

Writer's Block

One Way to Write a Paper: For Those with Writers Block

1. Format paper according to assignment criteria

- a. MLA: name, teacher, class, and date in upper left-hand corner; double-spaced; last name and page number in upper right-hand corner.

2. Cluster (See “Invention Exercises” handout)

3. Write thesis (See “Thesis” handout)

4. Outline ideas under thesis (See “Outline” handout)

5. Free-write to expand the outline

- a. Bullet ideas and write a few ideas about each

6. Write body of paper (skip intro and conclusion)

- a. Turn bulleted ideas into complete sentences
- b. Shape outline into body paragraphs

7. Conclusion

- a. Quickly (one to two sentences) sum up the ideas of the paper
- b. Answer the questions: “Who cares?” and “If your thesis is true, why is it important?”

8. Introduction

- a. Looking at your conclusion, write an introduction that points to your conclusion
- b. Start from a broad introduction and narrow down to your thesis

After paper is written, use these clean-up ideas:

9. Transition paragraph to paragraph

- a. If you wrote about the dangers of guns in society in your first paragraph and your next paragraph discusses the dangers of guns in the home, transition in ways such as the following: “Guns pose a danger not only to society, but to the home as well.”
- b. Use transitional words such as: therefore, furthermore, conversely, similarly, along the same lines, in addition, etc.

10. Elevate your language

- a. Remove colloquialisms (cool as a cucumber, hard as a rock, stubborn as a mule)
- b. Replace weak verbs and generalizing adjectives/adverbs (a lot, very, great, hard, says, talks about, etc.)

11. Sentence Structure

- a. Vary types of sentences
 - i. Short/long
 - ii. Use semicolons or colons
 - iii. Use prepositional phrases to introduce a sentence

(See reverse side)

- b. Scan for passive voice and replace with active voice
 - i. Active voice: Subject + Verb + Predicate
 - 1. Godzilla ate my sister yesterday.
 - ii. Passive voice: an inversion of this consecutive order
 - 1. My sister was eaten by Godzilla yesterday.

(See reverse side)