

The Writing Wheel Strategy

You've probably heard about the importance of developing a plan or an outline for your writing assignments. This kind of plan is a blueprint for your writing *product*. Some writers also find it helpful to plan out their writing *process*, especially if they are testing out new assistive technology. This handout offers a strategy for identifying *how* you write.

YOUR Academic Writing *Process*

Scott and Vitale (2003) outline an example of how writers can plan their activities, including collecting research, planning an argument, drafting the argument, revising for logic, editing for errors and publishing the work. They call their strategy **The Writing Wheel**. The Wheel can help you organize, visualize and connect the tasks you must complete before you submit your paper for grading. We tried it out for a university-level writing assignment in the examples that follow.

How to Use this Strategy:

- **BRAINSTORM:** plan out the various activities or action words that describe the steps you need to take (gather research, develop outline, track citations, strengthen claims)
- **CHART YOUR ACTIVITIES:** plot those activities in a circular map through the phases of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing
- **FOLLOW UP/MAKE A CHECKLIST:** you could also develop a checklist of activities, if you like lists better than diagrams (see the following pages)

In this handout you will find:

An example of the Writing Wheel Strategy.

A blank template for trying it out.



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The Writing Wheel

Here's an example based on one writer's process for writing a literature review in a 200-level course. The writer has also included their preferred tools (i.e., RefWorks, speech-to-text software, spell check).



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The Writing Process Checklist

Here's an example of how the same writer turned their Writing Wheel into a to-do list, and used it to schedule their study time.

	Prewriting
	Compare assignment to course objectives in course outline
	Visit my professor with questions (make office hours apt.)
	Read text chapter and collect important articles
	Read through the articles (SCREEN READER)
	Make notes about important points
	Create a mind-map of connections between articles
	Develop a bullet-point outline
	Drafting (SPEECH TO TEXT SOFTWARE)
	Review a purpose-statement taped beside my computer
	Write the introduction last, after I've written the main body paragraphs
	Complete the works cited page using RefWorks
	Review full paper once before writing the conclusion
	Revising
	Review the assignment description before reading over the paper
	Evaluate the main ideas and topic sentences first
	Strengthen weak or unclear claims
	Condense any long or unnecessary phrasing
	Editing
	Listen (SCREEN READER)
	Run the document through MS Word spellcheck
	Identify any remaining errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, citation format
	Publishing
	Submit the paper to my professor (email)



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Your Writing Wheel

Your Writing Wheel might look different in different projects, courses or semesters. As you create your plan for how you will write, ask yourself: What has worked well in the past? What are my strengths as a student? As a writer? How can I use those in this project? What do I know about how I learn best?



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Your Writing Process Checklist

Suggestion: as you draft your checklist, consider your preferred spaces for reading and writing, plus the technologies and tools that you use to write. Schedule these activities into your calendar, and estimate the time it should take for you to complete each step.

	Prewriting
	Drafting
	Revising
	Editing
	Publishing

**Developed by Kelly McManus, 2015.*

***Read more about the Writing Wheel in Scott, B.J., & Vitale, M.R. (2003). Teaching the writing process to students with LD. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 38(4), 220-224.*



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