

# FOCUS

Focus is the key to relevant, good writing. It means that all parts of a work stay on topic, and revolve around one main point or idea—the thesis. This helps writing maintain a direction and purpose. The benefit is that when a piece of writing is focused, it directly and logically conveys a clear message to the reader.

*Focus:* concentrates on one main point, with direction and purpose

## CREATING FOCUS

### PREPARATION

Preparation is the key to focusing later. *Before* you start writing, know your topic, have a thesis, and get your research done. This will help you determine exactly what you intend to say and why. If you prefer, create a detailed or general outline—whatever you need to get the job done right.

- Know your topic
- Have a thesis
- Get your research done
- Make an outline

### WRITING

When you get to the actual writing—*focus*. It's as simple as that. Make sure everything you say relates back to your main point or thesis. Don't go on tangents. Everything *must* have a purpose for being said, and that purpose *must* be the thesis. Topic sentences work wonders for this. That's the way to focused, relevant writing. Use a topic sentence at the beginning of each paragraph to introduce a sub-topic which helps evidence the thesis. Make sure your topic sentence incorporates the thesis. Then, make sure your paragraph only expresses what the topic sentence introduced.

- Relate everything back to your thesis
- Use topic sentences

### REVISION

When you're done getting it all down on paper, do a run-through to make sure that everything is relevant and coherent. Don't be afraid to take out bits that don't fit. Don't be afraid to rework it. In fact, threaten everything you wrote with deletion. Refer to the "Revision" handout for detailed strategies. This will help bring it all together.

- Cross-check everything for relevancy
- Don't be afraid to delete or rework