

The writing process

How many drafts do you do?

Activity 1

Please look at the descriptions below of the different drafting stages you should ideally go through when writing and editing an essay or assignment. Would you say you normally address all of these stages?

First stage: Get the words on the page – This is for your benefit

You begin to express your ideas, organising them and putting them together under different section headings. The writing is rough because you need to work through what you think, what your argument is, what theoretical writing and sources you are going to use.

Second stage: Get the overall structure right – Now we're thinking about the reader

Once you have made a rough draft, you can revise it to see that it answers the question and that each section carries your argument forward. You are looking at the overall shape of your essay, checking that it is clear, logical, and progressive.

Third stage: Check the structure and focus of each paragraph – Will all your points be clear to a reader?

This focuses on the individual sections or paragraphs. You will rewrite them as necessary, making sure that each section is well explained, well sequenced and supported by appropriate evidence. Check the ideas link and that each sentence serves a purpose. Focus on individual points being made and ensure they are expressed in the best way. Cut out anything that is not needed.

Fourth stage: Check and proofread at sentence level – Polishing for your reader

You will be looking for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. At this stage you should have a final check for any unnecessary words that can be cut and any sentences that could be sharper. You will be checking all your references are correct and finalising your bibliography.

What do you think you need to improve about your process?
