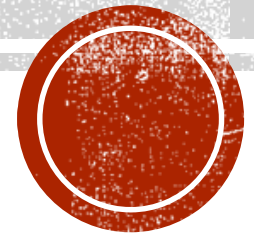


INTRODUCTION TO WRITING



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What is writing?



Writing is...

- a visual form of communication, either written or printed in hard-copy or in electronic form.
- the process of putting sentences together to form a text.
- a practical means for fixing or consolidating various language components (e.g. vocabulary, syntax).
- considered as a productive skill, because the writer creates new language and does not only interpret existing information

Process of writing

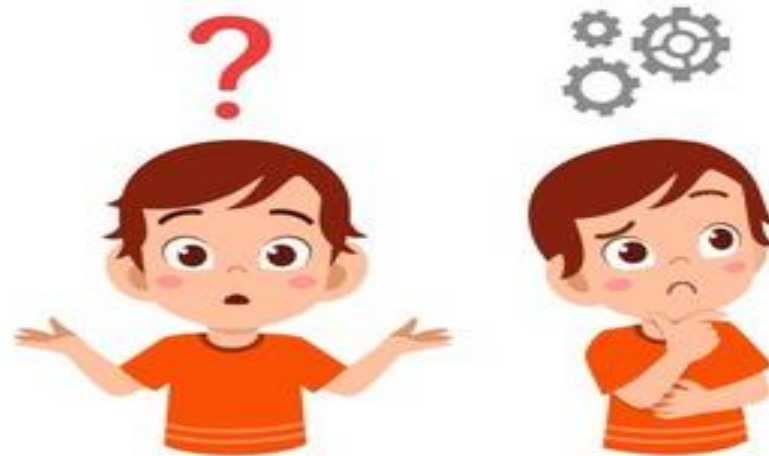


1) Planning – Pre-writing

- Prewriting is any activity that helps you create, develop, and organize ideas for writing
- Prewriting is the first stage during which the writer needs to consider **three main factors**: topic, audience, and purpose
- The main **purpose** of prewriting activities is to find the focus of the paper. Focus is the point on which all energy is concentrated.
- Once you decide on the approach you may begin gathering ideas. Remember that you can always change the focus of your paper provided that you have enough time to make the necessary adjustments.
- If you have trouble limiting the subject, a prewriting activity may help you find the focus.

Questions to ask yourself when beginning a writing assignment

- 1) Were you given a topic, or can you choose one?
- 2) What is the purpose of this writing (assignment/essay etc.)? Are you informing, persuading, analyzing, entertaining, or summarizing for your readers?
- 3) What are the five W's of this writing (assignment/essay etc.)? Who? What? When? Where? Why?



Prewriting Techniques

1) Brainstorming

This is a technique where you record every idea that comes to your mind that relates back to the topic.

Useful Tips:

- Be comfortable and in a space with good lighting. You'll think best when you're in a pleasant environment.
- Eliminate distractions. Stay focused and record everything.
- Make lists of all the ideas that come to you. Don't worry about trying to write in complete sentences. Just capture your ideas quickly.
- Brainstorm by having conversations with other people.
- Brainstorm while reading. Annotate and interact with the text (use sticky notes if you need to) to capture your reactions, commentary, and own ideas.

Brainstorming can make it easier both to think of a good topic and to start finding supporting evidence and examples.

2) Clustering

This is a technique where you map out your thinking using circles and lines to display “branches” of your ideas. It is a great way to show how many ideas can connect to one central idea and can also help you prioritize and organize your ideas to use in your writing.

Useful Tips:

- Draw a circle and write your central idea in the middle.
- Branch off by drawing a line and creating another circle. Note an idea which relates back to your central idea. Continue the process.

How do all your ideas connect to one another?

What do the new additions make you think of?

What is another aspect of the overall topic?

3) Freewriting

Freewriting is a technique which asks users to write without stopping for a short period of time (approximately ten minutes is a good goal) to allow ideas to flow freely.

Useful Tips:

