6.5: Overview- The Writing Process

This chapter will introduce you to the writing process: the steps involved between receiving an assignment from your instructor to handing in your paper. Figure 6.1 illustrates the writing process.

Figure 6.1: The writing process

A successful writing project includes the following phases:

1. **Prewriting:** Generate and begin to develop ideas to write about. As a starting point, read the writing assignment, determine what is required, and what you will focus on. You may need to conduct research during this phase.
2. **Outlining a structure of ideas**: Determine the paper’s overall organizational structure and create an outline to organize these ideas. This phase usually involves elaborating on the initial ideas.

3. **Writing a rough draft**: Use the work completed in the prewriting and outlining phases to develop a first draft. It should cover the ideas that you brainstormed and follow the organizational plan that you laid out.

4. **Revising**: Review the draft and reshape its content to ensure it flows smoothly. This stage involves moderate and sometimes major changes: adding or deleting paragraphs, phrasing the main point differently, expanding on an important idea, reorganizing content, etc.

5. **Editing**: Review the draft again to make changes that improve style and adherence to standard writing conventions. For example, you may replace a vague word with a more precise one, or correct errors in grammar and spelling. Once this stage is complete, the writing process is finished and your work is ready to share with others.

Check out Audio Podcast 6.1 in which Dr. Annette Bailey from the Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing at Ryerson University shares her insights about writing and transferring your thinking onto paper.
Audio Podcast 6.1: Insights about writing [7:53]

Student Tip

The Iterative Process of Writing

The writing process is not linear: you should move back and forth between the phases. For example, you might recheck the assignment guidelines to verify that your topic, pre-writing, and writing meets expectations. Or, you might brainstorm some ideas, do some research, and only then begin thinking about the main idea or thesis of your paper.

Activity: Check Your Understanding

The original version of this chapter contained H5P content. You may want to remove or replace this element.

Attribution statement

The writing process content was adapted from (with editorial changes):

Writing for Success 1st Canadian Edition by Tara Horkoff is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted. Download for free at: opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccess/