

The Writing Process

Read aloud the definition of *the writing process* with students. Tell students they will use the writing process to find topic ideas, write a draft, revise their work, and finally publish.

Step 1: Pre-write

Choose a topic Read aloud this section as students follow along. With student input, define the terms *freewrite* and *brainstorm*. Try the different prewriting strategies with students—list, freewrite, and brainstorm. Encourage students to think freely and be creative. Discuss which strategies students prefer and why. Write topic ideas that students generated on the board and have them vote on their top three favorites.

Identify Your Audience Read aloud this section with students. Using the favorite topics written on the board, have students respond to questions about their audience. Discuss why it's important to define who the audience is before starting to write.

Identify Purpose for Writing Read aloud the bullet points as students follow along. Have students select the key word for each bullet (*entertain, inform, persuade*). Discuss how identifying the purpose helps to guide how a piece is written.

Select the Best Form for Writing The audience and purpose for writing will help determine the best form to use. See *Modes of Writing* for descriptions of some forms.

Gather Information Once students decide on a topic, they need to gather information. The way they collect information depends on what they are writing. For a factual report, for example, they will need to do research at the library or on the Internet. For a fictional story, they will brainstorm ideas for a setting, plot, and characters.

The Writing Process

The writing process is a series of steps that helps you write clearly.

Step 1: Pre-write

When you pre-write, you explore ideas and choose a topic. You identify your audience, and you choose your purpose for writing.

To choose a topic, try one or more of these strategies.

- **List** many ideas that you might want to write about.
- **Freewrite** about some ideas for five minutes.
- **Brainstorm** a list of ideas with a partner.

To identify your audience, think about who will read your writing. What do they already know? What do you need to explain?

To identify your purpose for writing, ask:

- Do I want to entertain my audience?
- Do I want to inform my audience?
- Do I want to persuade my audience?

Now, decide on the best form for your writing. Gather and organize the details that will support your topic.

Scaffolding Explain how it may be beneficial to use graphic organizers to generate or organize ideas for a writing assignment. For example, a Venn Diagram or a T-Chart can help students to compare and contrast two things. Here are some common graphic organizers:

- T-Chart
- Word Web
- Venn Diagram
- Main Idea and Details Chart
- Sensory Details Chart
- Timeline
- Flowchart
- Sequence-of-Events Chart

Step 2: Draft

You start writing in this step. Put your ideas into sentences. Put your sentences into paragraphs. Begin to put your paragraphs in order. Don't worry too much about grammar and spelling. You will have a chance to correct any errors later.

Step 3: Revise

This is the time to look at your ideas and the organization of your writing. Read your first draft. Ask yourself:

- Are the ideas presented in the best order?
- Is there a clear beginning, middle, and end?
- Does each paragraph have a main idea and supporting details?

Ask a partner to read your writing and make comments about it. This is called a peer review. Decide what changes you want to make. Then rewrite your draft.

Step 4: Edit/Proofread

This is the time to look at word choice, sentence fluency, and writing conventions. Reread your paper. Proofread for mistakes in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Correct any mistakes you find.

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Cooperative Grouping Have students work in pairs to read first drafts to each other. They can conduct a peer review by using the bulleted questions and sharing constructive criticism to improve first drafts. After the peer review, have students work individually to revise their drafts.

Step 4: Edit/Proofread

Read aloud step 4 as students follow along. Guide students as they reread their second drafts and check word choice, sentence fluency, spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Step 2: Draft

Read aloud step 2 as students follow along. Using one of the topic ideas created in step 1, demonstrate how to write a short first draft. Think aloud as you write on the board, putting ideas into sentences and paragraphs, and using details to support the main idea. Point out that working out ideas and making changes are part of the drafting process. Show how writing a first draft can be a messy process, with cross outs, erasures, and imperfect spelling and punctuation.

Have students write a first draft using a topic idea from step 1. Remind them that the purpose of a draft is to get the ideas down on paper, not to have perfect spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Perfection will come later.

Step 3: Revise

In this step, students will review their first drafts and improve the presentation and organization of ideas.

Review Your Draft Read aloud the bulleted questions with students. Have students use each question to help analyze their first drafts and make appropriate revisions.

