The Writing Process

50% of your time is brainstorming and organizing
50% of your time is writing and proofreading

The writing process can be broken down into 10 steps:

1. **Understand the wording of the assignment and the instructor's expectations.**
   - Are there several parts to the assignment?
   - Are you asked to analyze, describe, discuss, summarize, review, or reflect?
   - How many words / pages are required?
   - Is there a marking rubric?
   - When is the due date?

2. **Write down what you already know about the topic.**
   Keep an open mind – you probably know more about the topic than you realize. This step could take as little as 15 minutes, but it allows you to start thinking of the different ways that you can approach the assignment.

3. **Gather information from several different sources (i.e. a literature review).**
   Again, keep an open mind – there may not be a lot of current research about what you originally wanted to write about – weigh up the pros and cons of the various directions your assignment could go.

4. **Narrow your topic and compose a thesis statement.**
   If your topic is too broad and you have a poorly composed thesis statement, you will lose your focus and the reader will get confused. The thesis is the anchor of the essay – all of your supporting paragraphs go back to the thesis statement.

   There are different types of thesis statements though, and not all writing assignments require a thesis statement – check with your Instructor or the Teaching Assistant (TA) and have your thesis statement approved before you begin to plan and outline your assignment.
5. Make a plan / outline.

Planning pays off in the end! This should include the topic, the thesis (if necessary), and key words and references for each section. If you can successfully summarize (orally) your assignment to another person, you are ready to start writing.

If some of your sections are repetitive, or if your arguments are weak or lack credible sources, you will need to make revisions.

The above 5 steps should take 50% of time spent on this writing assignment.

6. Write the first draft.

Now that you have a plan, your assignment has structure and flows in a logical way – this will help you to use your time more efficiently. You do not need to write all of your assignment in one sitting, e.g. leave the introduction until the end – it will be much easier to write when you have completed the other sections.

Don’t worry about revising – just write. Set realistic goals, and reward yourself after completing a section.

7. Revise for content – are there gaps in your argument?

Read your work aloud – this will help you to hear the way you write. Are you repeating the same words and expressions? Are some sections too similar – should they be combined?

8. Write the second draft.

9. Revise for grammar, spelling, referencing etc.

Save this until the end – it may be easier to do than step #7, but saves time in the end.

10. Write the final version and hand in your assignment.