

# The **WRITING** CENTER

**Elftmann Student  
Success Center**

**A Guide On  
How To:**

**Prepare  
Writing  
Assignments**

- The writing process
- How to start
- Keywords to use

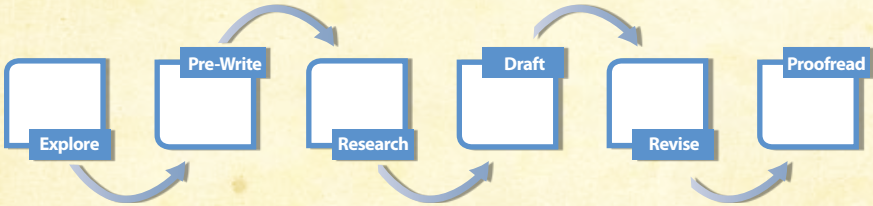


# Prepare Writing Assignments

Using a structure to complete writing assignments will make them easier to write and more effective.

## What is the Writing Process?

The Writing Process is a series of steps you can follow to write a successful writing assignment.



Successful writing assignments often require several drafts, revisions and proofreading to earn the highest grade.

It's also important to note that **the writing process illustrated above is not a fixed sequence**; these steps can be rearranged, taken out of order, and re-done as many times as needed.

## How can I get a good start on my writing assignment?

There are three features of your assignment you must consider:

- **What is the writing assignment** - Read your assignment as soon as you get it. Look at the prompt, and **highlight the verb** (action word) **and any key words** you see to get an overall sense of the assignment.
- **Who will read your writing** - Fellow students? An instructor? A prospective employer? Consider what you want to communicate through your writing.
- **What is the purpose of the writing assignment** - What do you want to accomplish in your writing?
  - Describe
  - Compare/Contrast
  - Process
  - Illustrate
  - Argument
  - Define

Use the chart below to determine the paragraph pattern you could use to complete a writing assignment.

| Prompt Verbs                                 | Key Words to Use  | Paragraph Pattern to Use  | Examples                                       |
|--|---|---|--|
| Explain,<br>Trace,<br>Show                   | Consequences,<br>results, relation                          | <b>Cause/Effect</b> -<br>How things cause<br>or are the effect of<br>another              | <i>Effects of using<br/>nuclear energy</i>     |
| Compare,<br>Contrast,<br>Identify            | Differences,<br>similarities                                | <b>Compare/Contrast</b><br>How ideas are the<br>same or different                         | <i>Nuclear energy<br/>vs. solar power</i>      |
| Discuss,<br>Illustrate                       | Specific<br>examples  | <b>Illustration</b> -<br>Proves a point using<br>specific examples                        | <i>Japan,<br/>Love Canal,<br/>Chernobyl</i>    |
| Discuss,<br>Define,<br>Identify              | Characteristics,<br>features                                | <b>Definition</b> -<br>What a term or con-<br>cept means using<br>unique features         | <i>Renewable,<br/>disposal,<br/>efficiency</i> |
| Separate,<br>Describe,<br>Categorize         | Categories,<br>kinds, types,<br>parts                       | <b>Classification</b> -<br>A topic sorted into<br>categories                              | <i>"Green"<br/>energy/nuclear<br/>energy</i>   |
| Explain,<br>Describe,<br>Trace               | Steps,<br>procedures,<br>timeline,<br>sequences             | <b>Process</b> -<br>How a particular act<br>happens, works, or<br>happened in<br>the past | <i>Timeline of<br/>nuclear energy</i>          |
| Explain,<br>Describe,<br>Imagine             | Sensory im-<br>ages, visual,<br>emotion, detail             | <b>Description</b> -<br>How something<br>looks, feels, seems,<br>etc.                     | <i>A nuclear<br/>power plant</i>               |
| Justify,<br>Prove,<br>Evaluate,<br>Recommend | Advantages,<br>disadvantages,<br>why or why<br>not, reasons | <b>Argument</b> -<br>Why a position on<br>an issue is correct<br>and reasons for it       | <i>Advantages of<br/>nuclear power</i>         |

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