

### **Stages of academic writing**

*Give each other advice on the process of planning, writing and checking your academic writing.*

*What could the stages be? What order would you put those stages in?*

*Put the academic writing stages that you are given in order without looking below.*

*Compare your ideas with the order below.*

*What are the reasons for the inclusion and position of each stage below, do you think?*

*What are the reasons for these things?*

- Drawing up a schedule
- Brainstorming before researching
- Brainstorming onto a mind map (not a list)
- Writing down a description of the reader
- Doing as much work as you can on the mind map
- Getting initial feedback on your mind map (not later)
- Going back to your introduction after the rest of the writing is finished
- Deciding the title after everything else
- Getting someone else to proofread your writing

*Are there any stages that you would put somewhere else in the process?*

*Are any of the stages unnecessary? Are any extra stages needed or possible?*

*What do the stages and their order depend on?*

**Cards to cut up/ Suggested answers**

Underline important words in the guide to what you have to write, e.g. key words in an email from the editor, an online guide for writers, or the homework task.
Draw up a schedule for planning and writing, with realistic deadlines for each stage.
Decide on an initial idea for a title/ topic.
Brainstorm all the things you could possibly write about the topic onto a mind map with categories and sub-categories.
Organise the mind map into bigger categories and add more examples of each category.
Do research on the topic, such as background reading.
Add as more ideas as you can to the mind map, until you have at least 20 or 30 categories and sub-categories.
Read examples of and advice on that kind of writing, e.g. some papers in the same journal as you want to publish in or a website about how to write that kind of report.
Find out about, think about and write down a description of the readers, e.g. what they already know, don't already know and might want to know/ be interested in about your topic. If relevant, write down at least two things that you want to achieve by people reading your writing, e.g. one aim for a specialist readership and one aim for a non-specialist readership.
Cross off categories, and examples on your mind map which aren't important or relevant to your readers and/ or aims, and circle the most important and relevant parts. Make sure that the remaining sections are the right number for the length of your writing (e.g. two sections for the two main body paragraphs of a 250 word essay) and that each section has at least two sub-sections.

Put the sections and sub-sections into logical order by writing (1), (2a), (3bii), etc on the mind map.
Get initial feedback on your mind map.
Write a plan for your writing, with a brief description of the topic of each section and/ or paragraph.
Write the first draft of the introduction (or just an outline of the introduction if you get stuck on how to catch reader's attention, explain the background to the topic, etc).
Write the first draft of the body of the piece.
Write the first draft of ending/ summary/ conclusion.
Go back to your introduction to make it more effective and make sure it matches the body and conclusion.
Edit your writing, for example using spellcheck, rephrasing where possible, checking for typical mistakes such as missing articles ("a", "an" and "the") and un-academic writing, and adding support for your arguments.
Get feedback on your writing.
Write the second draft of the body of the piece.
Write the second draft of the conclusion.
Write the second draft of the introduction.

Edit your writing, looking back to the feedback on your first draft to make sure that you haven't made the same mistakes.

Get feedback again.

Finish off the main body and conclusion.

Finish off the introduction.

Make a final decision on the title (and the titles of section headings if you have them).

Write an email to accompany the writing (if needed).

Re-read the task/ guide for writers and do a final edit, double-checking the word limit and/ or page limit, formatting rules (cover page, footer), bibliography, etc.

Get someone (e.g. a professional proof-reader) to check the grammar, spelling and punctuation of all of your writing (including the email if there is one).

Submit your finished writing.