

A 7-STEP WRITING FORMULA

- STEP 1: List Your Random Thoughts.** As soon as you know the subject of your assignment, zero in on it by making a list of every related idea that comes to mind in any order. Some of your thoughts may not make sense, but writing them down helps you get started. It will help you avoid wasting time, sitting and wondering what to write about.
- STEP 2: Limit Your Subject.** Your random thoughts may take you in many different directions even if most of the ideas are related, but you must limit the subject so that your theme can be unified and coherent and can be written in the allotted time and with the allotted number of words.
- STEP 3: Write Your Thesis Statement.** If you are like many other students, you will not immediately hit upon the exact subject that you want to develop. By the time you have finished limiting your subject, however, you should be prepared to write a thesis statement containing your main idea. It serves as a guide for the organization and development of the balance of your paper. *Writing a good thesis statement is probably the most important single factor in the writing of a good paper.*
- STEP 4: Plan the Body.** Write in outline form the major points you will use in explaining your main idea. Decide on the best order in which to present them. Now, consider how you are going to support those points. Each point must be explained, described, or proven as fully as possible. Just to say, for example, the United Nations is a great organization does not mean any more than to say that it is a rotten organization. Your reasons, examples, and detailed descriptions are vital to the development of a good paper.
- STEP 5: Plan Your Conclusion.** Ideas for your conclusion should come easily at this juncture. Jot them down. Your conclusion should develop naturally, as an outgrowth of the introduction and body, not as something new and different. A good test is to read the conclusion and then the introduction. Do they complement each other? Do they seem to be part of the same package? They should.
- STEP 6: Write the Paper.** This should be a relatively simple task if you have followed the steps in the formula to this point. You have already done the more difficult work. You have limited your subject and written your topic sentence. You have planned the organization and development of the body of your finished product. You need only flesh it out with carefully worded sentences.
- STEP 7: Polish and Correct.** Try to save at least five (5) minutes for this chore. Read the paper twice, once to see whether your ideas hold together, and a second time to correct the diction, spelling, grammar, and mechanics. Diction refers to your choice of words. You are asked to be aware of it at this point because as students write longer papers, they tend to become wordy and repetitious. Use words carefully and economically. Do not repeat unnecessarily. If you have time, type the paper neatly.