

Tips for Writing

Establish, narrow, and define your topic.

- State your thesis or theme in a sentence or two at most

Define your audience.

- Is it your instructor who grades you or a teaching assistant?
- Your classmates who will critique your work?
- A conference of professionals for review?

Plan ahead.

- Set a time line and allow for unexpected developments and planned revision.

Gather resources.

- People: instructor, teaching assistant, research librarian, tutor, subject matter experts, professionals
- References: text book, reference works, web sites, journals, diaries, professional reports

Research:

- Read, interview, experiment, gather data, take thorough notes and document sources. Either use index cards or a system in word processing.

Organize your notes with a prewriting exercise:

- Focused free writing, brainstorming, mapping, and/or outlining

Write your first {rough} draft

- Determine how you will develop your argument: Use good logic in a reasoned argument to develop the theme and/or support the thesis. Will you compare or define? Will you criticize or describe?

The Study Guides and Strategies website was created and is maintained by Joe Landsberger, academic web site developer at the University of St. Thomas (UST), St. Paul, Minnesota. <http://www.studygs.net/lrnstudy.htm>.