

# Thinking Like a Writer: Approaching Complex Texts

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# Writing kinds of writing do you do?

What types/genres of writing do you write in school?

Out of school?

How are these similar?

How are they different?



# What Activities or Steps make up Writing?

- Before you write
  - Drafting
  - Revising
  - Editing
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# Writing Process/Routines



# What is your writing routine/process?

Think of a piece of writing that is representative of what you often write

Now, in as much detail as possible, write down how you created that piece of writing

Be as specific as possible

What do you need to write?

What did you do first?

What were the steps you took?

How long did it take you?



# How to use your process

- 
- Before you start to write
    - Brainstorm
    - Prewrite
    - Research
    - Ask questions
  - Draft
    - Get your ideas down
    - Don't worry too much about structure
  - Revise/Edit
    - Add detail
    - Rearrange elements
    - Include research
  - Proofread
    - Check grammar/mechanics/sentence structure
  - Publish

# Applying to Timed Writing (suggestions for a 60 minute session)

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- Read through the prompt (2-5 minutes)
  - Outline/Plan your piece (5-10 minutes)
  - Brainstorm
    - write down everything you think you may write about in the piece (5-10 minutes)
  - Draft
    - spend time combining your outline and brainstorming into a draft (15-30 minutes)
  - Revise and Edit
    - give yourself enough time to read through the draft and make changes (10 minutes)
  - Remaining time
    - Read through it again, making sure you have answered the prompt thoroughly



# What are your writing questions?

What is the most difficult part of writing for you?

What help do you want with writing?

What questions do you have about writing?



