

Three steps in writing

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



For many people, the hardest part of writing is getting started. The thought of writing the first few words in the all-important lead sentence paralyzes many writers.

In writing, the prewriting stage or planning involves posing key questions that your finished work must answer. Asking these questions can help you plan your writing. Firstly, what is the purpose? Why are you writing it? In a sentence or two, state the purpose of the paper. Secondly, who is the audience and what are their needs and motivations? Effective persuasion depends on your ability to identify and appeal to the recipients' needs and motivations. Who are the readers – upper management, the board of directors, and your immediate supervisor? Research your audience so that you know how to appeal to their self-interest.

The client or other readers should understand clearly how they would benefit from your efforts. How do you catch the readers' attention? Once you have identified their needs, capture the reader's attention by addressing their primary concern first. Do readers want to save time and money? Increase profits? Change procedures? Are they motivated by prestige or convenience?

What results or outcomes would the reader like to have? A proposal asks for some change, perhaps a new policy or procedure, or the solution to a problem. Your job is to identify what outcomes the reader would like and then consider other outcomes the reader may have overlooked. If necessary, the author researches and limits the amount and length of writing. Correct spelling is not necessary at this stage.

In the second step of the writing process, a pencil is placed on paper or fingers on the keyboard. The task is to start writing and keep it flowing. Forget about spelling, grammar, or punctuation at this point. Do not try to make things perfect. Just write, let anything happen. Present facts or ideas about the topic. Keep your paragraphs short. Short paragraphs move the story along and cover the main points quickly while holding the reader's interest. Keep the press release to one or two pages, unless the story is particularly newsworthy – such as a new heart transplant technique or the latest innovation in computer memory. A concise release is more likely to be read and distributed. Read about

Prewriting, Writing and Revising

Aim for a conversational, journalistic style. Make your language lively and fresh. Most editors will simply delete complicated and highfaluting terminologies. Use quotes where you can. They add interest to a press release.

The third step is finalizing the paper, which is completing. Read the first draft. Does it say what it is meant to say? Is the message clear and complete? Are the facts or events in the right order? Does the writing follow the plan established in the prewriting stage? Concentrate on each word. Now correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Change what needs to be changed. If necessary, consult others for feedback. Notice any satisfaction or discomfort that comes with reading the words. If there is discomfort, more work is needed. Try revising some lines until you can say that the outcome

has already been written properly and in order. No one is perfect so under the completing stage is proofreading.

Proofread your final copy carefully and make sure you have addressed the issues that have to be discussed. A well-written and carefully prepared release will help keep your name in the public eye.

The purpose of proofreading is to check and correct the final printed product. The proofreading stage is not the time to make major changes. It is the time to check for typing errors or slips of the pen. Mistakes reflect a negative image to the reader.

In summary, it should be evident that good writing does not just happen. A writer follows a systematic approach that calls for planning, writing and completing. Just as you learn to read by reading, you learn to write by writing. Practice makes perfect. Writing improves with practice. Practice is the key to successful writing.

References:

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