content of your paper and uses keywords that are readily searchable online.** No cute titles, please. It's essential that your title let readers know what your paper is really about.
- **Try a two-part title** if you have your heart set on a clever phrase that's not particularly descriptive. Start with the unconventional phrase and follow it with a colon. The second part of the title, after the colon, should clarify exactly what the paper is about, as in "Short Guy, Big Ego: A Psychological Analysis of Napoleon's Military Strategy."

EXERCISE 4 Which of these titles are likely to be good predictors of content in a paper? Why?

1. iPods and Identity: How Push Technology Led to a Cultural Revolution
2. The Growing Trend of Hybrid Cars
3. College Students and Religion
4. What's in a Name?
5. Politics in the Hollywood Western

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How Do You Write a Draft?

How Do You Write a Draft?

a How do you start a draft?

Even professional writers sometimes feel anxious as they sit and stare at a blank page or computer screen. Beginnings *are* hard, but remember that a first draft doesn't have to be perfect. It's simply a place to start. In this section we offer suggestions to help you through the drafting process—so that you can stop worrying, take the plunge, and *start writing*.

Central Pennsylvania College

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Mid-South Community College

In what writing environments do you produce your best work? What resources and tools help you to write? Make a conscious effort to re-create these conditions each time you begin a draft.

1 Find a place to write and get organized. If you can, find a spot away from friends, family, and noise, where you won't be distracted. Collect your materials—laptop, flash drive, notes, source materials, and a copy of the assignment—and adjust your chair and the light. Try to follow the same routine every time you work on a project.

2 Keep the ideas coming. Try not to agonize over the first few sentences. Treat your first paragraph as a device to get rolling. Write three or four sentences nonstop to build momentum, no matter how imperfect they

may be. You may be surprised at how quickly words begin to flow once you've warmed up to your topic.

Remember, too, that you don't have to write the opening paragraph first. You can always begin with whatever section of the paper seems easiest to write and come back to the introduction later.

3 Don't criticize yourself, or edit prematurely. As you work on a first draft, cut yourself some slack. Good writing develops over time—you can't expect something to be perfectly polished when you first start working on it.

Don't fiddle with problems of mechanics, formatting, or style in your early drafts. You can go back and fix difficulties with spelling, punctuation, parallelism, word choice, and the like *after* you've gotten your ideas down on paper. If you bog down in details of form too early, you may lose your momentum for writing, letting your brightest ideas fade. In a first draft, push yourself to grapple with difficult ideas, try an unfamiliar organizational pattern, or experiment with a more interesting style.

4 Set your own pace. When you're not sure what pace best suits you, try writing quickly at first. If you hit a snag or can't produce the specific phrase or example you need, skip the troublesome spot and move on. Above all, keep writing. A draft in hand, even a sketchy one, will give you a sense of accomplishment and material to develop and refine.

5 Get feedback from other writers. Brainstorm, share ideas, compare findings, and test out arguments with fellow writers. Your classmates and colleagues can serve as important audiences for your first draft and keep you motivated. Many college writers also visit a campus writing center to get feedback as they develop a paper draft.

In Section 4e you'll find tips for approaching collaborative writing projects.

6 Draft on a computer. Even before you begin a draft, use your computer to accumulate and store material for your paper. Start a file that records your initial notes for a project days or weeks before the deadline. Bookmark online sources and download copies of relevant articles and images.

With a computer it's also easy to experiment with major changes without losing the work you've already done. Save alternate versions of your draft until you decide which one you want to use. If you use many different computers, consider using a Web-based office suite such as Google Docs. Such applications allow you to edit and save drafts wherever you have access to a computer and the Internet, even if you forget your flash drive.

You can also try out different formats and visual elements at this stage.

b How do you keep a draft on track?

When you begin a draft, you will probably have a thesis and a general organizational plan in mind. You will have gathered the resources you plan to use in the paper (articles, Web sites, statistics) and perhaps developed an outline. But the real work of writing a draft doesn't start until you begin putting words onto a screen or page. Only then can you see precisely how your plan may have to be altered. You will need to be both focused and flexible: focused enough to guide readers through your ideas and flexible enough to shift strategies when necessary.

