ENGLISH COMPOSITION · STUDY GUIDE

Exam 2 Study Guide

This guide covers chapters 3 and 4. First you will take the writing process apart into its working stations and learn to budget your time so invention and revision get real hours. Then you will build the sentence the whole essay depends on: a thesis that is arguable, scoped, reasoned and aimed at the right purpose. Work one chapter at a time. Read the "what to know" paragraphs, copy the tables by hand, then try each worked case with the steps covered. Finish each chapter with its ten self-test items. The cram sheet at the end holds every test and template.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

- Chapter 3 · the recursive process (Flower and Hayes, Perl, Sommers), the ten-hour budget, freewriting, looping and other heuristics, incubation, working theses and scratch outlines, the so-what, order and nutshell tests, zero drafts, stall diagnosis, the four revision passes and the reverse outline.
- Chapter 4 · topic, research question and thesis, the reasonable-disagreement test, claim, thesis and hypothesis, the four purposes and prompt verbs, narrowing scope, the because-clause and the so-what statement, qualifier versus hedge, placement and shapes, the thesis paragraph, the six failures and the seven-test checklist.

CHAPTER 3

The Writing Process: Invention, Drafting, Revision

Read it in full: **Chapter 3 in the textbook**. Practice it in the lab: **The Invention Engine** and **Reverse Outline Studio**.

What to know

A blank page is usually a **sequencing problem**: trying to discover, organize, phrase and punctuate all in the same sentence. The fix is to separate the jobs. When Linda Flower and John Hayes had writers think aloud (late 1970s and early 1980s), they found not a line but processes of planning, translating and reviewing that writers interrupt and re-enter constantly. The word for this is **recursive**: the process loops back on itself.

Sondra Perl (1979) found that struggling college writers loop too, but for the wrong reasons: they stop every few words to check spelling instead of every few paragraphs to check meaning. Nancy Sommers (1980) found that students revised mostly by changing words, while experienced writers cut paragraphs, moved sections and sometimes restarted from a better question. Since the 1990s, **post-process** scholars have argued there is no single universal process to teach. Treat the chapter's methods as tools, not a ritual.

The linear myth wrecks your calendar. A defensible starting budget for a 1,500-word essay with assigned sources over two weeks: reading the task and sources 15% (1.5 h), invention 15% (1.5 h), shaping 10% (1 h), drafting 25% (2.5 h), **incubation** overnight, global revision 25% (2.5 h), editing and proofreading 10% (1 h). Keep a **process log** for one assignment and you will usually find more minutes than you thought, in fragments. Match the task to the window: a twenty-minute gap suits a freewrite or a reverse outline, not polishing an introduction.

Invention (rhetoric's *inventio*) is finding something to say. **Freewriting**, popularized by Peter Elbow in *Writing Without Teachers* (1973), means ten minutes without stopping or editing. **Looping** takes the liveliest sentence to the top of a clean page and freewrites again. A freewrite is ore, not metal: throwing most of it away means it worked. A **heuristic** is a set of prompts that produces ideas without inspiration: the **journalists' questions** (who, what, when, where, why, how), **clustering** (Gabriele Rico), **cubing** (credited to Gregory and Elizabeth Cowan: describe, compare, associate, analyze, apply, argue) and the **topic ladder** ("an example of what?" goes up; "for example?" goes down). Reading with a pen, talking aloud and Graham Wallas's incubation (1926: preparation, incubation, illumination, verification) are invention too.

Shaping turns the pile into a plan. A **working thesis** is a provisional claim you write early so you have something to argue with. A topic is a noun phrase; a question adds a verb and a controversy; a working thesis answers it in a way someone could dispute. Good ones force a distinction: "less X than Y," "only when," "trades A for B." A **scratch outline** lists paragraph **jobs**, not subjects: "show that the administrators' numbers measure hours, not attention" tells you when the paragraph is done. Ronald Kellogg's experiments found that outlining before drafting improved quality; Elbow's tradition warns it can freeze an idea too early. The compromise: invent first, outline second, hold the outline loosely.

Test the plan while changes are cheap. The **so-what test**: finish "this matters because..." for each item. The **order test**: read the jobs backwards and look for anything that depends on information arriving later. The **nutshell test**: say the whole essay in one spoken sentence. For arguments, add the strongest opposing view as its own job.

