

Essay Writing I

The Writing Process

(Planning the Essay: Terms and Directives for Essays/ Titles

Bailey 2015: 40-47)





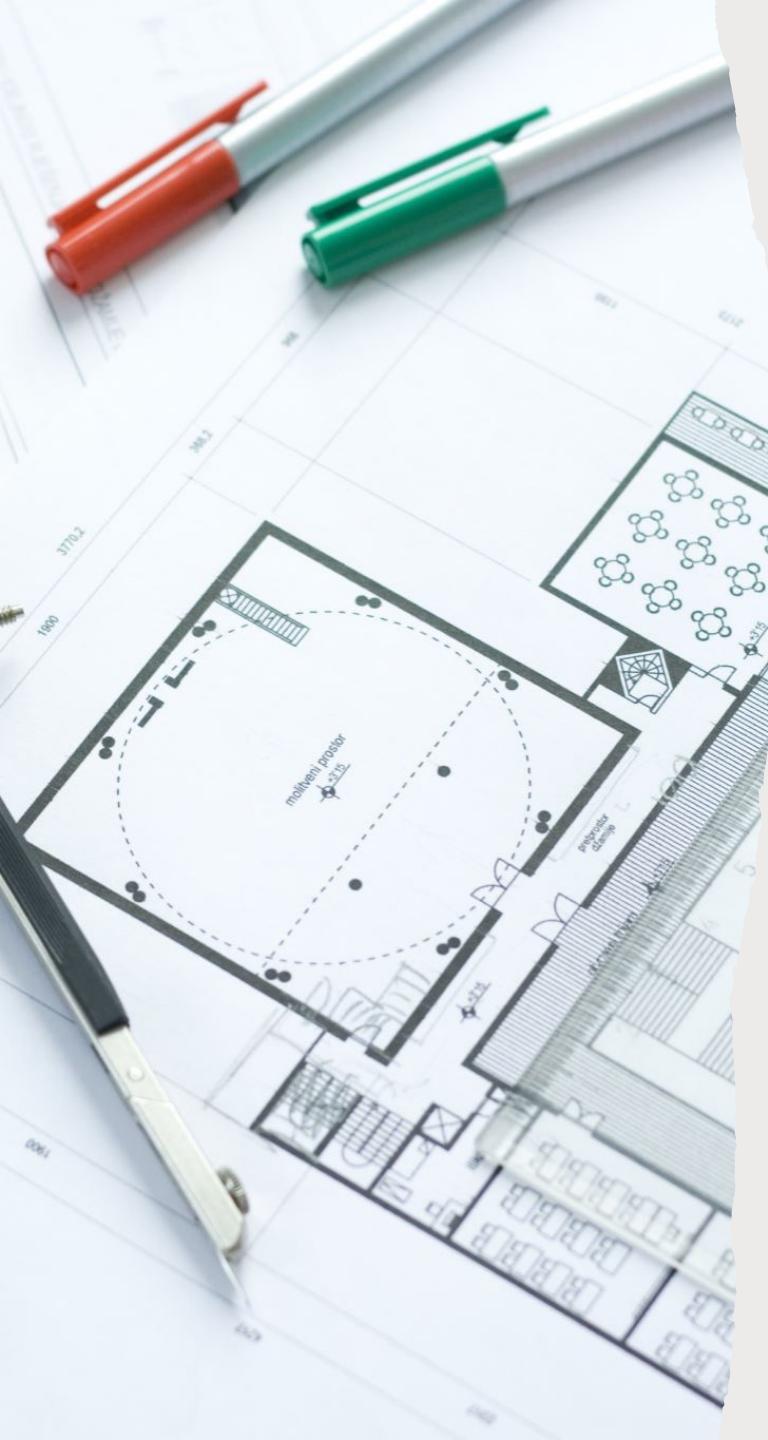
The Process Approach

- In academic writing, the **process approach**, rather than the product approach, is the recommended approach to writing essays.
- One must therefore go through a **writing process** to accomplish the essay writing task.



The Writing Process

- The writing process involves three main stages of writing, as follows:
 - Prewriting/ Pre-drafting
 - Writing/ Drafting
 - Post-writing/ Post-drafting

A photograph of an architectural floor plan on graph paper. Two pens, one red and one green, are placed on the top left corner of the plan. The floor plan includes various rooms, doorways, and furniture outlines. A ruler is also visible on the right side of the plan.

Prewriting/ Pre-drafting

- Prewriting or pre-drafting is the first stage in the writing process. It mainly involves planning and preparation.
- Prewriting may include several activities.
 - Prewriting starts with selecting a topic; when choosing a topic, students should ensure that the topic is neither too broad nor too narrow.
 - Sometimes, the topic may be given by the lecturer.