1 Highlight key ideas. Keep your thesis and main points in mind as you compose the draft. One way to do this is to summarize your thesis up front, in the first paragraph. Beginning with key points gives readers a notion of what to expect; then you can follow with supporting material. Even if you choose to ease your readers into your thesis by opening the paper with background information or an attention-getting anecdote, you still need to keep your main point in mind so that the opening doesn't wander too far astray.

Continue to highlight main ideas throughout the draft. Use phrases like these to snap readers to attention.

> The main points of disagreement are . . .
>
> The chief issue, however, is . . .
>
> Here is the crucial question:
>
> I propose that . . .

Even cues as simple as *first, second*, and *third* can help readers follow the structure of your paper.

2 Keep the amount you write about each point roughly proportionate to its importance in the paper. Be careful not to write a lopsided draft that misleads readers. Your introduction paragraph shouldn't take up half the paper. If your thesis promises to develop a new solution to a problem yet neglects it until the last paragraph, you haven't fulfilled that promise. Should you find yourself writing at length on a minor point, or quoting at length from one source while neglecting others, step back and return to your central argument.

However, although you should respect the principle of proportion, don't be too stingy with words and ideas in a first draft. You'll discover in editing that it is easier to prune material you don't like than it is to fill in where your ideas are thin. Don't stray too far from your thesis, but do capture any fresh thoughts that emerge as you write. The same is true of examples, illustrations, facts, figures, and details: if they don't work, you can always cut them later or find a better place in the draft to use them.

3 Allow yourself enough time to draw conclusions. Conclusions are important, so don't skimp on the final paragraphs. The ending often determines what impression readers will take from your piece.

When you approach the end of a draft, take time to review what you have written. Then consider what remains to be done: What are the larger implications of the ideas you've discussed? What do you want readers to know, believe, or do? What loose ends need to be tied up? Let these concerns shape your concluding paragraph(s). If you have time, try out several endings and choose the one that you think best fits your audience and purpose.

WRITER AT WORK A Drafting Journal

Student writer Tallon Harding recorded in a writer's journal the steps she went through in drafting "Overwhelmed and Overworked: How Today's High Schools Fail to Meet Students' Needs," which she wrote for a first-year writing course.

In what ways does her process reflect the suggestions made in this chapter? How does her drafting strategy match and differ from your own? Which of her strategies, if any, might you try next time you write a paper?

—When I got the assignment, two weeks before the draft was due, I knew almost right away what topic I wanted to write about—the fact that high schools push students so hard to do college-level work before graduation. I started by freewriting to explore my general argument and my own experiences.
—Next, I made a scratch outline of main points and allotted myself about a week to complete the draft, with the first two days devoted to research. I searched the campus library's online resources and found sources that provided evidence to back up my arguments and new information that helped me to better develop my thesis—I also found sources that disagreed with my viewpoint and had to figure out how to address these in the paper.
—The next day, I began to form my rough draft, using my outline as a guide along with the information that I had gathered in my research. There were several times when I was unable to focus on my paper, and during these instances I would go for a quick run to clear my head. When I returned, I was able to pick up where I had left off.
—In this way, over several days, I wrote most of my paper, working on one or two paragraphs at a time, taking breaks in between each one. Within four or five days I had completed my rough draft, at which point I took a day off, completing the assignments in my other courses.
—After twenty-four hours had passed, I returned to my paper and read it over. With a fresh mind, grammatical and structural mistakes were more obvious, and I was able to edit and proofread. I did this again on the following day, correcting smaller errors and fine-tuning my wording until I was ready to give the draft to my instructor for feedback.

C When should you take a break?

In the middle of a writing project you may suddenly find yourself stumped. You gaze at your computer screen or look at a blank page, but nothing happens. No ideas come. Such a lull can be stressful, especially when a deadline looms. But don't panic; you may simply need to kick back and let your thoughts *incubate*.

Incubation is an interval during which a writer stops composing for a time to let ideas germinate or develop. You can't force or rush incubation; you can only be ready to grab a new idea when it surfaces. When possible, start a writing project well before its deadline, since you may need several incubation periods. For authors who work consistently, such rest periods are absolutely necessary. When they've written themselves out for the day, they know it's fruitless to sit at the desk any longer.

