

The Writing Process

Writing, like any other skill, takes practice; however, there is a process which makes writing easier and, hopefully, better.

Step 1—Prewriting:

The first stage or step of the process is called *prewriting*. In this step, the writer explores ideas in order to select a topic, determines a purpose and focus or point relating to that topic, identifies the audience and gathers information about the topic. Prewriting can take many forms, such as:

- Brainstorming
- Mapping
- Researching
- Outlining
- Asking questions

The more attention a writer pays to prewriting, the less trouble he/she will have during the writing or drafting stage.

Step 2—Drafting:

The drafting stage is when you put your ideas on paper and develop them. Since a topic and focus were decided on in the prewriting stage and information was gathered, drafting becomes simply a matter of writing that information in a clear, interesting format.

Step 3—Revising:

Once the first draft is written, set it aside for awhile. When you return to your paper, you will need to think about making it better, or *revising* it.

First, revise for content by asking yourself:

- Does my writing have a clear thesis?
- Have I included adequate detail to make my point?
- Is there any unnecessary, unrelated or confusing information in my writing?

If you are not satisfied with the answers to these questions, you have work to do. You may need to clarify your thesis, find more or stronger details to support your point, and/or delete inappropriate or confusing ideas.

Next, revise for structure by asking yourself:

- Is the writing clear?
- Is the flow of sentences and ideas smooth and logical?
- Do I have adequate transitional words, phrases or sentences to help the reader see the relationships between ideas?
- Do I have adequate sentence variety to make the writing interesting?
- Is my word choice precise and appropriate for the purpose and audience?

If you spot problems with any of these areas, this is the time to fix them.