

## Sequencing Writing Assignments

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If you are noticing that many students are not performing as well on major writing assignments as you would wish, try breaking down that assignment into its component parts. Between the time that an assignment is announced and the time that it is due in final form, help students undergo a series of activities and smaller assignments that prepares them to complete a larger, more complex assignment successfully.

Here's one possible sequence of assignments and activities to help students get ready for a research assignment:

### **Define Possible Questions**

Students create a preliminary proposal in which they outline areas of interest, offer a preliminary inspection of course materials, and/or present an analysis of appropriate questions. Instructor offers a line or two of response.

### **Identify Key Resources and Types of Evidence**

Students offer a list or bibliography of major sources and general comments about their importance. Instructor evaluates quickly and offers suggestions.

### **Summarize and Critique Key Readings**

Students exchange drafts of a summary and critique of key sources and offer comments on improvement.

### **Outline of Paper**

Students review one another's outlines outside of class and offer suggestions.

### **Rough Draft**

Students review one another's draft outside of class and offer comments. They use a critique guide to help them offer meaningful comments. (Sample critique guides are available in the writing center.) Authors will attach the draft and the comments to their final version.

### **Polished, Final Draft**

Students use the suggestions that they received from peers to revise their work. They improve it in terms of content, structure, adequacy, relevance.

### **Self-evaluation**

At the time of or shortly after submitting the paper, students write a one-paragraph statement that answers the question, "What would I do if I were to have another chance to revise this paper?"