

Essentials for writing a paper:

The UMASS Junior Year writing program was one of the first in the country to use the “writing across the curriculum” approach. Our Writing Program strongly recommends that for any paper there be peer sharing, peer editing and multiple drafts. Just as with faculty writing, students should be taught they must have peers edit and write at least three drafts before a final paper. Building these techniques into your assignments will teach students to learn scholarly writing techniques.

1. **Peer sharing** - first there is peer sharing where students read aloud to each other or trade papers. This process helps students clarify their thinking and develops a sense of audience. This is helpful for early drafts.
2. **Peer editing** - reserved for later drafts, can be done in class or outside of class. The faculty creates a guideline to follow, where students note strengths and weakness of the writing and suggest improvements. There may be questions for each peer editor like: 1) What is the main point? 2) What is strong about the writing? 3) What needs clarification? 4) Where are transitions needed? 5) What are your thoughts on the topic? When students hand in a paper after a peer edit it is helpful to have a cover letter accompany the paper so the author can point out at least two to three changes they have made in response to their peer’s suggestions.
3. **Multiple drafts** – more than one draft should be submitted to the instructor. A cover letter may accompany the final draft addressing suggestions the faculty previously made.

These approaches only make sense considering the number of peer edits and drafts one goes through to publish a paper. The junior year writing program and the writing center has very helpful suggestions for student writing, take a look:

www.writprogram/writcenter/links.htm