

# 3

## Writing

### THE WRITING PROCESS

“Writing isn’t a skill that some people are born with and others aren’t, like a gift for art or music. Writing is talking to someone else on paper. Anybody who can think clearly can write clearly, about any subject at all.”

—William Zinsser

#### FACT OR FICTION?

*Prewriting can be done at any time. It is okay to stop while I am writing my essay and use a prewriting strategy.*

#### FACT.

The word prewriting may seem to imply that it can be helpful only at the beginning of the writing process; however, prewriting can help you improve and develop your argument at any stage.

### Discovering Key Points

- ➔ Identify the stages of the writing process
- ➔ Write to demonstrate knowledge of the prewriting strategies
- ➔ Describe the writing stage
- ➔ Identify revising as part of the rewriting stage and why it is important
- ➔ Identify editing as part of the rewriting stage and why it is important

The series of activities that writers go through from the very beginning of the assignment to the finalized product is called **the writing process**. While this process may differ somewhat for everyone, all writers plan, write, and review their work. These basic stages are called **prewriting**, **writing**, and **rewriting**.

The parts of the writing process do not occur just once. They tend to recur many times before a paper is finished. Most successful writers revisit parts of the writing process several times before they consider their work completed. If a writer uses only one part of the writing process—that is, if the writer does not use prewriting or rewriting—the paper will not be as interesting and sophisticated as it could be. Using all three parts of the writing process helps to create a more interesting and developed final product. For example, you may start with prewriting and then move onto writing, but if you find you need more ideas, don't be afraid to prewrite again to further explore your topic. Similarly, you may discover during rewriting that you have not directly addressed the whole assignment. In this case, you would return to prewrite and write about the “missing parts” of the topic in order to make your paper more complete.

## Prewriting

Prewriting strategies are used to help writers generate, explore, and develop ideas for use on an assignment or paper. Once a writer has ideas he or she wishes to use, prewriting can even assist in constructing an organization and evaluating how to effectively fulfill the assignment. These prewriting strategies are sometimes called invention strategies because of their ability to help writers create new arguments and develop new points at any stage of the writing process. There are many prewriting strategies; **reading**, **free-writing**, **brainstorming**, **questioning**, **discussing**, **clustering**, and **planning** are some of the most common.

### Reading

One way to discover ideas is to read about your topic. Investigating a topic that you are unfamiliar with will help you formulate an informed opinion and provide you with strong examples. In some of your classes, you may be asked to write a paper so you can research and learn about a topic in depth; reading is the beginning of this process. You may find general information about your topic online or in a newspaper or magazine article. More specific and in-depth information may be found in a journal article or a book. Write down what you have discovered through your reading. Include interesting and important facts, notable experts, and any questions you might have. To keep your information organized, a useful strategy is to put any factual information you find in one column and your thoughts and questions in another.



For more information about reading, see Chapter 2.

STUDENT EXAMPLE

Howie needs to give a description of a local charity and has been assigned Opportunity Village. He has decided to read about the charity and record the information he finds as well as his thoughts.

Opportunity Village	
Facts and Information	Thoughts and Questions
<i>Opportunity Village is a non-profit charity in Nevada for people with intellectual disabilities.</i>	<i>The charity tries to help people with disabilities become part of the community and even find jobs.</i>
<i>Opportunity Village was founded in 1954. They help 3,000 people a year and estimate they have saved taxpayers 22 million dollars in education and services.</i>	<i>They seem to help a lot of people. If I had someone in my family with a disability, I would want them to be a part of an organization like this. Are there more charities like this in other states? What makes this one so successful?</i>

YOUR TURN

Imagine you were asked to write a description of the American Cancer Society. To learn more about the subject and get ideas for the assignment, read about the American Cancer Society and record the information you find as well as your thoughts.

American Cancer Society	
Facts and Information	Thoughts and Questions

## Freewriting

The act of writing engages our brain and stimulates our creativity. Freewriting can help you generate ideas through the process of writing. When you freewrite, the goal is to record all of your ideas on a topic in a casual and free-form way for a set period of time. During that time, record all of your ideas without evaluating them. In order to get the most out of your freewrite, don't worry about grammar, spelling, punctuation, or organization. Worrying about these issues may slow your flow of ideas and draw your concentration away from your goal.

To freewrite, start with a blank page. You may find it helpful to write a word or phrase at the top to help you keep focused. Then set a time limit for yourself. Many writers freewrite for ten minutes; this will give you enough time to think and explore your topic, but not enough to censor your ideas. If you think you have run out of ideas, keep writing. You can repeat a word or phrase, but you should keep writing until the time is up.

### STUDENT EXAMPLE

Marie has been asked to freewrite about how technology can be a distraction.

*Technology is a distraction. I see technology everywhere, and I often find myself pulled away from what I am doing to check my email, post to Pinterest, or update my Facebook page. While I watch television and have a phone, I spend the most time on my computer. Even if I get online to do one simple task, such as pay a bill, I find that I always end up following an ad to a new page. I spend hours on Facebook. I chat with my friends, play games, and look at pictures. It is so easy to forget why I got on the computer in the first place. When I try to clean out my email, I end up opening an email that leads to an hour of reading about breaking news or investigating a sale. Inevitably, I miss something while I am online. I should probably spend more time on my homework.*

### YOUR TURN

Your sociology professor has assigned a short paper on rude behavior and lapses in common courtesy. You are going to write about people who use their cell phones, to talk or text, while watching a movie in the theater. Freewrite about whether you think this is rude behavior.

## Brainstorming

Brainstorming, like freewriting, is a casual and free-form style of prewriting. A brainstorm, as the name implies, is often disorganized and chaotic, like a storm. Unlike a freewrite, which is timed and may contain sentences, a brainstorm often takes the form of words and phrases. When you are brainstorming, record ideas and examples as you think of them.

The purpose is to think of as many ideas as possible without worrying about organization, spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Your brainstorm might be scattered over a whole page, or it might resemble a list.

#### STUDENT EXAMPLE

Nate is going to write a paper discussing how businesses change and adapt to new consumer habits. He has decided to brainstorm in the form of a list to develop a few ideas.

