

# Writing a Paper



## Study Skills InfoGuide

## Writing Tips

Below are some additional tips to help you write an outstanding paper.

- ▶ Create a strong opening paragraph that includes a bold statement, notable quote, statistic, or interesting example.
- ▶ Make sure that you have a thesis statement that's clear and concise.
- ▶ End with a strong closing paragraph that restates or summarizes the main idea.
- ▶ Always identify another person's words or ideas by using quotation marks, footnotes, or by including a Works Cited page. If you present another person's words or ideas as your own, it's plagiarism, and you may find yourself in trouble.
- ▶ Make sure that 1) your paper is the proper length; 2) you have followed the instructions; and 3) your paper is turned in on time.

*The key to writing a good paper is to give yourself plenty of time to plan, write, and revise it!*



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## Writing Steps

### Step 3 - Organize your ideas

Before you begin writing, make an outline or diagram of your ideas.

- ▶ put main ideas in the order you want to present them
- ▶ write several supporting ideas under each main idea

### Step 4 - Write the first draft

- ▶ find a place where you won't be interrupted
- ▶ write the first draft in one sitting
- ▶ don't worry about making mistakes - just start writing and get your ideas down

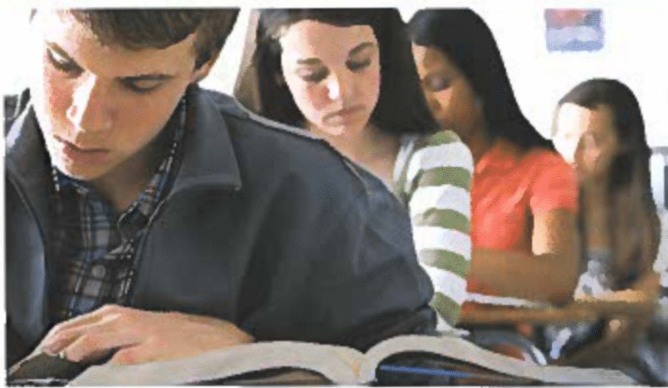
### Step 5 - Rethink, revise, rewrite

Read your first draft out loud to see if it makes sense. Then rethink, revise, and rewrite.

- ▶ add explanations and details
- ▶ rewrite anything that isn't clear
- ▶ eliminate parts that aren't necessary
- ▶ vary your sentence structure
- ▶ correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors
- ▶ give it to someone else to read

### Step 6 - Write the final draft

- ▶ make final changes
- ▶ turn in a neat, clean copy







## Writing a Paper

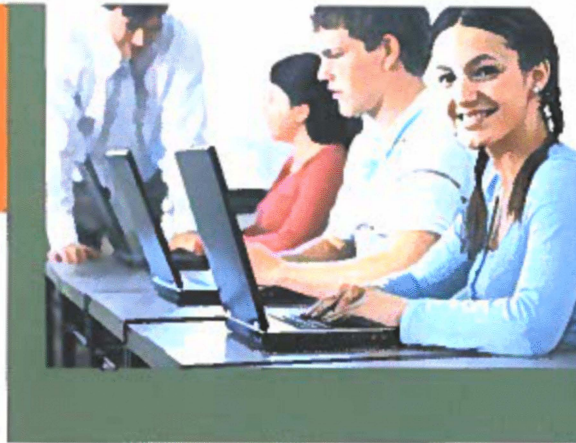
- ▶ Do you ever feel overwhelmed when you have a paper to write?
- ▶ Do you skip the outline and just start writing?
- ▶ Do you wait until the last minute to begin?

If you answered yes to any of the above, you may want to work on improving your writing skills.

**To succeed in school or in a career, you must be able to clearly communicate your thoughts and ideas in writing.**

**When writing a paper, go through these six steps. Your paper will be easier to write, and you are likely to get a much higher grade.**

- 1) Choose a topic
- 2) Gather information
- 3) Organize your ideas
- 4) Write the first draft
- 5) Rethink, revise, rewrite
- 6) Write the final draft



## Types of Papers

There are several different types of papers. These are the most commonly assigned.

### Report or Essay

- ▶ A paper that informs, explains, or persuades
- ▶ Generally 1 - 4 pages in length
- ▶ Focuses on one topic, idea, or argument
- ▶ Includes facts and evidence from several sources

### Research or Term Paper

- ▶ Similar to an essay, but longer
- ▶ Examines a subject in depth
- ▶ Requires a great deal of research, organization, and documentation

### Creative Writing Paper

- ▶ A paper that tells the reader a story
- ▶ Uses characters, plot, dialogue, and dramatic twists and turns to communicate the writer's ideas

### Thesis - All reports, essays, research, and term papers need a thesis statement.

A thesis statement is a sentence or two that tells what your paper is about. It explains what you believe, intend to explain, or prove. To write a thesis statement, ask yourself, "What is the focus of this paper?"



## Writing Steps

The following six steps will help you write a paper that's organized and well thought out.

### Step 1 - Choose a Topic

- ▶ If you have a choice, choose a topic that you're familiar with, and one that you want to learn more about.
- ▶ Choose a topic that's not too broad. (Instead of writing about the Civil War, write about one battle.)
- ▶ Make sure there's plenty of information available on the topic you choose.

### Step 2 - Gather Information

- ▶ Information on most any subject is available online. Finding good, solid, reliable information, however, isn't always easy. A library is still the best place to go for information. (Librarians can also be very helpful in locating hard-to-find information.)
- ▶ Have a system for gathering and organizing information. Use 3 x 5 index cards, a notebook, and/or printouts from online resources.
- ▶ Record accurate information for each source you use (title, author, page numbers, publisher, etc.). If obtaining information online, record the URL and date of access. You'll need this information for footnotes, bibliographies, or a Works Cited page.