



A Walk Through the Writing Process—Introduction

Writing, in one form or another, is an essential component of your daily life. Whatever your final product, the writing process—a systematic approach to writing—can help you achieve it. From prewriting to publishing and presenting, being familiar with and using the stages of the writing process will help you.

For the Teacher, this lesson serves as a guided tour of the stages of the writing process.

For the Student, use this lesson to familiarize yourself with the activities of writing, learn new strategies, look at the way other effective writers employ them, and try them out yourself. In the lessons that follow, you'll see how to apply these and other strategies to specific types of writing.

The following materials are included in this lesson "A Walk Through the Writing Process."

A Walk Through the Writing Process	Power Point Presentation
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A Walk Through the Writing Process—Definitions

Types of Writing

- ◆ Reflexive (writing you do for yourself)
 - Journal entry
 - Personal essay
 - Lists
- ◆ Extensive (writing you do for others)
 - Research papers
 - Persuasive essays
 - Reviews

Modes of Writing

- ◆ Narration
- ◆ Description
- ◆ Persuasion
- ◆ Exposition
- ◆ Research
- ◆ Response to Literature
- ◆ Assessment
- ◆ Workplace

The Process of Writing

- ◆ Prewriting
 - Exploring topics, choosing a topic, gathering and organizing details
- ◆ Drafting
 - Getting ideas down on paper in rough format
- ◆ Revising
 - Reworking first draft to improve content and structure
- ◆ Editing and proofreading
 - Correcting errors in grammar, spelling, and mechanics
- ◆ Publishing and presenting
 - Sharing your work with others





A Walk Through the Writing Process—Prewriting

Most writers feel challenged when faced with a blank sheet of paper. Writers may grapple with what topic to write about or they may wonder just how much they have to say about a subject. The prewriting stage helps to get a writer's creative juices flowing. Just as musicians prepare for a performance by practicing, you can warm up to write with your own set of prewriting strategies and techniques.

Choosing Your Topic

- ◆ Write about what you know or
- ◆ Write about what interests you
- ◆ Take time to explore subjects, issues, and experiences that are meaningful to you
- ◆ Use a wide variety of strategies to generate topics
- ◆ Sample Strategy: Blueprinting
 - Draw a map of a place you know well
 - Fill in the room plan with symbols for objects in room
 - Think about significant events the room calls to mind; list
 - Select topic to develop from list

Narrowing Your Topic

- ◆ Make sure it is not so general that you can't cover it thoroughly in a short piece of writing
- ◆ Focus on a single subtopic or aspect of it
 - Sample Strategy: Looping to Narrow a Topic
 - Free write on a general topic for 5 minutes
 - Review what you've written
 - Circle the most important or significant word
 - Free write based on that word for 5 more minutes
 - Again, circle the most important word
 - Again, freewrite about that word for 5 minutes
 - Continue looping until you are satisfied that your topic is narrow enough

Considering Your Audience

- ◆ Audience = the person or people who will read your work
 - Consider age, interests, level of knowledge of topic
 - Use appropriate language
- ◆ Sample Strategy: Create audience profile
 - What does my audience already know?
 - What do they need to know?
 - What details will interest or influence the audience?





A Walk Through the Writing Process—Prewriting

Considering Your Audience

- ◆ Purpose = what you want your writing to accomplish
 - Identify what you hope to accomplish
 - Keep your purpose in mind as you decide what details to include, which to leave out, and what type of language to use

Gathering Details

- ◆ Back up the points you make with examples, facts, details
 - Take time to do this before writing
- ◆ Conduct research
 - Library
 - Internet
 - Experts
- ◆ Sample Strategy: Using a Hexagonal
 - Create a 6-sided chart (plot, personal allusion, theme, analysis, literary allusion, evaluation)
- ◆ Sample Strategy: Generate Sensory Word Bins
 - Sight, sound, smell, taste, touch/physical sensations
- ◆ Sample Strategy: Group Related Information
 - Gather details, sort into related groups, word/phrase that names or describes each group

