Preparation
- Understand your assignment and set a schedule
- Select a topic: narrow down or expand if necessary
- Do background research
- Start assembling resources
- Evaluate the quality of your resources

Organizing
- Organize your thoughts using prewriting (mapping, brainstorming, freewriting)
- Map out your argument, create a thesis statement
- Create an outline
- Develop a plan for your writing

Drafting
- Start creating your first draft: stick to your writing plan and proceed in a logical order.
- Be sure to create your citations and references
- Focus on grammar, tone, and clarity.
- Remember to master shorter sentences first, then worry about longer ones.

Reviewing
- Proofread your draft: print out a copy to get a fresh view. Read it aloud to yourself.
- Submit to Smarthinking.
- Make sure you stayed on topic throughout the paper.
- Gather additional resources if necessary.
- Repeat drafting and reviewing as necessary.

Final Revising
- Create a final draft: make sure APA style is correct from cover page to references.
- Check for minor errors in spelling, formatting, or citations.
- Have a friend, librarian, or tutor look over your final draft.
- Make final changes and submit.