- *Businesses have to change to keep up with the consumer*
- *Creative new products and inventions*
- *Things that make our lives easier*
- *Sometimes services change too*
- *Physical stores not needed; Redbox stands are the closest*
- *Customers want to access their purchases instantly, e.g., InstaWatch from Walmart*
- *Can stream movies and television shows from Amazon, Vudu, and Netflix*
- *Can watch on phone, gaming system, Apple TV, computer*

#### YOUR TURN

Choose your favorite holiday, such as Valentine's Day, Thanksgiving, or New Year's Eve, and create a brainstorm that will help you to describe this holiday and explain why it is your favorite. Remember that your brainstorm can be created in a number of formats and styles, including unorganized notes or a list, and may express your ideas as words and phrases.

### Questioning

As the author of your paper, you will need to supply your readers with the information they need to know and answers to the questions they might have. Questioning is a pre-writing strategy that helps you anticipate your reader's questions. Answering who, what, when, where, why, and how (also known as journalistic questions or the 5 Ws and 1 H) will support your essay's development.

<b>Who?</b>	Who is involved? Who does the issue affect?
<b>What?</b>	What has happened? What are you writing about?
<b>When?</b>	When did the event occur? When did the situation change?
<b>Where?</b>	Where did the event or topic take place?
<b>Why?</b>	Why are the above questions important? Why should your reader pay attention?
<b>How?</b>	How did the event or topic happen? How can the problem be solved?



These questions are also helpful when discussing supporting details. For more information, see Chapters 4 and 5.

**STUDENT EXAMPLE**

Eva writes for the school paper, and her assignment this week is to cover the student response to the drastic reduction in the university's library hours. Before she begins her article, she uses questioning to make sure she has every angle covered.

- Who? Students, library staff, and administration are involved.*
- What? The effect of shortened library hours on students and how they feel about the issue.*
- When? A week ago.*
- Where? Our campus library.*
- Why? This is important because the library provides resources for students, such as group study rooms, individual study tables, computer labs, and research materials. Shortened hours means we will have limited access to these resources.*
- How? Budget cuts were given as the reason for shortening the library's hours. They might keep the library open longer if more money were raised; the students could organize a fundraiser or get a donation. Students might also petition to keep it open longer and cut something else instead.*

**YOUR TURN**

Imagine there has been a food poisoning incident in your school cafeteria. Now, pretend you are a journalist for your school's newspaper, and your editor has asked you to investigate and write an article about this incident. To prepare, use questioning to explore the issue. Make sure to record your answers for all six questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how.

- Who? \_\_\_\_\_
- What? \_\_\_\_\_
- When? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where? \_\_\_\_\_
- Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- How? \_\_\_\_\_

## Discussing

Discussing your paper topic with others can create positive momentum in your writing process. The person you talk to doesn't need to be in your class. Friends, family members, and roommates can offer insight and personal perspectives and even ask questions that you wouldn't be able to form on your own. In addition, verbalizing your thoughts, arguments, organization, and questions can help you solidify your position and overcome the challenges you are facing. Talking about your paper topic with a friend or family member at any point may be helpful to you. Once you have a draft, you can discuss the strength of your argument, the evidence you want to incorporate, or the solution you plan to offer. It is important that you write down the content of your discussion so that you can remember what was said.

### STUDENT EXAMPLE

Hamond is writing an email to his boss requesting a raise, but he has decided to discuss the issue with his older brother before starting. He takes notes during the conversation to record any helpful ideas.

*Discussing why I should get a raise with my brother*

*He said that businesses usually want to reward good employees because they want them to stay and be happy in their jobs. Sometimes companies can't give a raise just because someone asks, but it doesn't hurt to try. He said I should give reasons why I am a valuable member of the staff and remind my boss of how long I have worked there. I am reliable and trustworthy. I have never been late to work. He even reminded me of the time when I went out of my way to help a customer to her car.*

### YOUR TURN

You must make a PowerPoint presentation in your economics class about whether students employed by your university should be able to work more than 20 hours a week. Discuss the matter with a friend or classmate and record notes about your conversation.

