

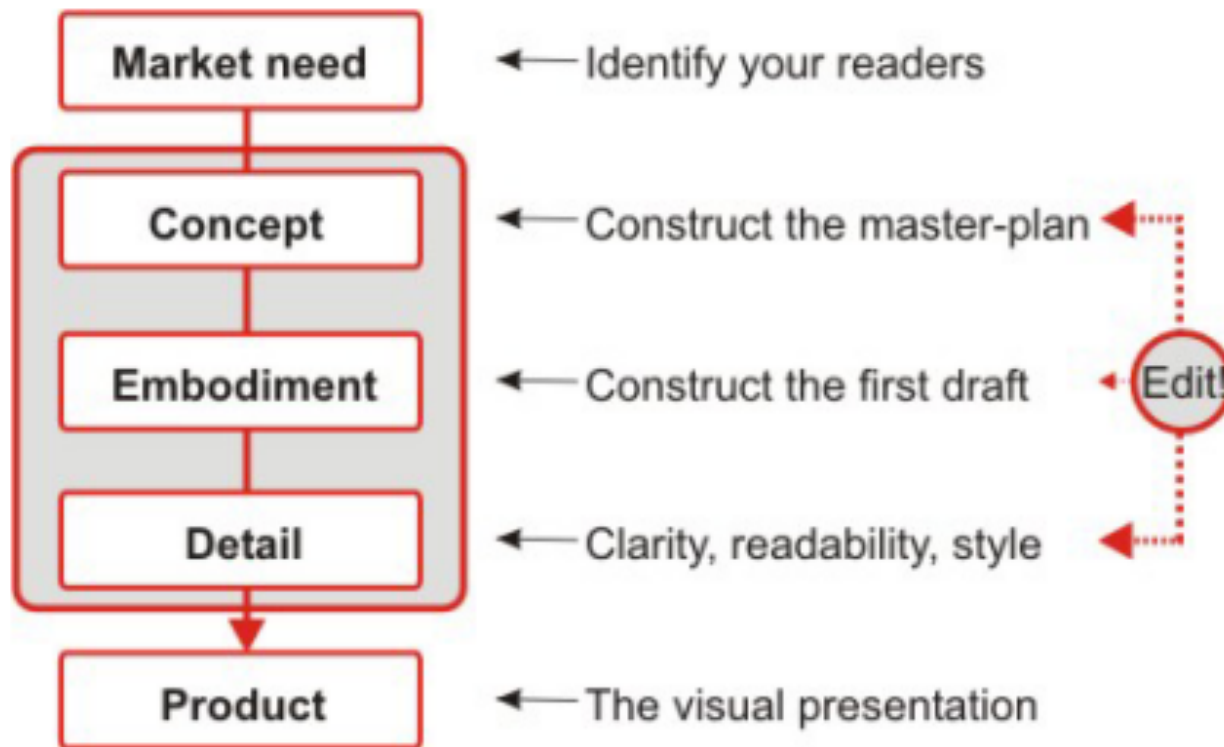
# How to Write a Paper (for this class)

(modified from Prof. Melissa Mazmanian's slides which where  
modified from Prof. Bill Tomlinson's slides)

Why is it important to  
be able to write?

# The Structured Essay

- Thesis
- Background
- Support
- References



Source: <http://www-mech.eng.cam.ac.uk/mmd/ashby-paper-V6.pdf>

# Core Ingredients: Thesis

- The take-home message

# Core Ingredients: Background

- Contextual information

# Core Ingredients: Support

- Data/Citation/Quotation
- Reference other work.
- Give credit where credit is due.

# Core Ingredients: Explanation

- How does the citation support your thesis, in the context of the background info?

# Example:

## The Five Paragraph Essay

- Statement of problem/question. Point one. Point two. Point three. Thesis statement.
- Reiterate point one. Point one background. Point one support. Point one explanation.
- Reiterate point two. Point two background. Point two support. Point two explanation.
- Reiterate point three. Point three background. Point three support. Point three explanation.
- Reiterate thesis. How points one, two and three confirm thesis. Why thesis is relevant to a broader context.
- References

3000 words = 30 paragraphs

- How are you going to use them?

# Defend Against Counter-Arguments

- Consider most likely opposing points and refute them.

# Citations & References

- The value of citations?
- Consistent formatting
- Preferred style: ACM
  - [http://www.library.dal.ca/subjects/csci\\_ref.htm](http://www.library.dal.ca/subjects/csci_ref.htm)

# Technicalities

- Fonts and Margins – see the syllabus
- Short, Declarative Sentences
  - Not too flowery.
  - Be careful with adverbs (“ly” words such as “slightly”, “partially”, “particularly”)
- “This”
  - Don’t use it without a noun following it.
- No passive voice
  - Unless you intentionally want to obscure the subject.

# Elements to Avoid

- Unnecessary hedges - “weasel words”
- Personal attacks
- Padding
- Virtuosity (simpler is often better)

# Tricks of the Trade

- Outline
  - Most important points first
- Emphasize thesis throughout
- Read through it once you're done

# Know your Audience

- Make it easy for us to read your paper and understand its key points.