

Overview

The **writing process** is a **journey**, brimming with specific steps and discoveries in the journey.

This document highlights important ways to think about **formal writing** in the context of academic and professional expectations. In fact, consider this document your **road map** for presenting your point of view in a clear and compelling manner that resonates with your audience. In turn, your audience will view you as a persuasive, trustworthy and overall effective communicator.

Please apply the following techniques and characteristics to **discussion** posts and **essays** this term. If instructions ask for your point of view, ensure that you present such according to the framework below. For all items, you can learn more via your *EasyWriter* e-text in the classroom or at the [Purdue OWL Writing Center](#).

Before You Write

- **Formal vs. Informal Writing:** Moving forward in the discussion boards and essays, please practice a more formal, professional style of writing. You can learn more about it here:
 - [Style, Genre & Writing](#)
 - [Formal & Informal Writing Styles](#)
 - [Formal & Informal Language](#)
- **Research Papers:** Learn more about how to write effective [Research Papers](#) at the Purdue Owl. By accessing this link, you will learn about the following:
 - [Writing a research paper](#)
 - [Genre & the research paper](#)
 - [Choosing a topic](#)
 - [Identifying audiences](#)
 - [Where do I begin?](#)
 - [Generating questions & topics workshop](#)
- **Presenting Arguments:** For most of EN106, you will practice arguing for your point of view. In doing so, you will avoid referring to yourself and will rely heavily on citing credible, relevant research to support your point of view. Learn more about the structure of [argumentative writing](#) at the Purdue OWL. This section includes how to write the following:
 - [Introductions](#)
 - [Body paragraphs](#)
 - [Rebuttals](#) (important: opposing viewpoints are required in your essays)
 - [Conclusions](#)

- **Audience:** Before you write, it is imperative to understand the specific audience to whom you will write. Having a better understanding of who they are, and their wants and needs, will help you adjust the tone and content of your writing. [Click here](#) to learn how you can understand and write for a specific audience.
- **Outline:** This will be an excellent road map for you. Prior to writing, consider drafting a detailed outline to help you organize your thesis statement, ideas and cited research. As you research, it will help you formulate your thought process, centralize cited summaries and quotes, see gaps in your research, and is a low-stakes way to feel in control of what you ultimately write in the essay. I start with my thesis statement, then organize the introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion based on my research and the key elements below. I incorporate cited material I want to use and I further refine the organization until it flows logically. I then transfer the outline to my essay and simply build out the paragraphs. Here are a few examples of detailed outlines that incorporate research: [Austin](#), [Purdue](#), and [Rasmussen](#).

As You Write

- **Introduction:** In the first sentence of an introduction, work to capture the reader's attention with something interesting to “hook” their desire to continue reading. Explain your topic. Then, end with a very specific thesis statement that captures your argument. See [Introductions](#).
- **Thesis Statement:** It is typically a sentence of 25 words or less that is placed at the end of your introduction paragraph. The thesis statement always notes two items: your topic and a very specific point of view that you will explore throughout the essay. A thesis statement is never a question.

Here is an example. It displays my specific point of view without referring to myself:

Thesis statement example: Given that childhood obesity is on the rise, it is imperative for parents affected to change the sleep, eating and physical activity behaviors of their children.

- My topic: childhood obesity is on the rise
- My point of view: it is imperative for parents affected to change the sleep, eating and physical activity behaviors of their children

Another good technique throughout the essay is to show how the one point of each body paragraph proves/illustrates the thesis statement point throughout the essay. Be explicit for your audience. The Purdue OWL provides a few [examples](#).

- **MLA or APA Evidence:** In EN106, you have the option of applying the Modern Language Association (MLA) style or American Psychological Association (APA) style to your research. The style you select should correspond to your degree and career path. Lunsford's *EasyWriter* e-text in your classroom further explains this. Also, to help you choose, this offers an [in-depth comparison](#) between MLA and APA.

The style should be applied to your document design and to research citations in each discussion board and essay assignment. Here are a few additional resources for you:

- MLA: [essay design](#), [in-text citations](#), and [full citations for the Works Cited page](#). Also, [The MLA Style Center](#).
- APA: [document design](#), [in-text citations](#), and full citations for the [References page](#). Also, [APA Style](#).
- FYI: if accessing the Purdue OWL, ensure that you click through the links on the left side of the page.
- There are more resources available to you via the **Library Resources** and **Learner Support** links on the left side of your class homepage.