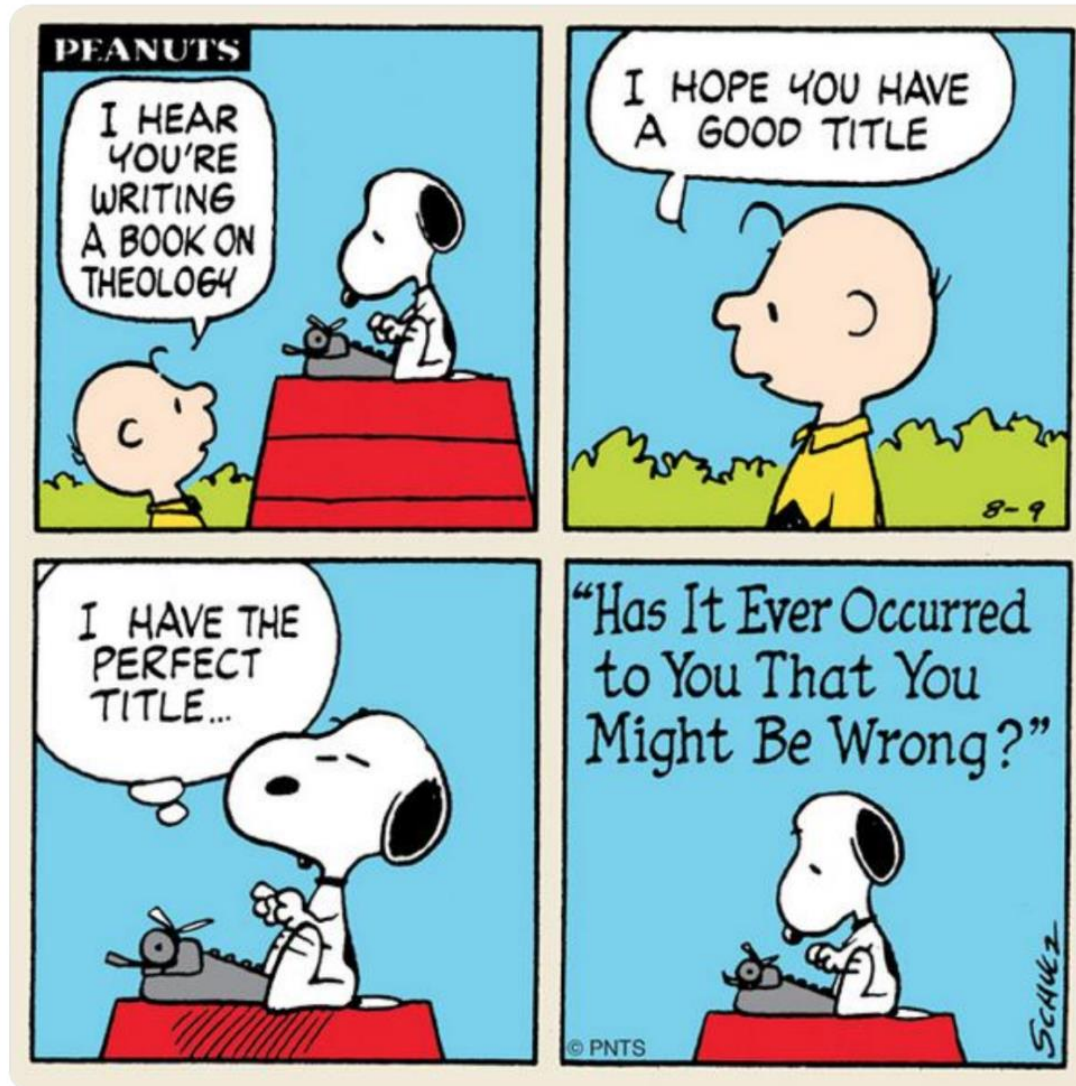
- At this stage, grammar, punctuation, etc. doesn't matter. Don't let those concerns distract you.
- This process focuses on getting down all of your ideas on paper quickly.
- When you free write, you don't have to use complete sentences or paragraphs, as long as you understand what is being written.
- Allow yourself to think more about the subject and develop more ideas.

4) Preliminary research

After deciding on a general topic, think of broad search terms. These can be used to gather research and refine ideas. The sources that are available will help you further limit your paper's focus.

Useful Tips:

- Once you know your focus, try to use the most specific search terms possible.
- Use the library databases to your advantage.
- Look for synonyms.



2) Drafting

- Once you have done all preparations, you start to write your paper.
- At this stage, you will write as you have planned and make use of all data and ideas collected in pre-writing.
- This is the stage of actual composing papers.
- You may use all the strategies you have acquired, such as summarizing and paraphrasing.
- Focus on content and structure.



Structure of Writing

1) Introduction

- The purpose of the introduction is to give your reader a clear idea of what your essay will cover. It should provide some background information on the specific problem or issue you are addressing and should clearly outline your answer.
- The contention and supporting arguments are usually stated in the introduction.
- Introduce the particular problem or topic the essay will address in a general sense to provide context, before narrowing down to your particular position and line of argument.
- Provide a specific and debatable thesis statement.

What is a thesis statement?

Thesis Statement

- A thesis statement usually appears at the conclusion of the introductory paragraph of a paper.
- A thesis statement is a sentence that makes a statement about a topic and predicts how the topic will be developed. It does not simply announce a topic: it says something about the topic.

E.g.

1) Bad: Reading can develop a child's analytical mind.

Words like "can" aren't strong enough. This thesis statement gives the question of how? If you're about to write several paragraphs (or pages) about a topic, make sure you can confidently defend every point you make.

