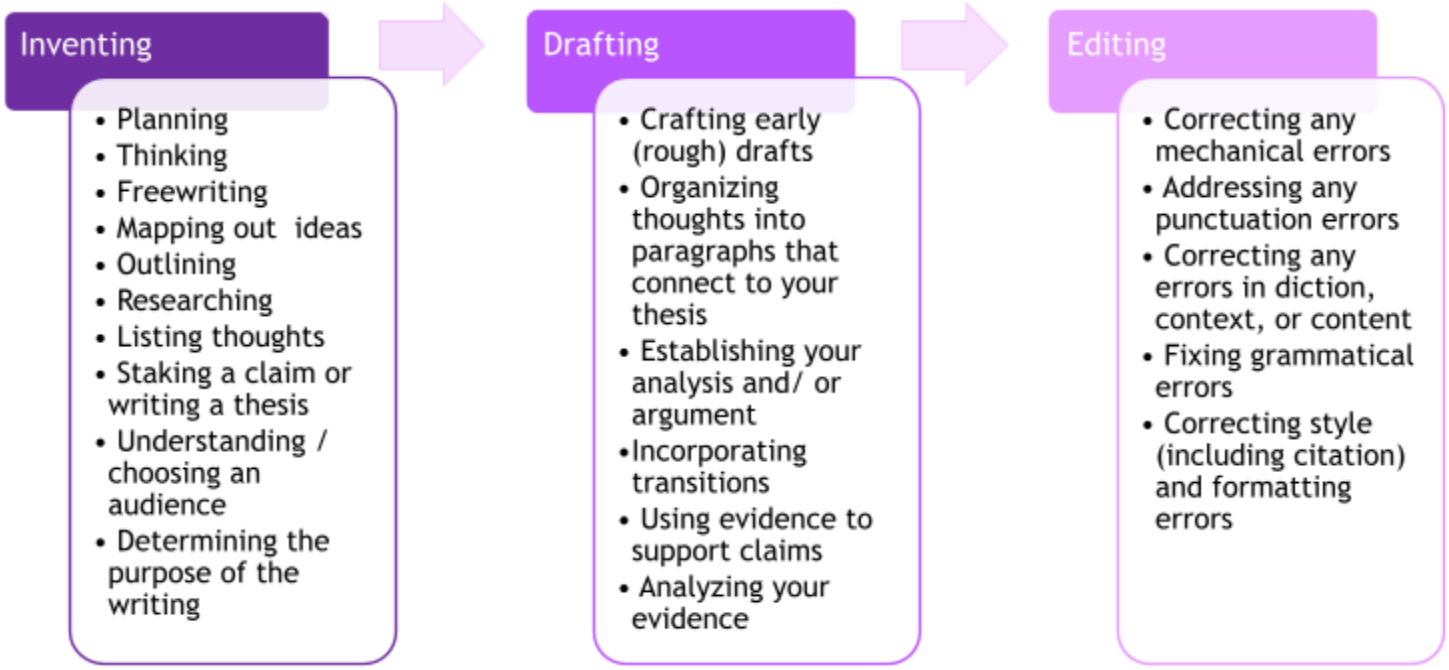
Suggestions for Writing - Beginning to Draft through Revision

Writing is non-linear. This fact means that we don't just start at the beginning and write through to the last draft. Instead, it's really circular—we keep tracking back to planning, researching, drafting, editing, and so on, throughout the entirety of the writing process. However, to get a good grasp on the writing process, it helps to think of writing in three basic stages. We just have to remember we can jump between any of these stages during the writing process but that it's best to follow a sort of progression:



During the stages of the writing process, keep these activities in mind if you get stuck:

- **Gloss**: write a one or multi-word summary of each paragraph in your draft to see if it matches your original plan, list, or outline. Glossing is also useful if you feel like you've gotten off track. You can see which paragraph(s) are not like the others.
- **Revise your outline**: if your draft isn't flowing, rewrite your outline to fit the flow of the draft to keep it on track. Return to your outline when you feel like your draft is getting off track and vice versa.
- **Mind the G.A.P.**: focus on the *genre* of your assignment (if it's an argumentative essay, are you crafting an argument?); the *audience* who will read your essay (Who is going to listen to or read your work? Have you explained everything fully?); and lastly, the *purpose*—what do you hope readers will take away from your writing?

There are also three levels of revision you can consider:

- **Unity**: you are reading to make sure the essay has a main thesis/ hypothesis which is supported by secondary claims in logical sections, which are illustrated by individual sentences in paragraphs. The paper does not stray significantly off topic.
- **Coherence**: you are reading your paper to make sure your arguments (in paragraphs and sections) are logical and consequential. Your transitions are used effectively to move from one section of the text to the next.
- **Balance**: your most important claims receive deep attention, analysis, and solid evidence. Sometimes, at this point, you'll have to cut out less-relevant claims and strengthen others.

Ideas taken in part from the Allyn & Bacon Handbook (5th ed), pgs. 87 to 95. Prof. Scanlon compiled this document & updated it December 2023. If you notice an error, need it in a different format, or have further questions or concerns, please email her at scanlon1@kenyon.edu or stop by and visit one of our writing center tutors in Chalmers Library on floor 2!