

What is the Writing Process?

Writing is a complex combination of skills which is best taught by breaking down the process. The writing process involves **a series of steps to follow in producing a finished piece of writing**. Educators have found that by focusing on the process of writing, almost everyone learns to write successfully. By breaking down writing step-by-step, the mystery is removed and writer's block is reduced. Most importantly, students discover the benefits of constructive feedback on their writing, and they progressively master, and even enjoy, writing.

Although they will often overlap, and sometimes students will move back and forth between them, the writing process can generally be broken down stages. When a student learns to internalize the steps of the writing process, he or she will likely produce a logical and well-written composition.

The Steps of the Writing Process

1. Prewriting - students brainstorm to generate ideas for writing. They use charts, story webs, and graphic organizers to help develop a word list for writing, decide the type of writing, and audience, and determine the purpose for writing.

2. Rough Draft – students put their ideas on paper. At this time, they write without major attention to punctuation, grammar, or neatness. Some teachers may refer to this as a rough draft. The purpose of the rough draft is for the student to focus on his/her ideas and get them on paper without the distraction or fear of making mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, or paragraph structure.

3. Peer Editing - Classmates share their rough drafts and make suggestions to each other for improvement. They help each other understand the story by asking who, what, when, where, why, and how questions. They look for better words to express ideas and discuss among themselves how to make the writing clearer.

4. Revising - The children use the suggestions from classmates to make additions or clarify details. Children try to improve their writing on their own. The teacher steps in at this stage and gives feedback.

5. Editing - students work with the teacher and/or peers to correct all mistakes in grammar and spelling.

6. Final Draft - Children produce a copy of their writing with all corrections made from the editing stage and then discuss this final draft with the teacher. The teacher offers the last suggestions for improvement at this point.

7. Publishing - The writing process is finally at its end. students publish their writing by making a copy in their neatest handwriting or using a word processor. This is a time for students to celebrate. They may share their pieces with the class during story time, make a class book or a personal portfolio, or send their work to local newspapers or student's magazines for publication!