Don't use incubation as an excuse to procrastinate, however. If you're still having problems with a project after a few hours (or a weekend) of rest, get back to work anyway. Review your notes or outlines; consult your research; reread what you've already written; try focusing on a new section of the paper. Most important, just write!

d How do you know when you have a solid draft?

Although you'll usually have a chance to revise and polish before the final product is due, don't settle for a first draft that's incomplete or rushed—especially if you plan to ask others to read it. How do you know when you've made a solid effort? Ask yourself the questions in Checklist 1.

Checklist 1 Knowing When You Have a Solid Draft

1. **Have you made a good-faith effort?** Be sure you've invested substantial time and thought in your paper. If you haven't, it's not ready to pass along to a reader.
2. **Is it a *complete* draft?** Have you stated a thesis, developed it with supporting arguments and examples, and finished with a defensible conclusion? Have you included any charts, tables, or images that will appear in the final project? A few paragraphs don't qualify as a working draft. Nor does a carefully written opening followed by an outline of what the rest of the paper will cover.
3. **Is the draft readable?** You can't expect instructors, classmates, or colleagues to respond carefully to a paper that's hard to read.

(Continued)

Knowing When You Have a Solid Draft *(Continued)*

- Double-space your draft, leaving ample margins all the way around the page for comments.
- Be sure that your printer or photocopier has made dark, legible copies.
- If you must handwrite a draft, *print* in ink on every other line.
- Print or write on one side of the paper only and number your pages.

EXERCISE 1 Evaluate a draft you have recently written against the three criteria in Checklist 1. Does your paper meet the standards? If not, what changes would you have to make to remedy the problems?

e How do you work on a draft collaboratively?

Being able to write as part of a group is an important skill in college, in business, and in many community settings. It's always a relief to share the workload, and collaboration often produces better ideas than a single individual could. But pundits joke about the ineffectiveness of committees for good reason. Without a shared focus and careful planning, collaborative writing projects can become frustrating exercises.

The kind of collaborative drafting we discuss in this section is different from the work of peer revision groups that meet to help individual writers improve an already written draft.

1 Decide on shared goals. Suppose your instructor has asked you and several classmates to develop a promotional Web site for a local historical museum as part of a service-learning project. Before you begin work, you'll need to come to a consensus on what you want to accomplish:

- Do you want to construct a primarily informational site where readers can find the museum's address, hours of operation, admission fees, and upcoming exhibits?
- Will your site also try to persuade readers to serve as volunteer tour leaders or to donate funds?
- Will your Web site be technically sophisticated or very basic?

Of course, you may not be able to sharply define a group project in a first meeting. You may need to brainstorm or do background research. If group members have conflicting ideas, you'll need to negotiate these differences.

2 Consider dividing the project into individual sections. You may find it efficient to ask group members to research and compose a section of the project individually, and then schedule a group meeting to combine and edit the sections into a single document. Students working on the museum Web site might ask one writer to take responsibility for constructing an informational home page, another to compose pages on current exhibits, and another to create a list of external links to other Web sites of interest to museum patrons.

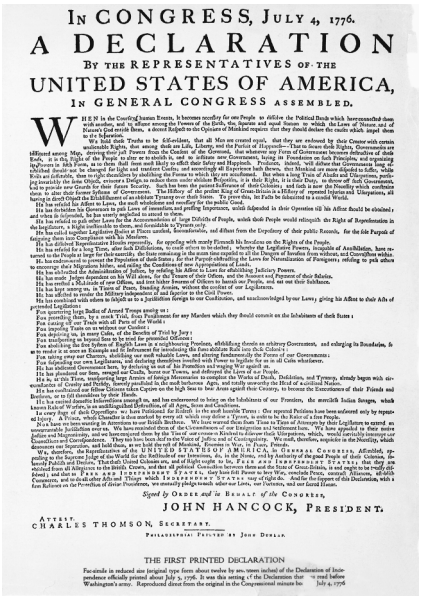
When you compose a group project in this way, set aside plenty of time to pull the pieces together. You'll need to eliminate overlap, address gaps in your coverage, and revise for consistency. The finished product shouldn't read like several shorter pieces cobbled together.

