

STEP NUMBER SIX: WRITING & EDITING



College of the
Siskiyou
WRITING LAB

INTRODUCTION: Step number six is writing and editing your paper.

Writing the Rough Draft:

- Read your note cards. Review your rough outline and make any needed changes.
- Following your outline, begin to write your rough draft. Write freely and do not worry about perfection at this stage.
- Revise the material content of the rough draft. Check to see that you have adequately supported each point.

Editing and Revising:

- Indicate in-text parenthetical notes, footnotes, or endnotes. Be sure to cite each source as you use it.
- Examine the introduction. Is it stimulating? Does it hook the reader? Does it state your purpose?
- Examine main points. Do you have clear units with appropriate transitions? Do you have a balance between quotation and paraphrase? Be sure to avoid overusing direct quotations—use them when something would be lost by a paraphrase.
- Examine the conclusion. Does it follow logically?
- Examine word choice, spelling, and sentence structure.
- Rewrite and add works cited, references, or bibliography page.
- Have COS Writing Lab staff go over the paper with you.

Understand How Your Paper Will Be Graded:

Although the specific weight of each of the following areas will vary depending on the course and assignment, most college research papers are graded according to the following criteria:

- **Substance:** The majority of points often comes from this area. To do well on this section, the paper must have a clear and relevant thesis that is well supported by excellent sources and statistics. Further, the paper must show some insight, stay focused on the topic, and be the appropriate length. (Do not try to meet the page requirement by changing font or margins). Attempting to "adjust" a history paper into a sociology paper rarely works. A history paper should present the historical lesson--what we should learn from the historical events. However, a sociology paper should establish why the information is important to society.
- **Organization:** In order to do well on this section, the paper must have a worthy introduction, an organized body, and an adequate conclusion. The paper should contain no unneeded or redundant information. Further, transitions between sentences and paragraphs should not be absent or awkward. In general, the order of the information presented should follow a logical development.
- **Mechanics:** To do well on this section, the paper must follow a standard format for title page and method used to cite sources. Sentence structure should be relatively free of errors--no run-ons, sentence fragments, or awkward phrasing. Further, there should be no spelling or punctuation errors, and the word choice should be at the college level.