---

---

---

---

---

---

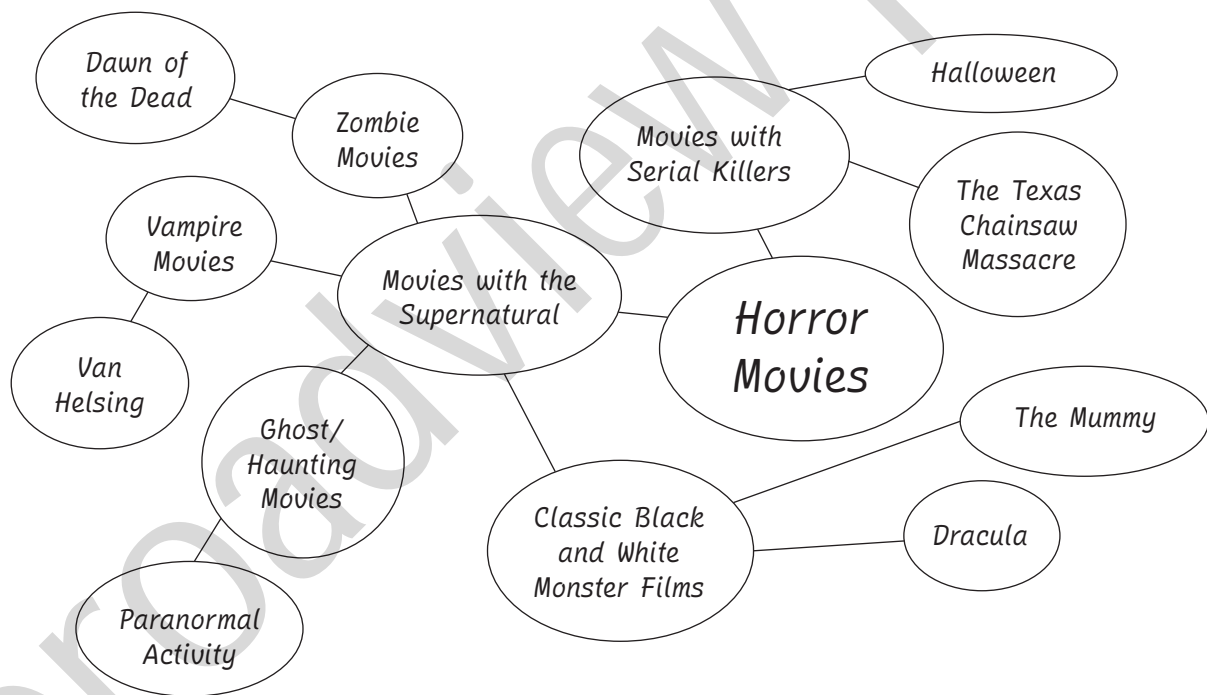
## Clustering

Clustering not only helps you think of ideas; it also helps organize them by identifying the relationships between your ideas. This strategy is often used to further develop a topic after reading, freewriting, brainstorming, questioning, and discussing because it helps organize the ideas discovered in these strategies. Clustering is sometimes called bubble clustering, webbing, web mapping, or spider webbing.

First, put a keyword or phrase in the center of a blank sheet of paper. Circle the key word or phrase. Then think about how this topic can be broken down into different categories or examples. Write these related ideas near the first circle. Circle the newly added words and phrases, and draw a line to show the relationships with other circles. Continue this process until you have recorded all of your ideas.

### STUDENT EXAMPLE

Franklin has been asked to write about his favorite type of movie. He uses clustering to map his thoughts.



### YOUR TURN

Imagine you have been given an assignment to write about action movies. Collect your thoughts by creating a cluster for action movies. Make sure to connect with a line any ideas that are related.



## Planning

Before you begin to write your paper, you will need to formulate a plan. Planning consists of selecting a **subject**, an **audience**, and a **purpose**.

The subject of your paper should be appropriate for the assignment you have been given. In many cases, you will be given a paper topic. Make sure you are fully addressing the topic assigned. If you were not given a specific topic, use various prewriting strategies to decide on a topic that is narrow enough to fit the other requirements given, such as page length.

Consider the audience of your paper. Your paper should be written with the right level of formality, jargon (vocabulary specific to a group or profession), and background information to satisfy your audience. Also, consider the age, profession, and special interests your audience might share. For example, a doctor at a medical conference could assume certain things about the audience. The audience would have a medical background and would understand medical terminology. They would also expect a formal presentation from a well-educated and professional speaker.

Consider the purpose of your paper. The purpose of a paper may be to inform, entertain, and/or persuade your audience. Some papers may have more than one purpose; many academic and scholarly articles are meant to both inform and persuade readers.

- **To inform**—Informative papers are meant to educate your audience. Think about what your readers will already know about the subject and what you will need to tell them.
- **To entertain**—Entertaining papers often tell a story and engage the readers' attention. Think about what your audience might find interesting, funny, or touching.
- **To persuade**—Persuasive papers use information, examples, and reasons to convince the reader that the argument being presented is valid. Think about what your readers might already believe about the subject.

**i**  
For more  
information  
about audience  
and purpose,  
see Chapter 5.

You may have an assignment that requires you to explore only one of these purposes. However, strong arguments will often be informative, entertaining, and persuasive. Arguments can be presented to us in many forms. We normally think of finding arguments in essays or newspaper columns, but arguments can be found in advertisements, songs, news broadcasts, and many other places. Some arguments, such as commercials, try to entertain viewers to keep their attention long enough to inform them about a product. In your own arguments, your instructors will expect you to show that you understand the content you are presenting and to persuade others to accept your position.

### STUDENT EXAMPLE

Farah is creating a commercial for a local non-profit organization to educate others on the struggles of women in the criminal justice system. She uses planning to make sure her commercial will be effective.

<b>Subject</b>	<p>What is your subject? Is it narrow enough? How do you know?</p> <p><i>My general topic is women in the criminal justice system, but because I am making a two-minute commercial, I am only going to focus on mothers who are incarcerated or on parole.</i></p>
<b>Audience</b>	<p>Who is your audience? What do they know about the subject? What are their expectations?</p> <p><i>The audience is my local community. If they have not been affected directly by this issue, then they may not know much about the topic. The people in my community may not know how the prison system is different for men and women, especially mothers.</i></p>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>What is your purpose? How do you know? What do you need to do to fulfill this purpose?</p> <p><i>The purpose of my commercial is to inform and persuade. I need to provide as much information as I can in two minutes. This means that my message needs to be very clear. Because it is a commercial, I plan on using photos and video to help make my point.</i></p>

#### YOUR TURN

Imagine you are the student body president on your campus and you are preparing for a podcast in which you will encourage your fellow students to donate to the local homeless shelter. To ensure your plea is successful, use planning to define the subject, audience, and purpose.

<b>Subject</b>	<p>What is your subject? Is it narrow enough? How do you know?</p>
<b>Audience</b>	<p>Who is your audience? What do they know about the subject? What are their expectations?</p>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>What is your purpose? How do you know? What do you need to do to fulfill this purpose?</p>

## Writing

Once you have ideas, you can start the writing stage of the writing process. In the writing stage, you will develop your thoughts more thoroughly. Start with reviewing your prewriting—and then begin to write in a more considered way. As you are working on your first draft, you may find you run out of ideas and can't think of anything else to write about. In that case, look at your prewriting again. You can always complete another prewriting strategy to create more ideas and examples. The first draft is usually rough, and once you complete it, you may immediately see where you want to make changes.

To finish your assignment or essay, you may find that you need several drafts. The work that is done between drafts is called rewriting.

Part of writing a paper is deciding on and following a pattern of organization. If your paper lacks clear organization, your reader is likely to become lost and may even lose interest in your argument. Following common patterns of organization will help readers to recognize the structure of your essay. **Specific to general**, **general to specific**, **chronological**, **spatial**, and by **importance** are all common forms of organization that can be applied to a paragraph, a part of an essay, or a whole essay.