Splitting a document into individually authored parts is the quickest way to complete a group writing assignment. However, this approach doesn't work well for texts that aren't easily separated into components or for a document that must represent the shared perspective of a group.

3 Consider writing the document collaboratively. Collaborative drafting—a method in which the entire group writes a document together—can yield impressive results. The advantage of this method is that several ideas and viewpoints are often better than one: you'll have diverse input and ideas at every point in the composing process. There are many online applications that allow you to easily share sources and collaborate on documents. Most Web-based office suites allow multiple users to share and edit the same document; because such tools automatically save multiple versions of the same document, the confusion of having many different writers working on the same document is lessened. The primary disadvantage of this approach is the amount of time required. You'll need to schedule plenty of group meetings or frequent email exchanges to write and discuss the text in progress. If you choose this method, ask one person to be in charge of maintaining the draft in progress and recording new text and ideas.

4 Address disagreements promptly. Some college students resist group projects because they've had bad experiences with classmates who monopolized a project or neglected their responsibilities. To prevent such problems, work out a schedule of meetings and deadlines that everyone can agree on, and distribute copies to each group member. If one writer fails to abide by the agreement, raise the issue in your next meeting. You may need to ask your instructor to help if the problem persists.

Other difficulties arise when group members disagree about the direction a project is taking. Suppose that in a persuasive paper for an English composition course, some members of a group want to create a multimedia presentation on the health risks of body piercing whereas the rest want to write a traditional report. If you can't settle on an approach that satisfies everyone, consult your instructor. He or she may allow you to compose two smaller subprojects or to incorporate a statement of minority views into your document.



IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

A DECLARATION

BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

IN GENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

WHEN in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended in their Operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them and formidable to Tyrants only.

He has called together Legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the Depository of their public Records, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them into Compliance with his Measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his Invasions on the Rights of the People.

He has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and Convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the Population of these States; for that Purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their Migrations hither, and raising the Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries.

He has erected a Multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their Substance.

He has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our Legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large Bodies of Armed Troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an Example and fit Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People.

He is at this Time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their Friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions.

In every Stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every Act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the Ruler of a free People.

Nor have we been wanting in Attentions to our British Brethren. We have warned them from Time to Time of Attempts by their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable Jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Emigration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace, Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in GENERAL CONGRESS, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great-Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which INDEPENDENT STATES may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

Signed by ORDER *and in* BEHALF *of the* CONGRESS,

JOHN HANCOCK, PRESIDENT.

ATTEST. CHARLES THOMSON, SECRETARY.

PHILADELPHIA: PRINTED BY JOHN DUNLAP.

THE FIRST PRINTED DECLARATION

Fac-simile in reduced size (original type form about twelve by ten inches) of the Declaration of Independence officially printed about July 5, 1776. It was this setting (the Declaration that was read before Washington's army. Reproduced direct from the original in the Congressional minute book July 4, 1776

Library of Congress

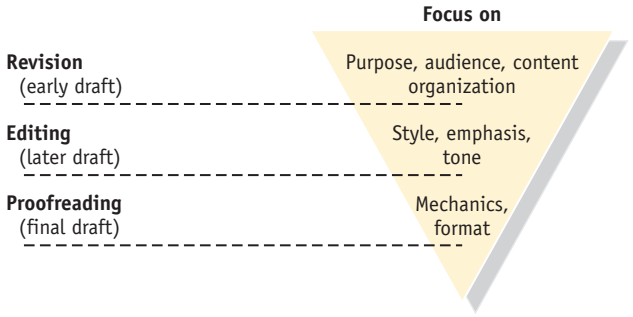
The Declaration of Independence is one of the most famous and influential collaboratively drafted documents. How do you think the document might have turned out if the signers had split up the work and written different sections individually? What elements of their writing situation might have inspired them to work as a group?

Corbis

How Do You Revise, Edit, and Proofread?

Why make a fuss distinguishing among terms as similar as *revising*, *editing*, and *proofreading*? Because revising, editing, and proofreading are different phases of the writing process, each of which involves thinking about a different aspect of the paper.

