

Steps Towards a Paper

Stage 1: Focus the Assignment

Annotate assignment sheet for key requirements
Determine major components (format, length, expectations)
Identify purpose of the assignment within context of overall course goals
Connect assignment to concepts in class notes/discussions
Connect assignment to class texts and handouts
Review professor's explanations of the assignment (notes, emails, prompts)
Compare this assignment to previous papers: What is new? What is the same?
Contact professor to clarify expectations
Propose a focus and plan for the professor

Stage 2: Follow a Process

Define steps: What do I need to do and in what order?
Create a timeline (write goals, calendar deadlines)

Select appropriate evidence
Analyze connections between evidence; use freewriting to generate ideas
Develop a working thesis
Skeletal outline—plan flow, topic sentences, transitions
Plan introduction and conclusion