

Ten Tips to WPE Success

(Adapted from John Edlund, Cal Poly Pomona)

When the proctor says you can start, do the following:

1. Relax. You can do it.
2. Read the topic quickly. Look for a specific instruction about what to do. If the questions that are designed to help you think about the topic confuse you, ignore them.
3. Make the topic your own. Write about some aspect of the topic that you know well or that interests you—but make sure that you stay on topic.
4. Take three to five minutes (no longer) to do some brainstorming, list making, clustering, or rough outlining.
5. Plan to write only a single draft. There is no time to recopy. Feel free to cross out errors. Use circles and arrows to make changes and to insert or rearrange things. Don't use white out.
6. Your introduction should probably have a thesis statement, some context for the issue or problem (Why is this important now?), and some ideas for supporting the thesis. The thesis can be qualified using "although"; for example, "Although many people enjoy educational programs on television, I think that programs with lots of car chases, explosions and shootouts are best because they get out your aggressions and reduce stress."
7. You can write a five-paragraph essay, but you don't have to.
8. If you run out of time, try one of these emergency conclusions:
 - a. Write "For all of the above reasons," and then restate your thesis.
 - b. If you don't have time, simply don't write a conclusion; just make sure the ideas in support of your argument are clear and convincing.
 - c. Write "Sorry, ran out of time."
9. Save a few minutes at the end to proofread your essay for your most common mistakes.
10. If you don't pass, come to the Writing Center and make an appointment to see a WPE consultant.