Scaffolding Point out that good writers try to put their "personal stamp" on whatever they write. This personal stamp is often referred to as *the author's voice*. Write the following tips on the board. Tell students to use the tips to make sure their personal voice shines through.

- Write about subjects you know well and truly care about.
- Express your enthusiasm for your subject.
- Write directly to your readers.
- Choose words that will help the reader understand exactly what you mean.

Peer Review Prior to the class, make an overhead transparency of a first draft written by a student volunteer. Show the transparency to the class. Model a peer review session with the student author. Demonstrate how to ask questions about the first draft and give positive, constructive criticism on ways to improve the writing.

Step 4: Edit/Proofread (continued)

Go through the editing marks in the chart with students. Students may be unfamiliar with some or all of the marks, so give additional examples for each. You may wish to have students come to the chalkboard, recreate the marks, and write sentences using the marks.

Scaffolding You may want to give students a variety of sentences with mistakes on which they can use editing marks to make corrections. Another way to practice is to give students sentences with editing marks, and then have them rewrite the sentences correctly.

Proofreading Checklist Read aloud the bullet points as students follow along. Have students use the checklist to make a final check of their work before publishing. Ensure that students use dictionaries to check spelling and refer to their Handbooks to correct grammar and punctuation.

When students are done editing and proofreading their work, they should rewrite or reprint a perfect final draft, ready for publishing.

Metacognition To monitor student comprehension ask: *When you went through the revision and editing steps, how did you improve your writing? Give specific examples of how you did this. Why are these steps important in getting your piece ready to publish?*

When you edit and proofread your draft, use these proofreading marks to mark the changes.

Editing/Proofreading Marks		
To:	Use This Mark:	Example:
add something	^	We ate rice, bean ^s , and corn.
delete something	e	We ate rice, beans, and corn s .
start a new paragraph	¶	¶ We ate rice, beans, and corn.
add a comma	,	We ate rice, beans, and corn.
add a period	.	We ate rice, beans, and corn.
switch letters or words	~	We ate rice, bea n s, and corn.
change to a capital letter	<u>a</u>	<u>W</u> e ate rice, beans, and corn.
change to a lowercase letter	A	W e ate rice, beans, and corn.

Proofreading Checklist

- Check your spelling. Look up words you aren't sure of in the dictionary.
- Check your grammar and usage. Use the Grammar Handbook to help you correct sentences.
- Review capitalization and punctuation. Make sure each sentence begins with a capital letter and uses proper end punctuation.

Step 5: Publish

Once you have revised and proofread your paper, share it with others. Look at these publishing ideas.

- Post your paper on the bulletin board.
- Photocopy your paper. Hand it out to your classmates and family members.
- Attach it to an email and send it to friends.
- Send it to a school newspaper or magazine for possible publication.

Once you have shared your work with others, you may want to put it in your portfolio. A portfolio is a folder or envelope in which you keep your writing. If you keep your work in a portfolio, you can look at what you have written over a period of time. This will let you see if your writing is improving. It will help you become a better writer.

Build Your Portfolio

You may want to keep your completed writing in your portfolio. It is a good idea to keep your drafts, too. Keep comments you receive from your teacher or writing partner, as well.

Reflect on Your Writing

Make notes on your writing in a journal. Write how you felt about what you wrote. Use these questions to help you get started.

- What new things did you learn about your topic?
- What helped you organize the details in your writing?
- What helped you revise your writing?
- What did you learn about yourself as you wrote?

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Step 5: Publish

In this final step, students share their work with others. Read the bulleted ideas aloud as students follow along. Invite students to think of other ways to publish their work. You may wish to explore creating a class web page where students may post their work.

Build Your Portfolio Have students place their work in their assessment portfolios for comparison with past and future assignments. Sometimes it is helpful for students to keep all their drafts and revisions together with their final published work. This provides evidence of growth, improvement, and learning through use of the writing process.

Reflect on Your Writing Read aloud this section as students follow along. Ask students to select a recent, published writing assignment. Have students write answers to bulleted questions in their journal and then share ideas with the class.

Metacognition After students write reflections on their writing, ask them how this activity helps them become better writers. How will they approach their next writing assignment?

Websites For more information, log on to www.LongmanCornerstone.com for links to other interesting websites on the writing process.