

A brief outline of some major differences between novice and expert writers

Stage	Novice	Expert
Pre-writing (Reading, Note-taking, & Planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a “gist & list” (Flower et.al., 1990) approach to note-taking and a “knowledge-telling” approach (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993). They list or summarize information from sources and produce less-elaborate or abstract sets of writing notes • Do little thinking in advance • Less time spent on this planning stage • Often can’t distinguish between ideas that are important to their topic and which are unimportant because they are new to academic writing and their field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a more intentional “knowledge transforming” (Flower) model, where they set goals, engage in progressive problem-solving, and enter a dialogue with the texts they read • Read to uncover an underlying thread or to find a controlling concept that will govern the selection of information • Have a knowledge of their discipline and its rhetoric and readily available schemas that help provide mental frameworks to organize their responses to the texts they read • Planning and generating responses is easier because they can easily access those schemas. Thus they are able to concentrate more on planning, content, and rhetorical stances • Spend much more time on the planning stage.
Drafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t think about the audience or the rhetorical purpose for their writing • Concern is to generate content at this stage and much less time is spent considering goals, plans, and problems posed by the writing • Focus on mechanical elements. Because they are also grappling with lower-level concerns (such as grammar, word choice, etc.), this takes up a larger amount of their mental focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very aware of audience • Able to sustain higher “cognitive loads” because they can make many simultaneous rhetorical decisions during the composing process. [The role of working memory means that any cognitive process that isn’t automatic has to be retrieved from our long-term memory by our working memory before being used to solve problems. (Hayes, 1999).]
Revising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in only superficial revision after writing – revisions usually only consist of corrections of mechanical errors, shifting order of paragraphs, but not re-organizing or changing content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend considerably more time revising • Pay much more attention to global problems, and often completely recast their text when revising.