# Approaching a Text

# Positioning Yourself as an Academic Writer

Establish authority

Use research

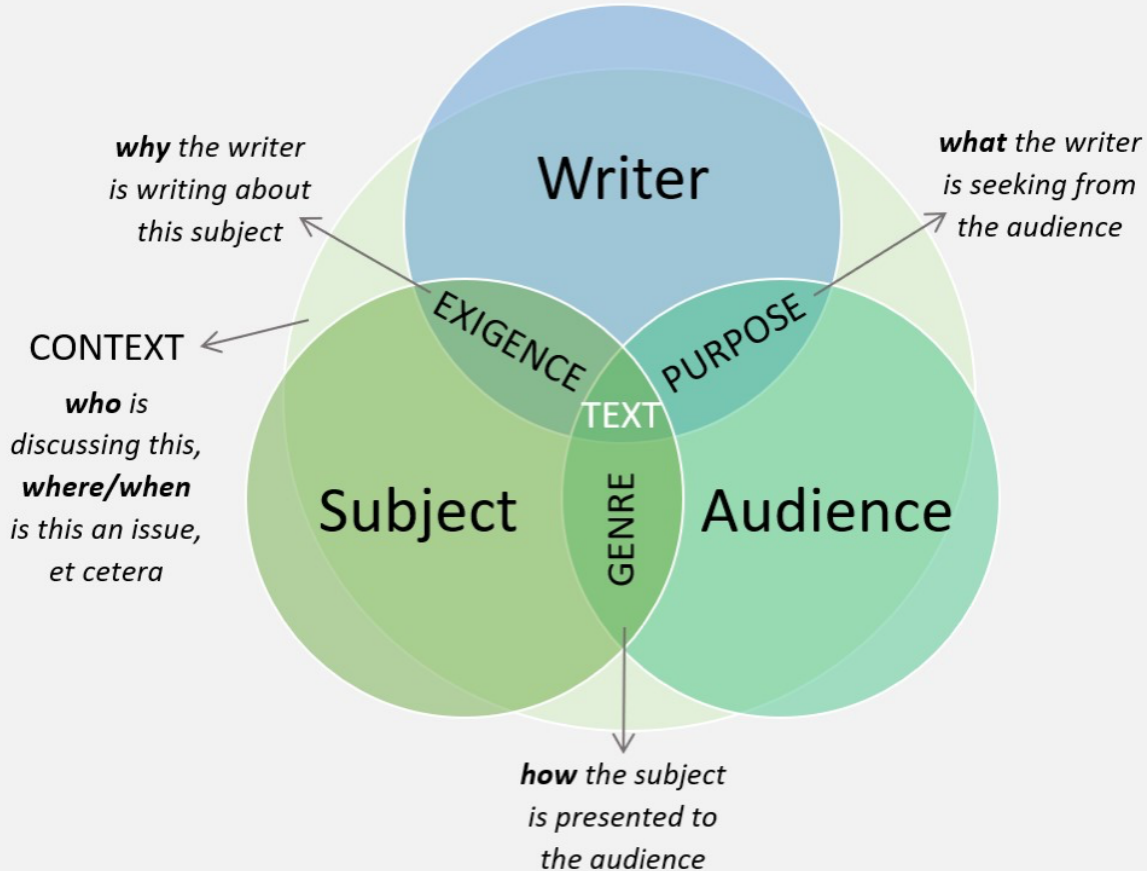
Think critically

Be direct and clear

Use formal language and complex sentences



# The Rhetorical Situation



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# Audience

- Who is your audience?
- What does your audience already know about your topic?
- What does your audience need to know?
- Why is your audience interested in your topic?
- What do you know about your audience that might influence how they think about your topic?
- What do you want your audience to learn about your topic?

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# Identify the Purpose/ What is the reason you are writing?

- **Summarizing**--Presenting main points of another text
- **Arguing/Persuading**--Expressing a viewpoint on a topic to convince others you are correct
- **Narrating**--Telling a story, recounting an event
- **Evaluating**--Examining the value or worth of a topic
- **Analyzing**--Breaking down a topic to examine the relationship between parts
- **Responding**--Conversation with another text
- **Examining/Investigating**--Questioning a topic to find new information
- **Observing**--Helping the reader understand a topic that you have directly watched or experienced. .



What is your all-time favorite movie and why? Write an essay persuading readers to watch this film.

**Arguing/Persuading**--Expressing a  
viewpoint on a topic to convince  
others you are correct





Where to start

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# Brainstorm

What do you already know?

Why do you know it?

Where do you know it from?

What kinds of sources do you need?

Where can you find your sources?

What should you do first?

What are you most excited about?

What is your central purpose?

What is your stance?

