



# LEAP Online

Learning Excellence Achievement Pathway Online Tutorial



## First Draft

LEAP Online

Academic Writing (Level 2)

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## Introduction

Once you've finished your plan and outline of your assignment, you can begin to write a first draft. This section aims to explain what this is and provide useful tips so that you can prepare your first draft.

## What is a First Draft?



As the heading suggests, a first draft is the stage that immediately follows the outline stage, whereby you will write a first draft of your assignment.

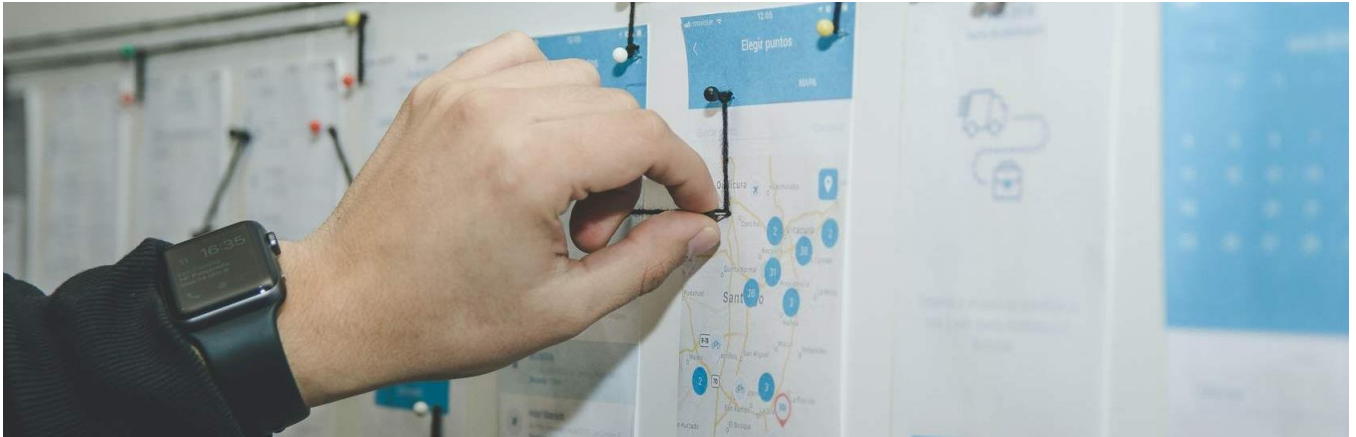
The first draft, also referred to as a 'rough draft,' will allow you to put all of your ideas together to create a foundation from which to build upon. The first draft may result in a second draft, third, fourth, etc. as you continue to refine your ideas and, if necessary, undertake additional research to find more source material.

It's important to stress that, you should only complete a first draft when time allows, such as for essay and report writing. This process may not be suitable if you are under time restraints, for example for an exam essay, in which case a single draft will be sufficient.

Once you are satisfied with your assignment, you will go through the process of checking, redrafting and proofreading (more on these areas later in this LEAP Online section) before submitting what is often referred to as the 'final draft.' Notice how the name attributed to your final submission is still referred to as a 'draft'? This is to highlight that writing is a continuous process, without an end – even your final submission will not be perfect and it's okay to recognise that.

**Move on to view the steps necessary to prepare a first draft.**

## Step1: Refer to Your Plan



As we explored in the '[Planning Your Assignment](#)' tutorial, by this stage in the writing process you should have brainstormed and prepared an outline of your ideas. Therefore, you should now attempt to follow your outline.

As mentioned earlier, however, writing is a continuous process and you may think of new ideas or additional source material, which you did not note in your original outline, but wish to include now. If this happens, it's important to consider asking yourself the following questions:

- Are my new ideas relevant? If not, do I need to include them? Same question applies for additional source material
- How do these new ideas fit into my original plan for the assignment and support the point I wish to make? Again, the same question applies to additional source material
- If I include new ideas or additional resource material, will it affect the word count? Always bear in mind, your assignment should be kept to a certain length and deviation away from this criteria may impact on your overall assignment mark

## Step 2: Where Should I Start the First Draft?



Ultimately, there is no right or wrong answer - start where you think is best.

As mentioned in the '[An Introduction to Academic Writing](#)' tutorial, some writers find the introduction the hardest place to start and may choose to begin with the main body or conclusion first. If, however, you have a detailed outline, it's possible to begin at the start.

## Step 3: Begin Writing Your First Draft



To begin, start with writing up your main ideas and content from the outline of your plan – don't worry too much at this stage about spelling, punctuation and grammar. As it's your first draft, you may end up deleting content so there's no point slowing yourself down and wasting time checking these areas only for them to be deleted.

### Useful tips for writing your first draft

#### Tip 1: Prepare to write



This tip might sound obvious to some students, but find a quiet space away from distractions, line up your textbooks, note-taking paper, assignment plan, stationery and computer; get a drink and prepare to write.



## Tip 2: Think about what you're going to write



Before you start to prepare your first draft, think about what you're going to write and how this can be converted into academic context.

