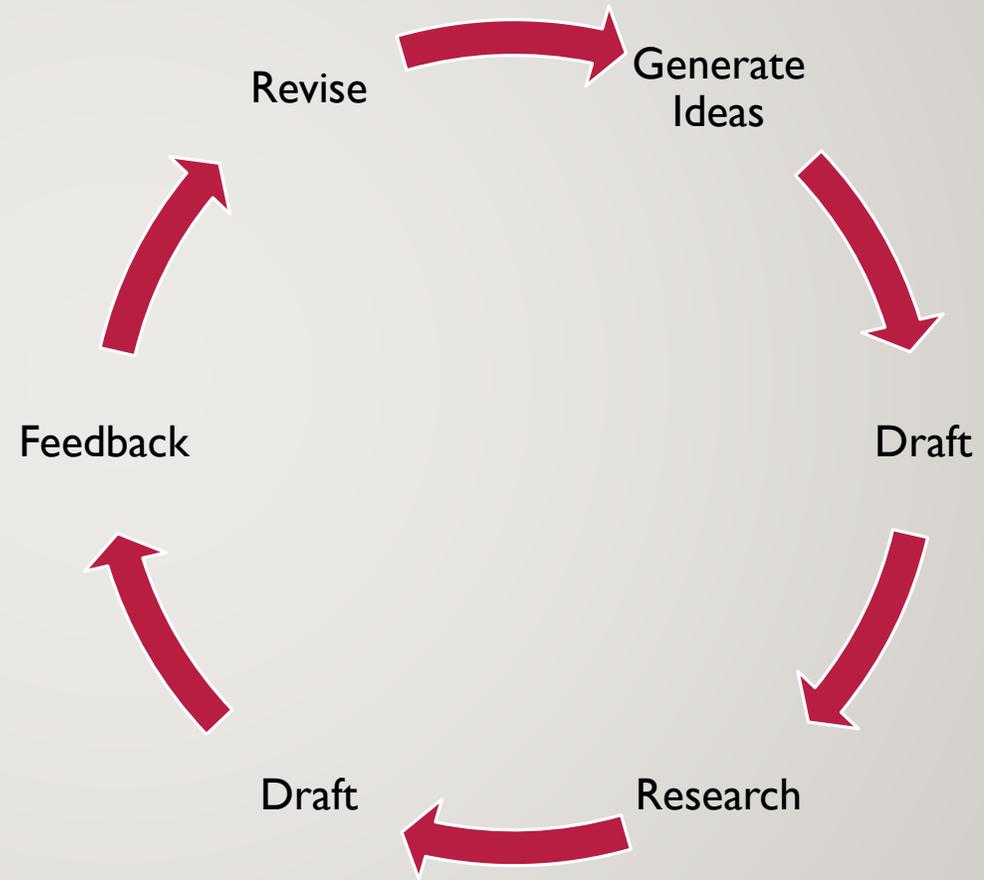


THESIS AND STRUCTURE: DRAFTING YOUR ESSAY

MSUB WRITING CENTER IN THE ASC

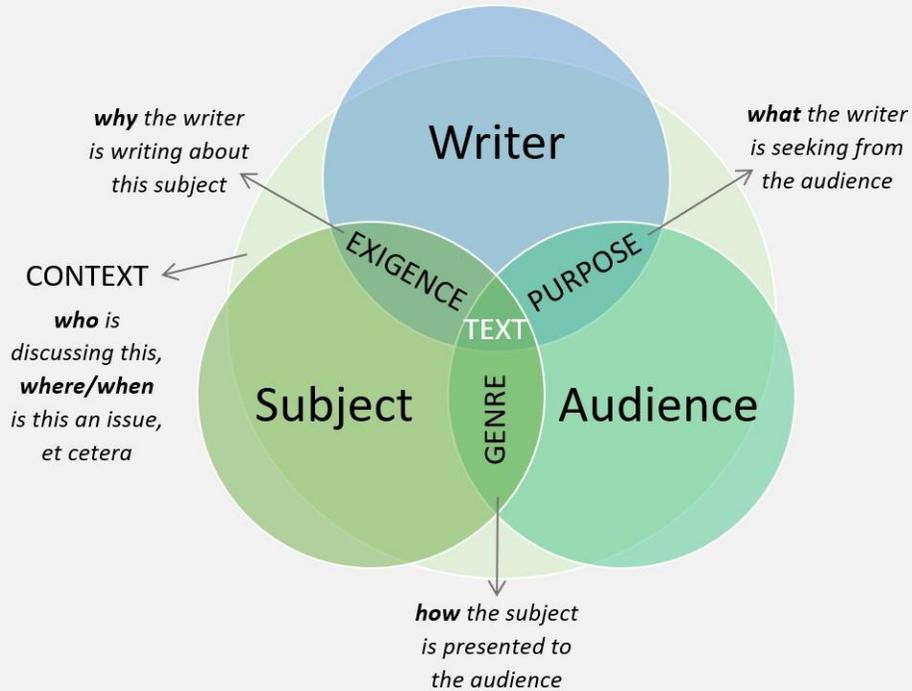
WHERE IN THE...
WRITING
PROCESS ARE WE?



FRAMING QUESTIONS

- 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

- 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

Beginning

- Where the introduction lives

Middle

- Where the content lives

End

- Where the conclusion lives

BEGINNING

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



