

Writing Process for Timed Writing

Tips for Succeeding on the Writing Exam



FIRST...

• **Ask yourself**, “What is the prompt asking me to do?”

✓ **Circle DIRECTIVE words in the prompt.**

For example:

✓ **ANALYZE**

✓ **DESCRIBE**

✓ **ARGUE**

✓ **EXPLAIN**

✓ **PERSUADE**

THEN...

Step 1: Carefully read the prompt (or writing task). Reread it if necessary.

Step 2: Analyze the prompt

- ✓ Circle directive words
- ✓ underline what the verbs ask you to do
- ✓ identify the audience
- ✓ number the different things you are asked to do in an order that will make sense to your reader

NEXT...

Step 3: Think about the task.

- ✓ **What will you need to include?**
- ✓ **What do you know about this type of writing?**
- ✓ **What skills have you practiced that can help you, here?**

Step 4: Write a workable thesis or claim.

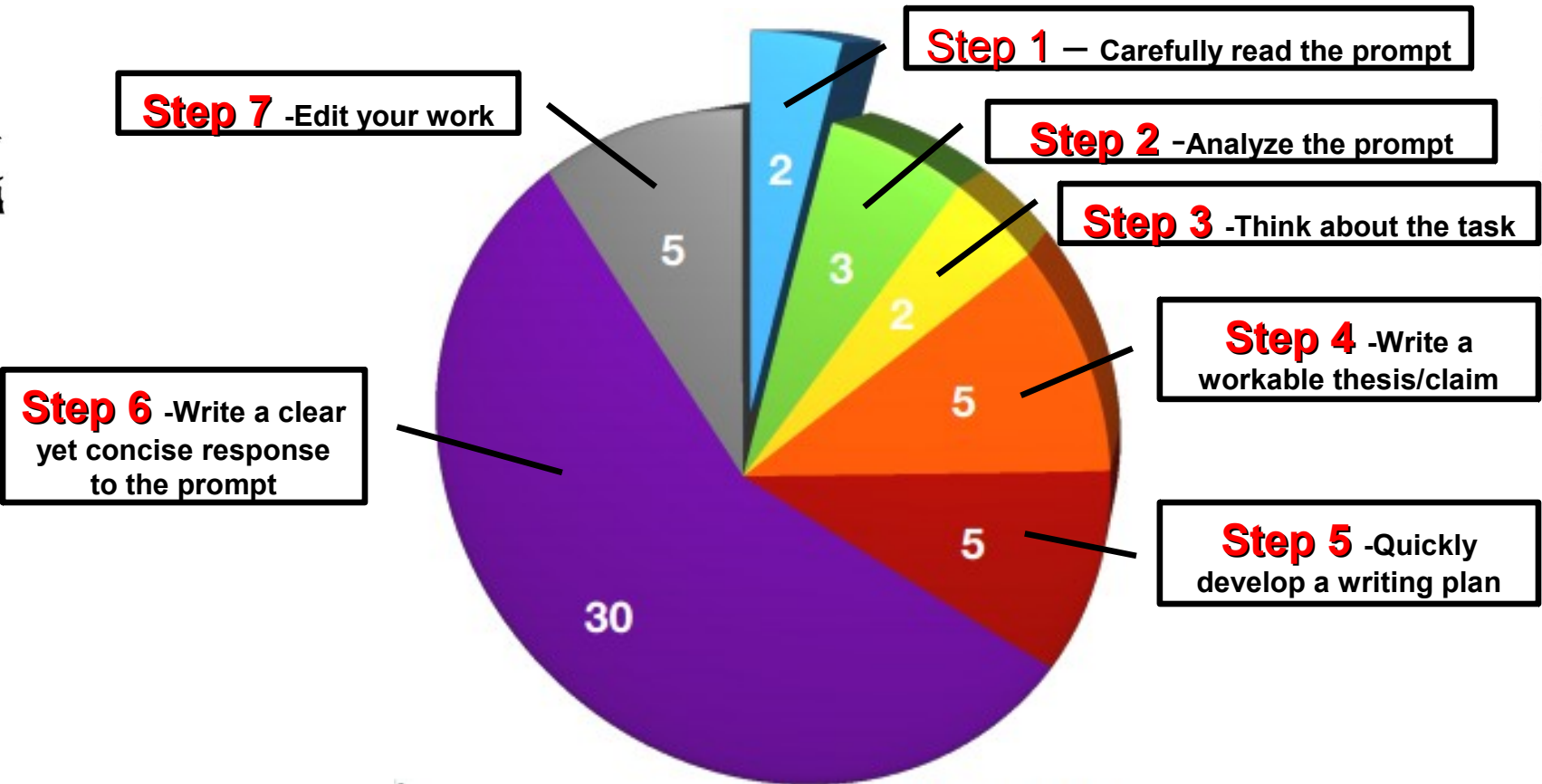
AND THEN...

Step 5: Quickly build a Reading & Writing Plan or another brainstorm tool like a bubble map, outline, or spiderweb.

Step 6: Write a clear and concise response to the question.

Step 7: Edit your work so that it is free of spelling and grammatical mistakes. Spend some time rereading your paper to ensure that the paper is free of errors. Use this last step to check your formatting.

Time Spent on Each Step (in minutes)



Time spent on each step.

Analyzing Prompts Strategy Guide

1. What is the prompt asking you to do?

- ✓ **Circle Directive Verbs like analyze, describe, argue.**
- ✓ **Underline what you're being asked to do. Sometimes prompts include questions.**
- ✓ **Turn the QUESTIONS into STATEMENTS.**
- ✓ **Begin your statement with a verb that best describes what you have to do to answer the question.**
- ✓ **Circle the verb and underline what you're being asked to do.**

Analyzing Prompts Strategy Guide

2. How can I use the prompt to help organize my paper?

- ✓ **Number the verbs you have circled in an order that makes sense to you and your reader.**

3. Who is my intended audience?

- ✓ **Place a box around the intended audience if it is stated directly.**
- ✓ **If the intended audience is suggested, write the intended audience in the margin and place a box around it.**

4. What sources (if any) am I being asked to use?

- ✓ **Write the name of the source(s) next to the prompt.**

This is what it should look like...

Example of "Analyzing a Prompt"

Melissa Healy offers a perspective on social media that challenges a common assumption among adults that constant "electronic chatter" produces teens who are socially underdeveloped and withdrawn. Write an essay for a parent magazine explaining how you and your friends use social networking. Using your own experiences and the research in Melissa Healy's article, construct an argument for social media sites. Make clear for parents how teens could benefit from spending their time in the "digital world."

Source:

Healy's text and personal experience

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