There are three basic patterns of collaboration:

- collaboration based on job specialty
- collaboration based on the stages of the writing process
- collaboration based on the section of the document
Collaboration has five advantages:

• It draws on a greater knowledge base.
• It draws on a greater skills base.
• It provides a better idea of how the audience will read the document.
• It improves communication among employees.
• It helps acclimate new employees to an organization.
Collaboration has six disadvantages:

- It takes more time than individual writing.
- It can lead to groupthink.
- It can yield a disjointed document.
- It can lead to inequitable workloads.
- It can reduce collaborators’ motivation to work hard on the document.
- It can lead to interpersonal conflict.
Follow these seven suggestions in managing your projects:

- Break down a large project into several smaller tasks.
- Plan your project.
- Create and maintain an accurate schedule.
- Put your decisions in writing.
- Monitor the project.
- Distribute and act on information quickly.
- Be flexible regarding schedule and responsibilities.
Conducting meetings involves five skills:

- listening effectively
- setting your group’s agenda
- conducting efficient face-to-face meetings
- communicating diplomatically
- critiquing a group member's work
There are five steps to improving your effectiveness as a listener:

• Pay attention to the speaker.
• Listen for main ideas.
• Don’t get emotionally involved.
• Ask questions to clarify what the speaker said.
• Provide appropriate feedback.
There are eight steps in setting your agenda:

- Define the group’s task.
- Choose a group leader.
- Define tasks for each group member.
- Establish working procedures.
- Establish a procedure for resolving conflict productively.
- Create a style sheet.
- Establish a work schedule.
- Create evaluation materials.
There are seven skills in communicating diplomatically

- Listen carefully, without interrupting.
- Give everyone a chance to speak.
- Avoid personal remarks and insults.
- Don’t overstate your position.
- Don’t get emotionally attached to your own ideas.
- Ask pertinent questions.
- Pay attention to nonverbal communication.
Critiquing a group member’s work involves three steps:

• Start with a positive comment.
• Discuss the larger issues first.
• Talk about the document, not the writer.
Critique a draft clearly and diplomatically

[insert Interactive Sample Document: Critiquing a Draft Clearly and Diplomatically, p. 70—image, and questions only]
Three powerful word-processor features can be useful in collaborative work:

- the comment feature
- the revision feature
- the highlighting feature
Electronic media are useful collaborative tools for two reasons:

- Face-to-face meetings are not always possible or convenient.
- Electronic communication is digital.
Groupware allows team members to perform six important collaborative activities:

- share files
- carry out asynchronous discussions
- carry out synchronous discussions
- comment on documents
- distribute announcements
- create automated change notifications
Communicating electronically may call for:

- using the comment, revision, and highlighting features on a word processor
- using e-mail to send files
- using groupware
Follow these six suggestions for conducting effective videoconferences:

• Practice using videoconferencing technology.
• Arrange for a person who is experienced with the videoconferencing software to be at each site.
• Organize the room to encourage participation.
• Make eye contact with the camera.
• Dress as you would for a face-to-face meeting.
• Minimize distracting noises and movements.
When collaborating across cultures, consider that people from other cultures:

• might find it difficult to assert themselves in collaborative groups
• might be unwilling to respond with a definite “no”
• might be reluctant to admit when they are confused or to ask for clarification
• might avoid criticizing others
• might avoid initiating new tasks or performing creatively