

Writing Process

The writing process refers to stages that writers follow from the beginning to the end of creating a piece of writing. The most important stages of writing process are planning, drafting, copy editing and publishing.

A process for technical writing has a lot in common with creative writing process, however different genres have their own processes to be followed. Technical writers must spend a lot of early stages carefully planning their writing. Creative or academic writers are concerned about words to enrich their writing, but technical writers are concerned not only with words but also with graphics and page design. A technical writer should understand following three features of technical writing process to manage the stages of the process:

1) Writing is recursive: Writing is a creative activity and starts from planning and ends in publication. Between the two ends a lot of activities go recursively to go back to add some missed items or rectify the errors. The more the writers read back their writing, the more additions or deletions and corrections they make.

For example, while writing an essay, a writer has to go through the structure of the essay in a given format, that is, introduction, description and conclusion. While revising writer notices introduction part is placed in description part, so shifts that part to introduction paragraph. Thus, it is natural that a writer moves forward and backward while creating any type of writing which is recursive process.

2) Writing takes time: Writing is such an academic activity that requires a lot of time. First of all a writer should make a plan, read a lot to decide what subject matter and topics

to be chosen. All these activities take a lot of time by themselves. Still the task has not come to an end. He/she has to produce first draft, revise the draft, copy edit it, review and publish it. All these activities are time-consuming tasks. Therefore, writing is a time taking task.

3) Writing is different for everyone: As the writing process has different stages, different writers do different things in these different stages, and every individual writer has different attitudes to different stages. For example, a writer love planning while he feels uninterested in revision or editing. It means writing is different for everyone.

⊗ Stages of Writing Process/Process for Technical Writing:

1) Planning: Planning is the first step of technical writing process. Planning refers to the stage of writing in which the writer thinks of a topic and prepares to develop the topic into a long discourse. Planning involves following stages:

a) Choosing a topic: Sometimes we will get a topic with some guidelines from employer. When the topic is given, it would be a bit easier that we need not to brainstorm about our topic. In such case we need to conduct literature ~~view~~ review to find out research gap regarding the given topic. Ask about audience, purpose, scope and medium.

↳ Brainstorming: Brainstorming refers to the technique of thinking about a topic before beginning a writing assignment. It involves listing everything that occurs to the mind about the idea as soon as possible. The techniques for brainstorming are as follows:-

- Talk ideas and take notes.
- Make a flow chart of main points
- Write an outline of ideas
- Use combination of these techniques.

↳ Free writing: Free writing is an act of writing freely and the best ways to generate ideas for an essay. We can write what come to our mind without judging what we have written or worrying about grammar and sentence structure. Free writing is of three types:

Open freewriting: In open free writing, we write about anything and see where our writing takes us.

Focused freewriting: In focused freewriting, we choose a topic first and write freely about our ideas related to topic.

Looping: In looping, we need to write continuously for five minutes. Then stop for a while and summarize our writing in a single sentence.

↳ Journaling: Journaling is another way to find out an idea for writing. Writing a journal is to express yourself. To help generate ideas and explore relationships among them, many writers keep a journal-notebook in which they record ideas and reactions to various issues.

b) Shaping an idea: Whenever we choose a topic, we need to shape our ideas related to our selected topic. These ideas will give some direction to our writing. While shaping ideas, we need to apply the strategies of questioning, reading, mapping and outlining that will help to focus our ideas.

↳ Questioning: We can use as much informative wh-questions as 'the basics for shaping ideas'. They are used to get information that has not been previously mentioned.

↳ Mapping: It is the way of visually analyzing the parts of a subject matter. It helps us to think about the topic. While forming maps, the writers use key words and phrases they need to answer, and even new sources of information they want to check.

↳ Outlining: It is a plan for writing and one of the most frequent techniques writers use to discover ideas and the relationships among them. An outline is a list of a writer's main points in the order they appear in documents.

2) Drafting and Revising: After completing the first stage of planning we will have enough information and a rough sketch so, now we are ready to write. A draft is an early version of writing. It involves writing to develop ideas in paragraphs and sentences. Revising is the act of going through written matter for clarity, coherence, correctness etc. Revising means to reorganize, make changes to content, relook the word choices. While revising we make notes in the draft.

3) Copyediting and Publishing:

Copyediting means examining a document for correctness in spelling, grammar, and mechanics. We can even ask help from our peer to copyedit. Reading loudly helps to identify fragments, grammatical errors and awkward sentences. Although electronic software catches misspelled words it may not help us to find the simple mistakes of word choices, so copyediting is needed.

Publishing means sending document to the person or people who need or requested it. We make sure that the document looks professional. We should use high quality paper and printer. If we prepare our document several days before deadline we will avoid the difficulty.

4) Writing Collaboratively: Many office writing projects are done collaboratively like: Newsletters, proposals, research projects, brochures, web pages and so on. More complex and longer the project, more likely we will work with others. Often collaborative writings are better than individual. Subject of our writing project will guide us to work with various interdisciplinary people. Even short documents sometimes require collaborative writing.

Advantages:

- Brings together different knowledge.
- ~~Can be dreaded event.~~
- Brings together different talents.
- Allows different perspectives and viewpoints.
- Improves work relationships.
- Is enjoyable.

Disadvantages:

- Can include conflict.
- Can take longer than people working alone.
- Can take away personal motivation.
- Can lead to unequal workloads.
- Can produce fragmented writing.