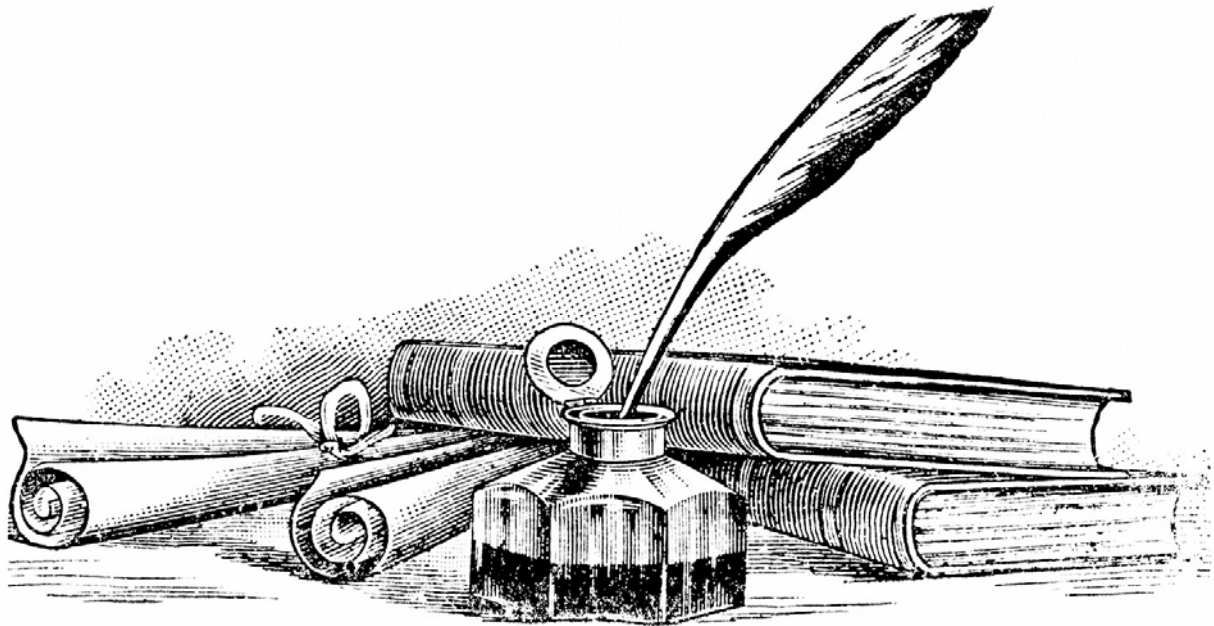


The Writing Process: Guidelines for Tutors

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FACTS ABOUT WRITING

1. Writing requires thinking!
2. Good writing requires time. Most good writing does not happen in one sitting. Very few people can produce a perfect paper in one sitting.
3. Writers must be willing to read their papers many times before they consider that these are done and ready to be read by their audience.
4. Putting away a paper for a few days helps writers “see” that a paper still needs more work.
5. Many times writing is a disorganized business (activity).
6. Everybody has a favorite or better way of writing. Respect it!
7. If writers do not know what to write about, they can do some free writing to help them “discover” some good topics or ideas.
8. If writers already have good topics or ideas, but they do not know how to develop these topics or ideas, they can do some free writing. While they free write, they can probably “discover” how to develop these good ideas they have.
9. Other writers prefer to do clusters (webs) to discover topics or to discover direction (where to go next) in their writing.
10. Still other writers find that writing a simple list (listing) can be useful when they are writing. Others like to brainstorm before they write or while they write.

Writing is Revising/Writing is Rewriting

Whenever you write, you should always be willing to **read** what you write. This will be an opportunity to **review** [to view again] what you have written. This will give you the opportunity to **evaluate** what you have written. A first reading will probably give you the opportunity to determine in what direction you need to continue writing. Most likely, you know that your paper is not done yet, and that one of the first things you have to do is to continue writing your essay. Therefore, after you finish reading your paper, you should just continue writing your paper (your future essay). Don't worry about organization at this stage of your writing. Just try to write everything you want to say about your topic. Later on you will have the opportunity to organize your thoughts. Whenever you feel that you have written enough or you can't seem to be able to add anything more to your paper, **stop!** At this point, it is a good idea to put your paper away for a few days. In other words, don't force yourself to continue writing this second time around.

After a few days, you should be ready to read your paper (your draft) a second time. While you are doing this **second reading**, you should make **annotations** as you are reading. You can check, for instance, what needs clarification, parts of the writing that you like, or parts of your writing that you don't like. In other words, this is the first chance that you have to start identifying what needs to be revised and/or rewritten. Sometimes this part of the writing process is difficult because we have to start searching for **flaws**, and it is not easy for a writer to see what needs improvement or clarification in his or her writing. During this stage, maybe you will realize that you need to add more information to your paper so that your purpose is clear. At this point it is important to think of your **audience**- the people who are going to be reading your essay. Try to put yourself in their shoes. If you think that what you need to do is to continue writing, do so. At this point, most likely that is what will happen. You will just continue writing. You might even observe that a lot of your writing is still a bit disorganized. Because you are still trying to fully develop your ideas, do not

worry too much about organization. Probably a third or fourth reading will help you start working on **organization**. In other words, please remember that good writing does not happen in one sitting. You should also remember that you are still **revising** your writing and that it means that you are adding or eliminating ideas that do not belong on your paper. It may also mean that you need to rearrange ideas, expand them, or even change or adjust sentences or words so that they fit within your paper.

