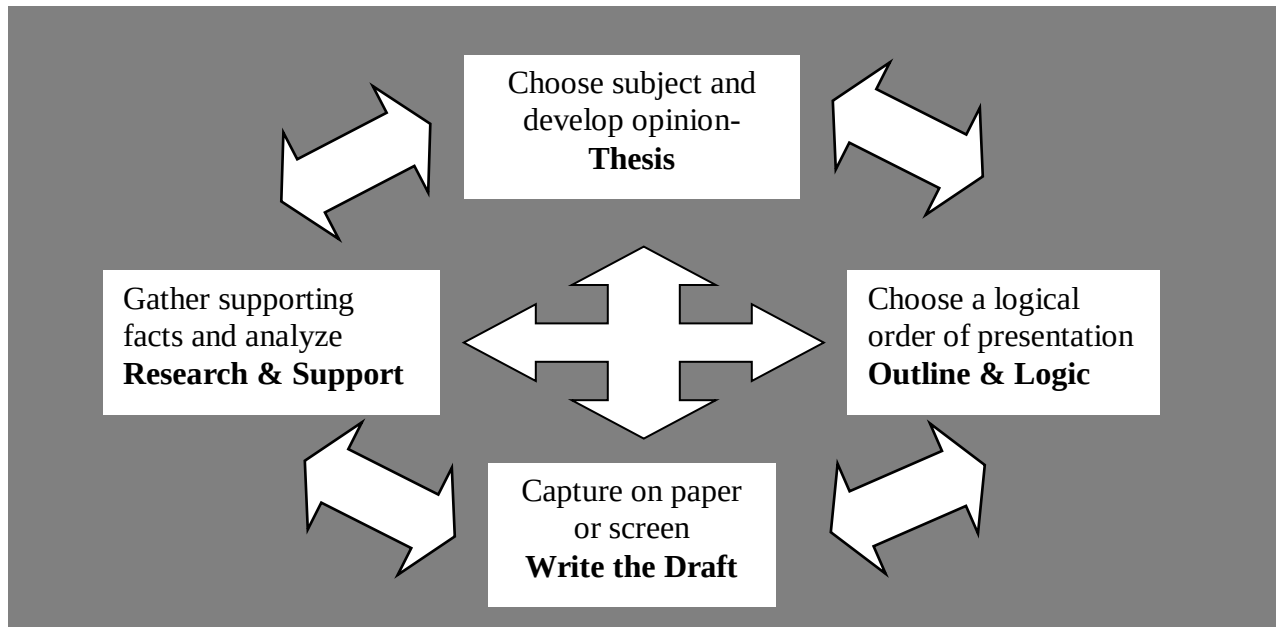


## Writing process

The process of creating a document has three major steps: Drafting, Revising, and Editing.

**Drafting the document** is very organic, requiring 4 tasks, which can be done in any order, shifting recursively between tasks. See Mind Map, Outline, Research, 6-Ws, Bluetooth



The writer can start with an outline (logical order), work on the thesis (opinion about subject), gather material (research) or just write (draft). This is the hardest part—getting the first draft done.

Many people discover their thesis while they are writing. This approach tends to require a lot more revision later on, even several drafts, but it allows the writer to capture ideas as they occur and not to worry about format, organization or mechanics. If you can't write or type fast enough to get all your ideas down on paper, record them on a voice recorder and transcribe later. You may even want to brainstorm with someone about your ideas, but be sure to record them in notes or audio.

Other people like to research first, to see what others have written about the topic, which can stimulate their own ideas. Make sure to record every detail of publication information: author, date, journal, volume, issue, pages, etc. Record your own ideas, marking them clearly in notes.

Other folks like to gather their own ideas first, mind-mapping or making lists or writing questions before doing research

Some folks like to be organized from the very beginning, and they start with an outline. They may already know what their opinions are on the subject, so they work on developing the order of the supporting points they want to make, leaving blank spots for research questions later on.

Any starting point will work, as long as you are thinking with a pen in hand or fingers on the keyboard. At the end of the first stage, the writer has a document, a draft, ready to begin step 2.