Pre-writing/ Pre-drafting Activities

After choosing or having been given a topic, pre-writing may include the following activities:

- Analysing the essay title
- Gathering information for the essay
- Organising the information

These activities are discussed in turn in the slides that follow.





Analysing the Essay Title

- Read the essay title or question carefully.
- Pay attention to keywords in the title.
- Analysing the essay title will help you to:
 - determine the actual focus of the topic
 - determine exactly what is required (for instance, whether to describe, narrate, or compare, etc.)
 - decide what information and how much information is needed to complete the essay



Gathering information for the essay

- After carefully analysing the essay title, the next activity is to find and gather information for the essay.
- There are several ways of gathering information for an academic essay.

Sources of information for the essay

- It is advisable to commence the information gathering process from oneself (the internal source); rack your brain, and comb through the deeper recesses of your memory for as many relevant ideas as possible, and pen them down. These activities are called:
 - **Brainstorming**, and
 - **Freewriting**



Sources of information for the essay

- Next, conduct research.
- Gather information from multiple sources by reading and making notes; these sources include:
 - Journal articles
 - Books (both e-books and hardcopy ones including textbooks, book chapters, etc.)
 - Relevant periodicals such as newspapers, almanacs, magazines, etc.
 - Reference sources such as encyclopaedias, dictionaries, etc.



Other Sources of Information

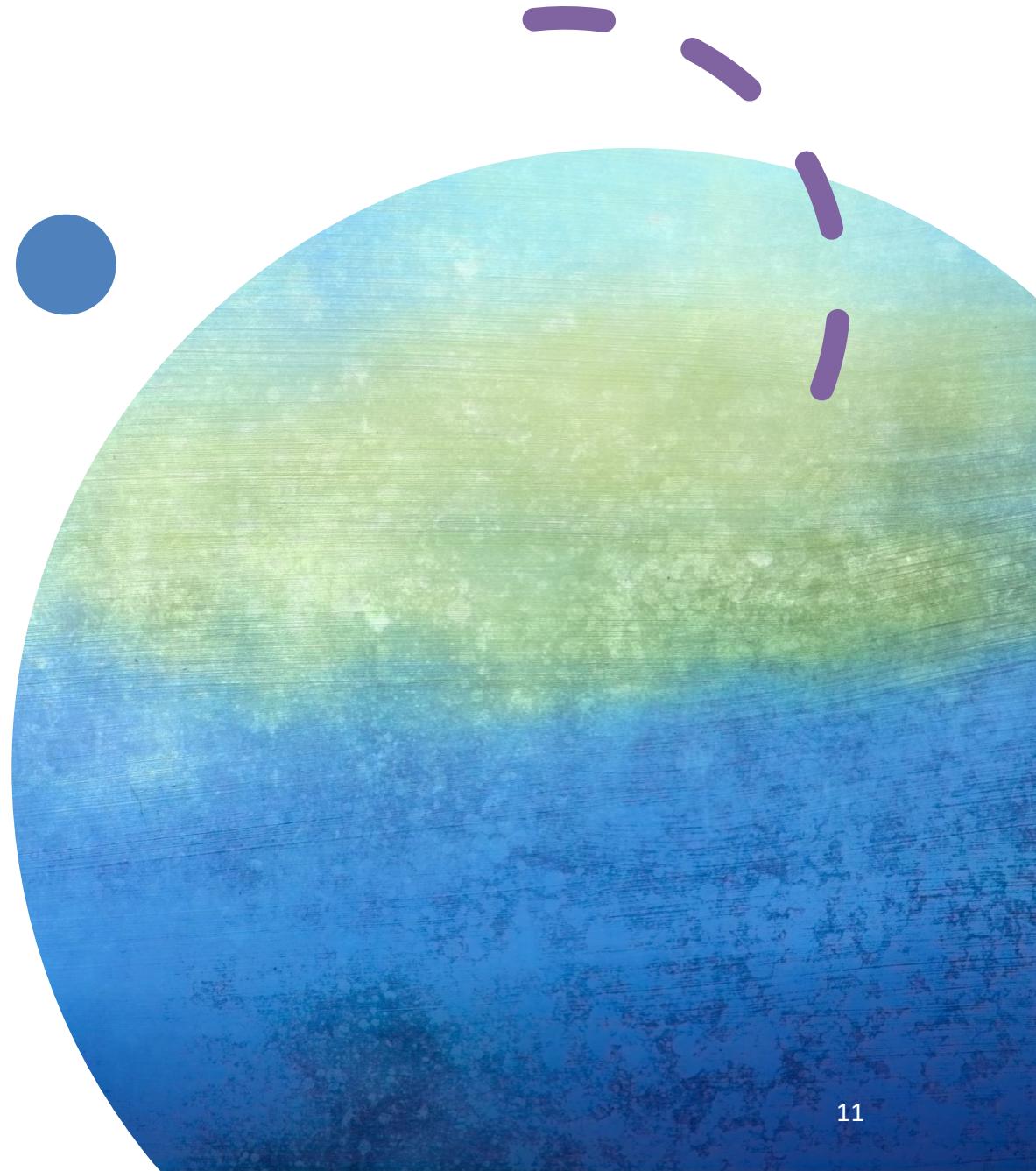
- Other forms of research involve experiments, interviews, and surveys.
- Information could also be gathered from lectures, seminars, etc.