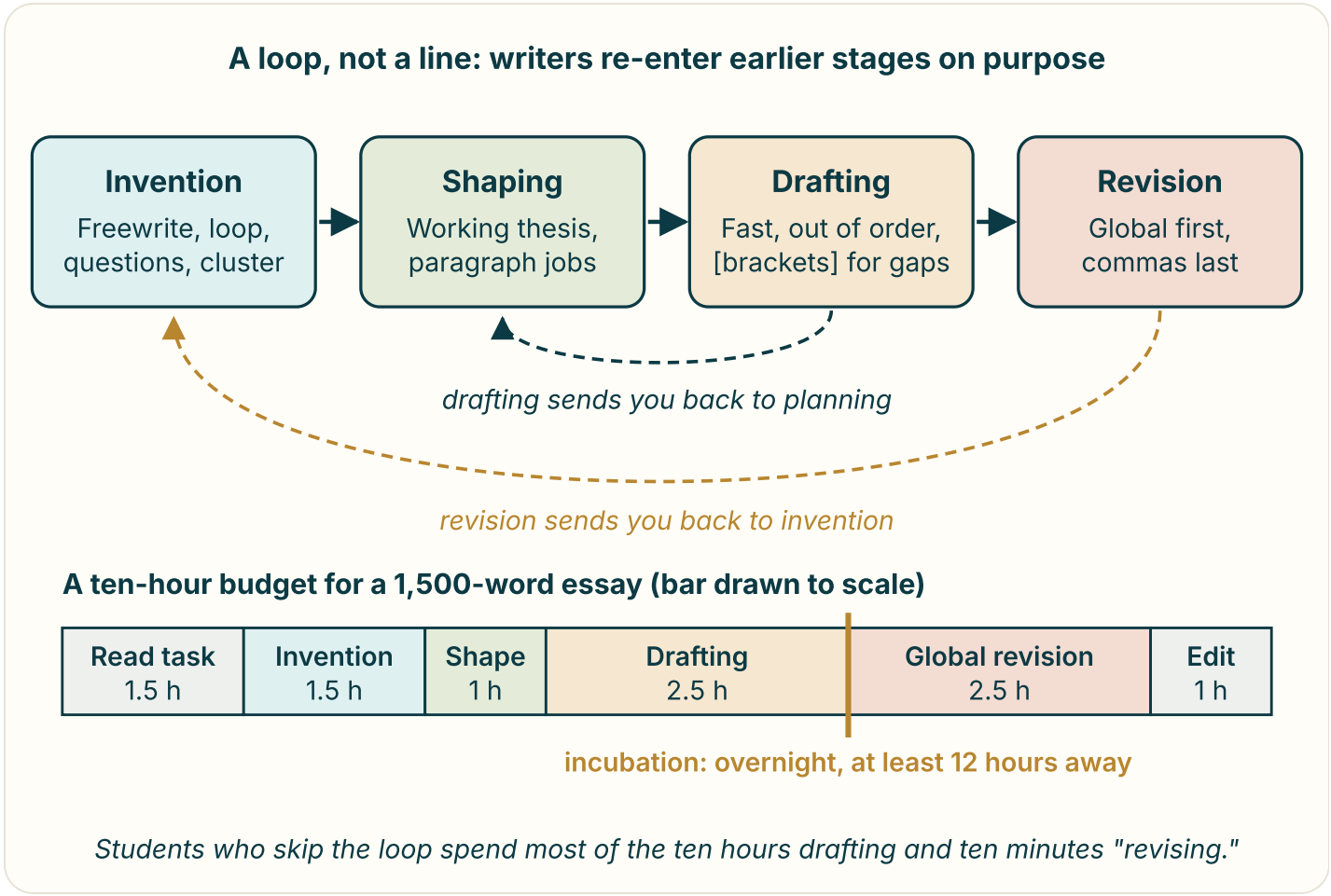
Drafting trades polish for momentum. Anne Lamott (*Bird by Bird*) insists every writer produces bad first drafts: generating and judging are different jobs that slow each other down. Write a **zero draft**: fast, complete, with "[CITE]" or "[find a better example]" instead of detours, and no rereading from the top. Early judgment filters out the specific and keeps the generic because the generic feels safe. Draft out of order, often the middle first and the introduction last. Leave a **landing strip** note when you stop. Draft with sources closed and name files by date.

"Writer's block" names a symptom. Mike Rose (1980) found blocked students were often obeying **rigid rules** (never use "I," exactly five sentences per paragraph). Diagnose the cause: rewriting one sentence again and again means you are judging while generating; knowing the point but stuck means a **content gap** (go get an example); every paragraph could go anywhere means a **plan gap** (return to the topic ladder); dread at opening the file often means stakes inflation plus a rigid rule.

Revision means re-seeing. If nothing moved, was cut or was added, you edited. Run four passes in order: **global revision** (claim, order, coverage), **paragraph revision**, **local revision or editing** (sentences), and **proofreading** (characters, deliberately mechanical). Put distance between drafting and pass one and change the sensory channel. The **reverse outline** writes each paragraph's topic and job beside it, then reads only those notes; it exposes repetition and the buried thesis that so often sits in paragraph six or seven. Ask readers where they got confused, not how to fix it.

