The Writing Process

Writing an assessment is rarely a linear process. As shown in the diagram over the page, you may move back and forth between brainstorming, researching and drafting as your ideas develop. The key stages of the writing process are outlined briefly below.

Stages of writing

View assessment

Before you start writing, carefully read your unit description and any instructional guides you have for your task. Pay close attention to the task requirements, marking criteria, recommended resources, and the marking guide or rubric. Consider how the task aligns with the unit learning objectives and identify the required format, such as essay, report, case study or presentation. Helpsheets are available to guide you through the structure and expectations of most assessment types.

Conduct topic analysis

Analyse your topic carefully. Ensure you include all the key information required. Correctly and thoroughly interpreting the question is critical to staying focused in your writing.

Brainstorm ideas

Begin by exploring what you already know about the topic. Consider the lecture notes, prescribed readings, personal experiences and prior knowledge. Record any ideas that come to mind, as this can help you identify gaps in your knowledge.

Research

Using key words from your topic, start searching for relevant information. Use your unit readings, lecture notes and the library databases (QuickSearch, Subject guides). This stage also requires effective reading and note-taking to keep track of sources.

Focus ideas

Now that you have expanded your understanding of the topic through research and reading, refine how you will respond to the topic. Write the main points you want to make, and the evidence you will use to support them.

Write first draft

Do not aim for perfection in your first draft. Refer back to your main points and the accompanying evidence and expand on them. These become the body of your text, and you can write the introduction and conclusion later. Remember to include in-text citations as you write to save time and ensure sources are not overlooked.

Revise draft

Revising requires you to double-check the assessment criteria. Make sure you've addressed the topic and included sufficient evidence to support your claims. Check for duplicated information. You may need to do more research to fill any gaps.

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Edit draft

Review your draft to ensure your ideas flow logically and your arguments are clear. Read your work from the perspective of someone with limited knowledge of the topic and check that your explanations make sense. Pay attention to the word count and remove unnecessary words or repetition to improve clarity and conciseness.

Proofread final draft

Before submitting, carefully proofread your assessment for spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting, and referencing errors. This final review helps ensure your work is polished, professional, and ready for submission.

Submit

Once you have completed your proofreading and final checks, submit your assessment with confidence. Remember to ensure all required files have been uploaded correctly and that your work meets the assessment requirements before submission.

Related helpsheets

- Note-Taking
- Reading Strategies: Questioning
- Understanding your Assessment Question
- Editing your Writing

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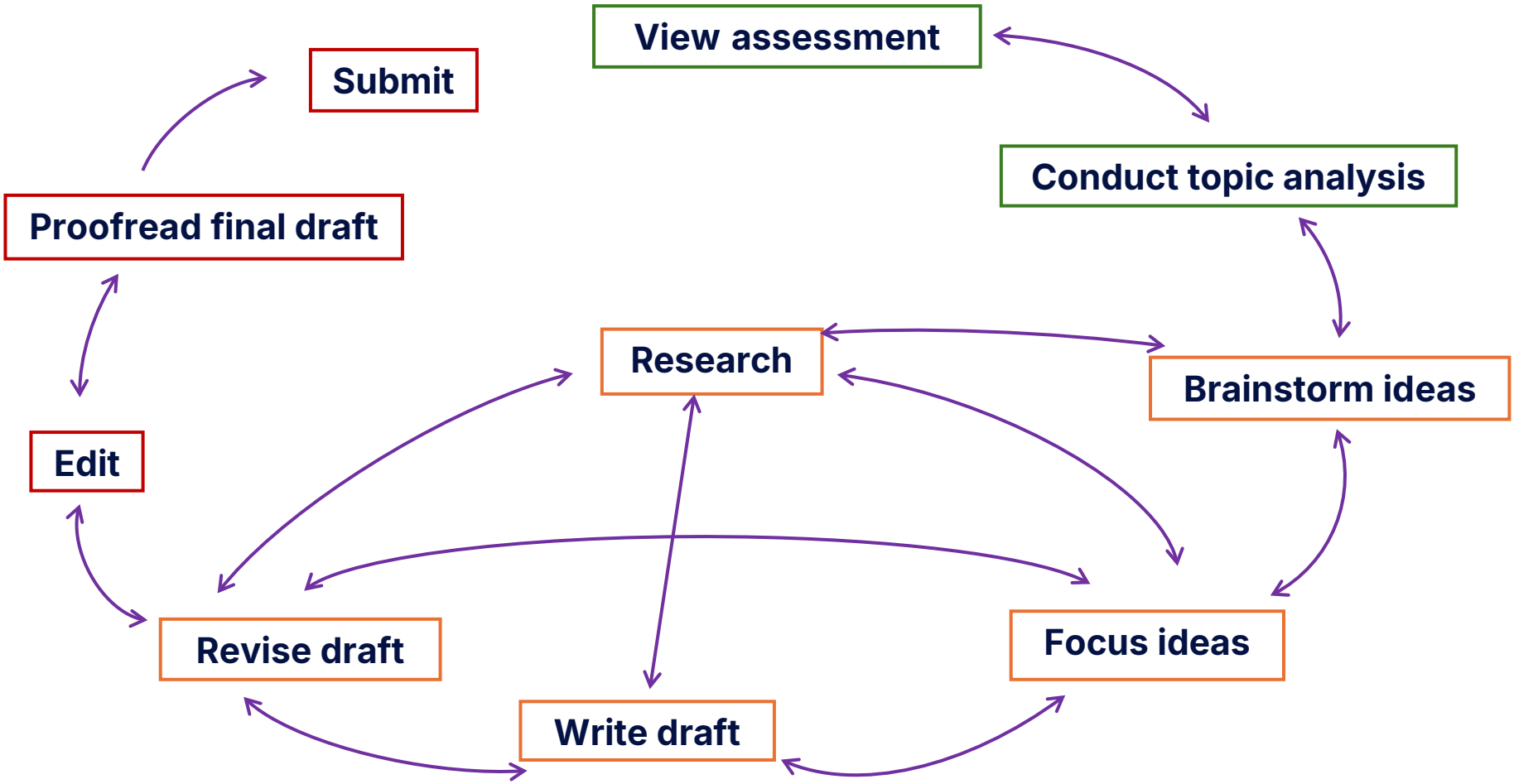
Find this helpsheet online
studyskills.federation.edu.au

Planning, producing, polishing



Adapted from Capella University (n.d.). *The writing process*. Retrieved from http://www.capella.edu/interactivemedia/onlineWritingCenter/downloads/TheWritingProcess.pdf

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