

Basic Writing Principles



by Tariq Maqsood

Writing Skills

Writing is not simply documenting ideas as they come to mind. It is a process that requires the writer **think carefully** about **the purpose of writing**, **plan what to say**, **plan how to say** and **understand** what the reader needs to know. Writing starts way before you put letters to a page. It involves processes like **critical thinking**, **communication**, and **creativity**.



Prewriting Strategies

- Brainstorming (collect your data and thoughts)
- Mind mapping or clustering (visual representation of your ideas)
- Free writing (focus on ideas rather than accuracy)
- Outlining (produce your outline with the help of mind map and organize information)



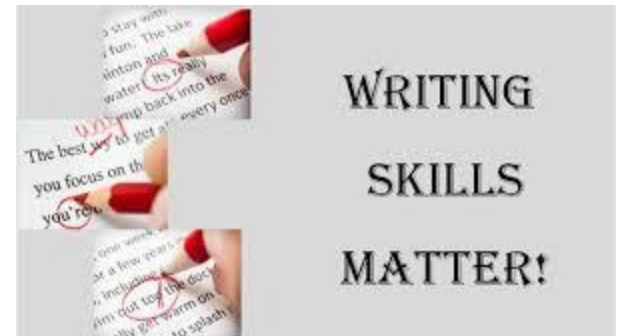
The Process of Writing

- Teach students specific basic strategies of the various components of the writing process ([planning](#) ,[evaluating](#), [revising](#) etc).
- Teach writing strategies explicitly and directly ([make sure students have background knowledge and skills to understand the strategy that is being taught](#)).
- Describe a strategy and model its use like a sports coach.
- Articulate the purpose of a strategy clearly.
- Guide students to apply that strategy in groups and then encourage them practise applying independently.
- Help students select the appropriate writing strategy to make it easy ([e.g., post strategies on a wall chart in the classroom](#)).



The Process of Writing

- Don't release responsibility to students too early.
- Gradually release writing responsibility from the teacher to the student.
- Identify difficulties and assist them with learning and applying the writing process.
- Help students to apply the skills they have learned from writing skills instructions.
- Work with words relevant to students' lives to help them build vocabulary.



Essentials of Writing Process

- Provide daily time for students to write and regularly assign brief writing exercises in your classes.
- Teach young writers how to hold a pencil correctly.
- Observe the way students write.
- Teach students about handwriting, spelling and sentence construction.
- Explain the importance of grammar and sentence structure, as well as content.



Essentials of Writing process

- Work on your student's mindset.
- Provide instructions throughout the writing process.
- Stress the importance of clear, thoughtful writing.
- Teach students to use shorter sentences.
- Use simpler and more compact words.
- Read a lot, learn from everything.
- Focus by learning what not to do.



Essentials of Writing process

- Show, don't tell.
- Provide students with opportunities to give and receive feedback.
- Develop and communicate ideas.
- Encourage good writing.
- Brevity.



Using words effectively

- Adopt a conversational tone.
- Focus on the readers' vocabulary.
- Eliminate unnecessary words.
- Replace negative words.
- Add extra interest through synonyms.



Writing effective sentences

- Vary sentence pattern.
- Emphasize key words.
- Control sentence pattern.
- Variety in writing style
- Avoid common errors.



Joining sentences into paragraphs

- Teach students about components of a paragraph.
- Control and vary paragraph length.
- Group related sentences in each paragraph.
- Create a logical sequence of sentences.
- Use transitional devices as necessary to strengthen the link from one sentence to another (e.g. **first**, **for example**, **further**, **similarly**, **on the contrary**, **otherwise**, and **so on**).



Post-Writing

- Re-read and make sure sentences make sense.
- Eliminate unnecessary or redundant details.
- Proofread for spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuations.
- Use proofreaders' marks.
- Develop the proofreading habit.
- Read for specific types of errors.



Assigning In-Class Writing Activities

➤ **VOCABULARY STORY**

- Now, write a story using as many of the words on the list as you can. Aim to include **10-20 words** in your story, depending on how much time you have for this exercise. Have some fun with it and try to get the finished story to make sense.

➤ **PICTURE STORY**

- Grab the closest magazine to you and choose a random picture. Describe it in as much detail as you can. Don't just write what you see. Imagine you're in the picture. Think about what you would smell, feel or even taste.

➤ **STRUCTURED SUMMARY**

- Think back to the last book you read or movie you watched. Summarize it (say what happened briefly).



Assigning In-Class Writing Activities

➤ **STORY of MY LIFE**

- Think of something that you did in the past, like visiting a place or going to school. Write about your experience with this activity. Your writing should **start in the past** and **end in the future**.

➤ **CREATE STORY PROMPTS**

- Cut out pictures from a magazine with different characters or locations, or write down different words. Place these in a container or glue them to cards to use as writing prompts for creating a unique story.

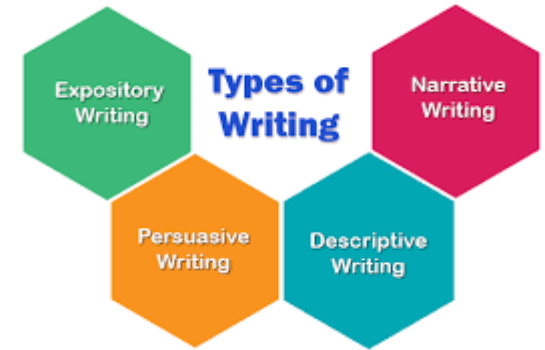
➤ **MAKE IT FUN**

- Play games and activities that encourage writing. Crossword puzzles and word games are great for everyone. Little ones will especially like the “write the word” game: where they search for items and write down the word when they find each item.



Types of Writing

- Technical writing
- Persuasive writing
- Argumentative writing
- Narrative writing
- Descriptive writing
- Expository writing
- Creative writing





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