Summaries & paraphrases: When you summarize information from another author, do so in your own words and sentence construction. Use an MLA or APA in-text citation at the end of the sentence. Most of what you cite should be content you summarize and cite. It's easier for your audience to read.

Quotations: Use quotations sparingly throughout your writing. They should be concise quotes stated in an interesting way to add support, diversity, and audience interest to your writing. Avoid quoting statistics and definitions that could be more easily read via a cited summary.

Important: As you use in-text citations in the body of your writing to support all claims/assertions that you make, you must also provide an MLA full citation on the Works Cited page or an APA References page.

At the end of the day, it is not necessary to memorize MLA or APA style for your citations. Of course, you will start to remember as you practice more. **Simply use your MLA or APA tools to look up the type of source you have (e.g., online article, hard-copy book, journal article, etc.). Then, apply the format to in-text citations in the body of your writing, as well as the full citations for an MLA Works Cited or APA References page.** Here are just a few examples of in-text citations:

MLA:

Source with author and page numbers -

- "This is a word-for-word quote" (Smith 2).
- Smith proceeded to speculate that "This is a word-for-word quote" (2).
- This represents ideas you summarized, from another author, in your own words and sentence construction (Smith 2).
- If you have multiple authors for a summary, it looks like this (Smith and Roberts 2).
- "If you have multiple authors for a quote, it looks like this" (Smith and Roberts 2).

Source with author and **no page numbers** (EX: **online article**) -

- "This is a word-for-word quote" (Smith).
- Smith proceeded to speculate that "This is a word-for-word quote."
- This represents ideas you summarized, from another author, in your own words and sentence construction (Smith).
- If you have multiple authors for a summary, it looks like this (Smith and Roberts).
- "If you have multiple authors for a quote, it looks like this" (Smith and Roberts).

APA:

Source with author and page numbers -

- "This is a word-for-word quote" (Smith, 2019, p. 2).
- Smith proceeded to speculate that "This is a word-for-word quote" (Smith, 2019, p. 2).
- This represents ideas you summarized, from another author, in your own words and sentence construction (Smith, 2019).
- Smith (2019) explained an idea that you summarized in your own words, sentence construction, and you cited it.
- If you have multiple authors for a summary, it looks like this (Smith and Roberts, 2019).
- "If you have multiple authors for a quote, it looks like this" (Smith and Roberts, 2019, p. 2).

Source with author and **no page numbers** (EX: **online article**) -

- "This is a word-for-word quote" (Smith, 2019, para. 2).
- Smith (2019) proceeded to speculate that "This is a word-for-word quote."
- This represents ideas you summarized, from another author, in your own words and sentence construction (Smith, 2019).
- Smith (2019) explained an idea that you summarized in your own words, sentence construction, and you cited it.
- If you have multiple authors for a summary, it looks like this (Smith and Roberts, 2019).

- “If you have multiple authors for a quote, it looks like this” (Smith and Roberts, 2019, para. 2).
- **Synthesis:** Effective writing involves a synthesis of authors to support, complicate and analyze your claims. As you incorporate more than one author into a synthesis, particularly as it relates to comparing and contrasting them, consider establishing one key point for each body paragraph that explores the claim in your thesis statement. In that one paragraph, compare and contrast where your sources stand on that issue. Ultimately, an organization like this makes for a well-organized and well-understood synthesis.

Read this about [synthesizing sources](#) and this for a [few examples](#). In other words, compare and contrast author themes to show why your claim is credible. Be explicit with your audience and always connect such throughout your writing to the main point of your paragraph and thesis statement. Always helpful to remind your audience. Transition words can help.

Here is a hypothetical synthesis example in MLA:

While discrepancies exist in research, it is clear that recent analysis proves we should redirect attention to the most impactful ways to solve childhood obesity. Smith (3) notes that childhood obesity is on the rise because of a lack of nutritious school lunches. While Roberts (6) partially agrees with this assessment, it is clear that Roberts' research has shed new light on this issue. In other words, Roberts' (6) study indicated that genetic factors and family experiences play greater roles in the increase in childhood obesity. In turn, this aligns with the overall assertion that we are placing our focus in areas of little impact.

On the other hand, such could be written in a way that the authors complement one another's claims, which subsequently supports your claim.