Chart 1 Revising, Editing, Proofreading



When you **revise** your draft, don't think in terms of *fixing* or *correcting* your writing—that's not really what you are doing. You are *shaping a work in progress,* reviewing what you have written, and looking for ways to improve it. You may get new ideas and shift the focus of the paper; you may cut, expand, and reorganize. At this point you are making large-scale changes.

When you **edit** a paper, you are less concerned with the big issues. Instead, you turn your attention to *clarity, style*, and *tone*. You may rewrite sentences you find awkward or correct problems with parallelism and repetition. Your goal is to create sentences and paragraphs that present your ideas effectively. These are small-scale changes.

When you **proofread** a paper, you go back over it line by line to *correct typographical errors, check for omissions, verify details*, and *eliminate inconsistencies.*

This is the fix-it stage, when you're preparing the paper to appear in public. Postpone proofreading until the end of a project. Otherwise, you may waste time repairing sentences that later are revised or deleted.

Although being able to distinguish among revising, editing, and proofreading is important (especially when your instructor has asked you to do one of these steps), the writing process is often more fluid and complicated than a three-part system. Sometimes, for example, you may not want to wait until the proofreading stage to fix a misspelled word or to insert a comma where you know one is needed, especially if you find that these small problems distract you from the higher-level revisions you're trying to focus on. It's okay to combine revising, editing, and proofreading if that's what works for you.

a What does revising involve?

When you revise a draft, don't try to work through it line by line, making changes as you go. Large-scale issues of content and rhetorical strategy that affect the entire paper must be addressed before you can polish individual sentences. At this point, reconsider everything you have written. Don't tinker. THINK BIG!

General Motors

Prototypes of possible future vehicles often appear at auto shows to test consumer reactions. In response, manufacturers then modify the product's design, just as you might revise a draft of a paper after showing it to readers. Think about the last few papers you wrote. Did you make changes in response to readers' suggestions? What kinds of changes did you make? Whose suggestions did you find most useful, and why?

1 Read your draft thoughtfully. Begin by printing out a copy of your draft and reading it from start to finish. Review the assignment and any feedback you have received. Ask yourself how you feel about the draft. What's good that you definitely want to keep? Where does it seem weak? Ideally you should appraise your draft several days (or at least several hours) after you have completed it so that you can read it more objectively.

When you dislike what you've written, readers have found little to praise, or you just need a fresh start, consider writing an entirely new draft. Creating a new draft may seem discouraging, but starting from scratch may be easier than repairing a draft that just won't work. Often an unsuccessful version points a writer toward what he or she really wanted to write.

2 Refine the focus of the paper. Once you've determined that your draft is workable, be sure that it makes and develops a central point. If the draft makes a lot of general statements without supporting and developing them, you have a problem with focus. Check your examples and supporting material. Have you relied mostly on common knowledge? If so, your draft may lack the credibility that comes from specific information.

Check also to see that your draft stays on track. Your introduction and thesis will evoke certain expectations in your readers. As you revise, rein in discussions that wander and tie up loose ends.

Checklist 1 Revising for Focus

- Have you taken on a larger topic than you can handle?
- Are you generalizing instead of stating a specific claim or thesis?
- Do you support your main ideas with evidence and examples?
- Does your conclusion agree with your opening?

EXERCISE 1 Using a working draft of one of your papers, try "paragraph mapping" to help you revise for focus. For each paragraph in your paper, write a short paragraph title, a paragraph thesis, and a list of your supporting points. Did you have trouble coming up with a title or a thesis for each paragraph? If so, this section of the paper probably isn't focused enough.

3 Consider your purpose. Ask yourself whether someone reading your draft would understand what you're trying to achieve. Decide exactly what you want to accomplish and be sure that your intentions are evident to yourself and to your readers.

Checklist 2 Revising for Purpose

- Do you clearly state in the first paragraph or two what you plan to do?
- Does the draft develop all the main points you intended to make?
- After reading the draft, will most readers be able to summarize your main idea?

4 Examine your paper's proportion. *Proportion* means the distribution and balance of ideas. You should develop your ideas in relation to their importance.

Checklist 3 Revising for Proportion

- Are the parts of the paper out of balance? For example, have you gone into too much detail at the beginning and then skimped on the rest?
- Can your readers tell what points are most important by the amount of attention you've given to them?
- Does the conclusion do justice to the ideas it summarizes?

