

WRITING WITH PURPOSE

1. **MAKE A PLAN.** Before beginning to compose a rough draft, be sure you have a PLAN. You plan your day, your weekends, and your party time—why not what you're going to write? What is your purpose? Do you want to inspire, inform, argue, educate, challenge, compare, contrast?
2. **WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW.** **If knowledge is lacking, then read. Good readers make good writers.** Since your instructor will likely give you topic choices, choose one in which you have interest. (You might as well make the assignment as painless as possible.)
3. **BEGIN ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS.** Cluster your ideas—from your experience, others' experience, reading, etc. Sort them out and put them in order so that you can construct an intelligent, clear thesis sentence.
4. **WRITE CLEARLY STATED TOPIC SENTENCES.** Whether expanding on a section of your thesis, or just writing a single paragraph, your topic sentence must be limited to ONE idea which **demands development** of a certain belief or opinion. The topic sentence governs your paragraph's content, so DO NOT deviate from it. You must support your position with examples and details. You may also want to include your own experience if it is relevant.
5. **WRITE A CLEARLY STATED THESIS SENTENCE.** This will be the foundation of your paper. Your entire paper hinges on this; without it, your paper will collapse. Think of the thesis as a mini outline which will advise your reader of what is to follow. Generally, the thesis consists of three main points which will be developed in three body paragraphs.
6. **KEEP YOUR PURPOSE ALWAYS IN VIEW.** Remember that you must **keep the reader engaged** if you expect him to maintain interest in your essay. Reading your paper aloud may help you in this regard. It may also help you pick up errors.
7. **WRITE WITH CARE.**
 - **Make every word tell.** (Advice from The Elements of Style by Strunk and White, a booklet that every student should own)
 - **Choose vibrant, active voice over passive voice.** For example, Say, "They ridiculed him" rather than "He was ridiculed by them."
 - **Use colorful verbs.** Say, "The cat stalked" rather than "The cat walked carefully."
 - **Avoid excessive use of adjectives and prepositional phrases.**
 - **Smooth out style bumps like subject-verb agreement, shift in tense or point of view, verbosity, and redundancy.**
 - **SIMPLIFY!** Use "now" instead of "this point in time"

Use "to" instead of "for the purpose of"
Use "because" instead of "in view of the fact
that"

8. **CITE MATERIAL THAT IS NOT YOURS. PLAGIARISM IS A BIG NO-NO.**
Your instructor will either take off points or disallow the essay altogether.
9. **EDIT YOUR WORK.** Be sure that the content reflects your purpose and that it maintains a formal tone. Toss out slang, jargon, and material irrelevant to the thesis. Eliminate unnecessary words and phrases. Be sure that what you say is what you mean. At times, a thesaurus can be misleading because it may list a synonym that does not fit the context of your sentence. Where appropriate, change passive voice to active voice.
10. **PROOFREAD YOUR WORK.** Check your paper for spelling errors. (**DO NOT RELY ON SPELL CHECK.**) Also, ferret out fragments, run-on sentences, left-out words, subject/verb agreement, parallelism, and pronoun/reference agreement.
11. **REVISE YOUR WORK!** Revision is different from proofreading. With this exercise you should look for transitions, logic, coherence, irrelevant examples or comments, and paragraph structure. Be certain that your paragraphs are developed **IN THE SAME ORDER** as the points stated in your thesis sentence.

Artists in every discipline work hard at their craft, striving to produce just the right emphasis and style. The musician, the dancer, the painter all practice and refine and revise...all to gain the ultimate goal of "getting it right." The potter, if dissatisfied with his vessel or vase, throws the clay to the ground and begins again. **The writer can do no less.**

The realtor emphasizes three words: LOCATION. LOCATION, LOCATION. The writer practices these three: **REVISION, REVISION, REVISION!**

NO ONE'S WORK IS SO MASTERFUL THAT IT DEFIES REVISION!

If you struggle with word choice, sentence structure, punctuation, grammar, or other specific challenges, avail yourself of material here in the tutoring center. You should address those troublesome issues, especially during the revision process.