

WHAT DO GOOD WRITERS DO?

PREWRITING:

It is recommended that you spend 25% of your allotted time (that's seven minutes on the ACT) planning what you will write before you write it. This will help your organization, focus and detail significantly. These minutes will translate into higher scores.

1. Read the Prompt. Determine what it asks you to do. Physically write out the verbs and the object of the verb.
2. Make a T-Chart of the arguments and counterarguments. Use this to help determine your position.
3. Use a graphic organizer (outline, T-Chart, bubble diagram, flow chart, web diagram) to establish your thesis and sub-thesis, your body and several logical arguments as well as counterarguments and a conclusion.
4. Arguments may include a personal experience to add detail and credibility.

WRITING THE ESSAY:

1. Use paragraphs. The first sentence should introduce the topic. The remainder of the paragraph should give support that moves from general to specific.
2. Use transitions. At a minimum, you can use words like "First, Second, Third, or "One reason, Another reason, A final reason. These help you to 1) consciously organize your thoughts and 2) alert the reader/grader of your organizational skills.
3. Support for your ideas must begin with general ideas that are supported by specific content knowledge, CDVs, data or, when relevant, personal experiences. **DO NOT WAVER IN YOUR OPINION.** Argue one side firmly.
4. Refute an opposing argument effectively. This isn't changing your opinion. It is an element of good writing. It shows analytical thinking and skill to refute the opposing side.
5. Your conclusion should not give new information, but should summarize the main arguments made, and may include a call to action or a warning of what the consequences will be if no action is taken.

WHEN YOU THINK YOU ARE DONE, YOU'VE JUST BEGUN

1. Save a couple of minutes to proof read. You may *think* you know what you have written, but most of the time your mind works faster than your ability to write.
2. Take the opportunity to *clarify* your intended arguments.
3. ***Don't rewrite*** your entire draft. It is good enough to cross out words and squeeze words into the margins and between lines. This demonstrates your editing ability, increases the clarity and earns you a higher grade.