### Specific to General

Imagine you are watching Monday night football at a friend's house. Your favorite player has just run in for a touchdown. You boast that he is also on your fantasy football team and will help you win this week's game. Your friend scoffs and argues that the league that you both belong to is rigged because you always win.

The conversation you had with your friend is organized from specific to general: from a single player, to a team, and then to a league. An essay or piece of writing that uses a specific-to-general organization gives a detail or example and then shows the reader the importance of this information by generalizing and showing how it belongs to a larger category. This organization is useful when you want to lead your readers step by step from an example to a particular conclusion.

You may find specific-to-general organization in the following types of writing:

**Description**—Because description essays favor details and examples, a specific-to-general organization allows an author to highlight a specific event, example, fact, or detail first, catching the reader's attention before showing its connection to other important ideas.

**Scientific Report**—Scientific reports often require that the writer define, describe, and test a specific problem before providing a discussion of how the results might help and apply to a variety of situations.

#### MEDIA EXAMPLE OF SPECIFIC-TO-GENERAL ORGANIZATION

Specific-to-general organization isn't found only in essays. It can also be found in songs. Search online for the song "Footloose" by Kenny Loggins.

**i**  
Want to know  
how to develop a  
body paragraph?  
See Chapter 4.

What specific information does the song mention? How is the information in the song generalized?

STUDENT EXAMPLE

Howard is going to organize his essay about dyslexia using a specific-to-general organization. He decides to start with a specific example. Then he knows his information needs to become more and more general.

SPECIFIC	<i>My younger sister was diagnosed with dyslexia at the age of six.</i>
GENERAL	<i>One of every five children has a reading disorder.</i>
MORE GENERAL	<i>Reading is a necessary skill for school and the workplace.</i>

YOUR TURN

You have been asked to write about superheroes. Practice using a specific-to-general organization. Start with a specific fact or detail about a superhero you are familiar with. Then generalize, creating two statements that become more and more general.

SPECIFIC	
GENERAL	
MORE GENERAL	

## General to Specific

Imagine you must buy a dress for a relative's wedding. You decide to try your luck at the mall, where you enter a store you like. Since the store carries a variety of clothing, you must also find the women's formal section. Your shopping trip is organized from general to specific. An essay or piece of writing that uses a general-to-specific organization starts with a broad category and then narrows to the subject being discussed. This organization is helpful when you want to use examples to support a larger argument.

You may find general-to-specific organization in the following types of writing:

**Research Papers**—A research paper requires you to support your argument with numerous facts and examples. The main argument is given toward the beginning of the paper in the thesis statement. Then more specific points and detailed examples are given.

**Illustration Essays**—An illustration essay might start with a general concept, provide examples, and then describe specific details.

### MEDIA EXAMPLE OF GENERAL-TO-SPECIFIC ORGANIZATION

General-to-specific organization isn't found only in essays. It can also be found in commercials. Search online for a commercial that uses this organization style. Consider looking at longer commercials, sometimes called infomercials, for skin care products or vacuum cleaners.

What general information is provided at the beginning of the commercial? What specific information is given as the commercial progresses?

### STUDENT EXAMPLE

Char is going to organize her essay about drunk driving using a general-to-specific organization. She decides to start with a general statement. Then she knows her information needs to become more specific.

<b>GENERAL</b>	<i>Car accidents kill thousands of people each year.</i>
<b>MORE SPECIFIC</b>	<i>Many of these accidents are caused by those driving under the influence.</i>
<b>MOST SPECIFIC</b>	<i>The legal blood alcohol limit for people over 21 is .08.</i>

**YOUR TURN**

Imagine you have been asked to prepare a speech for your communications course about how to stay safe on your campus at night. Practice using a general-to-specific organization. Start with a general statement. Then create two statements that provide specifics.

<b>GENERAL</b>	
<b>MORE SPECIFIC</b>	
<b>MOST SPECIFIC</b>	

## Chronological

Imagine you are applying for graduation from your college. When you look at your transcript, you notice that the courses you took in your very first semester are at the top. Each semester's courses are listed in order, and the most recent one is at the very bottom. Your transcript is organized chronologically. An essay or piece of writing that uses a chronological organization works much like a timeline, explaining events in order, usually from the past to the present. You might find this pattern of organization helpful when you are giving background information or when you show your reader how something has changed over time.

You may find chronological organization in the following types of writing:

**Biographical Essays**—Biographical essays tell the story of a person's life. Most of these start with the individual's childhood and then cover his or her teen years before discussing his or her adult life.

**Process Analysis Essays**—Essays that explain how something was created or how a process can be copied have a chronological organization. Starting at the beginning stage, they go step by step until the finished product is completed.

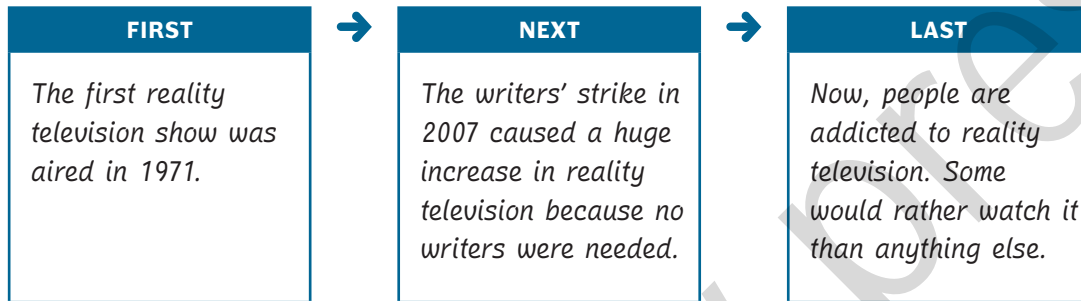
### MEDIA EXAMPLE OF CHRONOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

Chronological organization isn't found only in essays. It can also be found in social media. Examples of chronological organization can be found on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

Why would a social media site like Twitter or Facebook be organized chronologically? What advantage would this have over other forms of organization?

