

NOTE: Student samples may contain spelling, punctuation, and/or other usage errors, and may not meet all the requirements of the paper according to the rubric. They are included as realistic examples of student writing—including the imperfections.

Explanation of a Process

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The process of writing can be fit into a group of general stages. When loosely adhered to, these steps will produce a polished, meaningful piece of writing. First, you need the motivation to complete the writing. This motivation can come from several places: it can be your own will, a will to create some beautiful poem or exciting story, or it can be external, like a homework deadline. Wherever it comes from, though, it is very important, because a good source of motivation is jet fuel to a writer. If you do not have a firm grasp of this motivation, you risk sounding trite and unenthusiastic.

Next, you will need to find an idea or theme based on your motivation. If you are writing something creative, or if your subject is not already defined, then your potential themes are limitless. If it is an assignment or report of some kind then perhaps you don't have as many options. Before you choose your theme, make sure it is something that you know about, or can research, because otherwise you will lack the authenticity that makes readers take you seriously. After you've decided on your theme, you are nearly ready to begin writing.

It may help to make sure that you're in the right frame of mind, as this will let you articulate yourself better, and it increases your chances of having the words come out as you'd like them to. Of course, you can use a variety of mindsets to add color to your writing, but some are more appropriate than others.

Now you are ready to begin the actual writing. An effective approach to this stage is to tackle the job head-on: just pour your thoughts out. You can always edit later, so just let it all stream out and burst forth. Once this is done, and you've got all your thoughts down, then go back over it, weeding out errors and awkward expressions, deleting anything that you don't like the sounds of, editing spelling and mechanics as you go. Then, do the opposite, adding anything that seems to be missing, and making sure you didn't take out anything important.

When you are done with these steps, it is time to perform the final revision. Read over your piece and see how it hits you. It might help to wait a few hours or until the next day before doing this, because you will see it from a fresh viewpoint and will catch errors or awkward parts that you may have overlooked before. Try to make your piece seamless and smooth and flowing. Polish it so that it looks like it was written in one smooth blast, instead of several separate passes.

At this point, if you feel happy with the piece, then you are probably done. If not, try to find what part of it is out of place, and revise. Maybe another person's input would help point out any possible improvements and existing strong points. If you do use someone else's input, make sure that you don't put it before your own, because you know how you want it to sound and you are the only one who can fully make it sound that way.