

The Process Of Writing STAT8801, January 29, 2014

Material taken from:

<http://writing.mit.edu/wcc/resources/writers/writingprocess>

http://write.oid.ucla.edu/assets/docs/local-writing-issues/writing-process/2TWP_anthro.pdf

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

My goal in this course is not to improve your writing, but to improve your writing process.

The process of writing has four distinct steps, in addition to a preparation step.

The Preparation Step: Identify Topic, Audience, Purpose, Form

Topic: What are you writing about?

Audience: Who is the audience for your writing? Do you think your audience is interested in the topic? Why or why not? Why should your audience be interested in this topic? What does your audience already know about this topic? What do they need to know? What kind of vocabulary should you use? What terms must you define? How much background info must you give? Will your audience be sympathetic or adversarial to your argument?

Purpose: Writing can have many different purposes. Perhaps it's one of these:

- Summarizing: Presenting the main points or essence of another text in a condensed form
- Arguing/Persuading: Expressing a viewpoint on an issue or topic in an effort to convince others that your viewpoint is correct
- Narrating: Telling a story or giving an account of events
- Evaluating: Examining something in order to determine its value or worth based on a set of criteria.
- Analyzing: Breaking a topic down into its component parts in order to examine the relationships between the parts.
- Responding: Writing that is in a direct dialogue with another text.
- Examining/Investigating: Systematically questioning a topic to discover or uncover facts that are not widely known or accepted, in a way that strives to be as neutral and objective as possible.
- Observing: Helping the reader see and understand a person, place, object, image or event that you have directly watched or experienced through detailed sensory descriptions.

Form: What form will your writing take? Is it an essay, a letter, a report? Does it have defined features or sections that you are expected to follow?

Prewriting

Prewriting is anything you do before you write a draft of your document. It includes thinking, taking notes, talking to others, brainstorming, outlining, gathering information (e.g., interviewing people, researching in the library, assessing data), and generating and organizing your ideas.

- What techniques have you used for generating and organizing ideas? Share with your group.

Drafting

Drafting occurs when you put your ideas into sentences and paragraphs. Here you concentrate upon explaining and supporting your ideas fully. Here you also begin to connect your ideas. Regardless of how much thinking and planning you do, the process of putting your ideas in words changes them; often the very words you select evoke additional ideas or implications. This draft tends to be writer-centered: it is you telling yourself what you know and think about the topic.

- What techniques have you used for drafting? How do you get words on the page and into sentences and paragraphs? What do you do when you get stuck? Share with your group.

Revising

Revision is the key to effective documents. Here you think more deeply about your readers' needs and expectations. The document becomes reader-centered. How much support will each idea need to convince your readers? Which terms should be defined for these particular readers? Is your organization effective? Do readers need to know X before they can understand Y? At this stage you also refine your prose, making each sentence as concise and accurate as possible. Make connections between ideas explicit and clear.

We will spend more time this semester thinking about how to revise work to meet our readers' expectations, especially for scientific writing.

Editing

Check for such things as grammar, mechanics, and spelling. Especially here, remember to perform the steps separately. That is, don't edit your writing while you are working on other steps, and don't pay attention to such things as spelling at earlier steps.

- Why do you think it's important to work on the steps separately?

Name: _____

Which writing step is most difficult for you? Why?
What ideas did you learn about today that you think might help you improve?