- **Topic Sentences:** The first sentence of a body paragraph, which is between your introduction and conclusion paragraphs, summarizes the one main point of the paragraph. It is also good practice to do the same in the last sentence of the body paragraph, while also working to transition to the next body paragraph topic. See [Topic Sentences](#).
- **Body Paragraphs:** These are the paragraphs between your introduction and conclusion paragraphs. Keep one main point in each paragraph, which should be in support of the thesis statement in your introduction, and summarize the point clearly in your topic sentence. Here is a sample organization:
 1. Topic sentence: the first sentence should summarize the one main point of the paragraph. Be explicit and very specific. Avoid questions and quotes.
 2. Foundation: use the next 2-3 sentences to further explore that point.
 3. Research: summarize and quote authors who can prove/validate/illustrate the point. These sentences must have MLA or APA in-text citations.
 4. Your discourse: explain what the authors mean, how it relates to your thesis statement, the main point of your paragraph and/or any implications to your audience.
 5. Final sentence: again summarize the point of the paragraph and work to transition to the main point in the next body paragraph.

Importantly, ask yourself this: did the research I cited in this paragraph prove the overall point of the paragraph? Did it prove my thesis statement? If not, replace it with credible, relevant research published within the past 10 years. See [Credible vs. Non-Credible Sources](#) and [Research and Evidence](#) to learn more about how to identify credible sources.

See [Body paragraphs](#) for additional examples. Read up about the [PIE method](#) of paragraph development to do more of a "deep dive" into your analysis.

- **Opposing Viewpoints:** Be more explicit, too, about alternate points of view. Your audience will appreciate the bigger picture and your objectivity. In an essay, you can typically do this in one paragraph before your conclusion paragraph. Be sure to cite the opposing viewpoint. See [Rebuttals](#).

- **Conclusion:** This is a separate paragraph. Summarize the one key point of each of your body paragraphs, restate your thesis statement in some manner and end on a memorable note. Another way to think about this: mirror your introduction and reinforce your key points. Ultimately, what do you want your audience to do or believe after reading your work? See [Conclusions](#).
- **Concise:** Be concise and to the point in each sentence. Sharpen and uplift word choices, but not to the point your audience does not understand the term. Avoid [empty](#) words (very, always, in order, etc.) that add no additional meaning, as well as [wordy phrasing](#). These are hallmarks of formal, professional writing. In turn, you will appear much more credible and authoritative to your audience. Moreover, it is easier for your audience to flow through your message. Here are more [examples](#).
- **Pronouns:** Avoid [first- and second-person pronouns](#) (I, you, we, etc.) to maintain objectivity. Instead, write in the [third person](#). In turn, your audience will view you as more credible, authoritative and professional. As one example, keep the “I” out of your formal, professional writing. Instead of writing “I agree with Freire and Edmundson’s assumptions,” you could instead write “Freire and Edmundson’s perspectives are accurate.” See [Grammarly’s](#) discussion, [Rasmussen](#), and [Objective Writing](#) for reasoning and examples.
- **Active Voice:** Apply [active voice](#) to your writing instead of [passive voice](#). See [Purdue OWL](#) for additional explanations.
- **Contractions:** Avoid contractions in formal, professional writing moving forward. See [Contractions](#).

After You Write

- **Revising & Editing:** [Revising and editing](#) are different. I often tell students to plan their time effectively. This will enable them to revise and edit their writing on a different day than when they finished the essay.

Writers can become very engaged in what they write. Oftentimes this results in an inability to “see” the errors in their writing, such as a gap in research that supports all claims, the proper organization of each paragraph, incorrect MLA/APA style, and sentence-level grammar mistakes, to name a few. Therefore, it is imperative to revise and edit, with “fresh eyes,” and on a different day than you write.

- **Revising:** As one example, a [reverse outline](#) can help you compare your original outline to your final essay. There is an entire section of other examples at [UNC](#).
- **Editing:** If you haven’t already, download the free version of [Grammarly](#) to help with your classroom posts and in Word documents. It is a huge help with catching edits and learning why they need to be changed.

The Purdue OWL also has excellent sections on [proofreading](#), [mechanics](#), [grammar](#), and [punctuation](#).

- **Tutors:** Be sure to connect with [Park’s Writing tutors](#) to review your essay.
- **My feedback:** Importantly, know that I provide a grading rubric and feedback message with your essay grades, as well as suggestions inserted into the viewing pane of your essays. It is imperative that you incorporate my feedback before you submit the next essay. Message me via your Canvas inbox if you have questions about my feedback.

If you are challenged finding the feedback, here is a [video](#) that shows you how to view it. Access the [Canvas Help Guide](#), [Canvas Live Chat](#), or call Canvas at 844.470.5727. You may also contact [Park University Tech Support](#) for assistance.