



Writing:

Tips on Studying & Test-Taking

Writing is a process that requires careful attention. It takes time to write well. This can mean writing, making mistakes, correcting mistakes, and re-writing.

- The best way to learn writing is to **practice everyday** and **read** as much as possible in order to learn by example. Write in your own words about what you know, what you've read or what you think about different topics. Write in a journal. Write to a friend.
- After your instructor marks your writing, **learn from your mistakes**. Pay attention to the kinds of mistakes you make, so you won't make them again. For example, if it is a spelling mistake, use a dictionary to correct it, and then add the word to your new vocabulary list. Review the list often to help you remember new words.
- Go to the Learning Centre and study books and handouts on writing.
- Plan your writing. Limit your topic. Focus on one idea. Use an outline.
- Use a **checklist** from your instructor or tutor and read your writing aloud to check for mistakes. A checklist will remind you of common mistakes to look for: grammar, punctuation, spelling, organization, and others.

Before the test:

- Find out about the test format (length, kind of writing, passing mark) from your instructor **before** the final exam.
- Practice writing under test conditions.

During the test:

- Take a deep breath. **Calm yourself** before the test begins.
- **Plan your time**. For example, if it is a 1-hour test, plan 5 minutes for pre-writing, 45 minutes for writing, and 10 minutes for checking.
- If possible, choose to write about what you know best.
- Think about your topic by free writing, brainstorming, or mapping related ideas. **Limit the topic** and decide on one strong idea. Stick to your choice.
- Write a clear topic sentence for a paragraph, or a clear thesis statement for an essay which explains what will follow. Outline at least **3 major points** to support your controlling idea. Add some examples that help explain or describe your points.
- Write double-spaced on a new page. **Leave room for making changes and corrections**.
- Print or write clearly. Use upper-case and lower-case letters.
- Vary your sentences and vocabulary. Make your points clear. Connect your ideas.
- Finish with a conclusion.
- Take the last ten minutes to **proofread** for mistakes and make any changes. Read quietly to yourself to find mistakes.