

Introduction



The purpose of this class is to give you a clear process and techniques that you can apply to ANY WRITING TASK. All instruction is geared to help you become a more confident and comfortable writer.

This module will focus on THE WRITING PROCESS. Young writers often complain that they don't know what to write about, or don't know how to get started, or have no confidence. This process is designed to help with all of these concerns and provide writers with simple steps to follow. Writing can be enjoyable. Have fun!



This sign on a page signifies learning notes that may help you get a better grasp of the concepts being offered.

Example:

Throughout this module examples will be provide (in a box like the one above). In the BRB you will find a SAMPLE COMPLETED ESSAY PREWRITE All examples are keyed to this document. Print it out and follow along. Also use it as a guide when writing.

Also in the BRB is a BLANK ESSAY PREWRITE FORM. Print it out and use it to write your essays.

The Writing Process

Overview

Writing is a process that can be fun and expressive. It is a skill that in order to be effective needs to be organized, easily understandable, focused, and well developed. Here is a simple process that will empower any writer to be effective for any writing task. If followed diligently, a writer will have more than enough to write about, an organized way to say it, and far less anxiety about writing. On the following pages, each of the following will be presented in detail.

- **Prewriting**

This is the process of gathering ideas before writing. It is perhaps the most important step because this is where the writer explores and gathers information about the topic. It is also where Main Ideas (the focus of each paragraph) & A Thesis (the larger idea that controls the entire essay) are created. It is also where writing decisions are made..

The 5 step Prewrite includes:

- 1. Choose an appropriate topic
- 2. Do a Preliminary Brainstorm (Brainstorm for broad ideas)
- 3. Cluster Brainstorm
- 4. Make Prewrite Decisions
- 5. Make a Working Outline

- **Rough Draft**

Based on the prewrite, an author makes a first draft of the essay.

- **Revised Rough Draft**

This is the step where the first draft is carefully rewritten

- **Final Copy**

The culmination of the Writing Process in a formal presentation



Prewrite (5 steps)

1. Choose an appropriate topic.

- Will it have interest to a reader?
- Pick something you know about. Knowledgeable writers are much more effective.
- If you do not have sufficient knowledge of a topic, research it first and learn enough about it to be convincing.
- Be original; topics that are over used are not interesting and probably will provide a dull and uninformative reading experience for a reader.
- Be sure to address the assignment you have to accomplish. Pay close attention to the writing prompts.
- Make it manageable: Do not pick something huge. Some writers have a tendency to pick global or current issues. These usually require more knowledge and expertise than a typical college essayist has or is able to acquire in a short time.



Note: I am only interested in helping you to write effectively. A good writer using good techniques can make any topic interesting to read about. The topic you choose is not as important as how you present it. Make it easy to write about.

Example: Lets say the assignment asks me to describe something or someone I feel strongly about. I chose “My twin sister Celia.”. Since we grew up together, I feel like somewhat of an expert on her. Also, she is a very inspirational person to learn about, and I can provide lots of concrete examples, stories, insight, and information about her.

2. Do a Preliminary Brainstorm about your topic

- Begin by jotting down observations about your topic.
- Think of important aspect
- Obvious characteristics
- Broad ideas etc.



Note: Many writers complain about not knowing what to write about. Brainstorming is a way to open up ideas. Feel free to write whatever comes into your head. Do not limit yourself. As you write and think, you may be surprised how many new things pop into your head. The more you can observe, learn, know about your topic before you write, the easier and more fun the writing experience becomes.



Note: You want to come up with several (I recommend at least 3) very broad areas. In the next step we will do a second brainstorm on each broad area defined here.

Example: Thinking about my topic “Celia” my preliminary brainstorm hits a few highlights and things I know about her that make up big parts of her life. After combining ideas and thinking further, it occurs to me that 3 big areas (sub-topics) of her life are:

- **her interests**
- **her generosity (our birthday theater trip showed me this)**
- **her home life & friends**

3. Cluster Brainstorm

- Now that we have several sub-topics, we need to learn more about each.
- Brainstorm again for each sub-topic.
- Go into more detail and get more concrete ([see BRB: abstract\concrete](#))
- Gather as much as you can about each sub-topic.