Applying the Prewriting Strategies

1. Construct a blueprint of a special place. Consider your neighborhood or your first school. Then use your blueprint to identify potential writing topics
2. Use looping to narrow a topic generated by your blueprint
3. Identify two different audiences, and devise corresponding audience profiles for an account of a memorable vacation
4. Complete a Hexagonal for a short story or novel you have recently read
5. Generate a list of ideas about the topic "leisure." Then identify three subcategories and group related information





A Walk Through the Writing Process—Drafting

Shaping Your Writing

- ◆ Choose a Form
 - Purpose = influence others :: persuasive essay, editorial, or review
 - Purpose = express or reflect :: journal entry, letter, or poem
 - Purpose = inform or explain :: report, narrative, set of instructions, description
- ◆ Pull Readers in with an Enticing Lead
 - Conversational quote
 - Little-known fact
 - Bizarre bit of dialogue
 - Striking description
 - Unexpected combination of ideas or details

Providing Elaboration

- ◆ Elaborate on main ideas
 - Provide extensive facts, examples, statistics, other details
- ◆ Sample Strategy: the SEE method
 - Statement, Extension, Elaboration
 - Begin each paragraph with a statement that conveys the main idea
 - Extend that idea by restating or explaining the first sentence
 - Elaborate on your explanation or restatement by providing supporting examples, facts, and details

Applying the Drafting Strategies

- ◆ Write a humorous or startling lead sentence for a description of a basketball game
- ◆ Complete the following statements. Then, use the SEE technique to elaborate your ideas.
 - My favorite actor is _____?
 - I'd like to travel to _____?





A Walk Through the Writing Process—Revising

- ◆ Use a Systematic Approach to Revision
 - Revision is probably the most important stage of the writing process
 - Ratiocination = use of a logical step-by-step process to color-code, analyze, evaluate, and rework your writing
 - Evaluate the entire structure of your work
 - Look at paragraphs, sentences, and words
 - Highlight and color-code problem areas

Revising Your Overall Structure

- ◆ Check to see that your organization makes sense and that it is consistent. You may need to reorganize parts of your paper
- ◆ Make sure that your introduction will grab your readers' interest and that your conclusion will leave a lasting impression.
- ◆ Determine whether you have provided enough support for your main idea.
- ◆ Sample Strategy: Color Coding Support for your Main Point
 - Use red pencil to underline sentences that convey main point of paper
 - Use blue pencil to underline the support for this main point
 - Result should be primarily blue. If not,
 - Add more facts, details, or examples to strengthen your writing
 - Consider whether passages not underlined are necessary

Revising Your Paragraphs

- ◆ Check to see that each paragraph focuses on a single aspect of your topic
- ◆ Check to see that all of the sentences within a paragraph relate to one another
- ◆ Eliminate any sentences that are not clearly related to the others
- ◆ Look for places where transitions can link the ideas within a paragraph
- ◆ Sample Strategy: Using STEPS and STACKS
 - **STEPS:** When a paragraph presents a series of events or explains a series of steps, check to see that you have used transitions to make the sequence clear to readers. If not, add words such as *first*, *then*, and *finally*.
 - **STACKS:** When a paragraph presents a series of related ideas, add transitions such as *in addition* and *as well as*. If certain ideas are more important than others, make sure that you have indicated this with transitions such as *most important*.
- ◆ Revision Strategy: Using CHAINS and BALANCES
 - **CHAINS:** When a paragraph explains a cause-and-effect relationship, add transitions such as *consequently* and *as a result* to clarify the relationships among your details.





A Walk Through the Writing Process—Revising

- **BALANCES:** When the paragraph shows contrast or choice, add words such as *similarly*, *however*, *although*, and *rather*.

Revising Your Sentences

- ◆ Study your sentences.
- ◆ Check to see that you have varied their length and structure.
- ◆ Using too many sentences of the same types can make your writing sound choppy
- ◆ Sample Strategy: Brackets Sentence Openings
 - Use a colored pen to bracket the first three words of each sentence.
 - Review your paper, focusing only on the bracketed words.
 - If you have begun most of your sentences in the same way, rework some of them to produce greater variety

Revising Your Word Choice

- ◆ Analyze the words you have used.
- ◆ Look for places where you can replace vague or general words with ones that more precisely convey your meaning.
- ◆ Check to see whether you have overused certain words.
- ◆ Sample Strategy: Highlighting Repeated Words
 - Use a highlighter to mark any words you have used more than once.
 - Review the words that you have marked.
 - Consider replacing some to make your writing more lively.

