

WRITING A FIRST DRAFT



A first draft is a preliminary attempt to get ideas down on paper. It's okay if your ideas aren't completely formed yet. Writing can shape your thoughts and guide you to your conclusion.



Strategies For Writing a First Draft

Try these tips for writing a first draft. They will help you stay focused on your topic and provide a rough sketch of what your paper will look like.

- 1 Write your research question or thesis and post it above your work space so you can see it.
- 2 Print out your outline and refer to it as you write.
- 3 Start wherever you want. Write the part that comes most easily. Many people recommend leaving the introduction until the end.
- 4 Some people recommend writing as much as you can in one sitting. In the time you've given yourself to write, you should be producing sentences and paragraphs, even bad ones.
- 5 Get your main points down, but leave out quotations and specific evidence if you don't have them yet.
- 6 Leave gaps in the writing where you know you want to add more, and write yourself a quick note about what you should eventually include there.
- 7 Let go of perfection! Try to write complete sentences but don't worry too much about grammar, word choice, or punctuation. These elements can be fine-tuned in revision.

Once you have a first draft, your writing will need revising and polishing. See our resources on **Revision and Proofreading Strategies**.

