

# 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.

- Write your research question or thesis and post it above your work space so you can see it.
- Print out your outline and refer to it as you write.
- Start wherever you want. Write the part that comes most easily. Many people recommend leaving the introduction until the end.
- 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.
- Get your main points down, but leave out quotations and specific evidence if you don't have them yet.
- 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.
- 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**.

