5 QUICK TIPS
FOR ACADEMIC WRITING

ONE

RESEARCH

Before you start writing, gather all of the data first, saving the information and quotes in a separate file. Not only does this provide a solid understanding of the topic and stronger sense of direction before you begin, but it also saves time once you start to write. As you outline and draft the essay, the information and quotes can just be just plugged in so you're not researching on the fly.

TWO

PLAN

"If you don't know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else". -Laurence J. Peter

Outline your research, thesis, and ideas; it is critical to effective writing, and probably one of the most commonly skipped steps in academic writing. Outlines and mind maps act as a blueprint, providing the framework for the words, paragraphs, and ideas. Remember, plans can be adjusted once you get started.

THREE

WRITE

Write! Commit to writing a draft, it acts as a "work in progress" that can be revised and edited over time. Don't worry about grammar, sentence structure, or being perfect the first time around. Getting started is often the biggest challenge so just get the words on the paper. If you are stuck on the opening paragraph, don't worry, skip it. You can always come back and add the introduction later (it's usually better that way).

FOUR

EDIT AND PROOFREAD

Now you can be a perfectionist! You can't spend too much time here; it is what distinguishes good work from great work. Take the time to edit and fine tune your essay; re-work your sentence structure and get each idea or quote in its right place. Then proofread, and to do it effectively, print out the essay. It may not be eco-friendly, but it is much easier to catch mistakes on paper than on the screen. And always get a second pair of eyes to also edit and proofread; ask a friend, colleague, tutor, or mentor to assist, they will catch things you won't.

FIVE

BE ORIGINAL

Plagiarism is for amateurs. Not only is it an indication of dishonesty and laziness, but it can also get you kicked out of school or fired from a job; especially today, when every college and university has plagiarism detection software, and a quick Internet search can verify suspicions of plagiarism. Be the best version of yourself, plan ahead and do your own work.