#### STUDENT EXAMPLE

Adan is going to organize his essay about reality television using a chronological organization. He starts by explaining his topic, beginning with the events that happened first and continuing with events that happen closer to the present.



#### YOUR TURN

Imagine you have been asked to act out your favorite fairy tale in your theater course. To get ready for your performance, practice using chronological organization to tell the story. Start by explaining the events that happened first. Then continue with events in the order in which they happen until the tale is over.

FIRST	NEXT	LAST

### Spatial

Imagine you are walking to your car after class. A woman passing by asks for directions to the administration building. You tell her that she needs to head south past the sculpture, and then take a right when she comes to the library. The administration building is just west of the library. When you give directions, you organize your ideas spatially. An essay or piece of writing that uses spatial organization shows how items are related based on

where they are located. Spatial essays may discuss items in a variety of different spatial orders (e.g., from left to right, from north to south, from here to there).

You may find spatial organization in the following types of writing:

**Travel Essays**—A travel essay is organized spatially to highlight specific locations as well as the distance and travel required to get from one place to the next. For example, an essay about a road trip on Route 66 would describe each town and sightseeing opportunity from the starting point to the destination.

**Description Essays**—A description essay of a room could be based on spatial organization. The author might start on one side of the room and work clockwise until he or she has come full circle. The author might even describe a room from top to bottom.

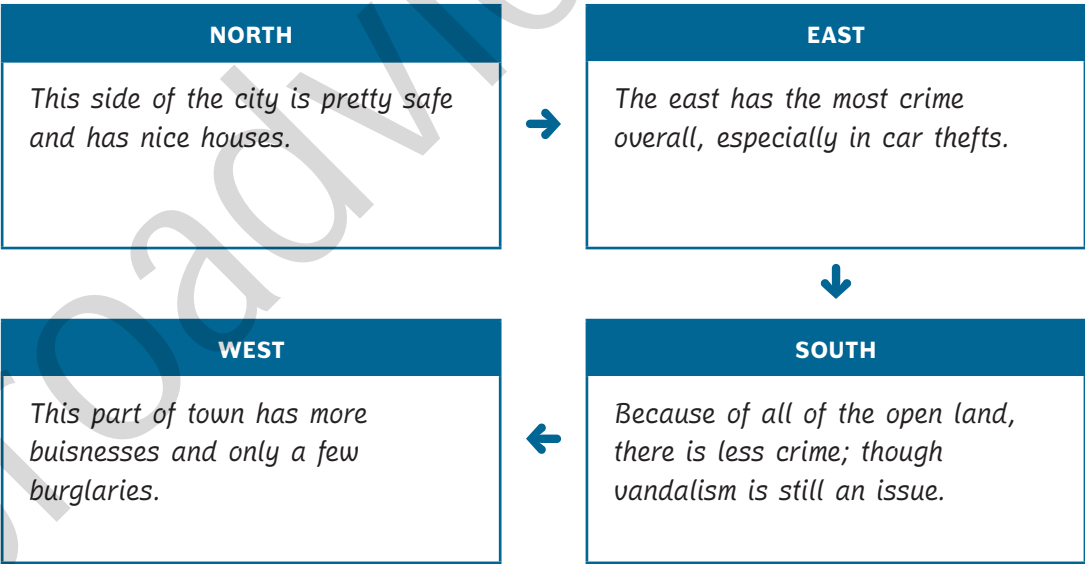
**MEDIA EXAMPLE OF SPATIAL ORGANIZATION**

Spatial organization isn't found only in essays. It can also be found in music. Search online for the song "California Girls" by the Beach Boys.

How can you tell that this song is organized spatially? What directions or phrases guide the organization of the song?

**STUDENT EXAMPLE**

Belen is going to organize her essay about her city's crime rate using a spatial organization. She starts by discussing the issue in a specific part of town before discussing the other nearby areas.





**YOUR TURN**

Practice using spatial organization by describing how to get to your favorite restaurant in town from campus. Start with a specific place or location on campus. Describe how to get to the restaurant, highlighting specific locations you would see along the way.

The diagram consists of four rectangular boxes arranged in a 2x2 grid. Each box has a blue header with the text "LOCATION:" in white. The boxes are empty, intended for a student to write a description of a route. Arrows indicate a clockwise flow: a right-pointing arrow from the top-left box to the top-right box, a downward-pointing arrow from the top-right box to the bottom-right box, a left-pointing arrow from the bottom-right box to the bottom-left box, and an upward-pointing arrow from the bottom-left box to the top-left box.

## Importance

Imagine you are making a list of homework you must complete in the next few days. At the top of your list, you put the assignments that are worth the most points or percentage of your grade. Because you want to maximize your time and effort, you prioritize your list. You decide to work on the most important assignments first. After these assignments are completed, you will work on the smaller assignments. Your list is organized by importance. An essay or piece of writing that uses an order-of-importance organization may contain points that increase or decrease in importance. If a paper uses increasing importance, it offers less impressive or important points first. Then increasingly stronger points are provided. If an essay uses decreasing importance, it will provide the most important point first and share points that are less and less important as the essay continues.

You may find importance is used to organize the following types of writing:

**Argument Essays**—Argument essays typically start with points that are less important and build toward those that are more important.

**Newspaper Articles**—Newspaper articles tend to begin with the most important information, in order to catch the reader's attention. Journalists start (or "lead," as they call it) with the most important information and follow with explanations and details, which increase the reader's understanding but are less important.

