

Writing Skills

Writing is the one of the basic skills of the English language. It is generally considered one of the most difficult that other skills for foreign language students.

The basic rule of writing says that you need to think about what you are going to write BEFORE you write and go over your writing a few times BEFORE sending it out or publishing it. This is because the act of writing is a complicated task, which involves many thought processes all going on at once. In order to produce written material more efficiently, these processes can be broken down into stages. These are defined differently by various approaches, with anywhere between 4 and 10 stages. We suggest the following six stages:

1. planning
2. drafting
3. revising
4. Editing
5. proofreading
6. presenting

1. The Planning Stage

It is very difficult and even futile to try and think about WHAT you want to write and HOW you want to phrase it in the same time. In planning, you try to foresee what you want your final text to look like, using the following points:

- Define your writing topic and content area. Narrow your topic down to a specific angle that will be developed in your text. Make sure you are aware of any specific content or technical requirements you may have from teachers. Research and analyze information sources if needed.
- Calculate the time needed to complete your writing task. Remember that even a 1,500 word college essay may take a few days to properly complete, so do not postpone writing assignments to the last minute!
- Brainstorm and jot down any ideas, thoughts, arguments, words, and phrases you think are relevant to your text.
- Organize your preliminary arguments into an outline following a logical order that would suit the general essay structure of opening, body, and ending. Put ideas in sub-groups that will later develop into paragraphs.

2. The Drafting Stage

When writing the first draft of your text, focus on content only and FORGET about language and mechanical aspects such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation. You must write freely and try to find the best way to communicate your ideas. Do not get stuck checking spelling and other nitty-gritty at this point! That will stop your writing flow!

Remember the following points:

- The opening paragraph (introduction) should present the text's topic. Refrain from using the first person when doing this (No: "In this essay I will present...") and prefer a stronger opening technique to entice the reader to keep reading. For example, pose a provocative question; give a testimonial or illustrative story, or present interesting facts on the phenomenon under discussion.
- The body (discussion) paragraphs should each present one idea or aspect of the general topic and begin with a topic sentence that will orient the reader to what follows within the paragraph.
- Provide enough supporting sentences for the topic sentence, using examples, explanations, facts, opinions, and quotes. Consider the expected text length and go into detail accordingly.
- Use connecting words (conjunctions and discourse markers, such as and, or, but, so, because, however, moreover, for example etc.) to logically unite arguments, sentences and paragraphs.
- The ending (conclusion) should present summative remarks and repeat the text's key idea or thesis in other words. Try to finish with a strong statement that will have your reader asking for more...
- Orient yourself to the appropriate register called for by your audience and purpose of writing. Keep it simple when writing to young children; consider delving into polemics when aiming for university professors...
- Try to diversify the words and phrases you use as much as possible, using synonyms, descriptive and figurative language, while considering the expected writing style of your text.
- If time permits, read your draft very generally and redraft, making immediate global changes you feel are urgent. Don't be too harsh on yourself and do not focus on fine nuances in meaning at this point.

3. The Revising Stage

No text should be sent out or published without going over it at least once! Twice is even better. You must reread even the shortest business email to prevent any embarrassing mistakes (such as sending the wrong email to the wrong person, to start with). Revising means evaluating your text's content and making sure you actually wrote what you intended in the planning stage. You may be surprised to hear that revising should take as much time as drafting! Go through the following checklist when revising:

On a global level (text-paragraph), ask yourself:

- Did I actually write on the required topic and used relevant arguments and examples, or digressed inadvertently?
- Is each piece of information relevant to the paragraph it is in? Should I delete certain parts or move them somewhere else in the text? In other words, is your text cohesive and unified around one theme?
- Does each paragraph and sentence logically follow and relate to what's written

before it? Is there enough or too much support to each topic sentence? Change accordingly.

On a local level (sentence-word) ask yourself:

- Did I use suitable connectors to present the logical relations between text segments (cause=effect, general-detail, compare=contrast, chronological order etc.) in order to make the text coherent?
- Did I technically tie ideas together with relevant word choices, apt pronoun reference, and techniques such as parallelism and emphasis?
- Did I diversify sentence types and lengths (from simple to complex, short and concise to long and elaborate)? Consider uniting two consecutive short sentences or dividing a long compound-complex sentence into two shorter ones.
- Did I refrain from no-no's such as run-ons, fragments, dangling modifiers, wordiness, or inappropriate register? Did I avoid sexist language?
- Did I refrain from repeating the same ideas and words and used a rich and varied vocabulary? Did I use adjectives and adverbs for text enrichment? Did I mainly use my own words?
- Do not attempt showing-off with a fancy word you do not know how to use properly.

4. The Editing Stage

Editing is sometimes considered part of revising, but refers to judging your text for language and technicalities rather than content. This is the time for all you grammar lovers and nitty-gritty enthusiasts to meticulously scan the text for language accuracy.

- Your sentences should adhere to proper word order rules, each containing a subject and a predicate. Use a variety of verb tenses correctly and appropriately (simple, progressive, perfect, and perfect-progressive tenses).
- Be careful with subject-verb agreement issues.
- Use a variety of language constructions to make your writing more precise and educated (comparative structures, relative clauses, conditional sentences, not too much of the passive voice etc.)
- Use a dictionary or spell checker when not sure about spelling. Reread your text again for problematic homonyms (there-their-they're).
- Use a variety of punctuation marks accurately and consult a style guide when hesitating between a comma, colon, or semi-colon.
- Edit for text mechanics: capitalization, numbering, italics, and abbreviations.

5. The Proofreading Stage

Proofreading comprises that one extra step you need after revising and editing in order to locate any small mistakes you missed out on until now. Be it some urgent last minute content change or some spelling and punctuation that escaped your attention – this is the time to brush away those invisible blemishes before writing or printing out the final copy.

