Faculté : Mathématiques et Informatique
Département: Socle Commun Mathématique et Informatique
Module: Written Expression Techniques
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Level: 1st year

THE PROCESS OF WRITING

When we write , we do more than just put words together to make sentences. Good writers

go through several steps to produce a piece of writing.

Pre-writing

STEP ONE: *Choose a topic*. Before you write, your teacher gives you a specific assignment or some ideas of what to write about. If not, choose your topic yourself.

STEP TWO: *Gather ideas*. When you have a topic, think about what you will write about that topic.

STEP THREE: *Organise*. Decide which of the ideas you want to use and where you want to use them. Choose which idea to talk about first, which to talk about next, and which to talk about last.

Drafting

STEP FOUR: *Write*. Write your paragraph or essay from start to finish. Use your notes about your ideas and organisation.

Reviewing and revising

STEP FIVE: *Review structure and content*. Check what you have written. Read your writing silently to yourself or aloud , perhaps to a friend. Look for places where you can add more information, and check to see if you have any unnecessary information. Ask a classmate to exchange texts with you. Your classmate reads your text , and you read his or hers. Getting a reader's opinion is a good way to know if your writing is clear and effective. Learning to give opinions about other people 's writing helps you to improve your own. You may want to go on to step six now and revise the structure and content of your text before you proofread it.

Rewriting

STEP SIX:

Revise structure and content. Use your ideas from step five to rewrite your text, making improvements to the structure and content. You might need to explain something more clearly, o r add more details. You may even need to change your organisation so that your text is more logical. Together, steps five and six can be called editing.

Proofread . Read your text again . This time, check your spelling and grammar and think about the words you have chosen to use .

Make final corrections. Check that you have corrected the errors you discovered in steps five and six and make any other changes you want to make . Now your text is finished!

Exercice 1:

Complete this chart, summarising the steps of the writing process.

Pre-writing

- ● **STEP ONE:**   Choose a ....
- ● **STEP TWO:**   Gather ....
- ● **STEP THREE:** Decide ....

Drafting

- ● **STEP FOUR:**   Write ....

Reviewing and revising

- ● **STEP FIVE:**   Check ....

Rewriting

- ● **STEP SIX:**
  May need to …   ■ explain ....
  ■ add ....
  ■ change ....

Steps .... and .... may be .... many times.

Pre-writing: Getting Ready to Write

Before you begin writing, you decide what you are going to write about. Then you plan what you are going to write. This process is called pre-writing.

Choosing and narrowing a topic

A paragraph is a group of five to ten sentences that give information about a topic. Before you write , you must choose a topic for your paragraph.

• Choose a topic that isn't too *narrow* (limited, brief). A narrow topic will not have enough ideas to write about. The ages of my brothers and sisters is too narrow. You can't write very much about it.

• Choose a topic that isn't too broad (general). A broad topic will have too many ideas for just one paragraph. Most paragraphs are five to ten sentences long. Schools is too general. There are thousands of things you could say about it.

> A student could narrow this topic by choosing one aspect of schools to discuss.
> schools ~ secondary schools in my country
> popular school clubs
> university entrance exams

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a way of gathering ideas about a topic. Think of a storm: thousands of drops of rain, all coming down together. Now, imagine thousands of ideas 'raining' down onto your paper! When you brainstorm, write down every idea that comes to you. Don't worry now about whether the ideas are good or silly, useful or not. You can decide that later. Right now, you are gathering as many ideas as you can. There are three types of brainstorming: making a list, freewriting, and mapping.

1. *Making a list:* Write single words, phrases, or sentences that are connected to your topic. Look at this list a student made when brainstorming ideas to write about her topic, 'What should I study at university?'

history—learning about the past
maths (too difficult, not interesting?)
What job do I want later?
English for work? Travel?
writing?
science—biology, chemistry
I don't like physics!
journalism
I like reading—literature?
art—drawing, painting, sculpture
photography?
studying / homework
friends / social life

2. *Freewriting*: When you freewrite, you write whatever comes into your head about your topic, without stopping. Most freewriting exercises are short- just five or ten minutes. Freewriting helps you practise fluency (writing quickly and easily). When you freewrite, you do not need to worry about accuracy (having correct grammar and spelling). Don't check your dictionary when you freewrite. Don't stop if you make a mistake . Just keep Writing! Here is an example of a student's freewriting:

> There are ~~too~~ so many subjects to study at university, it is difficult to choose one. I've always had good marks in maths, but I don't like it very much. I don't like ~~physical~~ physics or any science very much. Writing—I've always liked writing. Would journalism be a good course to take? Newspapers have pictures, too, so maybe photography would be good. I'm ~~maybe~~ definitely looking forward to meeting new friends at university. And what about reading? Reading is a part of any course, but literature includes a lot of reading and it probably includes a lot of writing, too.

3. *Mapping*: To make a map, use a whole sheet of paper, and write your topic in the middle, with a circle around it. Then put the next idea in a circle above or below your topic, and connect the circles with lines. The lines show that the two ideas are related. The example below shows a map of ' What should I study at university? ' The writer connected favourite subjects to the main idea. Art and English are connected to favourite subjects t o show that they are related .

What should I study?

- favourite subjects
  - history
    - Become a teacher?
    - the past
    - too much reading?
  - art
    - photography
    - painting
    - sculpture
  - English
    - travel
    - job
- good subjects for jobs
  - journalism
  - business
    - good money
    - boring?
- least favourite subjects
  - science
    - biology
    - physics
      - maths
      - experiments