



## Getting Started with a Writing Assignment

**Your instructor may give you specific steps for getting started with a writing assignment. In many cases, instructors ask you to write an outline first, begin with a thesis statement, or write an abstract or proposal. For some writers, these are good starting steps. Many writers, however, never use an outline, will write the thesis statement at the end of the paper and then put it in their intro, or will similarly write an abstract or proposal only after the paper is finished. There really is no right way to get started, and you shouldn't feel that you have to work in the way or the order that your teacher suggests.**

### **Consider some other ways to get started :**

- **Organize your ideas graphically. You might make a chart or a diagram, perhaps listing a few main ideas and then drawing connections.**
- **Rather than writing a first paragraph, first sentence or thesis statement, you can simply list key ideas or key terms. This means you are getting words on paper, but you are not yet composing sentences or paragraphs.**
- **For an argumentative paper, a side-by-side list of pros and cons may be the easiest way to see what you want to say.**
- **Some people write a complete first draft, and find that only in the last paragraph do their ideas become clear. This is not a waste of time! Many excellent professional writers throw away a lot more than they keep. So for some people, simply forcing themselves to sit down and write something is the best way to begin.**

**For more information, visit the Writing Center in DeRicci 206. Tutors are happy to work with you on writing strategies, and you do not have to have a completed paper in order to come in. Visit <http://LSS.edgewood.edu> for more information and to subscribe to the study tip podcasts.**