

# Pre-writing

## 1) Know the question(s) you need to answer.

**Why?** It can help you to choose a topic to write about as well as keep your thoughts organized while you decide how to craft your assignment.

## 2) Answer the question(s) and create your thesis.

**Why?** Whether you are analyzing a text, posing an opinion on a controversial issue, or presenting research, having some answers before you start writing can keep your thoughts organized and aid in your search for reliable sources that support your ideas.

## 3) Do some research.

- a) If you have participated in active reading, a lot of this work may already be done. If you need to use additional sources, continue to apply the ideas from the Active Reading Tips Sheet to your new sources.
- b) Pick out quotes or main concepts that support your ideas to keep on hand for when you begin to write.
- c) For ideas on where to look for trustworthy sources, check out the Danforth Library Research Tools page.

**Why?** Finding your sources and quotes ahead of time can streamline the writing process a lot. By doing this, you're not scrambling to find credible sources or skimming for quotes while also trying to write.

## 4) Create your Works Cited or Reference Page as you choose sources.

**Why?** If you create, review and organize this page as you go, you lessen the risk of leaving something out by accident. Also, it's one less task to do at the end of the assignment when mental strain and burnout might be high.

## 5) Create an outline.

- a) Organize your paper using a separate piece of paper or directly in your word document.
- b) Label each paragraph and what it's going to be about. You can even make note of which sources you plan to use in each section.
- c) A sample outline is available on the next page.

**Why?** This can help you to keep your writing organized, keep you from straying off topic, and help you to make sure you are sticking to your thesis/answering the assignment question(s).

# Sample Outline

## Paragraph 1 — Introduces topic

Introduction/Hook \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas that frame your topic and provide context \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Statement \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Paragraph 2 — Body Paragraph

Topic Sentence (introduce idea) \_\_\_\_\_

1. supporting information: \_\_\_\_\_

2. supporting information: \_\_\_\_\_

3. supporting information: \_\_\_\_\_

## Paragraph 3 — Body Paragraph

Topic Sentence (introduce idea) \_\_\_\_\_

1. supporting information: \_\_\_\_\_

2. supporting information: \_\_\_\_\_

3. supporting information: \_\_\_\_\_

## Paragraph 4 — Body Paragraph

Topic Sentence (introduce idea) \_\_\_\_\_

1. supporting information: \_\_\_\_\_

2. supporting information: \_\_\_\_\_

3. supporting information: \_\_\_\_\_

## Paragraph 5 — Conclusion

Summarize Key Points \_\_\_\_\_

Closing Idea \_\_\_\_\_