LOCK THESE IN

- Writing is recursive: a loop of planning, translating and reviewing (Flower and Hayes).
- Perl: weak writers loop at the wrong scale. Sommers: students change words; experienced writers change structure.
- Ten-hour budget: 1.5 read, 1.5 invent, 1 shape, 2.5 draft, overnight away, 2.5 global revision, 1 edit and proof.
- A freewrite is ore, not metal. Loop from the liveliest sentence.
- Scratch outlines list jobs, not subjects. Test with so-what, order and nutshell.
- Stalls have causes: judging while generating, content gap, plan gap, rigid rule (Rose).
- Revise in order: global, paragraph, editing, proofreading. Never polish what you might cut.
- The reverse outline (topic + job per paragraph) finds repetition and buried theses.



The loop and the budget. Invention and global revision get as much time as drafting. The dashed arrows are the return trips that experienced writers plan for.

Invention techniques

Technique	Use it when	What it produces
Freewriting (10 min)	You have a topic but no angle	A page of raw language with one or two live phrases
Looping (3 × 10 min)	A freewrite gave one good sentence	A narrowing spiral that ends near a thesis
Journalists' questions	The topic feels vague; you need facts	Six angles; the "why" often holds the argument
Clustering (Rico)	You suspect the topic is too big	A map showing where the topic splits
Cubing (Cowans)	The draft keeps doing one move	Six short takes; the surprising one becomes the essay
Topic ladder	The claim is a truism or too abstract	A claim at the right level of generality
Talk and transcribe	You explain it well aloud but freeze	A voice memo whose best 200 words go in the draft

The four revision passes

Pass	Scope	You are asking	You ignore
1. Global revision	Whole essay	Is the claim worth making? Does the order build? Anything missing or repeated?	Every sentence-level flaw
2. Paragraph revision	One paragraph	One job? Is the evidence really evidence? Does it connect?	Word choice and commas
3. Editing	Sentence	Who is doing what? Can it lose a third of its words?	Structure, now closed
4. Proofreading	Character	Typos, homophones, citation punctuation, format, file name	Everything else

Worked cases

WORKED CASE 1 · FROM FREEWRITE TO WORKING THESIS BY LOOPING

Tomas freewrites on "a change in how people work." Most of it is filler, but one clause stands out: "my uncle still prints his emails before he answers them, like they're memos." Use looping to reach a working thesis.

STEP 1 · CIRCLE THE LIVE SENTENCE

The printed emails: an old medium's habit carried into a new one.

STEP 2 · LOOP ONCE

Copy it to a clean page and freewrite ten minutes. Tomas notices he also writes "Dear" in work chats.

STEP 3 · LOOP AGAIN

Freewriting from that, he lands on the idea that new tools arrive wearing the manners of the old ones.

STEP 4 · FORCE A DISTINCTION

Working thesis: "Workplace tools change faster than workplace manners, so each new channel inherits the etiquette of the last one, which explains why chat messages at his job still open like letters."

STEP 5 · JUDGE THE YIELD

He kept about two sentences from thirty minutes of writing. **That is a successful result: a freewrite is ore, not metal.**

WORKED CASE 2 · TURNING SUBJECTS INTO JOBS IN A SCRATCH OUTLINE

Ana's outline for a paper on campus food pantries reads: 1. Intro. 2. Statistics. 3. History of the pantry. 4. Interviews. 5. Conclusion. Rewrite it as jobs.

STEP 1 · NAME THE CLAIM FIRST

Working thesis: the pantry's weekday-only hours fail the evening students who need it most.

STEP 2 · REWRITE EACH ITEM AS A JOB

1. Open with one evening student finding the door locked. 2. Show that usage data count visits, not unmet need. 3. Explain why the hours were set for a daytime campus. 4. Use interviews to show who is missing. 5. Answer the objection that staff cost makes evening hours impossible. 6. Land on a two-evening pilot.

STEP 3 · RUN THE ORDER TEST

Item 2 uses "unmet need"; make sure it is defined there, not later.

STEP 4 · RUN THE NUTSHELL TEST

One spoken sentence: "The pantry is open when the students who need it are in class or at work." It fits, so the plan is doing one essay.

STEP 5 · NOTE WHAT WAS ADDED

The objection became its own job. Without it, the essay would be a monologue.

WORKED CASE 3 · READING A REVERSE OUTLINE AND PLANNING THE SURGERY

Jordan's eight-paragraph draft on library late fees reverse-outlines like this: 1 history of libraries, general intro; 2 what late fees are, sets up problem; 3 a story about a neighbor who stopped borrowing, example; 4 fee revenue numbers, evidence; 5 more revenue numbers, evidence; 6 people should return books on time, recommendation; 7 fees keep the poorest patrons away, analysis; 8 conclusion restates intro.

STEP 1 · FIND OFF-TASK MATERIAL

Paragraph 1 is throat-clearing. Paragraph 2 is the real opening.

STEP 2 · FIND REPETITION

Paragraphs 4 and 5 do the same job. Merge them.