Prewriting: Organising information for the essay

After gathering information (from all or some of the multiple sources mentioned), the next step is to organise the information.

One effective way to organise information for an essay is to make an **outline**.

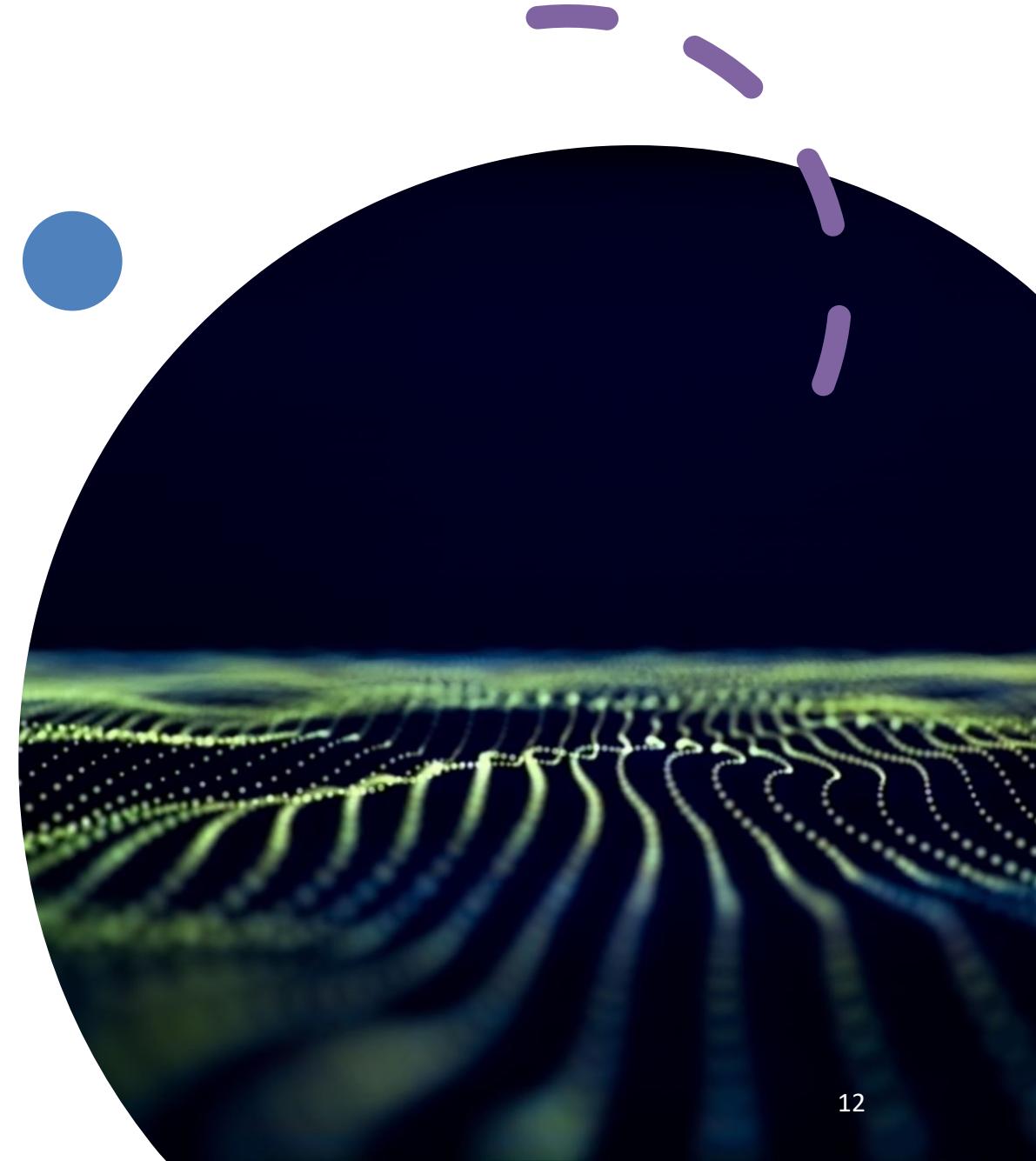


Drafting/ writing

After making an outline, the writer moves to the second stage of the writing process, namely, **writing or drafting**.

