

Strategies for Writing

POWER

To help me organize ideas when writing research papers and essays.

The POWER strategy has three stages. The first stage is a prewriting stage before you actually start writing and this includes the planning and organizing steps. The second stage is actually writing and includes the write step. The third stage is the post-writing stage and has the editing and revising steps.

Plan.

- First start with a clear topic. Be sure you know exactly what you want to write about.
- At this stage, you need to gather all the information that you will need for your paper.
- Brainstorm and list all the ideas you know about this topic.
- Make a list of topics for which you need to get more information.
- Gather the information from different sources, such as the internet and the library.
- Take notes on notecards of all the information that you want to include in your paper. Write down as much information as possible so that you will not have to go back later and get more information. Do not write complete sentences; just write phrases representing the ideas.
- Be sure to write complete references for all the information that you gathered so that they can be included in a bibliography later.

Organize.

- Review notes of your ideas and your notecards.
- Organize these in an outline using the main ideas of your paper as the major headings.
- You can write each of these main ideas on large or different colored notecards.
- Arrange each of the notecards from the planning stage under each of the main idea cards.
- Arrange the notecards in order and number them.
- Go back and make an outline of major headings, subheadings, and details.

Write.

- Use your outline and notecards as a guide for writing your paper.
- Write complete sentences for the phrases on the notecards.
- Do not pay attention to mistakes at this stage. Just make sure that you include all the ideas and that you state these clearly and in order.

Edit.

- Check all spelling, capitalization, punctuation, order of words, and grammar using the SCOPE strategy.
- Check whether your ideas are well stated using the FAST strategy.
- It may be helpful to read your paper aloud as a way of checking for errors.

Revise.

- Based on your editing using the SCOPE and FAST, revise your paper.
- Re-read it one last time before turning it in.

This strategy is based on a strategy presented in Englert, C. S., Raphael, T. E., Anderson, L. M., Anthony, H. M., & Stevens, D. D. (1991). Making strategies and self-talk visible. *Writing instruction in regular and special education*. *American Educational Research Journal*, 23, 337-372.

Learning Toolbox. Steppingstone Technology Grant. James Madison University, MSC 1903, Harrisonburg, VA 22807.