2) Good: Reading develops a child's mind by fostering comprehension skills, increasing vocabulary, and exposing them to new worlds they might not otherwise encounter.

Now, we've not just stated that reading is good, we've provided a sampling of all the benefits we're about to bring to light in our paper.

2) Body

- The body is where the main ideas are developed, sources are brought in to support them, and the overall argument is made.
- Each paragraph within the body should revolve around one major idea (Present one idea per paragraph) and follow the basic guidelines of a paragraph, i.e., topic sentence, idea, support, wrap-up.
- Outlining is the key to writing the paper's body. With a proper outline, you'll know how many paragraphs (or ideas) you want to present, what order you want to present them, and what you want to say in them.
- Begin with a topic sentence that relates to the thesis or main idea of the paper.
- Provide enough examples, explanations, facts, opinions and quotes

3) Conclusion

- Summarize or connect everything that's been said and give you a final chance to lay out your main ideas before the reader.
- Your conclusion should repeat your main ideas/thesis, address any opposing views, and point to future directions for research or for your topic.
- Just as the introduction presents the topic, main idea, and supporting points to the reader, so does the conclusion bring all of those back together to conclude things up neatly

Three ways to organize body paragraphs:

1) Chronological order

- Form of writing that narrates, describes, informs, or explains a process.
- When using chronological order, arrange the events in the order that they actually happened, or will happen if you are giving instructions.
- This method requires you to use words such as *first*, *second*, *then*, *after that*, *later*, and *finally*. These transition words guide you and your reader through the paper as you expand your thesis.

2) Order of importance

- This is best used for persuading and convincing, ranking items by their importance, benefit, or significance and illustrating a situation, problem, or solution
- Most essays move from the least to the most important point, and the paragraphs are arranged in an effort to build the essay's strength.
- It is best to begin with the most important point because it immediately captivates your readers and compels them to continue reading.

3) Spatial order

➤ It is best used for:

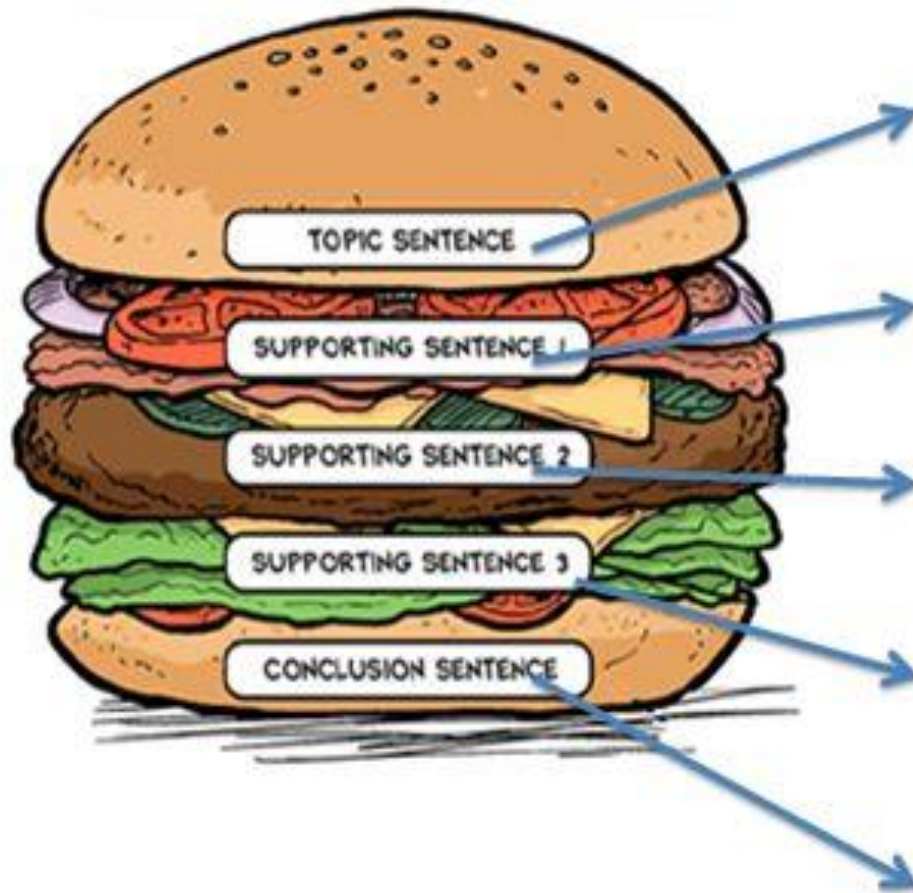
Helping readers visualize something as you want them to see it

Evoking a scene using the senses (sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound)

Writing a descriptive essay

➤ The key to using this method is to choose a specific starting point and then guide the reader to follow your eye as it moves in an order from your starting point.

