

WRITING VARIABLES

BEFORE BEGINNING ANY ASSIGNMENT, IT WILL HELP YOU TO FOCUS AND REMAIN CONSISTENT IN STYLE IF YOU CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING VARIABLES.

Audience For whom am I writing? A letter written to your ten-year-old sister will be much different in vocabulary, subject, content, format and sentence complexity than one written to your senator.

Topic About what subject should I write? If possible, choose a subject that interests you. Research your subject well.

Purpose Why am I writing? Have a clear purpose in mind before starting your paper. Are you writing to entertain, to instruct, to inform or to persuade? Keeping your purpose in mind as you write will result in a paper that is focused and consistent.

Voice What point of view or "voice" will I use? Writers sometimes write from the point of view of another person rather than from their own point of view. Writing in a voice other than your own can add variety and help you see your subject in a new way. Make sure your "voice" remains consistent.

Format What form will my writing take? Different forms of writing, such as letters, diaries, reports, essays, research papers, etc., have specific requirements. Decide on the form your writing will take, and then make sure you know the requirements for that form of writing.

PLANNING AND WRITING AN ESSAY OR COMPOSITION

REVIEW ONLY

- {1} Select a general subject area that interests you.
- {2} Make a list of your thoughts and ideas about the subject.
- {3} Use your list to help focus on a specific topic within the subject area.
- {4} Decide what you want to say about the topic, and write an introductory statement that reflects this purpose.
- {5} Make a list of details to support your statement.
- {6} Arrange the list of details into an outline.
- {7} Do any reading and research necessary to provide additional support for specific areas of your outline. Keep a careful list of all of your sources for your bibliography.
- {8} Write a first draft.
- {9} Revise your first draft making sure that:
 - (a) The introduction includes a clear statement of purpose.
 - (b) Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence.
 - (c) Every statement is supported or illustrated.
 - (d) The concluding paragraph ties all of the important points together, leaving the reader with a clear understanding of the meaning of the essay or composition.
 - (e) Words are used and spelled correctly.
 - (f) Punctuation is correct.
- {10} Read your revised paper aloud to check how it sounds.
- {11} Proofread your revised paper two times: once for spelling, punctuation and word usage, and again for meaning and effectiveness.

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