Tip: For a second proofread, try and pinpoint mistakes reading the text backwards. You'll be surprised at what you can find this way.

6. The Presentation Stage

After the text itself is ready, it is time to work on some finishing touches with aesthetics polishing your text to perfection.

- If you are handwriting your text, use a ruler to create margins on both sides of the page. Remember to double-space if required by a teacher. Write neatly and legibly!
- When using a computer, be consistent with font usage, spacing, and heading levels. Always be on the look out for more tiny errors for last-minute on-screen corrections.
- In academic papers, adhere to the strict citation conventions, dictated by your style manual.
- Consider using indentation for every paragraph as well as larger spacing between paragraphs.

The writing process may seem long and tiresome, but it is a guaranteed path to success. The more you use it, the sooner you will realize how you couldn't without it.

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What is a précis?

A brief summary of a book, article, speech, or other text. Plural: précis. The basic characteristics of an effective précis are conciseness, clarity, completeness, unity, and coherence.

Tips for Writing a Précis

A well-written précis should be a serviceable substitute for the original work. The goal is to preserve the core essence of the work in a manner that is both clear and concise. At a minimum, the précis should include the topic or main thesis, the purpose of the research, what was studied, what methods were used, what results (or insight) were gained, and a conclusion.

Goals of the Précis

Compress and clarify a lengthy passage, article, or book, while retaining important concepts, key words, and important data.

Remove what is superfluous and retain the core essence of the work.

Give a brief description of key terms

Give a brief description of methods – an idea of the general approach used by the researchers.

State the purpose of the research or piece of writing (why was it important to conduct this research or write on this topic?)

When finished, the précis should clearly state:

This is what was studied (argued, discussed).

This is how it was done (this was the focus).

This is what was learned.

This is what it means (why it is important).

Sample Précis

With respect to political feasibility, "[i]t becomes an axiom of constitutional reform," Sundquist pessimistically concludes, "that any structural amendment that would bring major benefits cannot be adopted--again, barring a governmental collapse that can be clearly attributed to the constitutional design--while any measure that stands a chance of passage is likely to be innocuous" (p. 330). The most effective measures will likely encounter organized institutional opposition and little public support. This grim prediction is based on (a) the assumption that most Americans fault incumbents (as opposed to the Constitution) for government failure, and (b) the zero-sum nature of the reforms and the inevitable opposition by incumbents who are expected to perceive their losses as outweighing the potential collective gains.

Engineering terms 1

A definition is a form of words which states the meaning of a term or statement of the exact meaning of a word or the nature of something. It can be linked to a verbal map, where just as a map provides an outline of a place, a definition provides a definite outline or description of an object, process or term.

Microscope

An optical instrument for viewing very small objects typically magnifying by several hundred times. This instrument is used in scientific study for making very small things look larger. So we can examine them carefully.

Catalyst

A catalyst is a substance which accelerates the rate of a chemical reaction by means of contacting with the reactants and which itself is not consumed by the overall reaction.

Gravitation

It is the natural phenomenon of attraction between physical objects with mass or energy or the act of moving under the influence of this attraction.

Atom

Atom is the smallest part of the substance that may take part in a chemical reaction. It may or may not have independent existence.

Energy

The power derived from the utilization of physical or chemical resources, especially to provide light and heat or to work machines.

Technical description of a ceiling fan

Ceiling fan-

A fan consists of a rotating arrangement of vanes or blades which act on the air. Usually, it is contained within some form of housing or case. This may direct the airflow or increase safety by

Characteristics of Business Communication/letters [RGPV/ Dec2013(4)]

Effective business communication is critical in today workforce--more than ever before. Business communicators have a variety of tools to choose from and must use those tools carefully and with consideration of their audience and their intended communication goals. Effective business communicators will find that their efforts pay off in better relationships and business success.

Even in small organizations, it is wrong to assume that all employees will have the same needs, interests and desires when it comes to business communication. Effective business communication is segmented to meet the needs of specific audiences. Employees working in an administrative setting, for instance, will have different needs--and different access to information--than employees working in a manufacturing environment.

Specific

Generic business communication doesn't meet the needs of anyone. Effective business communication is specific. The more specific communication is, the more it meets the needs of its audience, says Lin Gensing-Pophal, author of "Marketing With the End in Mind".

Accurate

When information is inaccurate it loses its credibility. The sender of the information also loses credibility. Effective business communication is accurate in terms of the content conveyed and in terms of simple things that include grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Timely

Employees need to know what is going on in their organizations--and in the external environment--that impacts them. Today's technology-driven environment makes it more challenging than ever before for businesses to communicate with employees in a timely manner, but it is critical for effectiveness business communication.

Frequent

It cannot be assumed that a message has gotten across if it is sent just one time. Effective

- business communication occurs frequently to ensure that it has been received by all employees.

Employees leave, new employees join the company and employees transfer from one role to another, requiring new and updated information.

Multi-Channel

Effective business communication needs to be sent through a broad variety of channels to ensure that it is received by employees in different settings. Businesses, fortunately, have a variety of channels to choose from--from the traditional (print, bulletin boards, meetings) to the new-technology (email, blogs, social media sites).

Face-to-Face

Face-to-face communication is still the most effective, says Grensing-Pophal, and should be used whenever possible and practical. Of course, in very large organizations this can be challenging, but even then, alternatives may include videoconferencing or the use of webinars.

Two-Way

Employees need the opportunity to share their feedback, opinions and thoughts with managers and employers. Effective business communication offers the opportunity for two-way communication to benefit employees and employers.

S.NO	RGPV QUESTIONS	Year	Marks
Q.1	(i) What are the characteristic features of Business Letter?	Dec2013	4