

Long writing projects may vary in form or length but often require significant time and energy to produce. While this handout provides general strategies to help you effectively and efficiently understand, plan, organize, and manage your project, always write with your audience and assignment in mind.

## Understand Your Project

- **Read through the writing prompt and guidelines** to clarify expectations, identify appropriate genre conventions, and define your goals.
- **Define the rhetorical situation** by identifying your project's audience, context, and purpose. Doing so can help you determine your content, length, organization, and style of writing.
- **Prepare to knowledgeably participate in the discussion** by familiarizing yourself with the existing conversation surrounding your project (e.g., research, media, public discourse, etc.).
- **Find and engage with reliable sources** that you can incorporate from your field of study. Seek additional information if you are struggling to write or think critically about your topic. If you need research help, consult a librarian or mentor in the field.
- **Ask questions and seek clarification from your support system** as you receive feedback on your work and learn more about writing in your genre or discipline.
- **Be willing to adjust the scope or focus of your work** as your project and understanding of the topic develops.
- **Review project guidelines and resources often** to help you remain productive and intentional throughout the writing process.

## Plan Your Writing Process

- **Remember the stages of the writing process**, including pre-writing, drafting, reflecting, seeking feedback, revising, and finalizing. The order of and time spent at each stage may vary.
- **Break your project into small, manageable steps** to make it simpler to complete.
- **Work according to your unique writing process**, including your preferred location, environment, time of day, and motivation systems.
- **Schedule breaks from your work**, so you can return to your project with a fresh perspective.
- **Consider the resources available to you.** Tools, platforms, and people—mentors, faculty, librarians, tutors, peers, and writing groups—can provide assistance and accountability.
- **Take care of your physical and emotional health.** Take breaks, revisit your purpose and motivation for completing the project, and seek support.
- **Keep in mind that writing and learning are ongoing, non-linear processes.**

## Organize Your Materials

- **Develop a system to organize any research**, including source material and citations. This might involve annotated bibliographies and citation managers.
- **Organize your writing by saving files** for each section or draft of your project. Develop a file-naming strategy. Keep old drafts to refer to or pull from.
- **Sort feedback** by tracking patterns, relevance, and implementation. Clarify feedback when necessary and be intentional about what you apply.
- **Familiarize yourself with digital platforms or programs** you are using to write, format, or submit your work. You may need to schedule time for this.

## Manage Your Time

- **Develop a project timeline** to account for deadlines, tasks, responsibilities, and personal goals.
- **Allot time responsibly for each stage of your writing process.** Account for your specific writing pace and session length, so you can effectively work within your personal schedule.
- **Be willing to adjust your timeframe.** Life events or struggles with time management may impact your project plan. When necessary, communicate extenuating circumstances and set new timelines with the appropriate people, including professors, editors, or accountability partners.