

Writing an assignment is not a linear process. As you can see from the diagram over the page, you may move back and forth between brainstorming, researching and drafting to finalise your work. The discreet stages in the writing process are outlined in brief below. Further detail is available in other helpsheets where noted. Academic skills helpsheets are generally available at campus libraries.

Stages of writing

View assignment

Read the Course Description for your task. Note the outline, the criteria, any resources, and the marking guide or rubric. Check how the task aligns with the course learning objectives. Identify what kind of structure the assignment requires, e.g., essay, report etc. Helpsheets are available on most structures.

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 on topic in your writing. Refer to the *Topic Analysis* helpsheet.

Brainstorm ideas

Start to your assignment by brainstorming what you know about the topic. Consider the lecture notes, prescribed text and your life experience, and note down ideas. This helps identify gaps in your knowledge.

Research

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

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. Include the in-text citations so you don't need to find evidence later.



Find this helpsheet online
studyskills.federation.edu.au

Revise draft

Revising requires you to double-check the assignment 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.

Edit draft

Check your writing for a logical flow of ideas, and clarity of information. Imagine you are a reader with limited understanding of the topic. Consider the word count, and cut out unnecessary words, such as 'very'.

Proofread final draft

This stage is the final check for errors in spelling, punctuation and sentence level expression. Refer to the *Editing & Proofreading* helpsheet for more tips.

Submit

Now you can hand in your assignment with confidence.

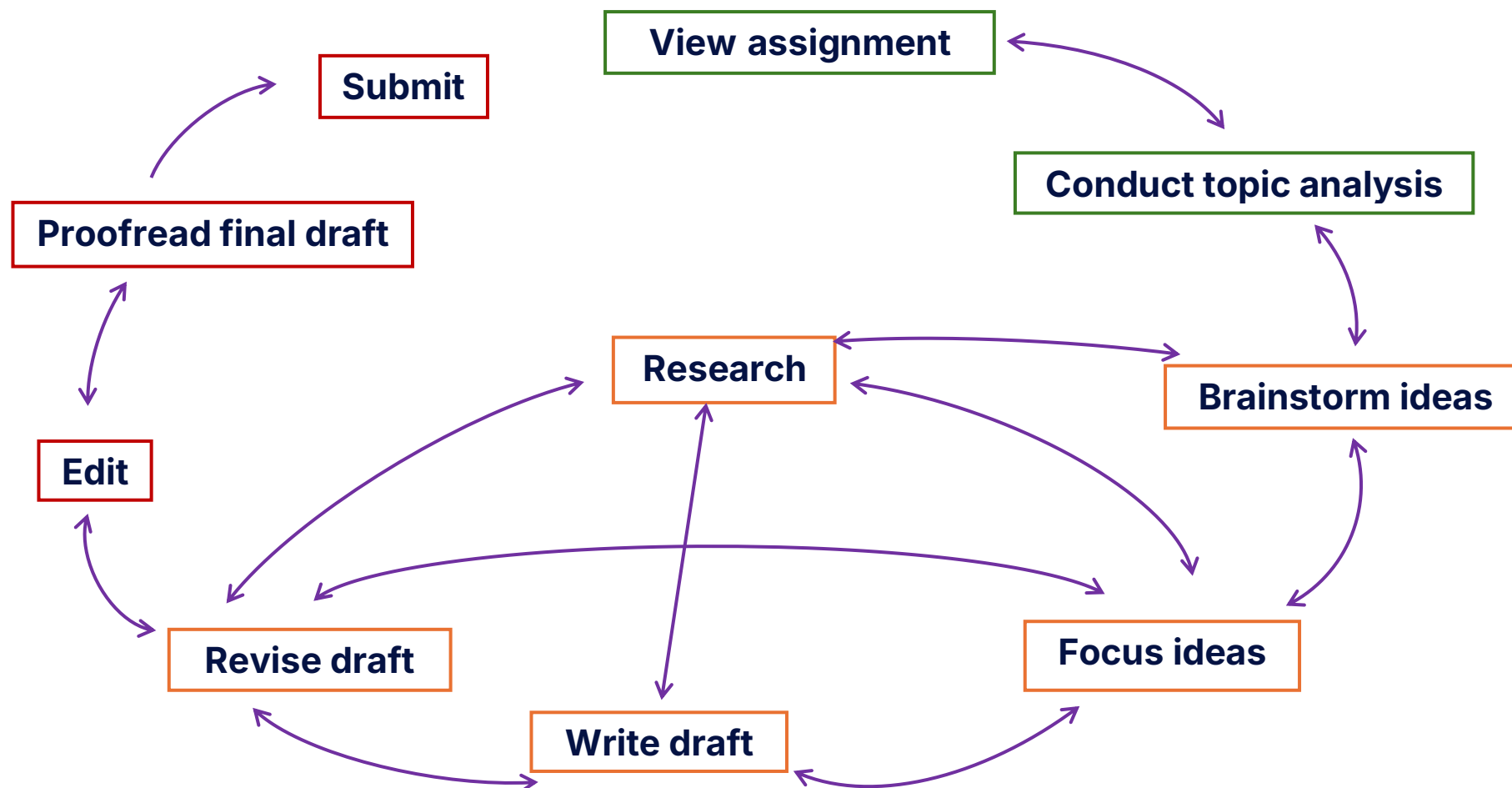


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Planning, producing, polishing



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