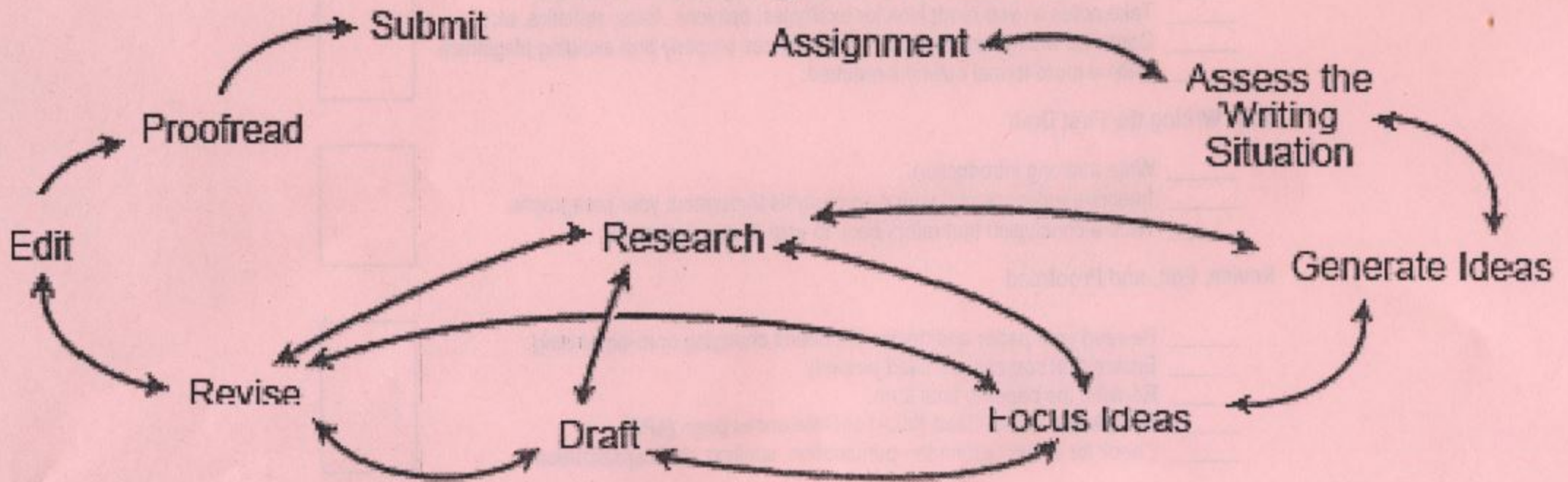


AVC Writing Center Handout Writing a Research Paper

Writing a research paper involves the following:

- Actively read the writing assignment by circling purpose words and highlighting important content information; consider your audience.
- Choose a topic and use pre-writing strategies (clustering, freewriting, brainstorming, etc.) to discover what you already know about the topic.
- Conduct pre-research to find out what is being said or written about the topic; narrow or broaden your topic if needed; consult a librarian.
- Decide on a focus for your thesis statement; make an assertion or claim about your topic; become familiar with the format/style required.
- Conduct more research to find evidence that supports your thesis statement; make an outline of points you want to make.
- Draft your paper; introduce the topic; create topic sentences for body paragraphs; consider how to integrate evidence and your own analysis.
- Cite sources within the paper; use signal phrases and parenthetical citations; cross-reference to citations on the works cited or references page.
- Revise global concerns in the paper (thesis statement, paragraphs, logical order of ideas, etc.); check for plagiarism and make adjustments.
- Edit for grammar and punctuation; proofread before submitting the paper by reviewing spelling and possible typographical errors.

The Writing Process



Research Checklist

Getting Organized

- _____ Actively read the writing assignment; consider purpose and audience.
- _____ Set a realistic timetable using this checklist or some other method.

My Due Dates

Choosing a topic

- _____ Find and choose an appropriate topic.
- _____ Pre-write and conduct pre-research.
- _____ Reconsider or modify your topic if necessary (consult a reference librarian).

Writing a Thesis Statement

- _____ Turn your topic into a guiding question you want to answer.
- _____ Write a thesis statement that answers your guiding question; make a claim.
- _____ Make an informal outline of points you are considering to support your thesis.

Starting Research

- _____ Gather your sources; create a "working" bibliography list of sources.
- _____ Take notes as you read; look for examples, opinions, facts, statistics, etc.)
- _____ Consult a writing handbook on citing sources properly and avoiding plagiarism.
- _____ Write a more formal outline if required.

Start Writing the First Draft

- _____ Write a strong introduction.
- _____ Integrate evidence and your own analysis throughout your paragraphs.
- _____ Write a conclusion that refers back to your thesis statement.

Revise, Edit, and Proofread

- _____ Re-read your paper and decide if it needs changing or re-organizing.
- _____ Ensure that sources are cited properly.
- _____ Re-write the paper in final form.
- _____ Complete a Works Cited (MLA) or References page (APA).
- _____ Check for errors: grammar, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.