

The writing process

One word at a time



Newcastle
University

| Academic Skills Kit

The writing process

If you are feeling a bit overwhelmed with how to begin a piece of assessed written work, it is worthwhile thinking about writing as a process as opposed to a final product.

The writing process continued

Thinking about it in this way means that you break the task down into smaller manageable chunks, but you can also review, reflect and edit your work as you go along.

This means that you are more likely to address the question you've been set and ensure that your work meets the marking criteria.

The stages/ process of writing

Consulting resources

- Course documentation
- Learning resources/own notes
- Search tools
- Writing/reference tools
- Scholarly/non scholarly material

Wingate and Harper 2021
Adapted from Flowers and Hayes 1981

Writing processes

Planning

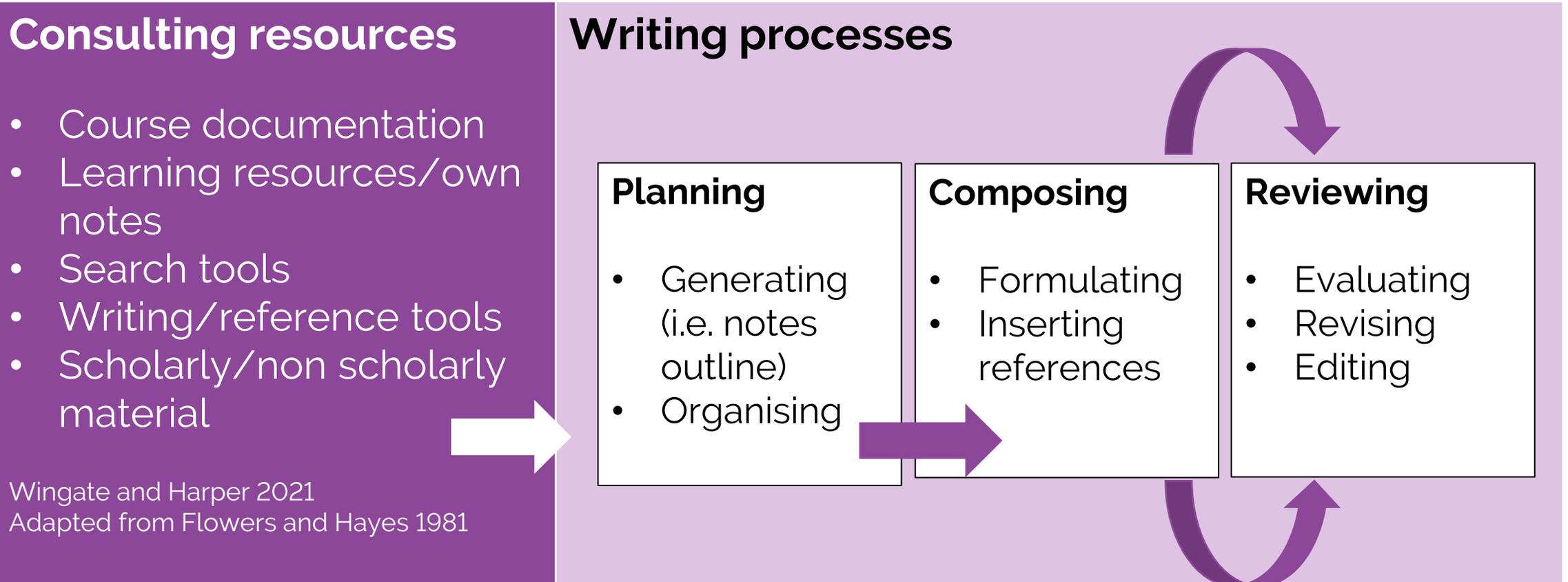
- Generating (i.e. notes outline)
- Organising

Composing

- Formulating
- Inserting references

Reviewing

- Evaluating
- Revising
- Editing



Viewing writing as a process

- Don't think of writing as a start to finish process- it isn't a race!
- Remember that you are likely to go back and forth between sections
- For example, you might draft a paragraph using evidence you've found, but as you read you may find more evidence, so you can go back, review and edit your initial paragraph.

Planning

This includes:

- Looking over the marking scheme
- Looking over the question set
- Making up a rough overview of the work and the various sections required (it can be as detailed or minimal as you like) although avoid falling into the trap of overplanning

Why plan?

- Planning and looking over the materials will give you a clear idea of what the marker is looking for
- It provides starting point for generation of ideas
- It gives you time to develop a clear overview of what you'll write about
- It will guide you as you work through the assignment
- It will help ensure that you've included everything and addressed the task fully

Why plan? Continued

- It will enable you to organise your argument and the evidence you'll use to support this
- It will enable you to establish connections between points
- It will also help you read with a clear purpose, as you'll be looking for material to support your point, as opposed to summarising relevant texts and adding them to your work.
- It will help your writing become more clear and focussed

Reading strategies

It is worth reading broadly at first to get an overall picture of your topic.