STEP 3 · FIND CONTRADICTIONS

Paragraph 6 blames patrons, but paragraph 3 showed a system problem. That is the draft's central confusion.

STEP 4 · FIND THE BURIED THESIS

Paragraph 7 is the real claim: fees push away the patrons who most need the library.

STEP 5 · WRITE THE SURGERY LIST

Cut 1, promote 7 to the thesis position, merge 4 and 5 under it, cut or rewrite 6, rebuild 8 from 7. **The fix is structural; polishing would have hidden it.**

TRAPS PEOPLE FALL INTO

- **Believing writing is a straight line.** Looping back is the mechanism, not a sign of bad planning.
- **Spending most of the time drafting.** Fund invention and global revision; they are the stages students underfund.
- **Keeping most of a freewrite.** If you keep ninety percent, you were drafting slowly, not freewriting.
- **Outlining subjects.** "Paragraph 3: statistics" will report numbers and stop. Write the job.
- **Writing the introduction first because you must.** Introductions promise what the essay does; write them once the essay exists.
- **Treating every stall the same way.** Diagnose first: content gap, plan gap, rigid rule, or judging while generating.
- **Calling a spell-check revision.** If nothing moved, was cut or was added, you edited.
- **Asking readers how to fix it.** Ask where they got confused. The fix is your call.

Chapter 3 self-test · ten items

1. What does it mean to call the writing process recursive?

A. Writers move through five fixed stages only once
B. Writers revise each sentence before writing the next
C. Writers loop back into earlier stages on purpose
D. Writers must outline completely before any drafting

C. Writers loop back into earlier stages on purpose Drafting sends you back to planning, and revising sends you back to invention. That doubling back is normal.

2. What did Sondra Perl find about struggling college writers?

A. They looped back at the wrong scale, checking spelling
B. They never looped back into any earlier stages of writing
C. They spent nearly all their time on global revision
D. They outlined too much before starting their drafts

A. They looped back at the wrong scale, checking spelling They stopped every few words to check spelling instead of every few paragraphs to check meaning.

3. On the chapter's ten-hour budget, which two stages each get 2.5 hours?

A. Invention and proofreading work
B. Drafting and global revision
C. Reading the task and shaping it
D. Shaping and editing the sentences

B. Drafting and global revision Drafting and global revision are each 25%. Reading and invention are 1.5 hours each; shaping and editing are 1 hour each.

4. You freewrite for ten minutes and keep one sentence. What does the chapter say?

A. The technique failed, so switch to an outline at once
B. That is a normal success; loop from that sentence
C. You should keep at least half of every single freewrite
D. You need to research more before trying it once again

B. That is a normal success; loop from that sentence A freewrite is ore, not metal. Put the live sentence at the top of a new page and freewrite again.

5. Which heuristic asks you to describe, compare, associate, analyze, apply and argue?

A. Looping
B. Clustering
C. The topic ladder
D. Cubing

D. Cubing Cubing, credited to Gregory and Elizabeth Cowan, looks at a subject from six sides to break a single repeated move.

6. Which scratch outline item names a job rather than a subject?

A. Paragraph 3: the statistics from the campus survey
B. Background on the history of the campus pantry
C. Show that the survey counts visits, not unmet need
D. Interviews with students and also with the staff

C. Show that the survey counts visits, not unmet need A job says what the paragraph must accomplish, so you know when it is finished.

7. You know your point, but the paragraph will not move. What is the likely cause?

A. A plan gap: you have no working thesis at all
B. Evaluating every sentence while generating it
C. Not enough time spent on proofreading earlier
D. A content gap: you lack an example or evidence

D. A content gap: you lack an example or evidence When the point is clear but the paragraph is stuck, go get one specific case, number or quotation.

8. Mike Rose's study of blocked writers found that many of them were:

A. Writing too fast and skipping invention entirely
B. Spending too much time on looping and clustering
C. Applying rigid rules from school too strictly
D. Reading too many sources before they started

C. Applying rigid rules from school too strictly Rules like never using "I" became blocks when applied where they did not fit. Unblocked writers treated them as guidelines.

9. In which order should the revision passes run?

A. Global, paragraph, editing, proofreading
B. Proofreading, editing, paragraph, global
C. Editing, global, proofreading, paragraph
D. Paragraph, proofreading, global, editing

A. Global, paragraph, editing, proofreading Do the biggest job first. Polishing a paragraph you later delete wastes the effort.

10. A reverse outline shows your sharpest claim in paragraph 7 of 8. What is the fix?

A. Polish the sentences in paragraph 7 until they shine
B. Promote it to the thesis position and rebuild
C. Delete paragraph 7 since it arrives far too late
D. Add a second thesis sentence at the very end of it

B. Promote it to the thesis position and rebuild The best idea often arrives late. Move it forward and revise the body to serve it.

