Writing Assignments: Getting Started

- **Manage your time**: Don’t wait until the last minute! Get started ahead of time. Remember to allot ample time for research, drafting, and revision.

- **Read the assignment closely**: Print out the grading rubric and highlight important points. Use it as a guide to make sure you stay on topic and answer all questions.

- **Change of scenery**: Often there are a lot of distractions at home, so try writing at the library or even a coffee shop.

- **Stay organized**: As you search for quality sources, make sure you keep track of where the information is coming from. Take notes with the key points from each source and the information you’ll need to format a citation, such as author(s), year, title, journal name, doi # for a journal article, URL for a website, etc. This will make your life easier when it comes time to create the references page.

- **Mini-assignments**: If you’re having trouble getting started, re-read the grading rubric and focus on short writing sessions. You can get a lot done in a short period of time if you are focused. Take it one paragraph, or even one point, at a time and give yourself breaks.

- **First drafts are a starting point**: Ignore your impulse for perfection as you begin writing. Don’t worry about making mistakes—that’s what revision is for. Create an outline first if that helps you organize your thoughts, or just dive in and start writing. Sometimes it is easier to write the introduction paragraph last.
Revision Tips

✓ **Read aloud**: You can catch many mistakes simply by reading your paper out loud. Don’t forget to use Spellcheck too.

✓ **Check grading rubric**: Have you adequately addressed all required points? Use the rubric as a checklist. Focus on sections that are worth the most points.

✓ **Elaborate**: Learn to be a close reader of your own work and identify areas that need to be fleshed out more. Often a sentence or two can provide clarification and enhance your point.

✓ **Conciseness/wordiness**: Highlight awkward/confusing sentences. Rework your writing to make it clearer and to the point. Don’t be afraid to delete unnecessary words or sentences. Stick to the rubric and stay on point.

✓ **Word choice**: Would another word sound better or more professional? Are you getting across what you really mean? Aim to be precise with your wording. Use a thesaurus if you are stuck.

✓ **Play with organization**: Make sure your points/paragraphs are organized in a logical manner. Maybe a paragraph you have towards the end of your paper makes more sense at the beginning or vice versa.

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