

THE WRITING PROCESS

P.O.W.E.R. TIPS TO HELP YOU IMPROVE **YOUR** WRITING!

PREWRITING

Start with brainstorming or by making a web with all of the facts and ideas about the topic that you can think of! What do you already know? For bigger projects, this is also the time to begin your research! What do you need to find out? It can also help to:

- Limit your topic to a "size" you can handle. It's far easier to research and write about narrow topics!
- Search your local library for books, magazines and encyclopedia articles about your topic. While the web makes tons of information available these days, real libraries still have a great deal to offer!
- **Write down any questions** about your topic that come to mind — and use that list to guide your research. Note that new questions will probably come up as you learn!
- Try kid-friendly web resources such as **Kids Click** (www.kidsclick.org), **Awesome Library** (<http://www.awesomelibrary.org>) and even the **Simple English site of Wikipedia** (<http://simple.wikipedia.org>) to research your topic! They **often** give better results than Google!
- Make notes about important facts and details you discover — so you don't forget them! Write them in a notebook, on index cards or on stickies! Or, type them up in point form with a word processor.
- **Try to put the information you find into your own words.** Use "quotation marks" whenever you copy word-for-word and keep a record of where you got your information (i.e. your sources)!
- Ask around to **find people in your community who may have expert knowledge** about your topic. Many of them will be happy to help you if you ask nicely!
- **Remember that prewriting is often messy!** Don't worry if your notes are scribbled or disorganized!



ORGANIZING

Read through your prewriting and try to fit your best ideas and notes into organized groups or an outline. For essays and reports, you should think about "supporting your ideas" in a way that will make sense to your readers. Here are some helpful strategies to try:

- Mark connected ideas with highlighter pens — one color for each group.
- Delete or cross-out notes that now seem off-topic or incorrect.
- Look for "weak spots" in your planning. Do you need more facts?
- Recopy your rough ideas onto stickies. They are easy to move around!

WRITING

Using your organized notes, write a first draft. Major projects may require several drafts!

- The use of a talking word processor is highly recommended. Many programs have high-quality text-to-speech tools these days. They can be a HUGE help while writing and editing!
- Essays and reports demand good paragraphs with topic sentences and connected details. Fiction writing needs strong characters, descriptive language, a problem to solve — and action.
- **THINK:** How can you draw your reader "in" to your story or report? Try to come up with an interesting introduction — as well as a strong conclusion!
- If you're using a word processor, it's a good idea to create a "header" that automatically prints your name, the current date and page numbers.
- Double-space your work to make it easier to edit later on.



EDITING

Review what you have written — and make changes to improve it!

- Read **exactly** what you wrote out loud — or use text-to-speech again! Does it sound right?
- Re-write unclear sentences. Add more detailed vocabulary! Be more specific! Delete repetition!
- Pay attention to the order of your ideas and decide if you have any "holes to fill."
- Double-check the spelling, capitalization and punctuation. If you have trouble with these kinds of things, ask your teacher for a [Proofreading Checklist](#). Use spell-check one last time!

PRESENTATION

Make your work look as good as possible! Do one last check and then create your good copy!

- Was every correction you've made on paper actually added to your document? It's easy to miss some!
- Don't forget to include a proper list of your information sources (i.e. a Bibliography).
- Print on nice paper! Add artwork or illustrations! For oral reports, practice reading it out loud!