

The Writing Process

Using the writing process can help your students organize their writing. The more familiar your students are with the writing process, the more efficient they will be at using it. Read the description of the writing process steps below. Using the writing process can help your students think through their writing and ensure that each step of writing is addressed



Brainstorming/Prewriting

This is the beginning phase where all writing starts. At this stage, writers are generating ideas, brainstorming topics, webbing ideas, or just talking or thinking about ideas. Graphic organizers are a great way to organize brainstorming and prewriting. Please see pages 15–18 for some graphic organizers.

What does brainstorming and prewriting look like? Here are the key features:

- Discussing with the teacher, partner, or class
- Brainstorming individually, as a class, or with a partner
- Drawing a picture of an event or idea
- Using webbing or other graphic organizers independently or as a group

Drafting

At this stage of the process, students are beginning to get their ideas on paper. Generally, students need to start with a solid beginning. The topic sentence should be clearly stated. A draft needs a beginning, middle, and end.

What does drafting look like?

- Recording writing ideas on paper and creating an outline of the paragraph
- Creating a rough draft version of the paragraph or writing assignment

The Writing Process (cont.)

Editing/Revising

First the student should edit the paper by looking at the mechanics of writing. Then he or she should revise the paper by looking at the organization and structure of the writing.

What does editing and revising look like?

- Conferencing (peer/teacher)
- Reading and revising (student)

Publishing

Publishing occurs when the other steps are completed and the student is ready to write his or her final copy. The final copy can be handwritten or typed on a computer. The goal is to present the information neatly and attractively so others can enjoy it.

What does publishing look like?

- Creating a final copy
- Sharing the writing orally (reading aloud to a partner, group, or class)

Reflecting

Reflection is a key phase in the writing process. It allows time for students to review their writing and see whether their writing skills are improving.

What does reflecting look like?

- Student reads what has been written and asks questions such as:
 - Is that what I wanted to say?
 - Is there more I should have written?
 - Did I write this piece how I planned to write it?
 - What can I learn from this assignment?
 - How can I continue to improve my writing?
- Students are given opportunities to read/share their writing with others.

Graphic Organizer: Outline Form

Title: _____

Thesis Statement:

I. First Paragraph:

Topic Sentence: _____

Supporting Details:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Transition Sentence (include transitional words):

II. Second Paragraph:

Topic Sentence: _____

Supporting Details:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Transition Sentence (include transitional words):

III. Third Paragraph:

Topic Sentence: _____

Supporting Details:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Transition/Concluding Sentence:

Continue to use this format for as many paragraphs as you need to complete your writing.

Sample Essay #3

Success and Failure

The American poet and teacher George Woodberry wrote, “Defeat is not the worst of failures. Not to have tried is the true failure.”

Some people never try things they really want to do because they are afraid of being embarrassed, or because they are worried they will disappoint themselves or others.

Trying something new takes courage. Trying can lead to success or failure—but if you don’t try, then you have no chance at success.

Questions:

Have you ever refused to try something because you were afraid to fail? Did you regret not having tried?

Directions:

Think about something you may have wanted to do, but didn’t try. What stopped you from trying? Explain the situation and what went through your mind while you were making your decision. What did you learn from your choice? If you had the chance to do it over again, what would you do?

Success and Failure

I figured out what success and failure were the first time my parents signed me up for a team sport. I had never played baseball before, but it didn’t take me long to figure out what success was. It was hitting the ball over the fence. It didn’t seem that hard.

It was hard. I couldn’t believe how easy some kids made it look. The first few games I played, I kept striking out or getting out at first. I felt like a complete failure to my teammates, parents, and especially myself.

I decided to try harder and asked my dad to get me extra help. We started going to the batting cages, and I got better. My coach saw that I was trying hard, and he also started helping me. I also started to pitch a little.

Pitching turned my failure in baseball to success. I was really good at it. I learned to throw a slider, a curve ball, and really good strikes. By the time I was nine years old, I was drafted to the Majors in Little League. It was a great team and a lot of fun.

Many people saw how I turned my failure at baseball when I was young into a success after just a few years. If I keep working hard, who knows how far I might go?

Time Capsule

A time capsule is a storage container with a collection of items and information that represent a specific time period. It is usually used as a way for people to communicate with people in the future. Imagine that your class is burying a time capsule in the school playground. You have left written instructions that the capsule should not be opened until the year 2075. Everyone in the class is putting one object in the capsule to show what life is like now.



Question:

What would you put in the capsule?



Directions:

Think about an object that would show someone in the future what life today is like. Make sure that the object is something that will last until the capsule is opened. Write about why you chose that object and how it represents life today. Be creative!

Curing Disease

Do you have a pet? For hundreds of years, animals have served humans not only as pets, but also in medical and scientific research. Today, millions of animals—mostly rats and mice—are used in scientific experiments. Rabbits, pigs, monkeys, birds, hamsters, guinea pigs, dogs, and cats are also used as experimental animals. Those who support research on animals say that scientists can learn a lot about curing disease in humans by testing medicines and procedures on animals. Heart surgery, cancer treatments, and organ transplants were all tried on animals before humans. Those who are against using animals for research say that animals feel pain, just like humans, and it is wrong to experiment on them.



Question:

Are you in favor of or against scientific testing on animals?



Directions:

Think about the rights of animals. Using details to support your opinion, write about whether you think animals should be used in medical research. Does it make sense to use animals to help cure human disease?

Choose What You Learn

To elect something means to choose it. Electing a president means you have chosen him or her for office. In school, an elective class is one that you don't have to take, but you want to. You may not have any choice in your classes right now, but you will soon. All high schools and colleges offer elective courses. Imagine that your school has decided to offer one elective class for fifth graders. It is not reading, math, science, or social studies, but something that is not taught in your school now. Your principal is letting the students help decide what elective class to offer.



Question:

What elective class would you like your school to offer?



Directions:

Think about a special class you would like to take at school that is not offered now. Write a letter to the principal, stating the reasons you think taking the class would make sense for you and other students. Give details to support your choice.