Sandwich Theory



Parts of a Paragraph

Topic Sentence: This sentence tells the reader the main idea, or what the paragraph will be about.

Supporting Sentence One: This sentence gives specific details relating to the main idea.

Supporting Sentence Two: This sentence gives another specific detail relating to the main idea.

Supporting Sentence Three: This sentence gives more specific details relating to the main idea.

Concluding Sentence: This sentence refers to the topic sentence and sums up the main idea of the paragraph.

3) Revising and Editing

Revising and editing are the two tasks you undertake to significantly improve your essay.

- When you **revise**, you take a second look at your ideas. You might add, cut, move, or change information in order to make your ideas clearer, more accurate, more interesting, or more convincing.
- When you **edit**, you take a second look at how you expressed your ideas. You add or change words. You fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. You improve your writing style. You make your essay into a polished, mature piece of writing, the end product of your best efforts.



How do you get the best out of your revisions and editing?

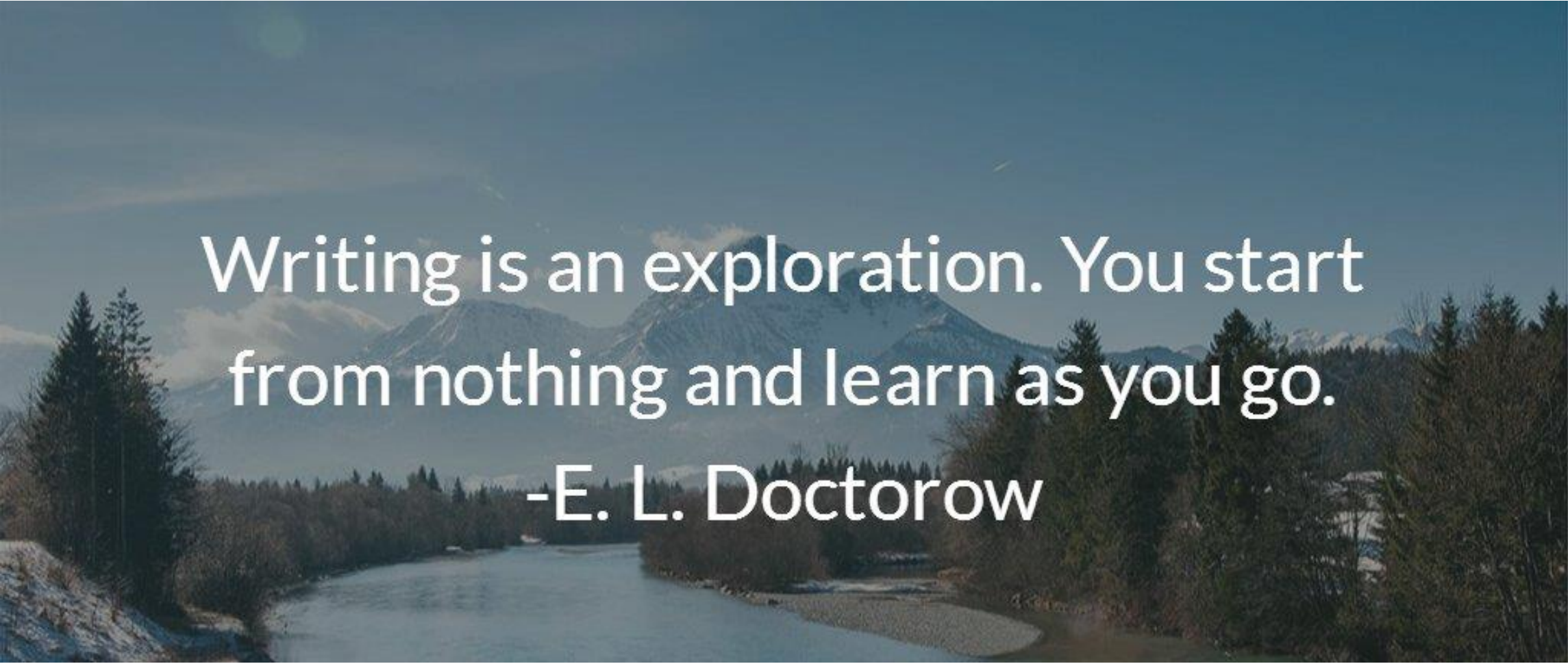
Here are some strategies that writers have developed to look at their first drafts from a fresh perspective.

- Take a break. You are proud of what you wrote, but you might be too close to it to make changes. Set aside your writing for a few hours or even a day until you can look at it objectively.
- Ask someone you trust for feedback and constructive criticism.
- Pretend you are one of your readers. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied? Why?
- Proofread!

4) Publishing

- This stage represents the act of presenting written work to an audience.





Writing is an exploration. You start
from nothing and learn as you go.

-E. L. Doctorow

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