

## The Writing Process



# The Writing Process

*The Six Steps to Writing the Successful College Essay*

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# Attribution and OER Revision Statement

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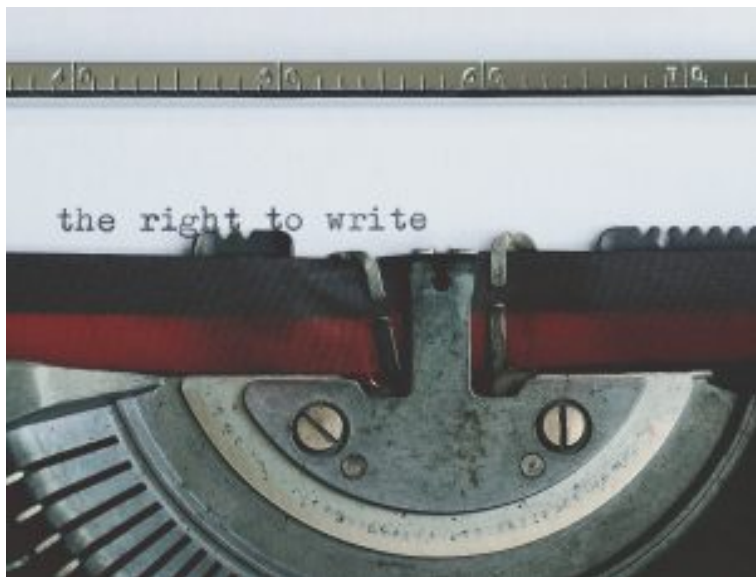
This book examines the best practices of academic writing by exploring how the writing process actually works; with particular attention paid to the various elements of the college essay format. This was originally published as an introduction to Gurevich’s first OER publication, “Critical Thinking.”

(The material is curated and presented to be applicable for subjects/assignments across a number of academic disciplines.)





# I. Preface



"Close-up View Of An Old Typewriter" by Suzy Hazelwood, Pexels is in the Public Domain, CC0

In this text, we will enter the world of academic writing by exploring how to craft the college essay. We will do this through an interactive discussion of the six main *stages* of the writing *process* and the six main *elements* of the essay *format*.

While no essay can be reduced to a simple series of steps or formulas, we will see that the essay format does provide a coherent template, an ancient and powerful structure, through which we can engage the world of ideas and communicate our discoveries in meaningful and academically productive ways.

Remember this is a **process**. There is an old saying, "writing is rewriting." The goal is not so much to arrive at a perfect piece of

writing as it is to engage the spectacular and complex world around us with increasing clarity of thought and vision. And, hopefully, with a sharpened sense of the importance of inquiry, evaluation and synthesis as vital steps on any path towards understanding.

An essay is an *attempt* to know something about the world with more depth of perspective. When we write an essay, we are opening ourselves up to the full spectrum of human knowledge and wisdom while simultaneously reaching for new connections to the truth and its relevance to our lives.

It is a sacred, scientific, and self-empowering task. One that we continue to perfect as long as we are alive and curious.

## 2. Introduction to the Process



"Rewrite Edit Text on a Typewriter" by Suzy Hazelwood, Pexels is in the Public Domain, CCO

### The College Essay

The methods for creating a successful college essay are not the same for everyone. Some writers require complete silence with no distractions, while others crave noise and interaction while they work. Many of us have little choice concerning how and when get to write. We fit it in between life and work and death and taxes.

While no guide can help you find what exact situations will work best for you, there are aspects of the process that, when followed, promote a cleaner, more stable final draft. These six general steps are: **discovery & investigation**, **prewriting**, **drafting**, **revising**, **editing**, and **formatting**.

## Discovery & Investigation

The first step in writing a successful college essay requires an active engagement with your sources. Simply reading a source for basic content is not quite enough. The questions should not be simply “What does this say?” or “What happened?” but rather “Why did that happen?” “What does that say about the larger themes and ideas I am exploring?” and “How does this help advance my thinking into the deeper layers of this topic?”

Make notes of your thoughts, ideas, and reactions as you read. Research is about following the conversation into your sources and allowing your sources to “talk to one another” as you develop your own presence in the conversation.