Note: The more info, examples, stories, concrete stuff you can gather about each sub-topic, the easier it will be to write. If you have too much, which is often the case, when it comes to writing, pick and choose what seems most relevant.

Example: Notice all of “Her Interests” I could easily write an entire essay on these alone. Notice the “Theater trip” She really did give our tickets to 2 little old gals who planned their trip for an entire year, but lost their tickets. We couldn’t go to the theater, but Celia was happy to do it. I thought this would illustrate just how generous she is. Notice all the stuff I thought about for her “Home Life.”



Note: After the cluster brainstorms, decide on a “Rhetorical Mode” for that paragraph.
([see BRB: Rhetorical Modes](#))

Example: Notice for cluster 1 “her interests” I chose “example\illustration because I had lots of examples. For the second: “Her generosity” I chose “Narration” to tell a story, For the third “her home life” I chose “description” to show readers what her home life appears to be.

4. Make Prewrite Decisions

- Order of Support: This determines how paragraphs will be ordered in your essay. Some basic orders are:
[\(see BRB Coherence\)](#)
 - Time (like a story)
 - Space (for descriptions – physical arrangement)
 - Order of importance
 - General to specific

Example: For my essay, I chose “Order of Importance” I plan to write about here least important “her interests” to next important “her home life” then finish with the most important “her generosity.”

- Primary Rhetorical Mode [\(see BRB Rhetorical Modes\)](#)
 - Narrative (telling a story)
 - Descriptive (showing what it appears to be)
 - Example\illustration (giving examples)
 - Classification (putting things into classes)
 - Compare\Contrast (putting items side by side)
 - Process (to show how something is done or how it came about)
 - Cause\Effect (shows how it happened or result of it happening)
 - Definition (your view of it)
 - Persuasion (to argue a position)

Example: For my essay, although each paragraph has a unique Rhetorical Mode, the overall feeling of this essay will be descriptive.



Part of being a good writer is becoming a good researcher. (so you have something to write about). The concepts presented in this module are basic writing principals. If you need more help, go to the BRB (on the Welcome Page) and The Basics , a required textbook, and get more guidance..

- Level of formality
 - Informal (friendly), familiar (relatives) formal (college writing) (college writing is formal = use of proper grammar, good sentences, limited slang, no PC abbreviations etc.) **(all our essays will be formal)**
- Purpose
 - Entertain, inform, argue, instruct, condemn, etc.
- Person
 - 1st (writing about yourself)
 - 2nd (writing about the reader)
 - 3rd (everything else in the world)



Avoid using the pronoun “YOU” incorrectly. It is very common to do! Whenever you say “YOU” you are referring to the reader! Do not do this. [\(See BRB “You: Avoiding 2nd person”\)](#)

- Time: determines what time area you are referring to
 - Present (now)
 - Past (anytime before now)
 - Future (anytime after now)
(you must stay consistent with verbs to avoid reader confusion)
- Tone: like the tone of a conversation or your stereo, essayist should be aware of their “verbal” inflections and nuances.
 - Serious,
 - humorous,
 - Sarcastic
 - Angry
 - Lighthearted,
 - Sad,
 - Happy
 - etc.



The Basics provides more information about Prewriting. Look into it.

5 Make a Working Outline

- First: Create a MI for each of the cluster brainstorming.
 - * A Main Idea (MI) is an abstract statement based on all the brainstorming data you wrote down. All paragraphs MUST have only ONE Main Idea. The rest of the paragraph proves\supports\illustrates that ONE Main Idea. ([see BRB: How to create a MI](#))
a MI = Topic of paragraph + Author's Point of View (APOV)
Topic = who\what you are writing about
APOV = you opinion, views, point you make about your topic.

