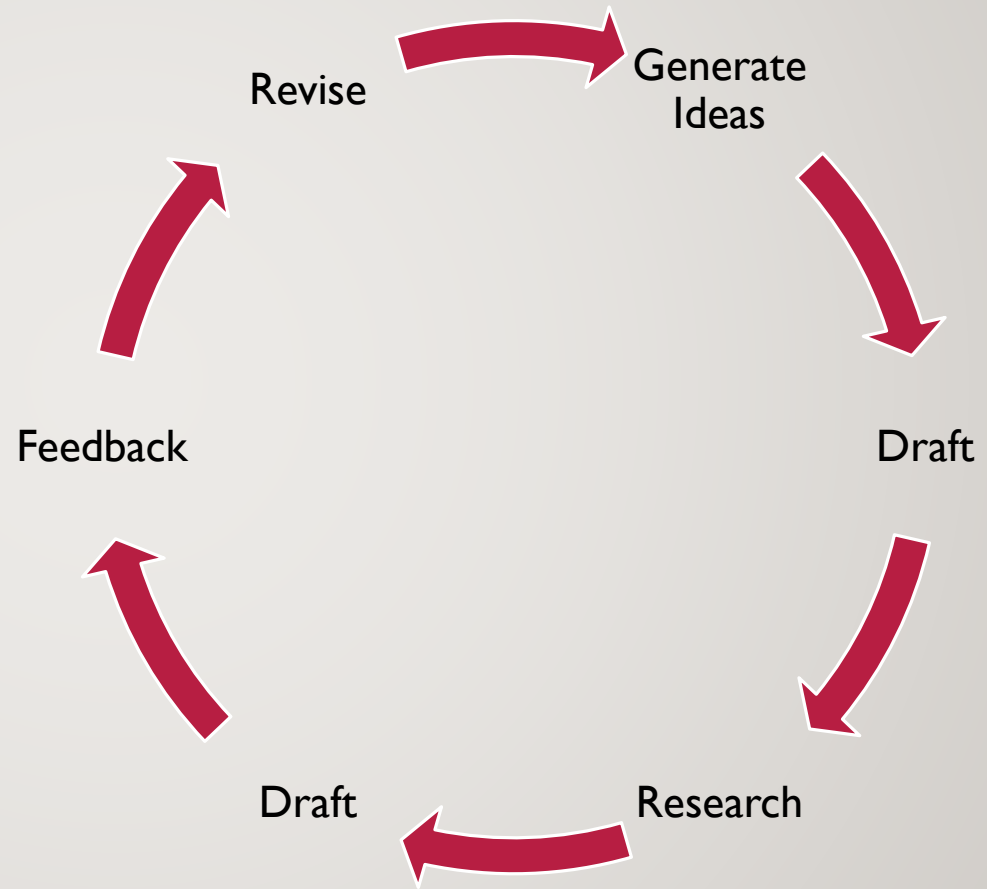


# THESIS AND STRUCTURE: DRAFTING YOUR ESSAY

MSUB WRITING CENTER IN THE ASC

WHERE IN THE...  
WRITING  
PROCESS ARE WE?