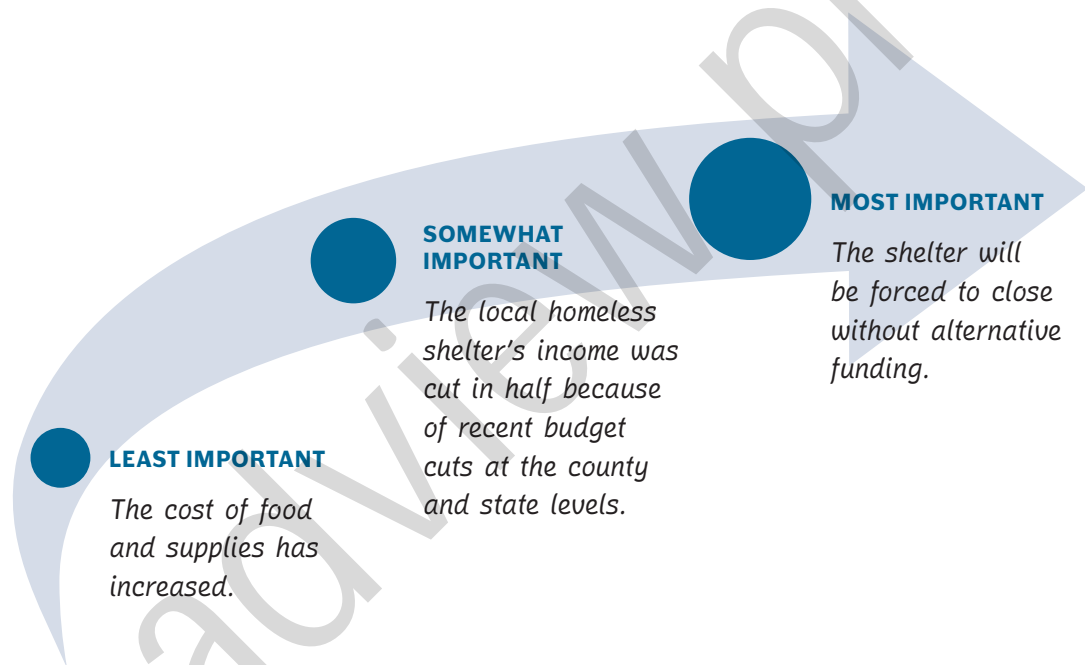
**MEDIA EXAMPLE OF ORGANIZATION BY ORDER OF IMPORTANCE**

Organizing by importance isn't found only in essays. It can also be found in the media. Movie box-office ratings are also an example of this organization style. Search online for recent box-office ratings.

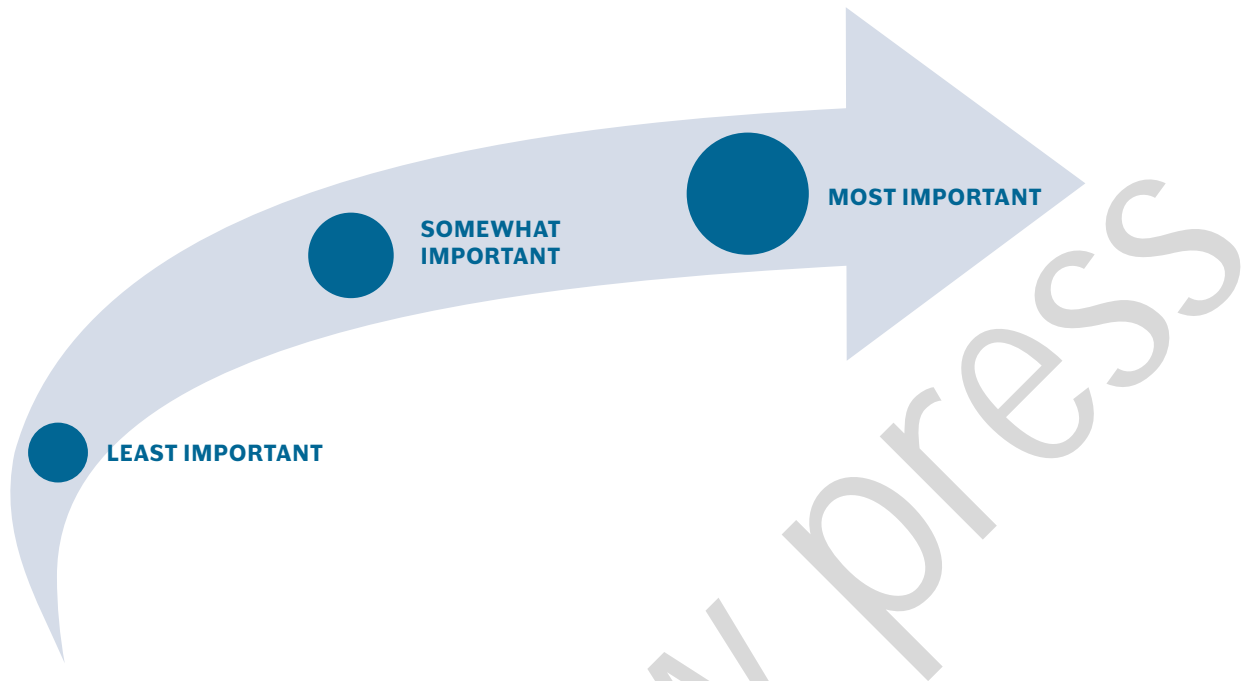
List the order of the movies from least to most popular. What else do we rate based on popularity or votes?

**STUDENT EXAMPLE**

Monroe is going to organize his essay about the homeless shelter using order-of-importance organization. He starts by discussing the least important idea. Each idea increases in importance, and his most important idea is given last.

**YOUR TURN**

Imagine you have been asked to write a letter to seniors in high school explaining how to pass a class in college. Practice using importance to organize your thoughts. Start by discussing the least important idea. Each idea should increase in importance, and your most important idea should be given last.



## Rewriting

Rewriting is an essential step in writing a paper. If this step is skipped, a piece of writing will almost always be insufficiently developed and lacking in clarity or detail. Rewriting an assignment provides you with a chance to correct mistakes and add to your ideas. Rewriting can be divided into two main categories: revising and editing. Revising and editing both improve your writing, but each focuses on different issues in an assignment.

### Revising

Revising is the process of looking at larger issues that affect how well the reader understands the piece of writing. Your professors will be interested in the content, the information provided, and the form—the presentation or organization—of your writing. In a revision, you should look to see what can be improved in your draft. Taking a short break between revisions of your draft can help you to see any mistakes or gaps in your paper more clearly.