Please remember that good writing takes **time**. Also remember that you need to have the **willingness to come back** to the piece many times. When you finally finish your essay, you will be amazed at the number of times that you went back to your writing. Some of you will probably have three, four, five, six drafts. Some of you will probably have even more!

The following is a recommended procedure to begin this task:

- A. Read your text (review). If possible, read it aloud.
- B. Answer the following questions. You do not have to write the answers.

You can just make annotations on your draft.

1. Are my ideas clear?
2. Will my audience understand what I am trying to communicate (the point of the essay)?
3. How can I make my ideas clearer?

- C. Begin to revise. Remember that this may mean that you are just going to continue writing.

Suggestions for revising/rewriting

1. Write on only one side of the paper if you are handwriting your first drafts. If you are writing directly on your computer, double space all of your drafts from the very beginning. This will make it easier to insert information as you draft your essay. It will also be easier to read your drafts. Use a bigger size font if you feel it will help you read your drafts. Save all copies of your drafts. Do not erase anything during the first stages of the writing process.
2. Use different font colors to add new information. Probably you started writing in black, so next time use red or purple and so on. If you are handwriting, do the same thing. Get yourself a set of pens each one a different ink color. Every time you work on your draft also identify the date when you worked on your paper. All this will allow you to identify the number of drafts you have. You will probably be surprised at how much time you have needed to produce a good paper.
3. If you are handwriting, write new sentences or paragraphs on separate pieces of paper. Number these additional pages by adding a letter to the previous page number (for example, 3a). Identify where these sentences or paragraphs have to be added on your original first draft by using asterisks (*, **, ***, etc) or numbers.
4. Write on margins and use arrows to identify where new information should be added.

5. Cut and paste if major changes are going to be done. If you are working on your computer, save all previous versions of your writing. Do not erase any of your drafts.
6. Cross out any information you do not think is part of the text you are composing. Use the ~~striketrough symbol on your computer to do this.~~ This symbol is usually located next to the bold, italics, and underline **symbols on your word-processing program (Word).** Do not erase anything yet. Also, be careful you do not use the “Insert” key because you will be erasing information you later might wish you had not erased. If you are handwriting, do not through away any of your drafts until you are certain your paper is done.
7. When you feel you have finished revising your paper, ask a classmate to read it. He or she will give you his/her opinion on the text that you have produced. At this point, you might have to continue working on your paper.

Questions to Ask During Drafting

It is a fact that students who plan their writing assignments usually find writing easier than those who simply begin without mentally organizing themselves. As a tutor, this is something you should always mention during a tutoring session. One thing you can do to help students organize their writing is to ask them to answer the following questions:

- What is the purpose of your writing?
- What will your audience want to know about your topic?
- What do you want to say? How do you want to say it? (description, analysis, definition, etc.)
- How can you best arrange the information? How many paragraphs do you envision you will need to develop the point of your essay?
- What are your main ideas? Do you have one main idea or several?
- What details can you use to support your main idea (s)?
- What will make a good introduction?
- What will make a strong conclusion?

These questions can help students stay focused while they are writing. These questions also help students understand that good writing does not happen in one sitting. Most of the time they will need to write several drafts in order to produce a good piece.

Other recommendations you can give students:

1. Take time to write your essays.
2. Write drafts.
3. Do not pay attention to errors when you start drafting.
4. Give yourself time to disconnect yourself from the writing.
5. Come back to your writing after a reasonable time (best when you give yourself a few days) and then READ your essay ALOUD. This is the only way you will HEAR your flaws (gaps or sections that are not clear). (Sometimes the ideas are not on the paper; the student only has them in his or her head. By reading the paper aloud, most likely the student will become aware that the paper still needs a lot of work.)

The first time you meet with a student ask him or her to read his or her paper aloud to you. Probably the student will become aware that the paper needs a lot of work.

Evaluation of Drafts/Recommendations for Next Draft

Instructions: When tutoring a student, you can use this checklist to help the student understand what he or she needs to do to continue working on the draft.

- _____1. Continue developing your ideas.
- _____2. Consider dividing your ideas into several paragraphs.
- _____3. Work on organizing your ideas.
- _____4. Go straight to your point in first paragraph. Eliminate sentences similar to the following:
 - I am going to write about...
 - I chose to write about...
 - I read an essay that...
 - I decided to write about...
- _____5. Reread every paragraph and make sure each one develops one point (a supporting idea for the main idea (thesis) of your essay.
- _____6. Give support to ideas of paragraph(s) _____.
- _____7. Clarify ideas in paragraph(s)_____.
- _____8. Consider eliminating ideas not connected to the main point.
- _____9. Read your draft aloud so that you observe gaps.
- _____10. Point of essay is not clear. The first paragraph does not make clear purpose of essay.

