

**UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER**  
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**SSC – 245**

**Suggestions for Writing under Time Pressure**

1. *Budget* your time. For example, if you have 75 minutes to write, you might break it up this way:
  - 15 mins. read the prompt, brainstorm ideas, create a thesis and a few main points to cover
  - 50 mins. write essay
  - 10 mins. Proofread
  
2. *Read* the prompt VERY carefully—*twice*. This takes very little time to do, but it will increase your comprehension of the prompt and help you calm down. As you read it for the second time, *underline* important words in the directions:
  - To what extent do you agree or disagree?
  - Discuss the pros and cons. Give examples of both.
  - Which are the two most significant causes ? Why?
  - Refer to the readings, videos, and class discussion in your answer.
  - Discuss, summarize, analyze, or argue
  
3. *Brainstorm*: make a rough outline, list, or web. This will help you generate ideas and choose *main points that you can use as topic sentences* for body paragraphs. Write down key words for *examples* you think of as you brainstorm.
  
4. Group related ideas to form paragraphs. Make sure each paragraph is relevant to the prompt.
  
5. Use the prompt to your advantage. To get your introduction started, you can *restate* parts of the prompt or background material in your own words. Make your introduction brief—a few sentences.
  
6. In the opening paragraph, establish the *thesis* you intend to support. Make sure the thesis directly *answers the prompt*.

7. Use *specific examples* from the readings, class discussions, or other class materials. Don't use hypothetical examples unless your teacher approves.
8. *Comment* on what your examples are intended to show (e.g. "This example demonstrates . . ." or "This was one of many similar events that led to . . ." or "The evidence indicates that . . ."). Don't assume the reader will understand why the examples are relevant.
9. *Synthesize*: tell your reader how ideas relate to each other (e.g. "This idea is also shown in X" or "Lee's article "Title" and the video about Y both comment that . . ." or "Smith's conclusion is echoed by Rodriguez, who said . . ." or "Wong argues X. . . However, Keenan disagrees and instead claims that . . .").
10. Use *transitions* from paragraph to paragraph, point to point (e.g. "for example," "in addition," or "by contrast").
11. Keep your conclusion brief—a few sentences. In an in-class essay, it is usually acceptable to conclude by *rephrasing* your thesis and main points.