CHAPTER 4

Thesis, Claim and Purpose

Read it in full: **Chapter 4 in the textbook**. Practice it in the lab: **The Thesis Ladder** and **The Claim Workbench**.

What to know

A **topic** is a territory: it has no edges and cannot be wrong, which is why papers built on topics wander. A **research question** gives direction; it must have more than one credible answer. "Is nurse burnout bad?" is not real. "Why do so many bedside nurses leave within two years of licensure?" is. The **thesis** is your answer, stated as a claim you will defend. Topic, then question, then thesis: territory, direction, destination.

The **reasonable-disagreement test**: could an informed, reasonable person disagree? If not, you wrote a fact, a definition or a platitude. If so, it is a claim. The test has a second edge: a claim so contested that no evidence you can gather in eight pages would move anyone is also a bad thesis. Aim for the middle band, disputable but decidable. A strong thesis is not a bold one; it is a supportable one with a real opponent.

Keep three terms apart. A **claim** is any assertion open to challenge; papers hold dozens. A **thesis** is the single governing claim the essay exists to establish. A **hypothesis** is a testable prediction stated before the data, framed so it could be shown false. In a lab report, being wrong is a legitimate

outcome. In an essay, a thesis your own evidence contradicts is one you revise. When a prompt's vocabulary confuses you, ask what sentence the instructor expects to underline.

The thesis takes its shape from **purpose**. **Informative**: name the controlling idea and the organizing principle (verbs: explain, describe, report, define). **Analytical**: state an interpretation of how or why something works (analyze, examine, interpret, compare). **Argumentative**: take a contested position and signal the grounds (argue, evaluate, defend, propose). **Reflective**: name the insight the experience produced, not the experience. The prompt's verb is a contract. The most common misfire is an informative inventory under an analyze prompt. Many analyze prompts really expect an arguable interpretation.

If a thesis would survive unchanged after you read a completely different article on the same subject, it is not about your source. When purpose drifts, background swells into the body and the argument never gets made. Subordinate background: any section that does not help a skeptical reader accept the thesis is compression material or cut material.

Scope is the most common reason a thesis fails. Narrow on four axes: **population**, **place or institution**, **time** and **aspect**. Two of the four is usually enough; all four can shrink a claim into triviality. Narrow claims are provable but risk mattering little, so find the narrowest claim that still matters.

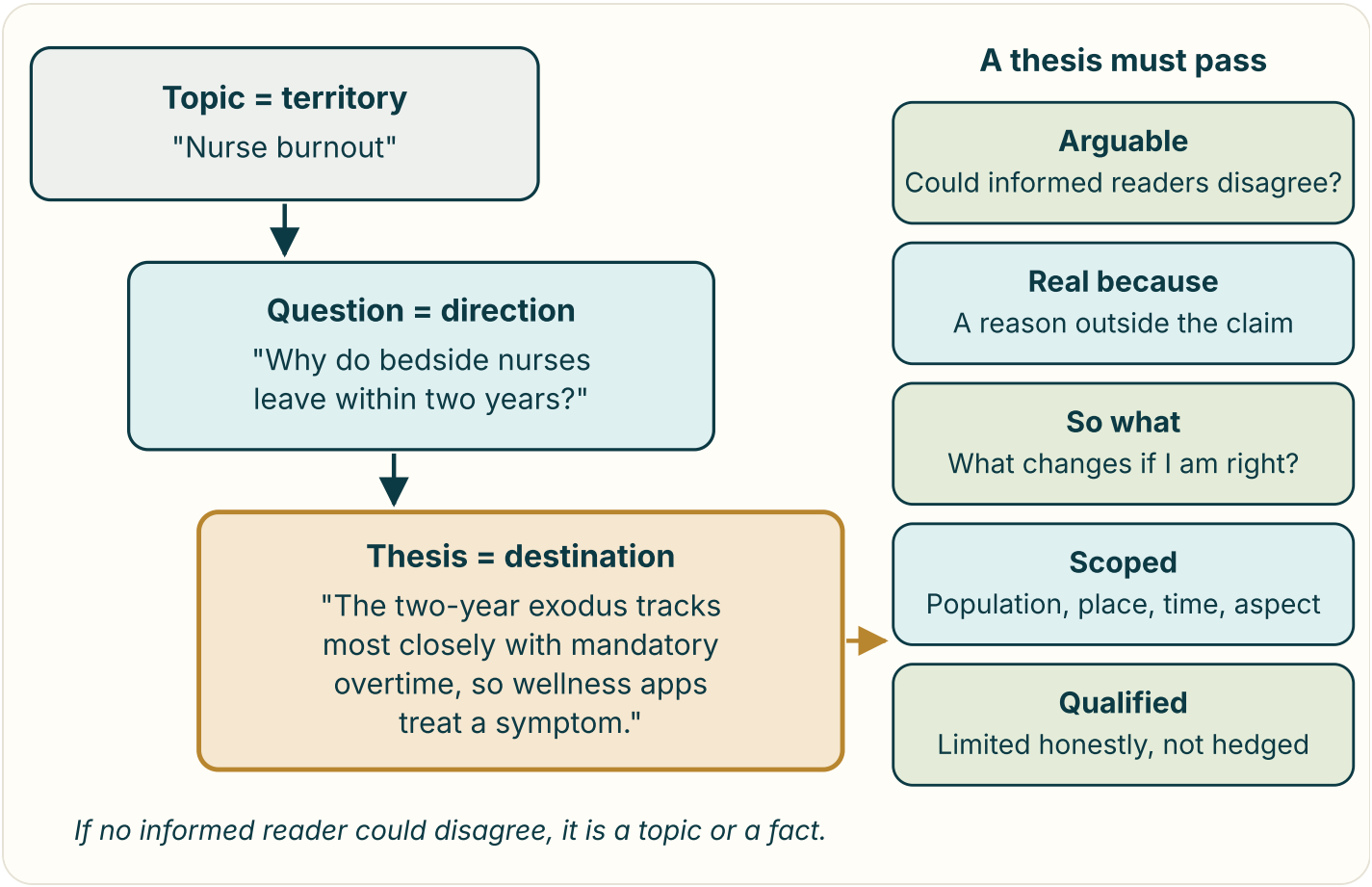
The **because-clause** turns an assertion into an argument and previews the body. Beware the empty because: "it should change because it is outdated" just restates the verdict. A real reason points outside the claim: a mechanism, consequence, piece of evidence or comparison. The **so-what statement** names what changes, and for whom, if you are right. A **qualifier** narrows a claim honestly ("for patients over sixty-five") and is load-bearing. A **hedge** weakens commitment without adding precision and is padding. If deleting the word makes the claim false, keep it.