As you become more informed on the topic, *your voice* will begin to emerge, and even direct the conversation. But now it will be a voice as rooted in authoritative research as it is in your own valid experience and perspective.

Once you have completed an active reading of a primary source, it will often be necessary to obtain secondary sources to back up your thesis. Peer-reviewed journals available online through the college databases will be your most commonly used secondary resources. But remember that other search engines, such as Google Scholar, can yield strong results too.

## Prewriting

Prewriting is the step in which tools such as free writing, brainstorming, outlining, or clustering are used. In prewriting, no idea is too off-topic or too strange to pursue. It is these sometimes dissociative ideas that can lead you to a paper topic that you never would have considered.

You will have time to tailor and sculpt your prewriting ideas to

fit the parameters of your given assignment later. For now, just let your mind wander. Be open, curious, and attentive to where your questions lead you.

Though the common perception is that there is nothing that hasn't been written about before, if you allow yourself to think outside the box, you can find a way of looking at an old topic through new eyes.

Even if it has been covered by another writer, you will be able to bring your unique perspective and relevant experiences to the larger discussion through initially casting a wide research net to pull in potential new ideas and relevant associations.

It is also during prewriting that the writer needs to make a decision about audience. Asking questions like: "Who is going to read my paper?" "What is the purpose of this paper?" and "Why are they going to read my paper?" will help you set your audience.

The simple answers to these questions are "My professor" and "Because they assigned it." But these are not the true answers. It could be that your paper needs to be geared towards elementary level students, participants in a seminar, peers at a conference, or your classmates.

The language and tone for each of these audiences would be very different. Considering this also helps you set your relationship to the topic and to the audience in ways that will make the essay more readable and accessible.

## Drafting

Drafting is the beginning of "writing" your paper. It is important to remember that in drafting you should already have a thesis idea to guide your writing. Without a thesis, your writing will be prone to drift, making it harder to structure after the fact. In drafting, the writer should use materials created in the prewriting stage and any

notes taken in discovery and investigation to frame and build body paragraphs.

Many writers will tackle their body paragraphs first instead of beginning with an introduction (especially if you are not sure of the exact direction of your paper). Beginning with body paragraphs will allow you to work through your ideas without feeling restricted by a specific thesis, but be prepared to delete paragraphs that don't fit.

Also be prepared to move body paragraphs around, if necessary, to better fit your pattern of development and thesis. Afterwards, create opening and concluding paragraphs (with an appropriately revised thesis) that reflect the body of your essay.

## Revising

There are two different scopes of revision: **global** and **local**.

*Global revision* involves looking for issues like cohesion of your main idea(s) and the overall progression of your essay. If your essay has paragraphs that do not flow into each other, but rather change topics abruptly only to return to a previous thought later, your essay has poor cohesion.

If your topics change from paragraph to paragraph, it is necessary to consider altering the order of your paragraph and/or revising your writing either by adding to existing paragraphs or creating new ones that explain your change in topic. An essay with a logical flow and smooth transitions is significantly easier to read and understand.

*Local revision* involves looking for clarity in sentences, ensuring coherence within your body paragraphs, and addressing grammar, syntax, and formatting issues. This should be done after you are comfortable with the larger issues addressed in global revision.

The greatest trick to avoid having to fix too many local issues is to use varied sentence structure and to avoid using the same words repeatedly. Repeating the same sentence structure can make your

paper feel mechanical and make an interesting topic feel boring. Also, if you can, have someone else read a draft of your essay to help catch the many small mistakes our eyes can miss when looking at the same essay for too long.

## Editing

The final stage in writing a strong college essay requires a review of what you have written. In this last read of your essay, you should look for any grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors that have slipped through the cracks during the revising stage, or that were introduced in your revisions.

Reading your essay aloud, or asking a friend to read your essay back to you, are good ways to catch errors. Often if you read your own essay, especially out loud, you can catch errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation that can be missed in a silent reading. Though this step seems minor within the process of writing, it is an easy way to prevent the loss of points over simple mistakes.

## Formatting, In-text citation, and Works Cited

The formatting required for your paper will change depending on the field of study and academic discipline. Generally, the sciences and business and economics use APA or CSE formatting. English and other humanities will use MLA, and History uses Chicago. The appearance of the first page of the essay, in-text citations, and the Works Cited page will all be affected by these different formats.

