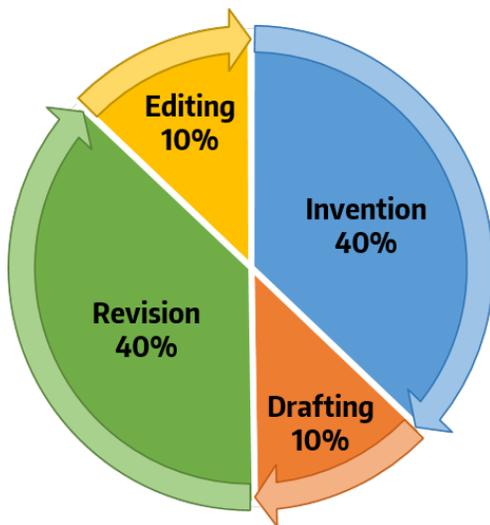


The Writing Process

Writing is a process of four general steps: **inventing**, **drafting**, **revising**, and **editing**. You might prefer to do the steps linearly, one after the other, or iteratively, in repeating or successive sessions. The steps blend into each other, so putting effort into each step pays off at the end with a clear, concise, and complete paper. The other side of this sheet defines the steps and suggests how and when to use each step.

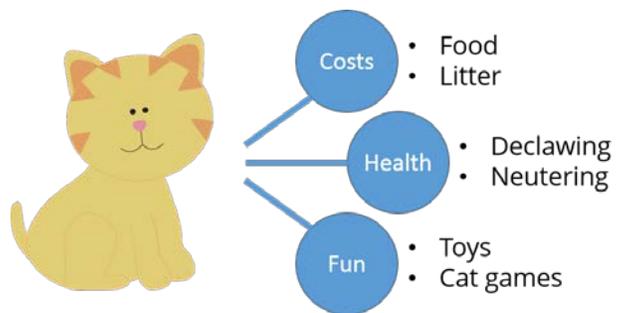
Approximately 50% of the process consists of generating ideas and organizing them into a coherent form (the **invention** and **drafting** steps).



Invention, also called pre-writing or brainstorming, is the foundation of a successful paper—without it, you’ll have nothing to draft, revise, edit, or submit to your professor.

Here are some different ways to invent or begin the writing process.

- Note-taking — This can be as simple as jotting down reactions, questions, or main points about your topic or as complex as keeping a system of notecards that you re-visit and take notes on again many times.
- Listing — Write down everything you can think of that is related to your paper topic. You can add or remove items from your list at any time.
- Free-writing — Write for 5 minutes on your topic without stopping or worrying about spelling, grammar, or anything else. If you run out of ideas about your topic, write “I don’t know what to say” or something similar until you start to come up with more ideas. Free-writing helps you clear out some of your dead-end ideas and write yourself into some surprising and fruitful ideas.
- Clustering (also called mapping or webbing) — This method allows you to show how your items or ideas are related to each other. Separate your thoughts into similar categories and draw lines connecting those categories to each other and/or to your main topic. [graphic]
- Outlining — Outlining consists of creating headings and putting your ideas, evidence, or sources under those headings so you can clearly see the entire paper’s organization.



an example of Clustering on the topic of owning a cat

The other 50% of the process (the **revision** and **editing** steps) consists of looking at the ideas and form more closely, often from a reader’s perspective. All four steps consider both global issues (such as argument, focus, and structure) and local issues (such as spelling and punctuation) to some degree.

Using the Writing Process

These tables describe the four steps of the writing process: **inventing**, **drafting**, **revising**, and **editing**. Knowing when and how to use these steps will help you resolve common problems in your own writing and grow as an effective writer.

1) **Invention**

What is invention?	How should I invent?	When should I invent?	When am I done inventing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the step where you get to be creative Focus on coming up with a topic and a direction Don't worry too much about organization yet Even just thinking about your assignment counts as invention! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorming Listing Outlining Mind-mapping Free writing Note-taking Researching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You get your assignment You understand the requirements Your draft is too short You need more ideas or support for your draft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your ideas turn into full sentences You have too much research But keep in mind: invention can be used throughout the entire writing process!

2) **Drafting**

What is drafting?	How should I draft?	When should I draft?	When am I done drafting?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This starts when you begin to put words together on the page You do not have to organize your ideas here, concentrate on putting them into sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free writing Writing Paragraphing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have an idea of the main points you want to make with your writing You want to put new ideas down in words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You begin to feel ready to show your work to another person Don't fall in love with your early drafts, because you'll probably want to make changes

3) **Revision**

What is revision?	How should I revise?	When should I revise?	When am I done revising?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the step where you begin to focus on organizing your writing in an effective and logical way You can rearrange, add, and delete words, sentences, and ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing your thesis Reorganizing Rephrasing Working on transitions or topic sentences Adding or deleting information Strengthening support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have a draft or part of a draft to work with You've stopped drafting long enough to become objective to your writing You have reread the assignment guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You organized your ideas logically You get too attached to a draft of your writing

4) **Editing**

What is editing?	How should I edit?	When should I edit?	When am I done editing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is turning a revised draft into a final draft This can include fixing spelling, formatting, citations, style, headings, grammar, punctuation, and minor redundancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making minor changes Checking grammar Running spell check Fixing formatting Checking citations Reading aloud for flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have a full draft You're satisfied with the organization, thesis, support, and ideas Editing can be done all along, but should also be done very last. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You turn in your assignment, but this only means you are done editing that specific draft of your writing