In American academic writing the default is a thesis at or near the end of the introduction. Critics of the five-paragraph template say this trains students to decide before they think; defenders call it scaffolding. Master the default, then depart on purpose. The **delayed thesis** suits resistant audiences and professional essays but can read as drift in a graded paper. Journalism's **nut graf** is a middle path. Shapes to borrow: concession pivot, correction, causal, evaluative, interpretive,

proposal. Treat the **roadmap thesis** (reasons A, B and C) with suspicion: real arguments have a hierarchy. A thesis must be one idea, not necessarily one sentence. Past about eight pages, use a **thesis paragraph**: situation, complication, claim, payoff.

Six failures recur: the **announcement**, the **fact**, the **both-sides shrug**, the **overreach**, the **vague verdict** and the **list without hierarchy**. Name the failure before rewriting. The seven-test checklist asks whether the thesis is arguable, specific, reasoned, provable, consequential, aligned and delivered. Reverse-outline the finished draft with one claim sentence per paragraph. If your conclusion says something more interesting than your introduction, you found your thesis late: move it forward and make the body earn it.

> **LOCK THESE IN**
>
> - Topic = territory, question = direction, thesis = destination.
> - Reasonable-disagreement test: could an informed reader disagree? Aim for disputable but decidable.
> - Claim (many), thesis (one governing claim), hypothesis (testable prediction before data).
> - Four purposes: informative, analytical, argumentative, reflective. The prompt verb is a contract.
> - Narrow scope on population, place, time and aspect; two axes usually suffice.
> - A real because points outside the claim. The so-what names what changes and for whom.
> - Qualifier = load-bearing; hedge = padding.
> - Six failures: announcement, fact, both-sides shrug, overreach, vague verdict, list without hierarchy.



Territory, direction, destination. A question with competing answers turns a topic into something you can argue. The thesis is your answer, and it has to pass every test on the right.

The four purposes

Purpose	What the thesis must do	Prompt verbs
Informative	Name the controlling idea and organizing principle	explain, describe, report, summarize, define
Analytical	State an interpretation of how or why it works	analyze, examine, account for, interpret, compare
Argumentative	Take a contestable position and signal the grounds	argue, evaluate, defend, propose, assess
Reflective	Name the insight the experience produced	reflect, consider, trace, narrate what you learned

The six thesis failures

Failure	Example	Fix
Announcement	"In this paper I will look at..."	Delete the frame; state the finding
Fact	"Hospitals must report certain infections."	Move it to background; claim something about it
Both-sides shrug	"There are advantages and disadvantages..."	Pick a side; keep nuance as concession
Overreach	"Technology has destroyed human attention."	Narrow population, mechanism and time
Vague verdict	"The article is very effective."	Name the criterion and the mechanism
List without hierarchy	"Caused by staffing, pay, documentation and management."	Subordinate: one cause carries the weight

Thesis shapes (scaffolding, not sentences to submit)

Shape	Template
Concession pivot	Although X, in fact Y, because Z.
Correction	Readers usually assume X; the evidence points instead to Y.
Causal	X happens because of Y, not because of Z.
Evaluative	Measured against criteria A and B, X succeeds or fails.
Interpretive	In [text], A functions as B, which reveals C.
Proposal	Because of problem P, agent should do Q, which produces R.