Example: For my essay about Celia, note my first MI directly taken from my cluster brainstorm

Topic = Celia's Interests

APOV = keep her busy; she always has something to do

I got my APOV from looking at all the ideas I collected on my cluster brainstorm. Good writers first gather lots of info about a topic, then make a statement (MI) based on all the data collected. (Not the other way around – that is a headache)

My MI II and III follow this same process.

- Then create a Thesis from all of your MI.
 - * A Thesis is the Main Idea of the entire essay. It is the largest concept that unifies the essay. Read all of your MI and see what they tell you
 - . Thesis = topic of essay + APOV

Example: For my essay about Celia. After deciding on 3 MI, I combined them and came up with a larger abstract thought about Celia (my essay topic) Note how my Thesis is the largest thought and is clearly supported by all 3 of my MI.

- Then fill in support for each MI. Use the ideas you gathered from your cluster brainstorm.

Example: For my essay about Celia, see how I took whatever I liked from my 3 cluster brainstorms and used it to support my 3 MIs.

- Then consider ways to write an Introduction. The purpose of an introduction is grab a readers attention & to state your Thesis (which you already have on your outline) ([see BRB: Writing Introductions](#))

Example: For my essay about Celia, I though some questions, maybe an anecdote, perhaps some statistics might get a reader interested in reading my essay.

- Then consider what to use in a conclusion ([see BRB: Writing Conclusions](#))

Example: For my essay about Celia, I tried to give some advice, and thoughts about the importance of family. I wanted to give the reader something to remember and think about.

After all this preparation, we should be well ready to write our first rough draft.



First Rough Draft

Write a first rough draft from you outline.

- Use the MIs from you outline as TS (topic Sentences) in your paragraphs. MI and TS are the same thing. If I was to write an essay based on my outline, it would have 3 support paragraphs. One from each of my MI on my outline. ([see BRB: How to create a Main Idea](#))
- Use the Introduction ideas to write an Introduction ([see BRB: Writing Introductions](#))
- Use the Conclusion ideas to write a conclusion ([see BRB: Writing Conclusions](#))

Be Sure of the following

- √ Make it **UNIFIED** ([see BRB: Unity](#))
- √ Make it **COHERENT** ([see BRB: Coherence](#))
- √ Make it **DEVELOPED** ([see BRB: Development](#))



Keep your Prewrite decisions that you made earlier in mind.



Revised Rough Draft

- Do not attempt to revise your rough draft immediately. Let it sit for a while and come back to it.
- When you are ready to revise, carefully read over your rough draft. You are looking to see how you can improve on it with regard to the following. Consider the following:
 - Is it UNIFIED enough. Are you clearly focused in all paragraphs and throughout the essay.
 - Is it COHERENT enough. Can the reader follow you easily; does it make sense?
 - Is it DEVELOPED enough. Is there good concrete support for your MIs?



It might be a good idea to have someone else read your Rough Draft.

Perhaps get a friend or relative to see if it is interesting,
Conveys a good message, and is worth reading.

- Once you are happy with the content, edit carefully to be sure that sentence errors are down to a minimum. It is not expected to be perfect, but it should reflect good control of grammar.
- This is now your revised rough draft. It should be your best effort.

We are ready for the Final Copy



Final Copy

- A Final Copy should reflect a polished piece of college writing. You are telling your reader, this is the best I can do. Be certain it is.

Be sure of the following

- You have carefully edited out all sentence errors you can find. The best content will be diluted and have far less impact if blatant sentence errors persist. Your credibility as a writer will not be enhanced with grammatically inaccurate sentences.



If sentences are a problem for you, let's discuss ways to help you.

Also you may want to visit the *Writing Lab* on campus where tutors are always available to help.

- Your final copy is in *MS Word format*.
- Your name is on it
- It is submitted on time. Once the essay closes, the system will not accept any submissions
- It is submitted through *Campus Cruiser*. Note: emailed essays will not be accepted..

See how easy that is – Congratulations; you're done!