Peer Revision

- ◆ Once you've finished revising on your own, enlist the help of classmates
- ◆ Often, others can see problems that are hard for the writer to identify.
- ◆ Specific feedback that is helpful:
 - Evaluate the introduction; ask what part was most interesting
 - Test the arguments; ask which reason was most convincing, which point was least compelling.

Applying the Revision Strategies

- ◆ Reread the first essay you wrote for a class.
- ◆ Use the revision strategies presented here to make improvements in this piece.
- ◆ Identify four changes the strategies helped you make and write about them





A Walk Through the Writing Process—Editing and Proofreading, Publishing and Presenting

Editing and Proofreading

- ◆ Once you have finished revising for content, proofread your work carefully to find and eliminate errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling.
- ◆ These types of errors will distract readers and may cause them to respond negatively to your work—even if the content is excellent.
- ◆ Get in the habit of reading your draft several times. Each time, focus on a specific proofreading topic:
 - ◆ **SPELLING:** The spell-check function of a word-processing program is never fully dependable. Refer to a dictionary to check the spelling of questionable words
 - ◆ **GRAMMAR, ETC:** Examine each sentence, and correct capitalization and punctuation. Check your grammar and usage, and eliminate problematic language or grammatical structures.
 - ◆ **RUN-ON SENTENCES:** If two main clauses are not adequately separated by punctuation, you have a run-on. You can either break it into two simple sentences or rewrite it as a compound sentence.

Publishing and Presenting

- ◆ Building your Portfolio
 - ◆ Your finished writing products are valuable, so be sure to organize and save them in the folder or notebook.
 - ◆ View your portfolio as a record of your development as a writer.
 - ◆ Occasionally, you may return to it to compare your latest writing with something you wrote awhile ago.
 - ◆ Use your portfolio as a repository for future writing ideas, including unfinished writing and thought-provoking photographs or clippings
- ◆ Reflecting on Your Writing
 - ◆ Each piece of completed writing affects your perceptions about yourself, your topic, and your writing process.
 - ◆ Questions posed about a selection can help you reflect on what you have learned with each successive piece
- ◆ Assessing Your Writing
 - ◆ A rubric, or set of criteria, on which your work can be evaluated is offered here.
 - ◆ To ensure that you are addressing the main points of the particular mode, refer to the rubric throughout the writing process.





A Walk Through the Writing Process—Rubric for Self-Assessment

Name _____ Date _____

Title _____ Total Score _____

	Score 4	Score 3	Score 2	Score 1	Your Score
Audience & Purpose	Contains details that engage the audience	Contains details appropriate for an audience	Contains few details that appeal to an audience	Is not written for a specific audience	
Organization	Presents events that create an interesting narrative; told from a consistent point of view	Presents a clear sequence of events; told from a specific point of view	Presents a confusing sequence of events; contains a point of view that inconsistent	Presents no logical order; is told from no consistent point of view	
Elaboration	Contains details that create vivid characters; contains dialogue that develops characters and plot	Contains details that develop character and describe setting; contains dialogue	Contains characters and setting; contains some dialogue	Contains few or no details to develop characters or setting; no dialogue provided	
Use of Language	Use of language creates a tone; contains no errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling	Uses vivid words; contains few errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling	Uses clichés and trite expressions; contains some errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling	Uses uninspired words; has many errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling	





Essay Checklist and Scoring Rubric

Writing Process Progress Chart

Name _____

Essay Type _____

Date due _____

Essay Title _____

Writing Task	Date completed
Prewriting: Choose your topic (brainstorm for ideas)	
Narrow your topic	
Create a full thesis	
Evaluate your topic	
Develop and audience profile	
Create a purpose planner	
Gather details	
Drafting: Shape your writing	
Provide elaboration	
Revising: Revise your overall structure	
Revise your paragraphs	
Revise your sentences	
Revise your word choice	
Peer Review	
Editing and Proofreading: Correct errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar	
Publishing and Presenting: Build your portfolio	
Reflect on your writing	
Complete self-assessment rubric	