Consult your syllabus or ask your professor to learn what format you should use. Guides for MLA are available later in this guide. Guides for APA, Chicago, CSE and ASA are available [here](#).

### 3. Overview of the Format



*“Clear Light Bulb on Black Surface” by Pexels is in the Public Domain, CC0*

Writing the college essay is a matter of answering a series of questions, of following a sequence of steps towards creating a coherent written document that explores a topic for greater insight and understanding.

It is a time-tested rhetorical technology meant to focus the writer’s inquisitive and curious mind towards an engaging, rational, and academically-sound discussion. Initially, we will explore the six basic elements of this very specific, yet adaptive, format:

- Thesis driven
- Primary pattern of development
- Coherent, unified paragraphs
- Strong, clear introductions and conclusions
- Proper use of relevant, authoritative sources
- Properly formatted (MLA format)



Please refer back to this book as needed for help with crafting specific elements of your assignments. There are many other websites, nonprofits, and academic institutions who have published readily available materials on the academic writing process. Students and faculty should feel free to explore the options available to them and employ the ones that resonate the most.

The Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL), for instance, is one of the oldest and most reputable college writing websites available to anyone with an internet connection. The point is not to follow one specific “Golden Road” to success in college writing.

Rather, we hope to become aware of the purpose and relevant structures of the model and apply them to our own critical and creative thinking processes in ways that make writing assignments more productive, engaging, and fun. This will translate to your reader, improve the substance of your writing, and inevitably elevate your grades along the way.

Here you can find most, if not all, of the technical material you will need to write competent, engaging college-level essays. But the *content* of your writing will be determined by the particular class or assignment and the special areas of interest that make you the person you are and contribute to personal and transformative nature of your education.

As needed, this ebook will be updated with new materials and relevant links as the author continues to curate the collection.

## 4. Step #1: Thesis Statements



*“Startup” by StartupStockPhotos, Pixabay is in the Public Domain, CC0*

Your thesis is the engine of your essay. It is the central point around which you gather, analyze, and present the relevant support and philosophical reasoning which constitutes the body of your essay. It is the center, the focal point. The thesis answers the question, “What is this essay all about?”

A strong thesis does not just state your topic but your perspective or feeling on the topic as well. And it does so in a single, focused sentence. Two tops. It clearly tells the reader what the essay is all about and engages them in your big idea(s) and perspective. Thesis statements often reveal the primary pattern of development of the essay as well, but not always.

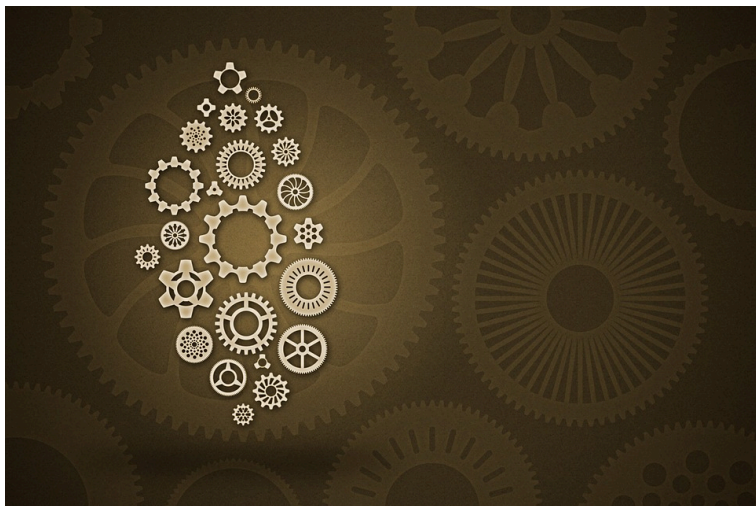
Thesis statements are usually found at the end of the introduction. Seasoned authors may play with this structure, but it is often better to learn the form before deviating from it.

- Consult this link for the OWL thesis statements discussion.
- Here is another link to assist with argumentative thesis statements.
- Consult these Thesis Writing Exercises for more help in crafting a strong, relevant thesis statement.

