

Steps in the Writing Process



1. *PREWRITE*—explore the topic and plan your writing; also known as *brainstorming* (“THINK”)

Prewriting is any kind of activity that helps you determine what you will write about. Many things qualify as prewriting activities. Some of the most common are:

- Making lists
- Brainstorming
- Making webs, charts, clustering, or using graphic organizers
- Outlining
- Drawing
- Discussing the subject
- Free writing, journal writing
- Note taking
- Researching
- Interviewing

The purpose of the prewriting stage is to allow you to explore the topic thoroughly in an informal, relaxed, unstructured way before starting a formal composition. Prewriting is a prerequisite for good writing. Don’t skip this step or cut it short.

2. *DRAFT*—put it down on paper. (“WRITE”)

Drafting is where formal writing begins. Using your prewriting materials as your guide, you start to write. At this point, you don’t worry too much about mechanics (spelling, punctuation, *etc.*), style, or organization. You just want to get your ideas down on paper as quickly and easily as you can.

You have finished drafting when:

- Sketches, notes, outlines, lists or ideas have been turned into sentences and paragraphs.
- There is a recognizable beginning, middle, and end.
- You have gone as far as you can go without some feedback.

Your draft does not have to be complete from beginning to end. Like prewriting, the drafting stage is important. It gives you as a writer the opportunity to engage in risk-free exploration of your subject. It’s a good time for trying things out.

3. REVISE—take a look at what you’ve written; get some advice. (“MAKE IT BETTER”)

Revising means *seeing again*, and it also includes getting some reader response. Response can come from many sources:

- Teacher conference (show it to your ES)
- Peer conference (show it to a friend)
- Small group or class share (read it aloud and get some feedback)
- Discussion with parent, family members, other adults

At this point, you are looking for reactions and suggestions. Everything is fair game, but comments regarding conventions should be kept to a minimum. You’ll deal with conventions during **EDITING**. Right now you’re most concerned with your ideas and how well they flow together into a clear piece of writing.

4. EDIT—make corrections. (“MAKE IT CORRECT”)

At this point, the writer will focus formally on mechanical correctness. This is the point in the process when copy editing occurs. Grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, and minor changes in wording are the only work the paper should need at this point.

Editing can come from different sources:

- Your ES or another teacher
- A friend
- Parents
- Spell-checking and grammar-checking features on your computer (these are not foolproof; you still must pay close attention)

5. PUBLISH—polish your work for presentation, and reflect on it. (“SHARE THE FINISHED PRODUCT”)

Publication can take many forms:

- Posting at school, publishing in the *Voice* or on the PCS website
- Submitting for formal publication in a newspaper or magazine, or on a website
- Reading aloud to an audience
- Collecting in a writing portfolio