**i**  
For more  
information about  
essay organization,  
see Chapter 5.

#### COMMON REVISING QUESTIONS

**Are you answering the assignment completely?** Take another look at the assignment you were given. Some assignments have specific requirements for the topics that need to be covered. They may involve requirements for page length, for example, or for number of sources. Following the directions and covering all the required topics is very important. If you omit information, it may lead your instructor to believe that you didn't do your best

or didn't think the assignment was important. Does your writing meet all the assignment requirements? If something is missing, revision is the perfect time to add it in.

**Did you write with your audience and your purpose in mind?** During the revising stage, you should confirm that your paper still addresses the audience's expectations. Your writing should use the appropriate level of formality and the terminology or jargon your audience expects—and it should provide the background information your audience needs. You should also check that your paper fulfills its purpose. If you have chosen to be informative, look to see that you have included enough information and examples. If you are writing to entertain, you can strengthen the appeal of a story with interesting details. If your goal is to persuade, you can test your argument to verify that it is convincing.

**Did you cover your subject completely?** Go through your prewriting again. Highlight any unused ideas and decide if they should be incorporated into your paper. Not all of your original ideas may be helpful, but you don't want to accidentally forget any points or examples that will strengthen your argument. Before you add new ideas into your paper, carefully consider where they should be incorporated.

#### STUDENT EXAMPLE

Cameron has written an essay giving his position on whether music with a political message should be encouraged. He has marked his ideas for how to revise in the margin on yellow Post-it Notes and made changes in the draft (note that this draft hasn't been edited yet).

#### Political Music

In my prewriting, I had notes about freedom and creativity that I would like to use in the intro.

~~Not all things are how people see them. Some people suffer disorders where they see letters on a page differently from others and some see colors in a different light than most. But for artists of all forms, there is a completely different light shed on so many different views of life that they as~~

~~people are sometimes seen as backwards to the rest of the world. We love music because it is an art form. The creativity that produces this art should not be shackled by a request or a political agenda. When a artist creates music it should grow organically out of the artist emotion.~~ Artist should express what they are feeling, not just what they are asked to. Encouraging any kind of music, especially political music, would ruin the freedom and creativity that musician now have, and ruin music as we know it.

Well-loved, popular music is not created by an order or request. Much of the music people love is a genuine expression of a simple, pure emotion. The Beatles, one of the most popular groups, didn't have fanatical fans because someone told them what to say in their music. They captured the feeling of love

in there music because that is what they felt. Some of there songs were written in response to political ~~actions~~ *unrest*, but at the core of those songs, they still attempted to express there desire to see love. It is a simple ~~idea~~ *concept* expressed in their music in response to the wars occurring at the time, but the love the Beatles sang about was not a political agenda as much as it was an answer all the violence.

While the Beatles sang about love in response to politics because it was at the core of their beliefs, and would have been expressed regardless of world events. Through music the Beatles expressed many ideas and did not push any political agenda, but displayed their emotions whether it was a result of world events or personal events. *John Lennon once said that "song writing is about getting the demon out of me. It's like being possessed. You try to go to sleep, but the song won't let you. So you have to get up and make it into something, and then you're allowed to sleep."* The Beatles would have never sung about anything they did not believe in, thus they did not convey feeling about welfare or health care in there ~~tunes~~ *lyrics*.

Music is a beautiful form of art with a lot of power. The main purpose of music is for an artist to communicate there feelings about ~~anything~~ *their beliefs* in a tasteful way; the idea cannot be forced. Music is a way voice feelings. If an artist attempts to communicate anything they have no emotional connection with all beauty that could be in the art, rendering it purposeless.

My purpose is to persuade—  
make an argument and  
defend it.

-show how examples prove  
my argument

Who is my audience?

-my instructor  
-expects a formal essay  
-use formal language

The assignment requires one  
quote. Add one in here.

## Editing

Editing is the process of looking for sentence-level errors, such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Because so much of your paper can change during revision, you should wait to edit your paper until after you are finished revising. Many writers find it is hard to see mistakes in their own writing; evaluating your paper with a strategy or plan for finding errors can help. Most successful writers find they need to go through their papers more than once, so they use several different strategies.

### COMMON EDITING STRATEGIES

**Read your draft out loud.** Reading your draft out loud will help you catch mistakes that you might miss when reading it silently. Because writers are so familiar with their own work, they often overlook distracting errors, such as missing letters and words. Reading out loud makes writers pay attention to each word and allows them to catch more errors.

**Read your draft sentence by sentence from the end to the beginning.** During editing, it is easy to get carried away by a stirring argument or an emotional story and fail to notice

grammatical errors. By reading the draft sentence by sentence, starting from the end, you can focus on the sentence structure, grammar, and spelling.

**Look for frequently made errors.** Writers tend to make the same mistakes frequently. Even experienced writers have weaknesses; they are just better at finding and correcting them. Knowing the kind of mistakes you make most often will give you the opportunity to fix them before you turn in your assignment. Examine your draft for mistakes you commonly make while writing. If you don't know what your weaknesses are, you can look at your instructor's comments from previous papers or drafts. You can also visit a tutoring center.

#### REVISED STUDENT EXAMPLE

Cameron has revised his draft but still needs to edit it. His ideas for editing are marked on blue Post-it Notes, and changes are marked in the draft.

#### Political Music

Reading out loud, I found missing words and letters.

We love music because it is an art form. The creativity that produces this art should not be shackled by a request or a political agenda. When **an** artist creates music, it should grow organically out of the artist's emotions. Artists should express what they are feeling, not just what they are asked to. Encouraging any kind of music, especially political music, would ruin the freedom and creativity that musicians now have, and ruin music as we know it.

Well-loved, popular music is not created by an order or request. Much of the music people love is a genuine expression of a simple, pure emotion. The

I often confuse there and their. Look for more in the draft.

Beatles, one of the most popular groups, didn't have fanatical fans because someone told them what to say in their music. They captured the feeling of love in ~~there~~ **their** music because that is what they felt. Some of ~~there~~ **their** songs were written in response to political unrest, but at the core of those songs, they still attempted to express ~~there~~ **their** desire to see love. It is a simple concept expressed in their music in response to the wars occurring at the time, but the love the Beatles sang about was not a political agenda as much as it was an answer to all the violence.

