

DEVELOPING A FIRST DRAFT (from research question)

1. Now that you've done most of your reading for your paper, go back to your original research question--write it down in the space below:

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Now answer it--using your readings and your own values, opinions, attitudes--in one sentence which will be the focus or thesis for your paper; write it below. It helps most people if they break their focus into the subject (what was previously the question) and a point of significance (the so what).

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2. Audience Guide. Answer the following questions briefly.

- a. describe the audience in terms of demographics (e.g. background, age, gender, educational background)
- b. how much does my audience know about this subject?
- c. what are my audience's values--overall and regarding this subject?
- d. how do you imagine your audience being affected by what you have to say?

3. Drawing up an organizational plan (NOT an outline) helps many people write more quickly. You can choose a mode or you can simply follow your focus.

Modes refer to organizational patterns; the most common is descriptive which goes from whole to parts. A narrative follows some chronology or process; an evaluative paper articulates criteria and then defends them. Here's an example:

Question: What is Isaac Bashevis Singer saying about the Jews after the Holocaust in NYC (in *Shadows on the Hudson*)?

Focus: In *Shadows on the Hudson*, Isaac Bashevis Singer is saying that the Jews after the Holocaust experienced impossible moral tension as a result of knowing obliquely their religious heritage and not being able to live it out because of a lack of faith often due to the Holocaust.

The isolation of the Jew was made impossible once they left their heritage, yet that was their identity, according to Singer.

Possible Organizational Plan:

impossible moral tension - - - - -lack of faith/Holocaust
each character suffers it - - - - - because of these
plot advances moral tension - - - - -showing remnants of beliefs
animation of objects - - - - -shows potential for faith
the city itself brings up moral tension - - - in its freedoms of lifestyle

Adapted from Cleveland State University's "Writing Across the Curriculum" site at <http://www.csuohio.edu/writingcenter/WAC/FOCAUDO.htm>