**Revising the document** is linear and should be done in a logical, orderly fashion. Take a break from the drafting process for at least a day, and for a long paper, take a week before going back to see what you have (RE = Back & Vis = See). Don't "look over" your paper, or you will overlook something.

1. **Thesis:** Do you have a clear subject that states your considered opinion on a definite topic? If not, then fix that first. Go back to drafting until you have a clear point to make. Why do you think you are right? Who would disagree with you? Why?
2. **Outline:** Do you have a logical order of presentation to lead your reader through the thought process to reach the conclusion suggest? If not, rearrange your paragraphs.. Put the most compelling point last, and the next most compelling point first, with the weakest point(s) in the middle, in ascending order of strength.
3. **Support:** Do you have enough material to support your thesis? Does anything need to be added? Does anything need to be taken away? Do you have documentation to show what part of the paper is yours, and what part you borrowed from someone else?
4. **Introduction.** Look at your initial conclusion and rewrite it as your introduction. Put your thesis near the end of the introduction. What does the reader need to know about the subject to understand your thesis? Why should the reader care about the subject? Consider adding one of the following to the beginning of the paper to get the reader's attention. Any of these should be from a recognizable authority, clearly documented with date and source. Don't just make them up.
  - a. **Quizzical Question**
  - b. **Startling Statistic**
  - c. **Quirky Quotation**
  - d. **Simple Story**
  - e. **Contrasting Statement**
5. **Conclusion.** Don't just summarize or repeat the main points of your paper. Tell the reader why your thesis is significant in the larger scheme of things. If you have recommendations, predict what will happen if they are (not) implemented. Give the reader an idea to take away, which might include one of the items from #4.

Once you have a solid draft with a clear thesis, take another break before beginning the editing and proofreading process. If you think of other things to add, so much the better. Give yourself time to mull over and muddle through the process so that innate can inform your educated mind.

**Editing the document** involves looking at the small details after the content is fixed. Wait at least a whole day or even a weekend before you start editing, after you are happy with the content. Get someone else to look at the paper as well—swap with a classmate.

1. **Grammar and spell-check** should not be left to MS Word, but that's a first step. MS Word has a lot of grammar checking options for formal writing. If you do not know how to turn them on, post a question in the discussion area.
  - a. **Passive voice.** If the sentence is marked passive voice, turn it around to take out the "**was** done" part and say who "**did**" it. Rather than say "Chiropractic *has been changed* from ...", say "Chiropractors *have changed* chiropractic from..."
  - b. **Spaces after punctuation.** The current standard is one space after a period, even though you learned to type two in typing class.
2. **Read the paper aloud**, or better yet, get someone to read the paper aloud to you. This will show you where awkward phrases and unclear sentences are hiding.
3. **Read backwards.** Start with the last word, and check it for spelling. Then read the next to the last word. Then the third from the last word. When you get to the beginning of the sentence, read that whole sentence. Then read the last word of the next to last sentence. Rinse and repeat!
4. **Check each reference.** Make sure you have recorded the author's name, date, journal, publication information and every other detail needed for your bibliography. Don't use material that is not dated, that has no author, or that does not show where the information came from. The burden of proof is on any source, especially anything on the Internet. If the site does not show where the information comes from, don't use it. Even Wikipedia requires off-site references. There's nothing wrong with using Wikipedia, but don't cite it. Go back to the sources cited in the article.
5. **Check each in-text citation.** Make sure that you have marked each sentence that takes material from a source (anyone other than you!). It's important to keep your notes straight so that you know what you thought of and what you read somewhere. The format to be used in the final copy depends on the journal to which it will be submitted, but for the class use parenthetical documentation (author, date) or for direct quotes (author, date, para. # or p. #).

If you decide to use an article that does not have an author, cite the article title on the references page and use ("short title", date, para. #) for citations.

6. **Check any tables, figures, or appended documents.** Each should be mentioned in the text of the paper and clearly labeled with source information if not developed by the writer.