The Writing Process

1. **Prewriting Stage:**
   1. Prewriting is the step most people skip, but the one that many successful authors cite as the most important step.
   2. The first part of prewriting is understanding the **assignment** **prompt**. What is it asking you to answer or address? During the whole writing process, constantly refer back to the prompt to make sure you are addressing all aspects of it.
   3. Second, you will start **brainstorming**. You can make a mind map, use focused free writes, make lists, or talk with someone and take notes. Any other methods that have worked well for you? Go ahead and use those!
   4. Last, you will write an **outline**. This is where you will start to organize your thoughts.
2. **Drafting Stage:**
   1. In this stage you will put your organized ideas into a draft. This is when your assignment will start looking like an assignment. Your first draft will be your **Rough Draft**. After your Rough Draft is finished you’ll move onto the Revision Stage, but don’t get too comfortable there because you’ll be back to the Drafting Stage soon.
   2. Take notes from your Rough Draft and make those changes in your paper, then you’ll have a Second Draft.
   3. Your paper should go through a minimum of three drafts. Print off each draft and make the changes in pen or pencil, that way your instructor can follow your drafting process.
3. **Revising Stage:**
   1. Revising is not a place for dealing with line level issues like spelling and grammar. The Revising and Drafting Stages deal with what we call **global issues** such as organization, specific details, focus, transitions, and development.
   2. After your Rough Draft is complete, the first thing you need to do is reread the prompt and read your paper. Does your paper address every aspect of the prompt? If not, make notes on your Rough Draft of how you will address this problem.
   3. To edit your Second Draft, choose a couple items from the list in 3a. Maybe you’ll choose focus and specific details. Now revise your paper with those in mind, create another draft. Continue until you’ve addressed all issues
4. **Editing Stage:**
   1. You’ve finally reached the last phase in the writing process, Editing! Remember those line level issues like spelling and grammar? We call those **local issues**. These issues include spelling, run-ons, fragments, awkward sentences, and word choice. For this stage I suggest you go beyond just reading your paper—you’ve already read it so many times that you’re not likely to catch any errors. Here are a few techniques to help you out:
      1. Read your paper out loud.
      2. Enlist the help of a friend and have them read your paper out loud. Have a copy of your paper on hand to write down anything that sounds awkward.
      3. Read your paper backwards.
      4. If you have a problem with fragments, run-ons or comma splices, separate the sentences of your paper and look at them each individually.