5 Check for adaptation to audience. Sometimes a first draft is *writer-centered;* that is, the writer has concentrated on expressing his or her ideas without thinking much about the audience. Such an approach can be productive in a first draft, but a major goal of revising should be to change *writer-centered* writing to *reader-centered* writing. Put yourself in the place of your readers.

Checklist 4 Revising for Audience

- Do you spend too much time discussing material that most of your readers already know?
- Do you answer important questions that readers might have about your topic?
- Do you define all the concepts and terms your readers need to know?
- Do you use language your readers will understand?

6 Check the organization. A well-organized project has a plan and a clear direction. Readers can move from the beginning to the end without getting lost. To revise the structure of a draft, you'll need a printed copy because organizational problems can be hard to detect on a screen.

Checklist 5 Revising for Organization

- Does your paper state a clear thesis or claim? Does it then develop key points related to that thesis?
- Does the development of your points follow a pattern readers will recognize?
- Do the transitions move readers sensibly from point to point?
- Would the paper work better if you moved some paragraphs around?

7 Evaluate your design and check images and graphics. Now that you have a complete draft, you can assess how well the document is working visually: Have you used an appropriate format for the writing situation? Are the pages readable? Are sections logically arranged? Check any tables, charts, and images. Are they substantive, accurate, and legible?

8 Check the content of the paper. When you revise, you may need to add information to give your paper more substance.

Checklist 6 Revising for Content

- Do you fully explain and support each main idea?
- Do you need to add specific information and concrete examples that will make your case stronger? Do you need to do more research?
- Do you cite reliable, credible sources to back up your ideas?
- Does the title of your paper reflect its content?

If the content of your draft seems thin, return to the library or to other sources.

9 Revise from a printed copy. Whether you are revising, editing, or proofreading, you'll probably work best from a hard copy of your paper. Problems that seem all but invisible on a screen (weak organization, sprawling paragraphs, poor transitions, repeated words) show up more clearly in print.

EXERCISE 2 Apply the criteria for large-scale revision described in Section 5a to a draft you have written.

b What does editing involve?

Revision has given you a more focused, better-organized, more interesting draft. Now you're ready to *edit*—that is, to make the small-scale changes that you put on hold while you were revising.

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The "deleted scenes" included in DVD versions of most popular movies—such as the scene represented in this still from *Pirates of the Caribbean* (Dir. Gore Verbinski, 2003)—give us clues about how filmmakers approach editing choices in their work. View the deleted scenes from a movie you like. What can you infer about why this material was cut? Do the director's choices suggest strategies that you might apply to your writing?

1 Make your language concrete and specific.

Language is *concrete* when it describes things as they are perceived by the senses: colors, textures, sizes, sounds, actions. Language is *specific* when it names particular people, places, and things.

Although generalizations and abstract terms are appropriate in some writing situations, readers usually need vivid descriptions that bring concepts to life. As you edit, add people to your discussions, illustrate generalizations with examples, and supply your readers with facts and images. Give your writing texture.

2 Strive for a readable style. Look at your word choices. Do you achieve the right level of formality for the writing situation? Do you balance technical terms with everyday language? Are your subjects specific? Do your verbs express powerful actions? Are your word choices vivid and accurate?

Different writing styles are appropriate in different settings. When in doubt about what kind of language you should use in a piece, take a look at similar pieces others have written. For example, if you are writing a textbook review for an education course, look at similar reviews in education journals to see whether their authors use contractions and first-person pronouns, or whether more formal constructions are the rule.

3 Be sure that your tone is appropriate. Avoid polarizing or hostile language that will alienate your readers. Replace name-calling stereotypes (such as "traitor" to describe someone who disagrees with the president or "Religious Right fanatic" to describe a member of an evangelical church) with more accurate and objective descriptions.

Nor should a reasoned argument rely on intensely emotional language ("this greedy, evil policy is disgusting . . ."). Although a well-timed expression of feeling can move readers, your personal anger shouldn't become the focus of an argument.

