The Writing Process

There are seven steps in the writing process, though with practice, many of the steps may be combined. For now, follow the seven steps and practice using outlines to keep your writing focused.

The Seven Steps of Writing

1. Discovering: Explore your subject. This step includes:
   - brainstorming,
   - listing,
   - free-writing, and
   - questioning.

2. Planning: Plan and organize your essay. Keep in mind your audience, subject, purpose, strategy, and design. In this step, you will:
   - narrow your focus,
   - determine main points,
   - cluster or create a web
   - order ideas, and
   - create an outline. (see Example 1 below)

EXAMPLE 1: A basic outline

Attention-Getter: Grab the audience’s attention with a snappy, engaging introduction.
Thesis Statement: Clearly state your main point(s)

I. First main point
   A. First supporting point
      1. Major detail or example
         a. Minor detail or example
         b. Minor detail or example
      2. Major detail or example
      3. Major detail or example
   B. Second supporting point
      1. Major detail or example
      2. Major detail or example
II. Second main point (and so on)
3. **Composing**: Begin composing/writing your essay

4. **Getting Feedback**: Get advice about your paper. Use your peers, a conference with your instructor (me), or go to a writing center.

5. **Revising**: Focus on the bigger picture. Ask yourself these questions:
   - Have I included all of my main points?
   - Will including more ideas strengthen my essay?
   - Are any points irrelevant or repetitious?
   - Are there enough examples to support my main points?
   - Can any of my points be expanded to achieve better clarity?
   - Does the order of my ideas make sense?
   - Can I rearrange my ideas for better clarity?

6. **Editing**: Focus on the smaller concerns. Remember to look at:
   - Word choice (diction)
   - Sentence structure
   - Grammar
   - Punctuation
   - Spelling
   - Mechanics

7. **Proofreading**: When you feel that you’ve completed your final copy, read through it again! It helps to read the paper aloud because you’ll be able to hear your mistakes. In this step, you also want to make sure your formatting is correct (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman, APA format).