

EDUCATION

The write stuff

Getting past the blank page and putting pen to paper

Written expression is an art form. It needs to be nurtured and cultivated to reach a state of perfection.

The ability to express thoughts within a well-constructed essay is a valuable skill that is often taken for granted. While some students might consider having to write an essay a cruel method of torture, they are unaware of how much they benefit from learning how to write.

Although there are three stages that make up the composing process, there is no right or wrong way to write. Following the procedures within pre-writing, writing and rewriting eases the frustration and feelings of angst that are sometimes associated with essay writing.

Pre-writing involves the steps a writer takes before creating a draft. One of the



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ON THE CHALKBOARD

Dedicating a paragraph to each supportive component helps keep the essay organized and easy to read.

Researching information is an important aspect to essay writing. Proven knowledge that supports a thesis strength-

Writing the first draft involves putting the bits and pieces of pre-writing together to formulate a thoughtful, organized and coherent essay.

The first draft involves the physical act of typing or writing ideas and concepts into words, sentences and paragraphs. The outline is not set in stone, therefore students may decide to omit or include other information while writing their initial essays.

Achieving the task of completing the first draft brings students to the third phase of the writing process — rewriting. Proofreading, editing and revising are major components of rewriting. Sometimes gathering more information is necessary at this point.

Having another set of eyes read over an essay increases opportunities to catch

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most difficult tasks in writing is coming up with a topic. This situation is often a catch-22.

When given freedom of choice regarding subjects, students complain they don't know what to write, but when they are told what to write, they want to choose their own subjects. More often than not, topics are easily discovered through processes of brainstorming.

Once a topic is discovered, a thesis statement must come to life. The thesis states the discussion of the paper without saying, "My essay is about..." It is a solid well constructed sentence that is continuously supported throughout the composition. In order for the support to exist, statements with examples need to be provided.

ens a piece of writing by providing facts and other meaningful data.

Constructing an outline provides a road map of how the essay will be written. Outlines help writers visualize their compositions by organizing thoughts and ideas into paragraphs. When creating outlines, students do not need to write in complete sentences, unless instructed to do so by their teacher.

When the information is organized, it is time to write. Sitting down before a blank screen or piece of paper can be intimidating, especially when a student has no idea what to say. Completing the pre-writing process reduces and eliminates this fear. Keeping an outline in close proximity helps students stay focused and on task.

mechanical errors and gain insight that will strengthen the piece. They might decide to change the point-of-view, narrow the focus or totally rewrite the topic. Revising requires the writing of additional drafts that continue the cycle within this stage until a student feels satisfied with their work.

The writing process is far more complex than the three stages discussed here.

Students are encouraged to try different techniques and strategies in order to find which work best for them.

Writing can be a cyclical or linear process, depending on learning preferences and styles. Dedicating adequate and necessary time is imperative when creating a solid, well-constructed essay.