____11. Make sure ideas in paragraphs are all connected to make point of essay clear.

____12. Try using connectors to make your writing more logical. Sometimes some ideas do not seem to be connected to the main point of your essay.

____13. You are writing about a text assigned in class (for instance, an essay, short story, or poem), and you are assuming all of your readers are familiar with it. Do not write: **This essay**.... Identify the text. Revise your sentence, so that your reader clearly knows you are writing about a particular text, for instance, write the following: The poem, Tonight I Can Write by Pablo Neruda, discusses....

____14. Your draft is ready to be edited.

Comments:

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Student name: _____ Term: _____
Phone number: _____ Date of First Visit: _____

First Draft

Purpose of the visit: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____
Professor: _____ Tutor: _____ Language: _____

Work covered during the session: _____

Comments about the student's draft:

1. ___ Hard to understand.
 2. ___ Many ideas are not fully developed, lack support.
 3. ___ Incoherent, without flow of ideas.
 4. ___ Ideas are poorly organized.
 5. ___ Audience is not taken into consideration.
 6. ___ Lacks a main, controlling idea.
 7. ___ Ideas are not connected properly. Student should use connectors.
 8. ___ Poor choice of vocabulary.
 9. ___ Many ideas are not written in full sentences.
 10. ___ Instructions to write paper are not followed.
 11. ___ Other _____
- _____
- _____

Recommendations:

1. ___ Read it out loud.
2. ___ Restructure paragraphs.
3. ___ Identify audience.
4. ___ Identify purpose.
5. ___ Develop the ideas within paragraph _____.
6. ___ Practice pre-writing exercises.

	Yes	No
Did the student explain clearly instructions to do the assignment?		
Did the student use a style manual if he or she is writing a research paper?		
Was the student prepared for the tutoring session? For instance, did he bring his or her draft?		
Do you think the student did not give credit to sources he or she may have used to write his or her paper?		

Editor's Checklist

Tutor: If you observe that the student still has a lot of grammatical, spelling and/or punctuation mistakes on what appears to be his or her final draft, you can give this hand-out to the student so that he or she can check his work before turning it in.

- ___ 1. All sentences begin with a capital letter.
- ___ 2. All sentences have a subject and a verb. All sentences are complete.
- ___ 3. Commas are used in compound sentences (and, but or, nor, for, so, yet) or to list items (oranges, apples, and pears).
- ___ 4. Proper nouns are capitalized (English, Puerto Rico, The Right Words at the Right Time).
- ___ 5. All words are spelled correctly.
- ___ 6. Semi-colons are used to join independent clauses (sentences).
- ___ 7. Choice of vocabulary is appropriate for content and purpose of essay.
- ___ 8. Subjects and verbs agree in all sentences.
- ___ 9. Pronouns agree with the nouns they substitute.
- ___ 10. Use of common homonyms is correct (for instance, they're, their, and there).
- ___ 11. Use of commonly confused words has been avoided (were/where, effect/affect).
- ___ 12. Paragraphs are indented.
- ___ 13. All paragraphs have a clear purpose.

Transitions

One way to ensure that all of the sentences in an essay are connected is by using transitions. According to Buscemi, Nicolai and Strugala (1996) “**transitions**, also called **connectives**, are words, phrases, and even sentences that make a clear connection between one idea and another, between one sentence and another, or between one paragraph and another” (p. 59). Observe the following sentences and make note of the use of a transition word that connects the ideas in the two:

Jerry is my best friend; *nonetheless*, I hardly ever see him.

The following lists will help you write paragraphs and essays that are more coherent.

Transitions that will help you add information:

again	and	furthermore	next
also	besides	likewise	finally
additionally	equally important	moreover	as well
in addition	for example	further	together with
another	for instance	furthermore	along with
as well	too		

Transitions that will help you conclude or summarize:

as a result	consequently	accordingly	in short
finally	thus	due to	to sum up
in conclusion	therefore	in summary	all in all

Transitions that will help you repeat information or emphasize a point:

as an example	again	as a matter of fact
for example	once again	indeed
specifically	once again	more important
such as	to be sure	

Transitions that will help you compare things (show similarities):

in the same way	likewise	as
also	like	similarly

Transitions that will help you contrast things (show differences):

but	yet	on the other hand	although	otherwise
however	as opposed	counter to	even though	as opposed
even so	conversely	still	on the contrary	

Transitions that will help you show time:

afterward	after a while	as soon as	all of a sudden
at that time	by the time	by then	during
suddenly	when	while	whenever
soon	since	meanwhile	then

Transitions that help you show condition:

as long as	provided that
as soon as	unless
in case	when
in order	

Other devices that help you maintain coherence:

Use pronouns: The students were being accused of cheating on the test. **They** had evidence to prove that the teacher was falsely accusing **them**.

Use synonyms to repeat important ideas or word in your essay: **Alumni** are also invited to the graduation. **Former students** are a very important part of the school.