Worked cases

WORKED CASE 1 · TOPIC TO QUESTION TO WORKING THESIS

Keisha's topic is "campus Wi-Fi." Move it to a research question and a working thesis.

STEP 1 · FIND A REAL QUESTION

"Who loses the most when the residence-hall Wi-Fi slows at night?" Credible people could answer differently: gamers, commuters, students without home internet.

STEP 2 · DRAFT AN ANSWER

"Nighttime slowdowns hurt students who rely on campus internet for coursework."

STEP 3 · RUN THE DISAGREEMENT TEST

Barely arguable. Who would deny it? Push for a distinction.

STEP 4 · FORCE A DISTINCTION AND A REASON

"The 9 p.m. slowdown is less a bandwidth problem than a scheduling problem, because online exams and streaming peak in the same hour, which is why adding capacity has not fixed it."

STEP 5 · CHECK SCOPE

Narrowed on place (residence halls) and time (9 p.m.). **Two axes are enough; the claim is now testable.**

WORKED CASE 2 · REPAIRING AN EMPTY BECAUSE AND ADDING THE STAKES

Draft thesis: "The city's bike-lane rule should change because it is outdated."

STEP 1 · TEST THE BECAUSE

"Outdated" is a verdict, not a reason. Ask "and why is that?"

STEP 2 · POINT OUTSIDE THE CLAIM

The rule lets lanes end at intersections, which is exactly where most bike crashes in the city's report occur. That is a mechanism.

STEP 3 · REWRITE

"The bike-lane rule should change because it lets lanes stop at intersections, the very place most crashes happen."

STEP 4 · ADD THE SO-WHAT

"...so the city is paying for paint that disappears where riders need it most."

STEP 5 · CHECK THE QUALIFIER

If the report covers only downtown, add "downtown." **Deleting that word would make the claim false, so it is a qualifier, not a hedge.**

WORKED CASE 3 · DIAGNOSING AND FIXING THREE FAILED THESES

Name the failure and fix each: (a) "This essay will discuss online classes." (b) "Online classes have pros and cons." (c) "Online learning has ruined education."

STEP 1 · SENTENCE (A)

Announcement. It describes the paper. Fix by stating a finding: "Asynchronous courses trade schedule freedom for the loss of incidental peer contact."

STEP 2 · SENTENCE (B)

Both-sides shrug. Pick a side and keep the nuance as concession: "Although online classes widen access, they cost first-generation students the peer network they cannot replace elsewhere."

STEP 3 · SENTENCE (C)

Overreach. "Ruined" and "education" are undefined and the scope is unprovable. Narrow population, mechanism and time.

STEP 4 · CHECK PURPOSE

If the prompt says *evaluate*, the thesis needs criteria; if it says *analyze*, it needs an interpretation.

STEP 5 · THE LESSON

Name the failure before rewriting. Blind rewriting tends to produce a different flavor of the same error.

TRAPS PEOPLE FALL INTO

- **Treating a topic as a thesis.** A territory cannot be wrong, so it cannot organize an argument.
- **Thinking bold means strong.** A strong thesis is supportable and has a real opponent.
- **Inventorying under an analyze prompt.** "It uses statistics, quotes and stories" lists. Analysis interprets.
- **Narrowing on all four axes at once.** Two axes usually suffice; four can shrink the claim into triviality.
- **Writing an empty because.** "Because it is outdated" restates the claim. Point at a mechanism or consequence.
- **Confusing qualifiers and hedges.** A qualifier narrows honestly. A hedge just weakens commitment.
- **Insisting the thesis be one sentence.** It must be one idea. A concession and a claim can take two sentences.
- **Forcing the draft back to the old thesis.** If the conclusion is sharper, move it to the front.

Chapter 4 self-test · ten items

1. Why is "Nurse burnout is a serious problem" not a thesis?

A. It is far too narrow to fill a whole paper
B. No informed reader would disagree with it
C. It uses a word that most readers cannot define
D. It appears at the very end of the introduction

B. No informed reader would disagree with it It fails the reasonable-disagreement test. It is a shared premise, not a claim to defend.

2. What is the main difference between a thesis and a hypothesis?

A. A thesis must always be stated in a single sentence
B. A hypothesis appears only in the conclusion section
C. A hypothesis is a prediction tested against data
D. A thesis cannot be revised after drafting begins

C. A hypothesis is a prediction tested against data A hypothesis is stated before the data and could be shown false. An essay's thesis is revised if your evidence contradicts it.