In assignments, the writing/ drafting stage may include two steps as follows:

- First or initial draft
- Rewriting/ revising



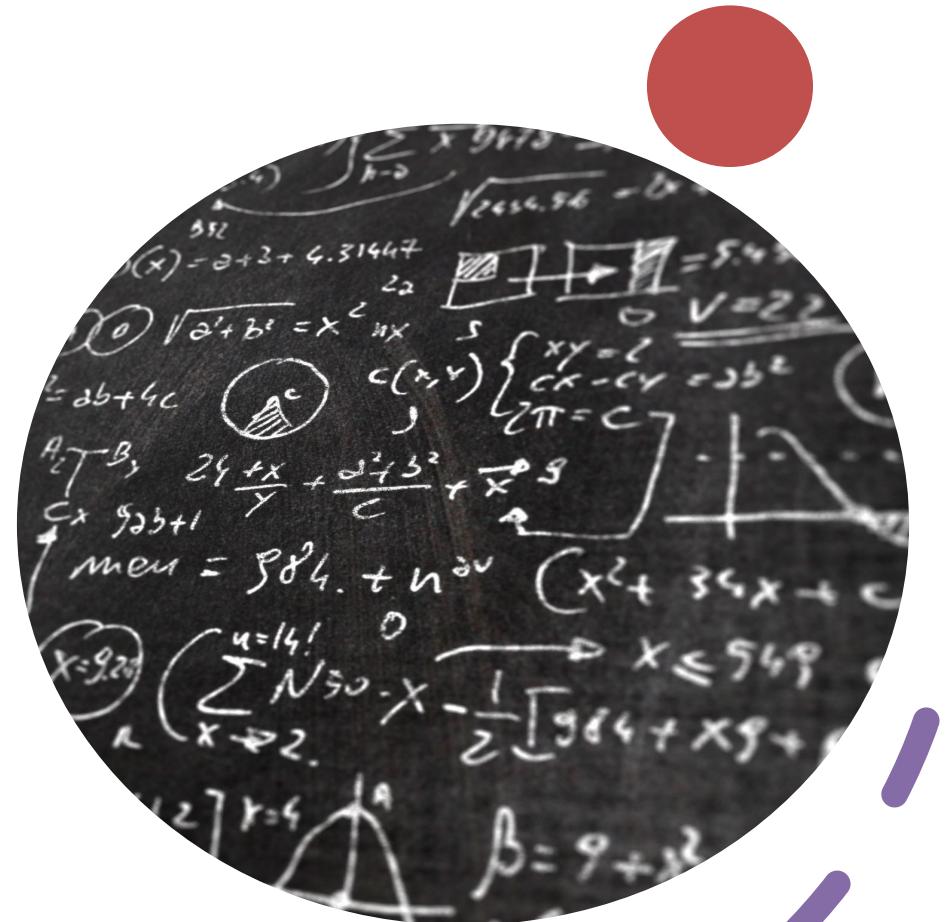
Drafting/ writing

- The first draft involves following the outline to write the various paragraphs of the essay.
- Rewriting includes any modification that is done to the first draft to revise and complete the essay, such as:
 - reorganizing/ changing/ deleting/ adding information
 - reorganizing the paragraphs
 - ensuring unity, completeness, and cohesion
- In examinations, there may not be an opportunity for rewriting or revision; i.e., the first draft may be the only draft; hence, it should be carefully composed.



Post-writing

- This is the final stage in the writing process.
- Post-writing activities include editing and proofreading.
- **Proofreading** involves reading the essay carefully in order to notice errors in spelling, grammar, usage, punctuation, omissions, and other mechanical inaccuracies while **editing** involves correcting such errors.
- It is always advisable to proofread the essay and correct all errors before submission.



Summary

- Academic writing recommends the process approach to essay writing.
- The process approach involves the writing process.
- The writing process involves three main stages of writing (prewriting, writing, post-writing).
- Each stage involves a set of activities.





Summary

- Prewriting activities include analysing the essay title, gathering information for the essay, and organising the gathered information.
- Writing involves composing the paragraphs by using the organised information and adding relevant details, as well as rewriting/ revising the essay.
- Post-writing involves proofreading and editing the essay.