

The Writing Process

By Claire Jordan Mohan

The stages of writing are:

1. Pre-writing
2. Drafting
3. Conferencing
4. Revision
5. Editing
6. Publishing

PRE-WRITING

This is the process of preparing the mind through listening, experiencing, and reading for the task ahead. Pre-writing enables you to find something to say and consider ways of saying it.

1. Think about what you will write
2. Gather many ideas
3. Choose the ideas you want to write about
4. Jot down ideas and information

Here are some ways to generate ideas:

- brainstorming
- observing
- reading
- interviewing
- memory chain
- use of photographs or pictures
- note taking
- written models
- freewriting
- trips
- discussions
- telling a story

DRAFTING

- put ideas on paper
- write on every other line
- don't erase or be concerned about spelling or grammar
- write your own thoughts

This is the first attempt to get ideas on paper. Learning to write well involves developing increasing skill and sensitivity in selecting and combining language and form appropriate to the subject, purpose and audience.

CONFERENCING

- read your paper to somebody
- discuss your paper

REVISION

Revising helps the writer improve the final product. It may mean making changes in organization, sentence structure, and style. The four types of changes that can be made are:

1. Something **A**dded
2. Something **R**emoved
3. Something **M**oved somewhere else
4. Something **S**ubstituted for something else

In this way, you change your paper in some way to make it better. You rewrite your draft and make as many revisions as you need.

- study your lead and concluding sentences. Do they relate to each other?
- expand your sentences
- add details
- use colorful adjectives and specific verbs
- change the form
- incorporate dialogue
- eliminate unimportant words or phrases

- avoid using the same word
- use similes and metaphors*

* **simile:** a figure of speech in which two things that are different in most ways are said to be alike, by using words "as" or "like." "He is as thin as a rail." "She sings like a bird."

* **metaphor:** the use of a word or phrase in a way that is different from its usual use to show a likeness to something else. "The curtain of night" likens "night" to "curtain."

EDITING

When you are satisfied with the content of your work, it is time to be certain that the form is correct. This is the time to check your spelling and punctuation. Now, take out your dictionary and grammar book.

After editing, rewrite your work in its now perfected form

PUBLISHING

After editing, your finished piece is ready to be put on display for an audience beyond the writer.

NOTE: Use a Thesaurus or a dictionary to find words to lighten and brighten your language.

Some books I have found helpful:

Roget's Thesaurus

The Elements of Style

William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White

Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. New York

My personal favorite book:

Say It With Words

Charles W. Ferguson

Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1973. Random House, Inc., N.

Quick and easy grammar reference:

The Successful Secretary's Handbook

Esther Becker and Evelyn Anders

Harper & Row, Publishers

10 East 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

Or any other secretary's book you might come across.