

The Writing Center @ KUMC

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The Writing Process

Many writers do not follow a writing process—or they follow a nonproductive one. Many writers don't know they have a process and would benefit by knowing consciously how they work.

Let's start with some negatives, just to get them out of the way, important though they are.

- Don't expect to write a perfect draft or near-perfect draft that you tweak.
- Don't draft and edit at the same time.
- Don't start out obsessing about your audience, especially if it's your instructor.
- Don't wait until the last minute.
- Don't do it all alone.

These negatives do not ignore the fact that every writer their process is different. Rather, they are meant to reject a fixed approach and encourage you to be flexible. Writing is a nonlinear process, and writers move forward and backward from one step/stage to another. So how do they get anything done? Each stage is meant to be creative and empowering, not limiting or useless, even if the goal is hard to see. Time, discovery, and planning are key.

Take a few minutes to consider what writing processes have worked well for you in the past. First, think of a writing project that left you feeling proud. Jot down your answers to some of the following questions:

- What was this writing assignment or project and why were you proud of it?
- How did you get started on the project?
- How much time did it take you to complete?
- How many drafts did you write?
- Did you ask others to read it? Who?
- What feedback did you receive on the project?

As you reflect your process, consider trying out some of the stages listed below. This five-part writing process emphasizes the importance of embracing your creativity (in the first three stages), before reading and revising your work critically (in the fourth and fifth stage). Remember that this order does not have to occur linearly. Feel free to jump around and stay flexible.



Adapted from The Writing Process Reconsidered, Claremont University Writing Center.