

# suggestions for the writing process

## **general:**

- Keep in mind the relation between writing and thinking—writing as the expression of your thinking.
- Find good models and study them (student papers, journal articles).
- Write when you are most alert and focused, perhaps in the morning; if possible set up a schedule that allows for writing at the same time every day. Begin by rereading what you wrote the previous day. Be your own devil's advocate. Sometimes real progress is just revising yesterday's writing.
- Set artificial deadlines, especially if you're a procrastinator.
- If an instructor offers to read a first draft before the paper is due, take advantage of the opportunity.

## **inventing:**

- Write down ideas all the time; keep a journal.
- Talk over your ideas with colleagues, and take notes.

## **outlining:**

- Make an outline; it will enable you to see where you want to go before you start. But be flexible. Once you start writing, your ideas may change or develop in ways different than you planned. Don't rule out new ideas just because they don't fit the outline.

## **drafting:**

- Plan your time carefully, but don't spend it all researching and reading, leaving too little for writing.
- Anticipate your audience—what it knows and what it needs to know.
- Always—always!—write both the introduction and the conclusion last.
- Don't get bogged down in data; make the data serve your purpose.
- If you get stuck in one section, mark it, leave it, and move on; it may have been out of place.
- Use signposts: transitions, headings, or organizing sentences. Make sure connections between points are clear.
- Show respect for positions you criticize.

## **revising:**

- Never (ever) turn in the first draft of a paper.
- Set aside a completed draft for a short time (an hour, a day, a week if possible) so that you'll revise it with a fresh perspective and see it as a reader would.
- Revise the content first; then edit the sentences and words, the syntax. Finally, review for adherence to APA style.
- When editing, read what you've written aloud. Notice sharp stops and sentence breaks, lengths, and rhythms. Then edit for style—precise and concise wording.
- Share your writing with a constructive, critical reader.