

Stages of the Writing Process

Prewriting

During this stage, explore ideas to write about. You can brainstorm, free write, outline, create cluster models, make observations, or do research. Plan your writing: focus your ideas, think about who your readers are, and loosely organize your ideas.

Drafting

At this stage, write an initial draft. This is your first attempt at getting ideas down using complete sentences and paragraphs. It doesn't have to be pretty! Just write.

Revising

During this stage, strengthen and clarify your ideas. Ask yourself, "Do I need to sharpen my focus? Clarify or strengthen my thesis? Is there more I can say, other details I should include? Are there ideas I need to get rid of? Could I make any of my ideas more understandable or more interesting? Could ideas be arranged in a clearer order? How do I come across to my readers?"

Editing & Proofreading

At this stage, find and correct errors in punctuation, grammar, and spelling. Read aloud, use colored sheets of paper to cover up all but one line at a time, or read backwards through the paper, from the end to the beginning, looking for errors.

Applying the Process

Writing is a recursive process. You may cycle through these stages more than once before a paper is finished. For example, you might return to prewriting if you are dissatisfied with your first draft, or you might revise and edit three, four, five times or more before you're through writing! Also, any stage is a good stage to visit the Writing Center!

This handout was created by the Writing Centers at YVC.
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Visit us at the [Writing Center's homepage](#).