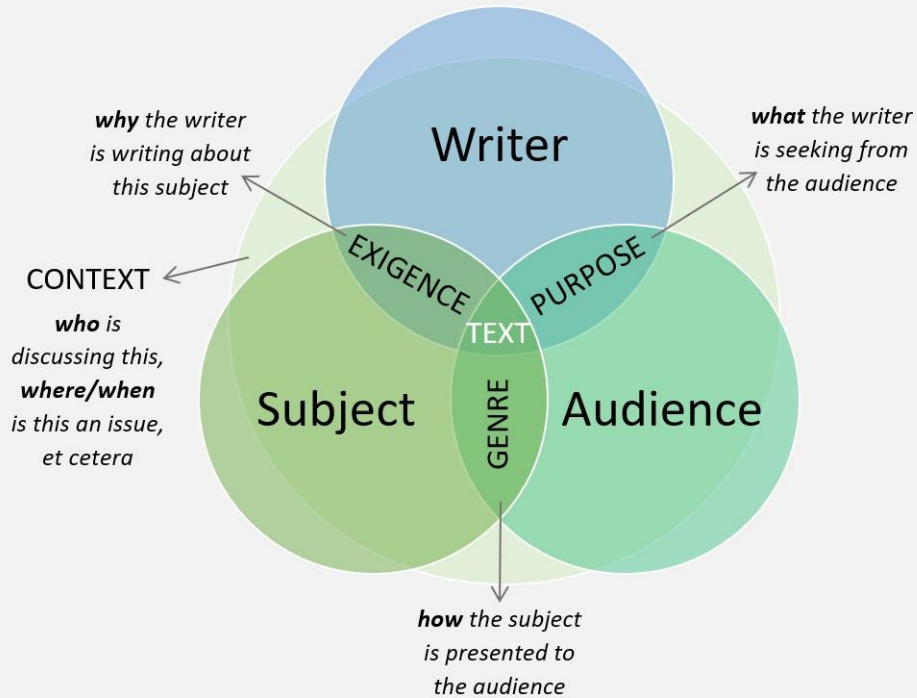


# FRAMING QUESTIONS

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- As you're reading and researching about a topic, you probably have questions:
  - Why is one intervention better than another?
  - What makes this event, person, or object significant?
  - What makes this side of the argument more valid than that side?
  - What evidence supports that policy?
  - Why is this a standard practice in the industry?
  - Why should this segment of society care about this issue?
- Posing a question helps position yourself and gives you direction as you write

## The Rhetorical Situation



## RHETORICAL SITUATION OF YOUR WRITING

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- Author – who are you? How do your views influence your thinking and writing?
- Purpose – inform, persuade, entertain, sell, compare
- Audience – who the information matters the most to; your reader(s)
- Genre – form that your writing takes and style in which it's written
- Context – the cultural or social context in which the writing occurs

# ESSAY STRUCTURE

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**Beginning**

- Where the introduction lives

**Middle**

- Where the content lives

**End**

- Where the conclusion lives

# BEGINNING

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WRITE YOUR WORKING THESIS AT THE TOP  
OF THE PAGE AND DEVELOP THE MIDDLE  
FIRST



# THESIS STATEMENTS

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The form a thesis statement takes depends on your writing's rhetorical situation



A thesis statement is

a clear, concise statement of the purpose of your essay

a distillation of the main point, argument, or position

tailored to the audience and genre of your essay

# WORKING THESIS

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- Your working thesis is the gist of your main point or argument
- It doesn't have to be pretty
- It isn't written in stone
- In fact, it may change as you develop your ideas and refine your thinking



# THE MIDDLE

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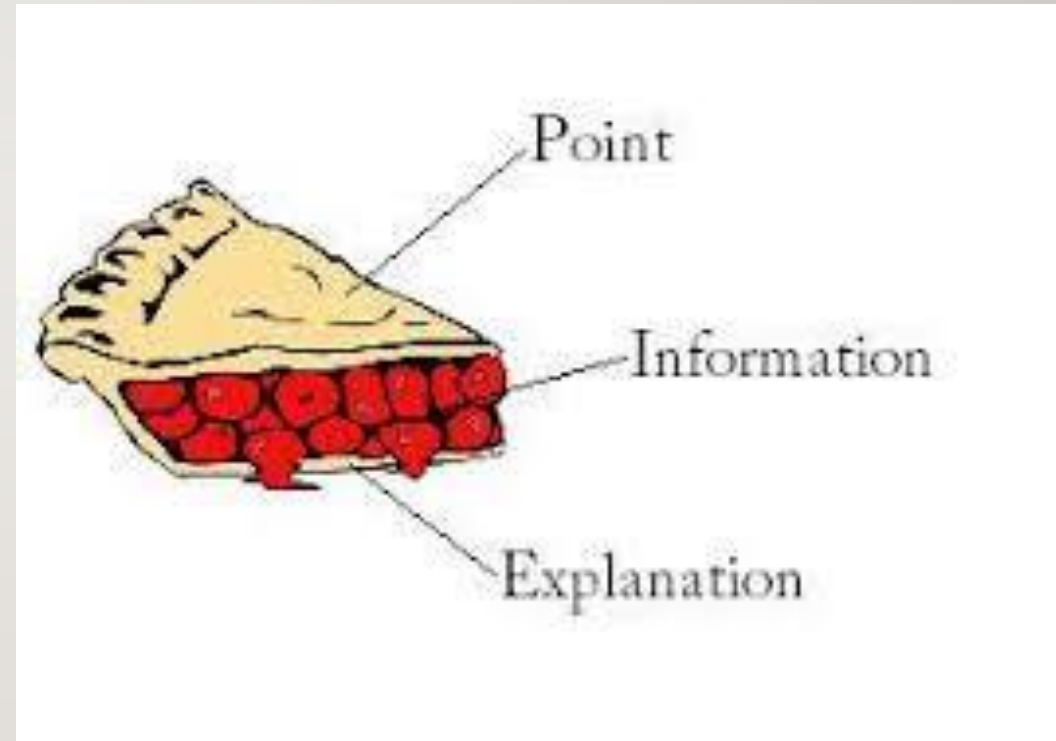
# THE MIDDLE

