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Knowing how to write within a time limit is a valuable skill in education and the workplace. Timed writing demonstrates and develops your ability to respond to assignment or task guidelines, organize your thoughts, and communicate effectively within a set time limit. This kind of writing can happen in the classroom, in standardized testing, or in conjunction with work deadlines. While this handout covers general concepts, work with your specific audience and purpose in mind.

## **Steps and Strategies for Timed Writing**

Manage your time by breaking your work into smaller steps, including understanding your assignment and audience, organizing your ideas, and finalizing your writing. Throughout the writing process, revisit the guidelines often, be aware of your remaining time, and adjust accordingly.

### ***Understand Your Assignment and Audience***

- Read the guidelines and understand what you are being asked to do by identifying keywords or phrases (e.g., compare, contrast, argue, summarize, analyze).
- Review the guidelines while writing and revising to ensure you are meeting assignment expectations.
- Determine your target audience, and adjust your content, structure, tone, and style accordingly.

### ***Organize Your Ideas***

- Set aside time after reviewing your guidelines to organize your ideas by prewriting and/or outlining (e.g., brainstorming, creating mind maps, lists, or charts).
- Allocate time for drafting each section of your paper, based on your writing plan.
- Prepare for timed writing by experimenting with different prewriting and outlining strategies to determine what works best for you.

### ***Finalize Your Writing***

- Finish writing early to leave time for revising and editing your work.
- Review the prompt to ensure you have fully addressed your topic and task.
- Make sure your ideas are clear and well-organized.
- Check for and correct any grammar or spelling errors, focusing on clarity and relevance rather than perfection.
- Leave time to submit your work and address any potential technical issues.

Having a plan for timed writing, along with practice and experience, can increase your confidence and reduce your stress as a writer.