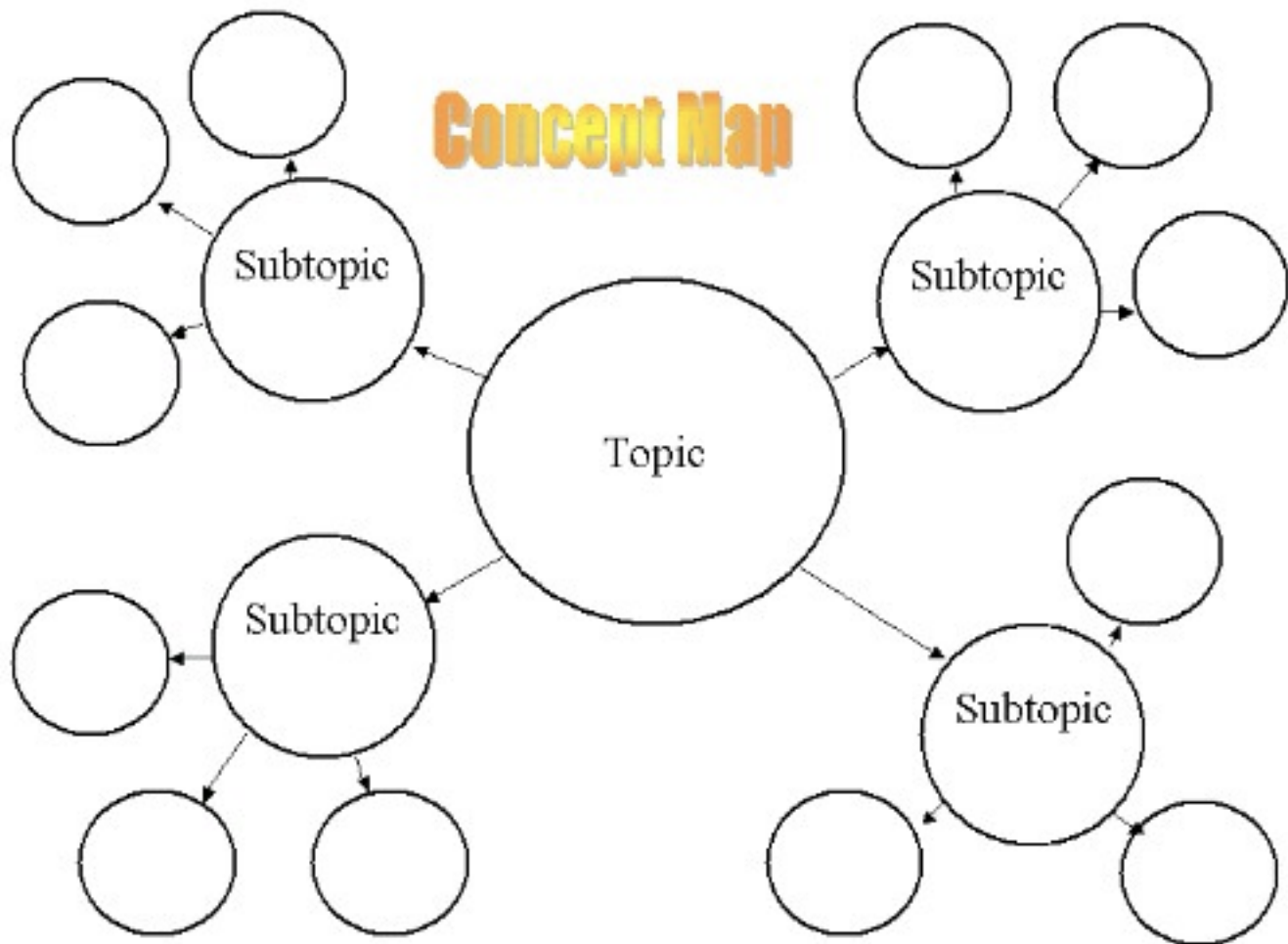
**K - What I Know**

**W - What I Want to Know**

**H - How I will Learn**

**L- What I Learned**

# Concept Map



**Formulate a  
question and  
hypothesis (working  
thesis)**

Come up with a question you can turn into a hypothesis (working thesis)

- Topic
- Narrowed Topic
- Issue
- Research Question
- Hypothesis (working thesis)

# Writing Your Thesis Statement

Be clear and specific


State it in the first paragraph

Captures your argument/position

Make sure it's debatable

Revise if necessary

# Questions to Ask About Your Thesis

- Is your thesis statement near the beginning of your paper?
  - Is your thesis statement specific?
  - Is your thesis statement clear?
  - Does your thesis include a comment about your position?
  - Is your thesis statement debatable?
  - Is your thesis statement original?
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# Common Features of an Argument

Claims

Reasons

Assumptions

Evidence

Qualifiers





# Organizing an Argument

## **Make a Claim**

*The federal government should ban smoking*

## **Qualify if Necessary**

*the ban would be limited to public places*

## **Present good reasons to support your claim**

*smoking causes diseases in smokers, non smokers are endangered*

## **Explain assumptions that underlie your claim and reasons. Provide additional explanations for controversial assumptions.**

*The Constitution was established to “promote the general welfare.” Citizens are entitled to protection from harmful actions by others. The US is based on a political system that is supposed to serve the basic needs of its people.*

## **Provide additional evidence to support your claims—facts, statistics, etc.**

*evidence of deaths attributed to secondhand smoke, lawsuits, bans already imposed, surgeon general*

## **Acknowledge possible counterarguments**

*smokers have rights too, smokers can smoke in private*

## **State Conclusion in the strongest way possible**



# BUILDING AN ARGUMENT

**MAIN IDEA**

Here's what I think...

Evidence to  
back up my  
reasons

An empty oval shape intended for writing evidence to support the reasons.

An empty oval shape intended for writing evidence to support the reasons.

An empty oval shape intended for writing evidence to support the reasons.

