

ORGANIZING AS YOU WRITE

When writing, it is often hard to keep track of your ideas and stay focused on answering the prompt. Finding steps to guide you through the writing process and stay organized helps your paper flow and makes it easier for your reader to follow along.

The writing process starts with understanding your topic and brainstorming ideas. Organizing these ideas will make it easier to move onto the next step and help you draw connections between your ideas and any source material. These steps are meant to help guide you through the writing process and the organization along the way.

Remember you can add in highlights, headings, notes/comments, and colored fonts to stay organized as you write and remove them for the final draft.

UNDERSTAND YOUR TOPIC

- Be sure to fully read and understand your prompt
- Annotate and highlight any requirements, such as the discipline's formatting style, to refer to later when finalizing the paper
- Highlight the specific prompt/questions that must be answered in the paper; remember to refer to these during the brainstorming and writing process to be sure you are answering them

BRAINSTORMING

- Begin writing down your thoughts and ideas onto the paper; do not worry about complete sentences yet, just get them onto the paper
- Jot down answers to the questions in your prompt
- Outline or map your ideas to find a logical flow and see how your ideas connect
- Group ideas together based on similarities and which evidence supports each idea
- If you are using outside research, be sure to engage with the texts and add notes or highlight anything that can help you develop your topic

GET TO WRITING

- Use headings to help organize as you write
- Use your ideas that have been grouped together to start writing out complete sentences and paragraphs
- Reread your writing periodically to make sure your paragraphs are answering the questions/prompt

CONTACT US:

(702) 895-3908 | writingcenter@unlv.edu
unlv.edu/writing-center



- If necessary, you can add in source material to further develop your topic and explain how the evidence relates to it

USE YOUR TOOLS

- Use different fonts and colors to make navigating through your document easier
- Use these colors as reminders for any places that might need revision such as:
 - Areas that need further explanation or support
 - Areas that can be rephrased for clarity
 - Areas that you are unsure about/that do not coincide with the overall topic
- Make use of the **comment** and **track changes** function available on Microsoft Word or Google Docs
- Make a purpose outline by summarizing each paragraph to help remove any unnecessary material and to be sure the paragraphs are unified in supporting the thesis and answering the questions in the prompt
- Once you have revised, refer to your annotations in the prompt to be sure you included all requirements: sources, word count, questions, and discipline style formatting (MLA, APA, etc.)

Organizing Different Types of Essays

Most often academic essays are organized in **climactic order**, which arranges the most important/most persuasive evidence last since this is what is remembered. **Chronological order** is another common organization method, which arranges the events/evidence in the order that they happened.

Here are some examples at how to approach different types of papers:

Cause and effect: This type of paper is a form of argumentative essay that details the relationships between two subjects. The writer's goal is to show how one person, thing, idea, or event directly influences another person, thing, idea, or event.

Compare and contrast essay: The writer's goal is to summarize two or more ideas/texts and show their similarities and differences. The essay can move from point to point, back and forth between items being compared, or it can be organized so one item is completely discussed before moving on to the next.

Problem/solution essay: The goal of this essay is to establish the problem in the introduction, then offer solutions in the body.

Analytical essay: The purpose of an analysis is to explain an idea or describe a process and use source material to support these ideas. Below are three common types of analysis essays:

- **Data:** The goal of this paper is to evaluate the data and how they support your argument/topic. You will systemically apply the statistical and/or logical techniques to describe, illustrate, condense, and evaluate data.
- **Literary:** The goal of a literary analysis is to present an argument about your personal perspective, interpretation, or critique of the text. In this type of essay, you present your argument/thesis and use the text to support your ideas.

- Rhetorical: This type of paper is less concerned with what the source is saying than with how the author says it (the rhetoric). It addresses the source/author's goals, techniques, and how the text appeals to the audience, and uses support from the text to further develop these ideas.