

INSTRUCTOR: Drafting. In the drafting stage of writing you flush out your ideas and create a complete document. Drafting is easier if you've done some prewriting first. Especially, if you have started on a thesis statement. Your thesis statement provided a topic and direction.

You now need to develop the thesis into a cohesive paper. Flushing out your ideas is like providing more details on a map. Based on your topic and direction, you decide to provide more information about specific areas. Starting from broad goals, and then targeting each element of a draft, body paragraphs, transitions, introductions, and conclusions, can help you make progress and avoid writer's block.

No matter which element you start with, drafting begins with thinking about how your audience and purpose shapes your goals. Who are you writing for? In other words, who will be using your map? What is your goal? In other words, where do you want your travelers to go.

Keeping your audience and purpose in mind as you draft will help you stay on track. Another way to stay on track is to use an outline. Start the outline by writing out your thesis statement, even if it is still rough it will guide you. To create an informal outline, try to come up with major points that relate to your thesis.

Aim for three points. Though you may find as you work through your draft that you only need two, or that you really need five. Under each major point list two to four details to help clarify and support your point. Don't worry about writing in complete sentences yet. If you have trouble filling out any of these entries in an informal outline, you may need to go back and rethink your audience purpose and thesis.

Or you may need to do some more prewriting to generate ideas. If you chose to make an informal outline, writing out your body paragraphs is easy. From your outline, turn each major entry into a topic sentence for a paragraph. Then turn the supporting details into additional sentences in your paragraphs.

Try to keep writing without worrying too much about style and grammar. You can always revise your rough draft later. If you get stuck, try prewriting strategies, such as free writing or clustering to come up with more details. Once you have written out your body paragraphs you may need to add transitions to improve the flow.

Read your paragraphs over to see how well they fit together. Add transitions to improve the flow of your ideas. A transition may be a single word or phrase at the beginning of a sentence, an entire sentence, or even an entire paragraph. In addition to forming body paragraphs with smooth transitions, devote some of your drafting time to developing a strong introduction and a memorable conclusion.

Your introduction paragraph comes at the very beginning of the paper. It needs to get readers interested in your topic, provide some background information, and state your thesis. Your conclusion needs to wrap up your paper by restating your main idea and leaving your readers with something significant to think about.

Remember, when you are ready to draft your paper, recall your purpose, audience, and thesis, and work from an informal outline. Stay on topic as you draft, and open with a strong introduction and end with a memorable conclusion.