Here are my  
**REASONS!**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Strong Finish!**
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**COUNTER  
ARGUMENTS**

You **COULD**  
argue that...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

...but here's the  
**WEAKNESS...**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PRO**

When you weigh all the evidence,  
you conclude that...

**CON**

## Why Paragraphs?

- You have a new idea or point
- You want to share contrasting information
- You want to give readers a break
- You are ending your introduction
- You are starting your conclusion

# P.I.E. Paragraphs

**Point:** The main idea of the paragraph, what everything in the paragraph relates to.

**Illustration:** Specific fact or example that explains (illustrates) the point. Should be *SPECIFIC* (a particular fact) and *CONCRETE* (example, quote, detail, name, etc).

**Explanation:** Shows how or why the illustration supports the point and how or why the point supports the main argument in the larger essay.

# PIE Example

Sam and Dean Winchester are the ideal supernatural hunters.

According to expert hacker turned hunter, Charlie Bradbury, “hunters are skilled fighters, can use firearms, and are strong trackers. Coming from a family of hunters, Sam and Dean have inherited a number of useful skills that they continue to hone through years of fieldwork.”

(Hunting 101). By working together to fight a variety of supernatural beings, learning hunting techniques from their parents, collecting firearms, and working with other hunters, Sam and Dean have become the most sought-after hunters in the world.



# Incorporating source materials

- Use them to support your work
- Help establish credibility
- Give examples of several points of view
- Highlight striking phrase, sentence or passage
- Call attention to something you agree or disagree with

# Integrating Sources

## Quoting

- Something so powerful, you can't change it
- Respected authorities
- Different opinion than others

## Paraphrasing

- Don't want to quote, but details are important

## Summarizing

- Long passages where main point is important

## Synthesizing

- Combining multiple sources to make a point

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## Reviewing your draft

- What do you now see as the purpose?
    - Is it the same as the original purpose?
    - Does the draft do what the assignment requires?
  - What audience does your writing address?
  - What is your stance?
  - What is your thesis?
    - Is it clearly stated?
    - What evidence supports the thesis?
    - Is the evidence sufficient?
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# RADAR WRITING GUIDE

From:  
Kelly Gallagher

R	A	D and	R
<p>Replace</p> <p>words that are not specific</p> <p>words that are overused</p> <p>sentences that are unclear</p>	<p>Add.... detail</p> <p>descriptive adjectives and adverbs</p> <p>metaphors</p> <p>similes</p> <p>hyperbole</p>	<p>Delete..</p> <p>unrelated ideas</p> <p>sentences that sound good but create unity problems</p> <p>unwanted repetition</p> <p>unnecessary details</p>	<p>Reorder</p> <p>to make better sense or to flow better</p> <p>so details support main ideas to avoid bed to bed writing</p>

# Word Clouds



# Tips for writing

Create a Word Bank

Use a thesaurus or dictionary

Draw pictures or use graphic organizers

List paragraph main ideas

Start where you feel confident (it doesn't need to be at the beginning)

Work on combining sentences

Give yourself time to write

Have someone read your draft

# Sentence Combining

# Coordinating Conjunctions

## FANBOYS

- For
- And
- Nor
- But
- Or
- Yet
- So

Bill loves hiking and camping.

Bill loves canoeing best.

Bill loves hiking and camping, but he loves canoeing best.



Susie likes heavy metal music.

Susie enjoys hip-hop tunes also.

Susie likes heavy metal, and also hip-hop music.



I worked late.

Then I walked home.

Home is sixteen blocks from work.

I am tired.

I do not want to fix dinner.

I worked late tonight then walked home 16 blocks home; I'm tired and do not want to fix dinner.





I want a ticket.

Mary wants a ticket.

Ilsa does not want a ticket.

The tickets are for tonight's concert.

Mary and I want a ticket for tonight's concert, but Ilsa does not.



The gelatin is red.  
The gelatin wiggles.  
It is in a large bowl.

The red gelatin wiggles in a large bowl.



The beach in Shorewood should be closed.  
It is scattered with debris.  
No lifeguard is on duty.

Because the beach in Shorewood is covered with debris and is not staffed by a lifeguard, it should be closed.





Questions?