In order to do this you'll use the materials you've been taught in lectures, look at your module reading list as well as other resources you've been directed to.

Keep your assignment question handy

At this stage (and throughout your work) it is a good idea to have the assignment question to hand so that you can refer to it. This will help you keep focussed on the task you've been set.

You'll then be in a position to decide how you want to respond to the assignment question. This will then help you source more detailed texts

Composition

Use the rough plan as your basis, imagine building a house, start with the basic structure and then add the other features to this.



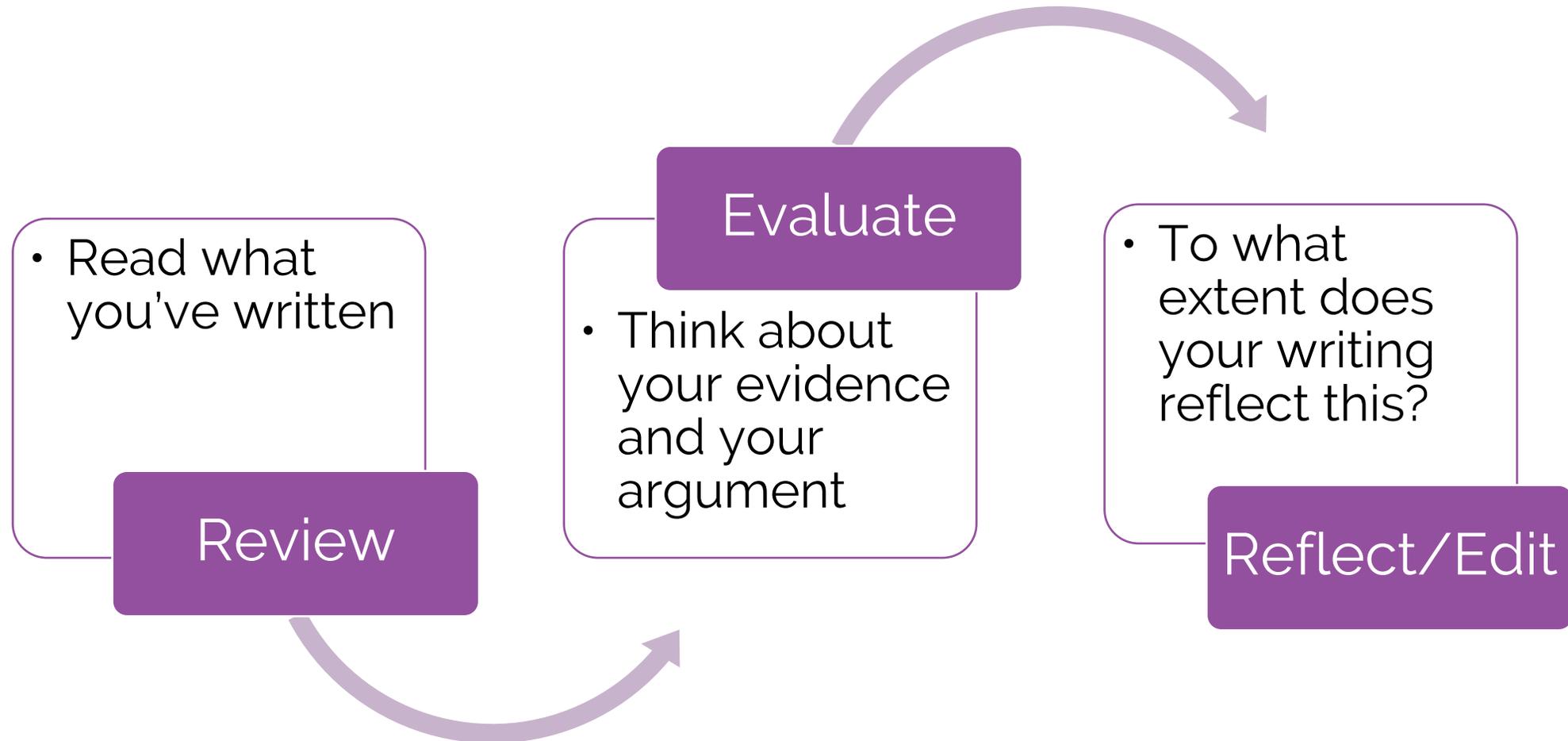
Photo by [Nathan Waters](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Use the plan to help you compose your work

Use the rough plan as a guide:

- Begin formatting ideas and incorporating references to support your points.
- Think about how to structure and compose each paragraph and add the appropriate references.
- Remember it is important to integrate sources when you are writing, not simply summarise one text per idea.

Composition and reflection



Reviewing

When you have a completed draft it is worth ensuring that you read the whole piece of work to ensure flow throughout. You can also check for any language, structural, referencing, style or grammar issues.

If possible, take a break from writing so that when you do your final checks you are looking at your work with fresh eyes and therefore will be more likely to spot any potential errors.

Reviewing, evaluating, revising and editing your work is likely to occur in several cycles.