**BEST:** A thesis is strongest when the writer uses both the specific topic, and their educated opinion on it, for writing a detailed and clear main point.

- Watch this video on writing a “Killer” Thesis Statement
- Watch this video on writing an effective Academic Thesis Statement.

## 5. Step #2: Primary Pattern of Development



“Gears” by xresch, Pixabay is in the Public Domain, CC0

Many college essays follow a primary pattern of development for laying out their ideas and expressing their main thesis. A pattern of development is the way the essay is organized, from one paragraph to the next, in order to present its thesis and the relevant, authoritative support for it.

Your readers will be experiencing your essay in time. That is, they will read it starting in paragraph one and then two, then three, four, five, six... This may seem obvious, but you will need to consider how the reader will experience the essay *in time* and *in relation* to your thesis statement.

Thus, we will need to organize the essay into a coherent pattern which allows the reader to easily follow our logic through the essay

and fully relate it back to our central theme(s). Some essays use a combination of patterns to communicate their ideas but usually a primary pattern is established to present the overall structure and logical flow of the essay. Common patterns include:

- Narration & Description
- Exemplification
- Cause & Effect
- Comparison & Contrast
- There are several more variations of patterns of development (see below) but these are the most common.

**BEST:** Patterns of development work best when they are used consistently and in conjunction with the structure and theme of the primary thesis statement.

- Follow this link to a more developed discussion on the more popular modes of essay writing.
- Consult this handout on the basic understanding and uses of the primary patterns of development.
- Consult this handout on the patterns of development discussed as the modes of essay writing.
- Here is a useful link that helps to visualize and summarize the primary patterns of rhetorical writing.
- And one more useful link that does more of a deep dive into the modes. With relevant exercises and questions.

## 6. Step #3: Coherent, Unified Paragraphs



“Vintage Book” by Suzy Hazelwood, Pexels is in the Public Domain, CC0

Strong essays are built with solid, coherent, and unified paragraphs. They should be digestible units of thought that have similar structure to the essay itself: a topic sentence, a body of support, and a concluding or transitional statement to help the reader move through the essay with clarity. Body paragraphs should also be arranged according to your primary pattern of development and focused on supporting your big idea(s).

A body paragraph is an expansion of a single thought that is laid out according to a specific, logical structure:

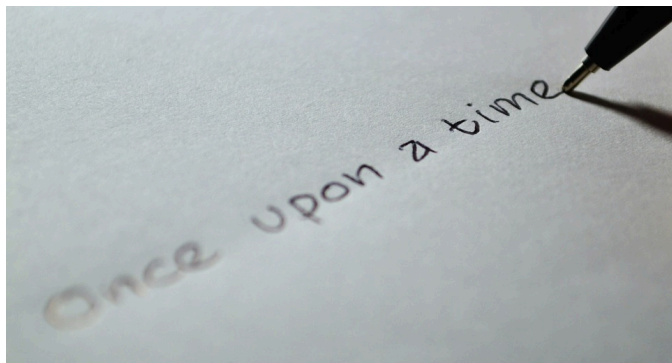
- A strong, clear topic sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph (which will likely be a sub-point helping to explore your thesis).

- Several (two-four) sentences of development and support for your topic sentence: including quotes, summaries, and paraphrases of relevant sources and your substantive responses to the source material.
- A closing sentence of summary and/or a transition into the next paragraph.

**BEST:** When the writer uses paragraphs to present unified, coherent, organized, and well-developed thoughts in support of their overall thesis.

- Consult this link on how to construct coherent, engaging, and unified paragraphs.
- Here is another valuable source for shaping coherent paragraphs: OWL Website.
- And yet another link that addresses paragraph length and consistency.
- Here is a video on writing strong body paragraphs.
- Watch this video on Writing Effective Paragraphs.
- Here is another video on writing strong transitions.
- And finally, a companion link for writing smooth transitions.

## 7. Step #4: Strong, Clear Introductions and Conclusions



*"Once Upon a Time" by Ramdlon, Pixabay is in the Public Domain, CC0*

The beginning and the ending of any communication event, studies show, provide the best opportunities to speak to any audience when their attention is the highest and most focused on what you have to say. Something about our species pays special attention to the way things start and the way they end. We should use this to our advantage as writers.

