

# Prewriting

## Understand the assignment

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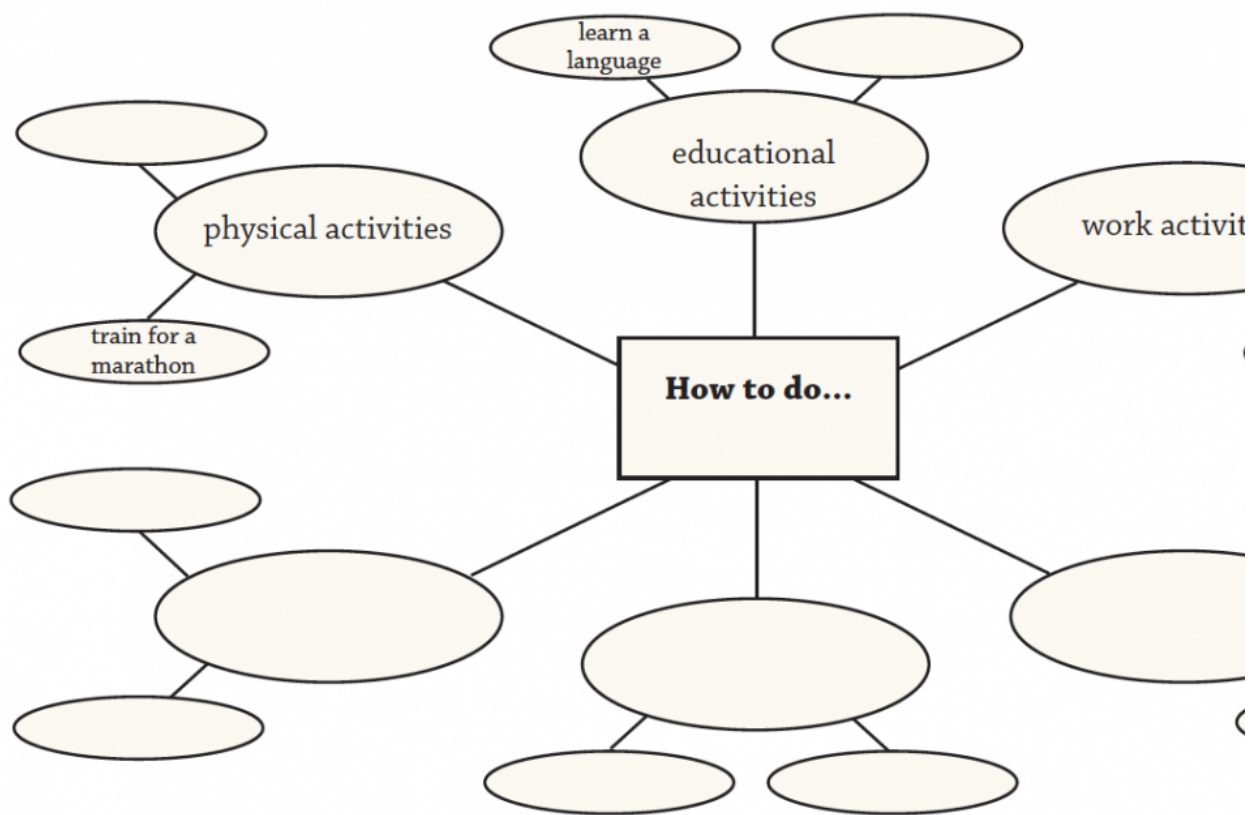
In your essay, you will describe a process. Many processes have a sequence of chronological actions or steps (e.g., how to prepare for a job interview) that are typically done in a specific order. Some processes do not have a specific sequence of actions that must be followed (e.g., how to live a happy life). These processes may be more like a list of advice. Either type of process can be used.

In more academic process essays that require research, a scientific process is usually explained (e.g., the Water Cycle). You should write about a topic you know about because you will NOT be including research in your essay.

## Brainstorm to find a topic

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Think of processes you know about. You can start by having a discussion about the question “What can you teach someone to do?” or “How does \_\_\_\_ happen?” You can also use an idea map like the one below to help you.



## Choose a focus

If the process you chose is complex, you may need to combine steps or focus on one specific part of the process.

Process: Apply to a university in the U.S.		
Decide which university to apply to	-->	1. Decide which university to apply to
Find out what the deadlines are		2. Find out what the deadlines and requirements are
Find out what the requirements are		3. Make a plan to finish everything by the deadlines
Make a plan to finish everything by the deadlines		
Prepare for the TOEFL		
Register for the TOEFL		

Take the TOEFL
Prepare for the ACT
Register for the ACT
Take the ACT

## Outline

A process essay follows typical essay organization with an introduction paragraph, body paragraphs, and a conclusion paragraph.

### Introduction

Your introduction should describe in general terms the process you will describe in your essay. At the end of your introduction paragraph, write your thesis. The thesis may state the purpose of your process, give the result of your process, or even list the steps.

*Writing an effective essay is simple if you follow the right steps.*

*In order to find the perfect apartment, you should consider the location, decide on your price range, and compare the different features that apartments have to offer.*

Here are some phrases that are useful for writing a process thesis:

***In order to*** pass the TOEFL...

*When upgrading your phone, you **should**...*

*Making a budget **is easy if you** follow three simple steps.*Body

Your body paragraphs should describe the steps of your process. You will typically need a body paragraph for each step in your process. However, it is okay to group steps together into a more general step. For example, the writing process has many small steps (brainstorming, choosing a topic, brainstorming about your topic, making an outline, drafting, etc.) that can be divided into three general steps: prewriting, writing, and revising. You can group steps together if needed.

### Conclusion

Your conclusion paragraph should start by restating your thesis. You should talk about the result of your process and end with a closing statement that in some way makes a prediction, suggestion, opinion, or asks a question. Many process essays will end by suggesting that readers try the process for themselves.

## Exercises

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### Exercise 1: Write steps in a process

*On a piece of paper, brainstorm a list of steps in your process. If you have a long list of steps, either combine steps or choose a section of the process to focus on.*

*Process:*

*Steps:*

### Exercise 2: Revise thesis statements

*On a piece of paper, revise these thesis statements to be more effective for a process essay.*

1. Finding a job.
2. Choosing a major is something that all college students have to do.
3. To start your own band, I will teach you the three supreme tips for success.
4. There are different ways to throw a party, such as a costume party, Halloween party, and birthday party.

### Exercise 3: Make an outline

*On a piece of paper, make an outline for one of the example essays in this chapter.*

Choose one of the essays. Create an outline that includes the thesis statement and topic sentences.

### Exercise 4: Finish an outline

*Use the topic sentences to create the thesis for this outline on a piece of paper.*

- TH:
- TS: First, you need to decide how much money you want to spend on your vacation.
- TS: Then you should find vacation options that are in your price range.
- TS: Finally, you should let everyone vote for the place they want to visit the most.
- TH:

## Exercise 5: Finish an outline

*Make an outline for the essay by writing three topic sentences to support the thesis and restated thesis.*

- TH: Deciding what to do with your friends on Friday night is easy to do.
- TS:
- TS:
- TS:
- TH: These steps make it easy to decide on fun weekend activities.

## Exercise 6: Make an outline

*In a word document, make an outline for your essay.*

Remember to organize your ideas logically. Your topic sentences should directly connect to and support your thesis statement.



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