



**WRITING UNDER  
TIME PRESSURE**

**UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER**

# 1. BUDGET YOUR TIME

For example, if you have 75 minutes to write, you might break it up this way:

- **15 mins:** read the prompt, brainstorm ideas, create a thesis and a few main points to cover
- **50 mins:** write essay
- **10 mins:** proofread



# 2. READ THE PROMPT VERY CAREFULLY—TWICE

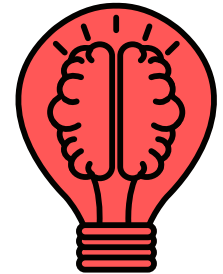
This takes very little time to do, but it will increase your **comprehension** of the prompt and help you **calm down**. As you read it for the second time, underline important words in the directions:

- To what extent do you agree or disagree?
- Discuss, summarize, analyze, or argue
- Which are the two most significant causes? Why?



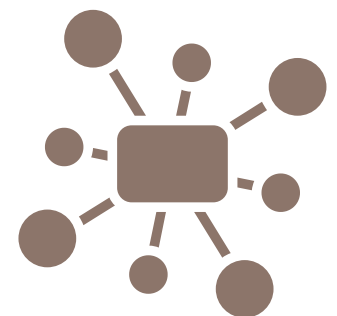
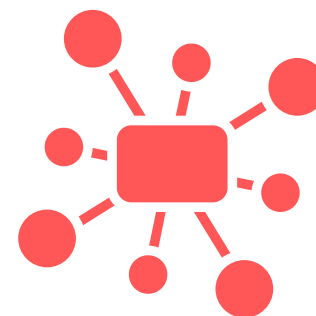
### 3. BRAINSTORM - MAKE A ROUGH OUTLINE, LIST, OR WEB

This will help you **generate ideas** and **choose main points** that you can use as topic sentences for body paragraphs. Write down keywords for examples you think of as you brainstorm.



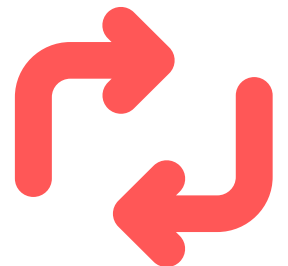
### 4. GROUP RELATED IDEAS TO FORM PARAGRAPHS

Make sure each paragraph is **relevant** to the prompt.



## 5. USE THE PROMPT TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

To get your **introduction** started, you can **restate** parts of the prompt or background material in your own words. Make your introduction **brief**—a few sentences.



## 6. CREATE YOUR THESIS

In the **opening** paragraph, establish the thesis you intend to support. Make sure the thesis **directly answers** the prompt.



## 7. USE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES FROM RELATED SOURCES

Use **specific** examples from the readings, class discussions, or other class materials. **Don't use hypothetical examples** unless your teacher approves.



## 8. COMMENT ON YOUR EXAMPLES

**Comment** on what your examples are **intended** to show. Don't assume the reader will understand why the examples are relevant.

Examples:

- "This was one of many similar events that led to..."
- "This example demonstrates..."



## 9. SYNTHESIZE

Tell your reader **how** ideas **relate** to each other.

Examples:

- “This idea is also shown in X”
- “Lee’s article “Title” and the video about Y both comment that . . .”

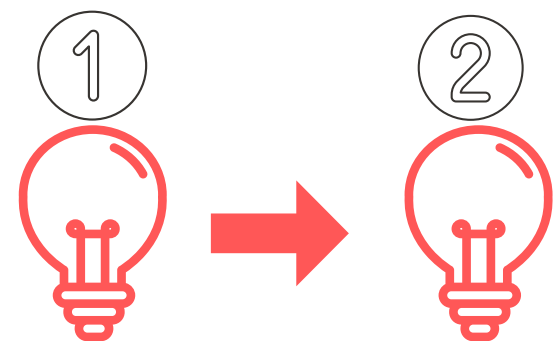


## 10. USE TRANSITIONS

Use **transitions** from paragraph to paragraph, point to point.

Examples:

- “for example,”
- “in addition,”
- “by contrast”



## 11. KEEP CONCLUSIONS BRIEF

Just a **few** sentences may be enough. Even when you are running out of time, take a few minutes to restate important points. In an in-class essay, it is usually acceptable to conclude by rephrasing your thesis and main points.



### MORE TIPS

- Make an appointment at University Writing Center to discuss your writing process and get personalized tips.
- Discuss the assignment with your professor ahead of time and their recommendations for being successful.
- Review class material and brainstorm what sources to use and where.