In communication theory, there is a saying, "Tell them what you are going to tell them (introduction), tell them (body), then tell them what you just told them (conclusion)." While this seems a redundant structure, it is useful to be reminded of the need to build a logical and self-supporting flow into your academic writing.

Clear intent and focus help your reader concentrate on the major ideas you are trying to communicate; and help you stay disciplined



and calculated in how you structure the essay to establish, highlight, and support those very ideas.

The introduction should grab your reader's attention, focus it on your general topic, and move towards your specific, engaging thesis. The conclusion should provide a restatement of your main idea (thesis), provide a sense of finality or closure, and possibly challenge the reader with a "so what?" moment.

- Consult the "Beginnings & Endings" handout.

Both should clearly state the main point of the essay (thesis). Both should grab and focus the reader's attention on the greater topic and larger significance of the thesis. Both should provide a sense of momentum for the reader to move through the essay with clarity, confidence, and full awareness of the main point. Both should inspire as much as they inform.

**BEST:** When the writer uses both the introduction and the conclusion to grab and focus the reader's attention on the main point of their essay.

- Here is a useful tutorial on writing strong introductory paragraphs.
- Here is another useful tutorial on writing strong concluding paragraphs.
- Watch this video on writing effective introductions and conclusions.
- Here's another video on Effective Introductions and Conclusions.

## 8. Step #5: Proper Use of Relevant, Authoritative Sources



“Bookcase” by Joergelman, Pixabay is in the Public Domain, CC0

The discovery, analysis, and integration of relevant source material into a research project is referred to as a “research methodology.” This can be a daunting, frustrating, and sometimes scary process.

It takes a lot of discipline and courage to boldly go into the world of a given topic to check our ideas against those of authoritative, current, and reliable source material. It can also expose us to the reality that most topics are far more complicated than they originally appear.

This is an essential component of college writing. It is important to get our thoughts and ideas down on paper in clear and

understandable ways. But it is equally important to verify, challenge, and expand those ideas by comparing/contrasting them with the most reliable information we can find on our chosen topic.

We do not research just to verify what we already believe about a topic, but to *challenge* our previously held ideas and, hopefully, move beyond the echo chamber of our own thoughts into a meaningful, substantive dialogue with others who have relevant experience and expertise on the topic.

Doing this will help us to generate a depth of knowledge that goes beyond the superficial and into the real mechanics of knowing. The result will be an essay that is engaging, grounded, and integrative.

The “essay” format itself is intended to get the writer to explore a topic by beginning with a question or idea and then going out into the world of the topic and finding relevant, authoritative sources to help develop, test, and explore that idea.

Authoritative sources do more than just back up the ideas we already have. They challenge us to dive deeper into the topic we are exploring to address their full complexity and broad application. And perhaps, even change our minds entirely.

- Watch this video on Searching the Databases.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online

here: <https://mhcc.pressbooks.pub/writingprocess/?p=70#oembed-1>

- Consult theLibrary Databases and our Writing Library Guide for help in finding and using relevant, authoritative sources.
- Follow this link for helpful tips on finding, using, and properly citing sources.

**BEST:** When the writer uses relevant, authoritative sources to enhance a dialogue with the audience and themselves around the significant issues the essay addresses. Most effective when they are blended carefully and properly into an honest and focused exploration of the topic that is lead by the writer but open to where the relevant source material can take the discussion.

A strong essay will include enough relevant, authoritative, and reliable sources to help develop and explore the topic and thesis. The exact level of what constitutes “enough” will largely depend on the weight and scope of the thesis and the particulars of a given topic or assignment.

Try to include a variety of sources from various academic, professional and popular institutions to provide a wide array of perspectives on the topic and thesis under discussion. But, a good essay doesn’t JUST report what the source material says.

A strong essay will also effectively blend sources into a focused, academic conversation by integrating them into the larger topic, allowing them to “talk to one another,” and commenting on them in ways that stay true to their original intent but also include your thoughtful responses. Ultimately, the writer is directing the course of the discussion. But the sources should be, in turn, leading the writer.