4 Cut wordiness. Many writers produce wordy first drafts. In subsequent drafts, however, it's time to cut. Go after sprawling verb phrases ("make an evaluation" → "evaluate"), redundancies ("initial start-up" → "start"), and strings of prepositional phrases ("in the bottle on the shelf in the refrigerator" → "in the bottle on the refrigerator shelf"). Be ruthless. You can often cut up to a fourth of your prose without losing anything.

5 Test your transitions. *Transitions* are words and phrases that connect sentences, paragraphs, and whole passages of writing. When transitions are faulty, a paper will seem choppy and disconnected. Read your draft aloud. Improve the places where you pause, stumble, and detect gaps. Often you'll just need to add a word or phrase such as *on the other hand, however*,

or *finally*. In some cases you'll have to rearrange whole sections to put ideas in a more coherent order.

6 Polish the introduction and the conclusion. The introduction of a draft merits special attention, but don't edit the first paragraph until you know precisely how your paper is going to come out. Then you can make sure that the introduction is accurate and interesting.

The conclusion also warrants special care, but don't fuss with it until you have the main part of the paper under control. Then work out a strong ending that pulls the paper together and leaves your readers satisfied.

7 Use a computer grammar or style checker very carefully. For all their cleverness, grammar and style checkers identify problems in a draft chiefly by counting items. They can't assess context. And it is usually context that determines, for example, whether expletives or repetitions are appropriate. If you have access to a style checker, use it, but don't assume that it can create a polished paper for you.

8 Refine your layout and design. Now is the time to fine-tune and polish your document's design. For example, would adding color or changing font size make the project more readable? Do you need to adjust the position of images or tables? Do the different parts of your paper look consistent?

Checklist 7 Editing

- Is your language sharp—concrete and specific?
- Are sentences readable and clear?
- Have you eliminated wordiness?
- Is your tone appropriate for the purpose and audience?
- Are your transitions effective?
- Are your opening and closing paragraphs polished and clear?
- Are format and visual elements appropriate and effective?

EXAMPLE 1 **Edited Sentences from Student Papers**

Here are some sentences from student papers that have been improved by judicious editing. Notice that the changes do not greatly alter the sentences' meaning.

ORIGINAL

wordy awkward passive construction

At some point ~~or another,~~ the experience of peers pressuring one to engage in binge drinking is a dilemma that most college students ~~will have to~~ face.

EDITED

At some point, most college students face peer pressure to engage in binge drinking.

ORIGINAL

wordy

The companies ~~and products~~ that advertise in ~~women's~~ fashion magazines know that most young women in the United States want to be beautiful and alluring and design their ads to reflect this.

awkward unclear reference vague

EDITED

The companies who advertise in fashion magazines know that young women in the United States want to be beautiful and alluring, so they design their ads to reflect these qualities.

EXERCISE 3 Apply the criteria for editing listed in Checklist 7 to a draft you are working on. Give your paper the attention to detail it deserves, and don't back away from making changes where they are necessary.

c What does proofreading involve?

Like checking your appearance in the mirror before an important meeting, *proofreading* provides a final measure of quality control. The more you care about the impression a paper makes, the more important it is *not* to neglect this last step.

1 Check your weakest areas. If you are a poor speller, consult a dictionary frequently. If you are inclined to put commas where they're not needed, check to be sure they don't interrupt the flow of ideas. And see that you have chosen the correct words from the troublesome forms *its/it's, your/you're, there/their/they're.*

2 Check for inconsistencies. Have you switched your point of view in ways that might be confusing? For example, have you addressed readers initially as *you* and later referred to them as *we* or *they*? Do you use contractions in some parts of the paper but avoid them in others? Are headings in boldface on some pages and italics on other pages? Is the tone consistent throughout (not casual in some places and formal in others)?

3 Check punctuation. Look for comma splices—places where a pair of independent clauses is mistakenly joined with a comma instead of a semicolon. Take a moment to review all semicolons. See that proper nouns and adjectives (*England, African*) and *I* are capitalized. Check that quotation marks and parentheses are in pairs.

4 Check for typographical errors. Look especially carefully for transposed letters, dropped endings, faulty word division, and omitted apostrophes.

5 Check the format of your paper. Number your pages, italicize or underline titles of sources as needed, and put other titles between quotation marks. Be sure that you've cited outside sources appropriately and listed them in your bibliography. Set the margins correctly and review the page breaks.