- A series of paragraphs that
  - Expand on and contextualize your thesis
  - Provide supporting evidence
  - Address and refute opposing point(s) of view

# THE MIDDLE: DRAFTING STRATEGIES

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- Use PIE to build paragraphs and effectively incorporate sources
  - **P**oint – the topic sentence
  - **I**llustration - the evidence
  - **E**xplanation – the analysis
- Limit each paragraph to one main point



# TRANSITIONS AND FLOW

- Transitions guide your reader through your thought process
- Repeat words and phrases between the end of one paragraph and the beginning of another
- PIE will help your essay appear organized
- The order of your points and paragraphs should be deliberate – is there a larger chronology or sequence to your points?
  - Least to most significant, first to last, largest to smallest scale, etc.
- In APA style, you can use headings and subheadings to facilitate transitions between sections and topics
- Check out:  
[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/academic\\_writing/paragraphs\\_and\\_paragraphing/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/paragraphs_and_paragraphing/index.html)

# THE ENDING

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- *The Bedford Guide* suggested incorporating one or more of from the following into your conclusion:
  - End with a brief, emphatic sentence or mind-blowing quotation
  - State or restate your thesis
  - Briefly summarize your essay's key points
  - Answer the “So what?” or “who cares?” questions about your topic. Why does this issue matter? Who should care about it? Who is harmed if no one pays attention to it?
  - Propose a course of action or offer a recommendation for future studies or future solutions
  - Discuss the topic's wider significance or implications
  - Redefine a key term or concept discussed in your essay (Kennedy, Kennedy & Muth, 2017, p. 414-415)



## LET'S GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING

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- **Why write your introduction last?**
- Saves time
- You've already developed your argument and support
- You can look at your whole essay and write the best introduction for it
- You can write your introduction around your revised thesis

# WHAT GOES AT THE BEGINNING?

- Begin with something that hooks your readers in and makes them want to keep reading
  - A story, a surprising fact/figure, or a vivid quote or commentary on the topic
- Expand on, comment, and provide context for your topic
  - The bigger picture of why and who should care?
  - Ask and answer a question (remember your framing question?)
- Include your thesis (usually towards the end of the first paragraph)
- Provide a roadmap that broadly introduces the essay's outline

WANT HELP  
WITH  
DRAFTING  
OR  
ANYTHING  
ELSE  
WRITING-  
RELATED?

- City College ASC – Tech Building
  - 406-247-3022
  - M-F 8am-5pm
- University Campus ASC – Student Union Building
  - 406-657-1641
  - M-Th 8am-5pm; F 8am-5pm
- Writing Services
  - Drop-in writing support available at both campus
  - Online appointments and email consultations available
  - Email: [writingcenter@msubillings.edu](mailto:writingcenter@msubillings.edu)
- To schedule an appointment and for more information, visit: [www.msubillings.edu/asc/](http://www.msubillings.edu/asc/)