- Consult the “Evaluating Sources” handout.
- Watch this video on Evaluating Sources.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://mhcc.pressbooks.pub/writingprocess/?p=70#oembed-2>*

- Consult this handout on how to effectively blend sources into

your essay.

## 9. Step #6: Properly Formatted (MLA)



"Paper notes" by Mediamodifier, Pixabay is in the Public Domain, CC0

Essays in Humanities classes are formatted according to Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines. Formatting can be a frustrating and time-consuming process. But there are many tools and tricks to help you through the weeds.

Stay calm and focused and learn how to use the tools that will assist you in proper MLA formatting. If something doesn't make sense, ask for help. Do this at the end of the process, during your "local editing" phase. MLA involves three primary components when getting your essay into proper format:

1. Formatting of the first page of your essay.
2. Proper use of "in-text" citations (citing sources you use in the body of the text of your essay).
3. Properly formatted "Works Cited" or "Works Consulted" page.

**BEST:** When an essay is properly crafted and formatted, the reader is able to clearly and easily follow the ideas and trace outside information to its original sources.

- Consult the MLA Style Guides on the MHCC Library Website.
- Consult this handout on how to put your essay in MLA format.
- Consult this template on how to construct your first essay.
- Watch the following video on how to use MLA Format (8th Edition).



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- Watch the following video on how to use MLA Format for MAC (8th Edition).



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- Watch the following video on how to create the MLA Works Cited Page (8th Edition).



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://mhcc.pressbooks.pub/writingprocess/?p=72#oembed-3>

- Have a look at this **SAMPLE STUDENT ESSAY** for tips on the whole process!

On the MLA Style Guides site there is a section called “*Citation Builders*” which will help put sources into proper format for you. Note also that in most newer versions of *Microsoft Word* there is an MLA template you can select to automatically put your document into MLA format.

Sources taken from the MHCC Library Databases will already be listed at the bottom of the article in MLA format. Simply copy and paste the citation from the database entry to your Works Cited page (making sure the entry is: in proper alphabetical position, bold type, double-spaced, and in proper “hanging” format”).

Lastly, although most essays in Writing and Humanities classes will be formatted according to the Modern Language Association (**MLA**) guidelines, many other classes will use alternative formats such as APA, Chicago and ASA documentation styles. Use this link to assist in the construction of these alternative formats.

As always, when in doubt...reach out!



# 10. The Building Metaphor



“Media House” by Mediamodifier, Pixabay is in the Public Domain, CCO

## Building the House

Writing an essay is a lot like building a house. In fact, it really *IS* building a house. As essay is a metaphor for a *certain kind* of mental construction. The steps are essential and must be engaged thoroughly, methodically, and without rushing through to the end.

Procrastination is a killer. Taking short cuts will diminish the quality of the final product. And the strength of each step is largely dependent on the strength of the ones before it. Also, each choice will contribute to the strength and/or weaknesses of the steps that come after.

An essay, like a house, is an integrated, interdependent set of complementary technologies meant to produce reliable results if followed properly. There is room for creativity and individual

expression, but only after the basic elements of building the structure are secure:



*“Surveying” by Cafeymas, Pixabay is in the Public Domain, CC0*

## Land Prep (Research & Free Writing)

The first step in the construction process is getting the land ready. This includes clearing the area, digging trenches and making sure utilities are installed. In essay writing, this is the research process. This is when we brainstorm, free write, and gather research on topics of interest as we lay the groundwork for what comes next: our thesis.



*“Cement Foundation” by ReliableMidget, Pixabay is in the Public Domain, CC0*

## The Footings & Foundation (Thesis)

Building a good foundation requires a lot more than digging a hole and pouring some concrete into forms. It must be tailored to its site like a custom suit, taking into account soil conditions, water tables, even the quality of the backfill. And it is the very structure upon which the rest of the house is built.

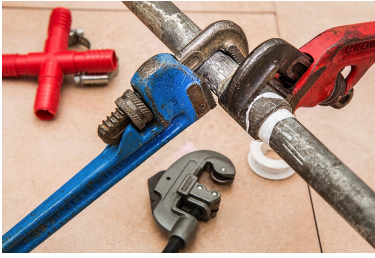
Absolutely nothing that comes next will matter if the foundation isn't solid. Similarly, your thesis is the foundation of your essay. Like the foundation, it needs to be as specific for the particular project as possible; and also like the foundation, it will lay the groundwork for absolutely everything that comes next.