THESIS STATEMENTS

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

- 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

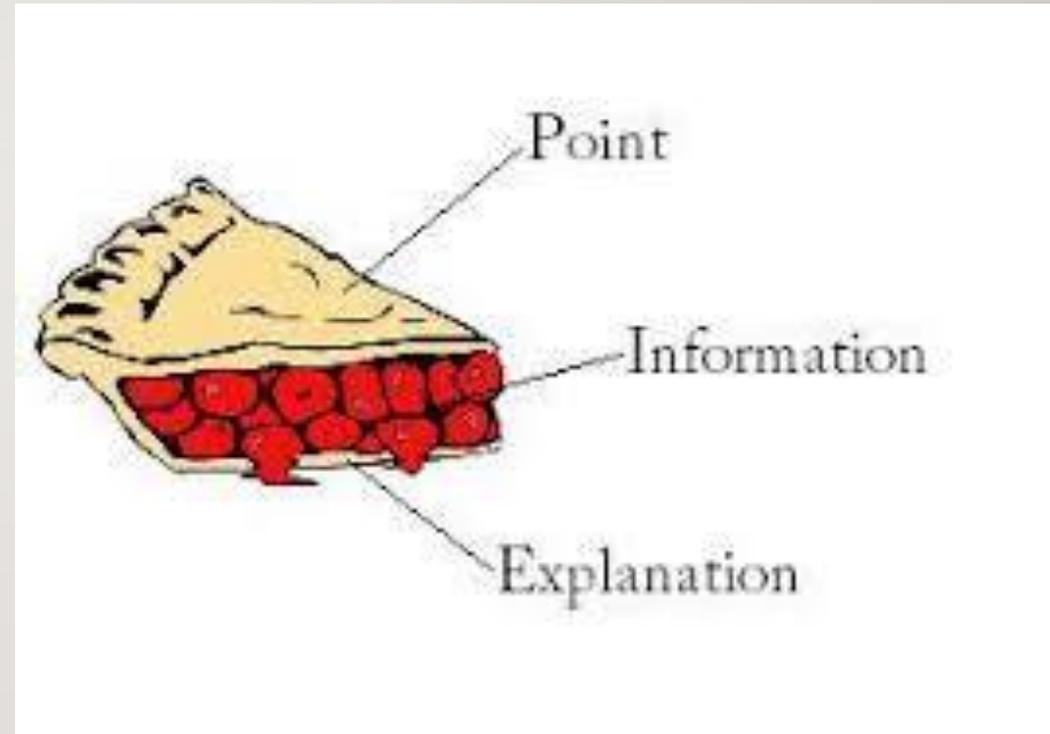


THE MIDDLE

- 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

- 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

THE ENDING

- *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

- **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
- To schedule an appointment and for more information, visit: www.msubillings.edu/asc/