



## Drafting the Proposal

### Tips for SURF Application Writers

**Reflect on your own writing process.** What are your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to writing? Maybe you struggle more with moving from an idea to a draft, or maybe you need more help narrowing your ideas or organizing a draft. Being aware of your writing self is important, especially when you work on high stakes documents.

### Read the instructions CAREFULLY!

- **Create a checklist.** What do you need to do to complete the process of applying for a SURF? Visit the SURF website and make a list of all the steps involved.
- Pay attention to **key words** in the SURF guidelines. Print out the instructions and use a highlighter to help you see the special words that give you hints about what the reviewers want you to do.
- Get a picture of your **audience**—who will be reviewing your proposal? What kinds of proposals do they want to see? What might an ideal proposal look like?
- Open your calendar and **make a plan to get started.** Include deadlines for developing a draft, getting feedback, and formatting the document according to SURF guidelines.
- If procrastination plagues you, check out these Writing Center handouts on these topics for help: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/index.html>

### Get Started

- **Use the prompt as an idea generator**—turn each item into a question: “What do I hope to discover?” or “What is puzzling about this situation that interests me?” “Why do I care about this project?” “How will I accomplish my research?”
- Try a few techniques from the Writing Center’s brainstorming handout <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/brainstorming.html>. You might continue this process with a SURF peer advisor if/when you get stuck.

### Turn your Brainstorm into a Draft

- **Begin to build your draft**—start writing wherever it seems easiest and build from there. You don’t have to begin at the beginning.

- **Work hard** until you reach an impasse, then set your draft aside to come back to another time
- **Revise at least once** before seeking outside help
- **Read your draft out loud.** You will be amazed how this technique can help you edit and improve your draft.



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