3. A prompt says "analyze the author's use of evidence." Which thesis fits?

A. The article uses statistics, quotations and anecdotes
B. The author writes very clearly and supports her claims well
C. Evidence is important in every kind of good writing
D. Her anecdotes cluster where her statistics are thinnest

D. Her anecdotes cluster where her statistics are thinnest An analytical thesis interprets how something works. Listing the evidence types is an inventory.

4. Which prompt verb signals that you must judge against criteria?

A. Summarize
B. Describe
C. Evaluate
D. Narrate

C. Evaluate Evaluate requires judgment against criteria and forbids mere description.

5. What are the four axes for narrowing scope?

A. Thesis, reason, evidence and warrant
B. Population, place, time and aspect
C. Writer, audience, context and purpose
D. Ethos, pathos, logos and also kairos

B. Population, place, time and aspect Narrow on two of the four. All four at once risks a trivial claim.

6. What is wrong with "The rule should change because it is outdated"?

A. The claim is placed too late in the essay
B. The sentence has a qualifier but no hedge
C. The because-clause restates the verdict
D. The thesis is much too narrow to defend

C. The because-clause restates the verdict "Outdated" is another judgment, not a reason. A real reason points to a mechanism, consequence or comparison.

7. Which phrase is a qualifier rather than a hedge?

A. It could perhaps be argued that
B. For patients over sixty-five
C. In my own personal opinion
D. It might possibly seem that

B. For patients over sixty-five A qualifier limits the claim and stays precise. The others weaken commitment without adding information.

8. When is a delayed thesis a reasonable choice?

A. Whenever the whole paper is shorter than three pages in total
B. Whenever the prompt asks for a summary of a single article
C. Whenever the writer is unsure what the thesis should say
D. When the reader is resistant and must feel the problem first

D. When the reader is resistant and must feel the problem first Delay suits resistant audiences and professional essays. In a graded paper it reads as drift unless tightly controlled.

9. "There are advantages and disadvantages to twelve-hour shifts" is which failure?

A. The both-sides shrug
B. The announcement frame
C. The overreaching claim
D. The list without hierarchy

A. The both-sides shrug It takes no position. Pick a side and keep the nuance as concession.

10. Why do experienced instructors distrust the three-part roadmap thesis?

A. It treats reasons as equal when one usually carries the weight
B. It places the main claim much too early in the introduction
C. It requires far more evidence than a short paper can hold
D. It cannot be used in any kind of argumentative college writing

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A. It treats reasons as equal when one usually carries the weight It is fine scaffolding, but finished arguments promote the load-bearing reason and subordinate the rest.

ONE PAGE

Cram sheet

Everything from chapters 3 and 4 in one place. Cover the right column and see if you can rebuild each row.

Names and findings

Who	What they found or argued	Why it matters
Flower and Hayes	Writers plan, translate and review, re-entering constantly	The process is recursive
Sondra Perl (1979)	Unskilled writers loop to check spelling, not meaning	Loop at the right scale
Nancy Sommers (1980)	Students change words; experienced writers change structure	If nothing moved, you edited
Peter Elbow (1973)	Freewriting; early outlines can freeze ideas	Generate before you judge
Ronald Kellogg	Outlining before drafting improved quality	Invent first, outline second, hold it loosely
Mike Rose (1980)	Blocked writers obey rigid rules	Name the rule; break it once
Graham Wallas (1926)	Preparation, incubation, illumination, verification	Schedule time away
Anne Lamott	Every writer produces bad first drafts	Your inner critic is early, not wrong

The ten-hour budget (1,500 words, two weeks)

Stage	Share	Hours
Reading the task and sources	15%	1.5
Invention	15%	1.5
Shaping	10%	1
Drafting	25%	2.5
Incubation	none	overnight, 12 h or more
Global revision	25%	2.5
Editing and proofreading	10%	1

Tests and checklists

Test	Ask	Failing looks like
So-what (outline)	"This matters because..."	The paragraph is decoration
Order	Read the jobs backwards	A term used before it is defined
Nutshell	One spoken sentence	Needs four sentences: two essays at once
Arguable	Could an informed reader disagree?	Everyone nods
Specific	Would it fit a different paper?	Interchangeable phrasing
Reasoned	Can I finish with a real because?	The because restates the claim
Provable	Can I get the evidence in this many pages?	Needs a literature review you will not do
Consequential	What changes if I am right?	"People would know more"
Aligned	Does it match the prompt verb and genre?	Descriptive thesis under analyze
Delivered	Does every section serve it?	Sections you cannot connect in one line

Rules that are not formulas

Topic	The rule
Stall diagnosis	Same sentence again = judging while generating; stuck with a known point = content gap; anywhere-paragraphs = plan gap; dread = rigid rule.
Zero draft	Write fast, bracket gaps with [CITE], never reread from the top.
Thesis paragraph	Situation, complication, claim, payoff (papers past about eight pages).
Placement	Default: end of the introduction. Delay on purpose, with a reason.
Late thesis	If the conclusion is sharper than the introduction, move it forward.

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