



Writing Process

The writing process is the never-ending cycle of brainstorming, prepping, writing, and revising. However, many writers struggle with getting started and—without starting—many writers will never experience the rewarding nature of the writing process.

Why can writing be so difficult?

Writing requires you to use multiple skills together, such as critical thinking, creativity, organization, adaptability, vocabulary and grammar, research, time management, mental discipline, etc. Because of this, writing can be daunting from the outside, causing feelings of fear and anxiety. These usually manifest into writer's block or procrastination but may also become a severe obstacle.

If college or external obstacles are ever causing you to struggle to complete assignments, ***reach out for help!***

University Counseling Center

Website:

<https://www.kysu.edu/student-affairs/university-counseling-center/index.php>

Email:

counseling.center@kysu.edu

Phone:

(502) 229-7735

Brainstorming to create an idea.

1. Think about the assignment and make an appointment with the Writing Center!
 - What you are allowed to write about?
2. Start listing different ideas.
 - **Write down the first ideas that pop into your head. Do not worry about if they are “good ideas.” What matters is that you write them down.**
3. Pick one or more ideas that interest you.
4. Break the ideas down into smaller parts. What are a few aspects of the topic that you find interesting?
 - For example, if you chose “nature,” then what aspect do you want to write about? Climate change? Deforestation? Endangered animals?
5. Break it down again and again!
 - If you chose deforestation, are you focusing on the loss of forests in North America? Asia? Africa?
 - Now, be even more specific. Are you focusing on the Congo Basin? The rainforest of Xishuangbanna? Tongass National Park in Alaska?
6. Land on a specific idea and move on to choosing a topic within your idea.
 - For example, deforestation in Tongass National Park is a good idea but too broad to be a topic.
7. Other strategies for brainstorming include:
 - freewriting, lists, “book reports” (problems, history, arguments), make a visual (word map, graphs, tables)

Creating research questions to turn your idea into a topic.

1. First, do some basic research on your idea, finding any source you can.
2. Then, ask the journalist’s questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how?
 - **Who is affected? Who is involved?**
 - **What are the current problems and debates? What is the history?**
 - **When do we need to take action?**
 - **Where is it taking place?**
 - **Why does it matter? Why is it happening?**
 - **How do we respond? How have others responded?**
3. Make these questions more specific.
 - Keep them clear, focused, concise, and arguable (not yes/no).
 - How are black and brown bears affected?
 - Where and why is the deforestation mainly taking place?
 - What can we do to reduce logging in Tongass National Park?
4. Use these questions to discover a specific topic, what you believe, and what you think should be done.

Procrastination

“act of delaying academic tasks despite knowing that doing so will likely result in negative consequences”

- **Fear of Failure**
(the fear that you will do badly on the assignment)
 - Writing is hard. You are not a failure for struggling. You are learning and growing. If you need help with this, please come to the Writing Center.
- **Fear of Missing Out/FOMO**
(the fear that focusing on assignments will cause lost free time and time with friends)
 - Schedule your writing times to ensure you have free time every day.
- **Fear of Expectation**
(the fear that, if you do well on an assignment, you will then be expected to do well on every assignment)
 - While it can be stressful, instructor’s do not expect every assignment you create to be perfect. Also, your success is not luck-based. If you succeed, it is because you have the skills and discipline to succeed again. It gets easier!

Writer’s Block

“condition of being unable to think of what to write or how to proceed with writing”

- **Physical Discomfort**
(e.g., too hot, too cold, sitting or lying uncomfortably, etc.)
 - Find a space that is comfortable for you on or off campus.
- **Past Experiences**
(e.g., negative experience with teacher, bad grades, past embarrassment, etc.)
 - Past feelings are hard to overcome, as criticism *should* be constructive. Remind yourself that you are here because you *are* capable.
- **Fear of the Unknown**
(unfamiliar with class, assignment, instructor, or place)
 - Speak with the Writing Center, your instructor, and friends to become more familiar with assignments and the environment.
- **Lost**
(simply having no idea how to start)
 - Speak with the Writing Center and instructor for assistance.
 - Just start freewriting to get your thoughts out. Do not worry about quality.
- **Limited Time**
(quick/hard deadlines (finals, mid-terms) or timed class writing assignments)
 - Take a moment to set goals for yourself, sketch a quick mental outline, and push yourself to just start writing.
- **Outside Circumstances**
(any struggles outside of college)
 - Contact the University Counseling Center, speak with instructors, and prioritize your mental health.