~~While~~ **The** Beatles sang about love in response to politics because it was at the core of their beliefs, and would have been expressed regardless of world events. Through music, the Beatles expressed many ideas and did not push any political agenda, but displayed their emotions whether it was a result of world events or personal events. John Lennon once said that "song writing is about getting the demon out of me. It's like being possessed. You try to go to sleep, but the song won't let you. So you have to get up and make it into something,



and then you're allowed to sleep." The Beatles would have never sung about anything they did not believe in, thus they did not convey feelings about welfare or health care in ~~there~~ *their* lyrics.

Music is a beautiful form of art with a lot of power. The main purpose of music is for an artist to communicate ~~there~~ *their* feelings about their beliefs in a tasteful way; the idea cannot be forced. Music is a way *to* voice feelings. If an artist attempts to communicate anything, they will have no emotional connection with all beauty that could be in the art, rendering it purposeless.

Reading the essay backward, I found missing commas.

## Peer Revision and Peer Editing

Revising and editing with the help of your classmates can be extremely helpful and productive. Your peers can help you spot errors you didn't see in your own writing and make suggestions that help you improve your draft. When you play the part of the peer reviewer, remember that your job is to be a good audience member and provide helpful feedback. Helping others improve their work is part of being a good writer and is good practice for revising your own writing.

**Be empathetic.** Respond to the draft just as you would want someone to respond to yours: with helpful tips and suggestions for improvement. Providing some praise along with constructive criticism will let your peer know if there are any changes to be made without hurting his or her feelings.

**Focus on the draft.** You may find yourself tempted to start a conversation during the revision. However, getting distracted by asking questions not related to the draft or sharing a story of your own won't help your partner improve his or her writing. Use the time you have wisely, and try to offer as much help as you can.

**Be a mirror.** Let your peer know what you see. Retelling a true story is harder than it seems. Beginning writers often forget to fully explain all the necessary background or fill in all the details their readers need. Point out where you were confused or wanted more information. If you enjoyed a story or found an example helpful, let your partner know. Telling your peer review partner how it felt to read the draft will help them write more effectively.

**Avoid judgmental reactions.** You don't need to agree with everything in your peer's paper. For example, the information in some personal essays might bother you, or you may not agree with the argument given. Keep in mind that it is your job to help your classmate improve his or her paper. Your responses should be focused on the draft and how it can better address the assignment.

# Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

The process of writing is not always easy; writing is hard work, but difficulty is never an excuse for **plagiarism**. Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work as your own or using another author’s words or ideas without the proper citation. Students must understand that this includes turning in someone else’s paper as their own or taking parts of a book, article, or website without credit.

**Academic integrity** goes beyond the issue of plagiarism. Turning in the exact same paper twice without getting permission from your instructors, for example, is considered dishonest behavior on many campuses. Learning institutions value education and want all students to practice honesty in their pursuit of knowledge. While every university has a different process for dealing with plagiarism and academic dishonesty, all of them consider it a grave offence. The punishment for plagiarism or academic dishonesty can include attending classes on plagiarism, counseling, failing an assignment or course, and even expulsion.

Sometimes students can unintentionally plagiarize information due to inexperience or confusion. Such offences are still very serious; if you are unsure how to use documentation or what kind of information should be cited, you can consult your instructor, tutoring center, or writing center.

**i**  
Want to learn more about using sources and documentation? See Chapters 15 and 16.

## Assessing Your Knowledge

KEY POINTS	REMINDER	HOW WELL DID YOU UNDERSTAND THIS MATERIAL?	PAGE(S)
Identify the stages of the writing process	<b>The writing process</b> consists of three parts: <b>prewriting</b> , <b>writing</b> , and <b>rewriting</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/> I've Got It! <input type="checkbox"/> Almost There <input type="checkbox"/> Need More Practice	p. 43
Write to demonstrate knowledge of the prewriting strategies	There are seven prewriting strategies covered in this chapter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Reading</b></li><li>▪ <b>Freewriting</b></li><li>▪ <b>Brainstorming</b></li><li>▪ <b>Questioning</b></li><li>▪ <b>Discussing</b></li><li>▪ <b>Clustering</b></li><li>▪ <b>Planning</b></li></ul> Practice these to make sure you can use them successfully.	<input type="checkbox"/> I've Got It! <input type="checkbox"/> Almost There <input type="checkbox"/> Need More Practice	pp. 44–52



Describe the writing stage	The <b>writing</b> stage can be started after prewriting. The first draft is usually rough and needs several revisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> I've Got It! <input type="checkbox"/> Almost There <input type="checkbox"/> Need More Practice	pp. 53–61
Identify revising as part of the rewriting stage and why it is important	The first step in rewriting a draft is <b>revising</b> . Revision focuses on content and formatting.	<input type="checkbox"/> I've Got It! <input type="checkbox"/> Almost There <input type="checkbox"/> Need More Practice	pp. 61–64
Identify editing as part of the rewriting stage and why it is important	The second step in rewriting is <b>editing</b> . Editing focuses on grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You should wait to edit until your revision is complete.	<input type="checkbox"/> I've Got It! <input type="checkbox"/> Almost There <input type="checkbox"/> Need More Practice	pp. 63–64

## Deepening Your Understanding

If you would like to go beyond the material in this chapter, explore additional connections, and get more practice, check out these related topics:

- ➔ **Getting Started:** Good writing takes time and planning. Before you sit down to write a draft, consider how you can prepare your workspace so you are successful. Having a strategy to stay focused will be helpful as you write.
- ➔ **Parts of the Essay:** Formatting is important in any assignment, and the most common form of writing in college is the essay. Check to see if you know all the parts of a complete essay.
- ➔ **Developing and Organizing a Paragraph:** Adding details to develop a paragraph is one way to revise. Readers appreciate paragraphs with clearly explained and organized ideas.
- ➔ **Spelling:** Check for misspelled words when you are editing a paper. Correctly spelled words allow the reader to better understand your argument, and this increases the chances that they can be persuaded by the information you present.