*"Construction" by  
PublicDomainPictures, Pixabay is  
licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0*

## Framing (Pattern of Development)

In the framing step, the “bones” of the home start to come together. Framing includes the floor joists, subfloors, and studs that form the walls and roof trusses. Here is where the very shape of the house begins to take shape. In writing, this is the pattern of development. It is where you decide how your body paragraphs are going to flow one to the next. This larger pattern will determine what spaces are for what functions in the house. In the essay, this is where we decide the larger pattern and shape our essay will take. Thus determining the purpose of the various parts.



*“Plumbing Pipe Wrench” by stevepb, Pixabay is in the Public Domain, CC0*

## Plumbing & Electrical (Paragraphs)

Once the home is framed, subcontractors will start installing the home’s major systems, including plumbing pipes, electrical wiring and heating and cooling ducts.

These are the systems that move air, water and electricity through the home and make everything flow. In an essay, these are your sentences and paragraphs. If these are not constructed properly, much wasted energy will be spent trying to extract the big ideas from an essay. Conversely, when they are built correctly, ideas can flow freely throughout the various elements of the essay and are delivered to the reader with efficiency and clarity.



*“White Ceramic Bathtub Near White Framed Glass Window” by Curtis Adams, Pexels is in the Public Domain, CC0*

## Interior & Exterior Finishes (Transitions, Introduction & Conclusion)

In this step, most of the home’s interior features will be added. This includes doors, baseboards, casings, window sills, kitchen counters, etc. Driveways, walkways, patios and final grading to direct water away from home will all be completed. Landscaping and exterior decorating happen during this step too. In essay writing, this is where we focus on things like writing strong introductions and conclusions and smooth

transitions. These are the things that make it easier for a reader to enter and move through the space. The first things noticed and thus, often, the most important as far as creating first and last impressions.



*“White Wooden Door Near Brown Wooden Parquet Floor” by Curtis Adams, Pexels is in the Public Domain, CC0*

## Final Inspection & Walkthrough (Formatting & Editing)

Once construction is complete, a final inspection will be conducted by a local building official. Before you move in, you’ll want to do a final walkthrough with your builder to identify a list items that need to be repaired for the job to be considered complete. In essay writing, this is where we do our editing and formatting. Remember there are various levels of editing. Some may require a good deal of reworking of the material and others involve smaller issues like punctuation and syntax errors. Similarly, formatting issues can run the gamut from major to minor as well. Don’t skimp on this step. Just like with building house, why bother taking the time to develop all of the other stages correctly just to cut corners on the installation of light sockets and door knobs? Get another set of eyes on it. That’s where the inspectors (writing tutors) come in.



*“Engineer Designing” by ThisIsEngineering, Pexels is in the Public Domain, CCO*

## Final Thoughts

Remember that writing is a **process**. We keep saying this but that is for a reason: it's true. When we realize the importance of each of the steps in the quality and coherence of the final product, it helps us to not get lost in the seemingly endless details of the process. We are working towards building something meaningful and lasting. A structure that can house our ideas (and the relevant, reliable and authoritative ideas of others) in a well-crafted, engaging, and

leak-proof domicile to which all who are curious and willing may enter to explore.

Also, the process is one that we must engage thoroughly over time as we move towards building more solid foundations for our ideas and our thinking. It is AFTER the designs and blueprints have been finalized and your permits have been filed and approved that construction (writing) actually BEGINS on the project. Research, outlining, editing, and revision are as essential to the process as the writing itself. Skipping steps here inevitably will compromise the quality of the final product.

The process matters because you matter. Because we matter. And our ideas deserve the best built delivery systems we can manage. Be patient with yourself but do not shy away from the disciplined side of writing. Success awaits on the other side.

# Final Thoughts

Please return to this book as needed for assistance with any of the elements of writing a successful college essay. Remember, writing is a process of self-discovery. It is a means by which we can educate ourselves about any topic and learn more about each other along the way. Embrace it, be patient, disciplined, and focused. If you do, it can help open the world to you.