## Tip 3: Keep it going



It is easy to become distracted from writing. You should try to avoid interrupting the flow of writing your first draft with too many digressions. For example, if you need to include an in- text citation, but cannot find the reference, don't spend too long trawling through your notes looking for it– simply add a comment with the word “REF” to act as a reminder and come back to it later. If your writing is going well, keep going! Once you're in a state of creativity and writing becomes automatic, it is important to remain in that mindset and continue to get your ideas down. However, do not assume that you will be able to jump back into the same mindset if you stop – it's not that easy!



## First Draft

### Tip 4: Don't rush



Your first draft should not be rushed. Manage your time effectively and make sure you include all your ideas and explore new ones, if they are relevant.

### Tip 5: Silence the perfectionist within you



It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking your first draft needs to be perfect. If you're concentrating on re-writing the same sentence or paragraph over again, you will struggle to finish the first draft, let alone find the time to write a final draft.

Remember, this is only a first draft – it doesn't need to be at the same, high standard as the final draft.

### Tip 6: Save your work



If you're writing your first draft on the computer, remember to save regularly to avoid losing your work unexpectedly. If you're using paper to write your first draft, keep your work in a safe place.

### Tip 7: Break



If you hit writer's block, perhaps take time away from your work area and try again later.

## Tip 8: Add comments to your work

As you write, use the comments feature within Microsoft Word to leave useful prompts and reminders, especially if you think of new ideas or additional resource material to include. However, don't forget to delete these before you submit your final draft.

See the following video to find out how to add comments to your work:

[Insert or delete a comment](#) [Microsoft Help & Support]

## Tip 9: Finish on a positive note



When you feel satisfied with your first draft, stop! Read over it but remember not to make a lot of changes right now – amendments will come at a later stage.

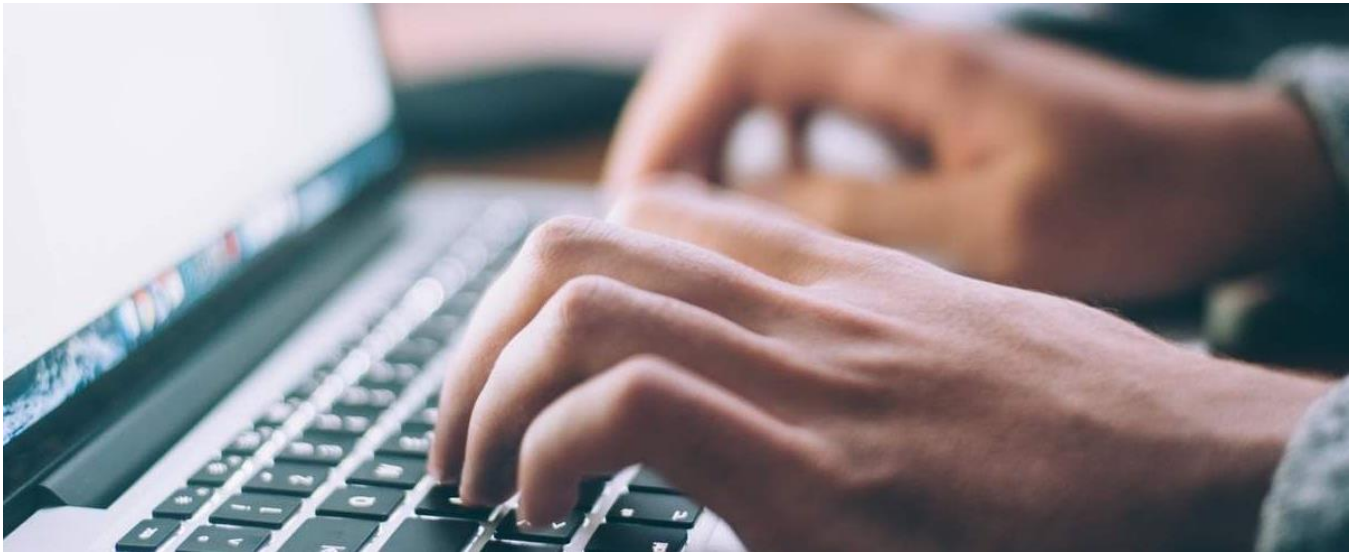
## Step 4: Piece It All Together



Work through tutorials '[Paraphrasing](#)' and '[Academic Cohesion](#)' (respectfully), which will help you to write your first draft.



## Summary



This Tutorial aimed to explain a 'first draft' and explore how to write the same. Remember a first draft will allow you to put all of your ideas together but it may result in other drafts as you refine your ideas or undertake additional research. Therefore, don't spend too much time correcting your spelling, punctuation and grammar - this will come later. The next Tutorial will focus on paraphrasing, which is an important academic skill that will help you to prepare your first draft.

### Where to go to next

Before you leave, select the button below to complete a short assessment and earn your LEAP Online digital badge.

Once you have completed the assessment, close the tab, return to the 'Academic Writing - Level 2' LEAP Online section and begin the next tutorial.

## Digital Badge

Before you leave, select the button below to complete a short assessment and earn your LEAP Online digital badge.

Academic Writing: First Draft

[Moodle assessment](#)



For more support on this topic, consider attending a free workshop at [LEAP Live](#).