

Module 1: English Essentials
Topic 3 Content: The Writing Process



The Writing Process

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Introduction

Prewriting

Introduction
Click on each of the spinning circles to learn more about what is involved in prewriting.

- + Thinking
- + Brainstorming
- + Planning
- + Researching
- + Organizing

Prewriting

Click on each of the spinning circles to learn more about what is involved in prewriting.

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Thinking

Prewriting

Thinking
Before you begin writing, consider the following questions: What are you going to write about? What are the requirements of the assignment? What are you interested in writing?

- + Thinking
- + Brainstorming
- + Planning
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Prewriting

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Brainstorming

Prewriting

Brainstorming

Brainstorming can be as simple as making a list of interesting topics or as detailed as creating clusters or webs about your chosen (or assigned) topic. Remember to make use of all the various brainstorming topics you have learned over the years like free-writing, clustering, or listing. If you want more information on specific types of brainstorming techniques, access [UNC-Chapel Hill's Online Writing Center](#).

+ Thinking
+ Brainstorming
+ Planning
+ Researching
+ Organizing

Prewriting

The graphic features a central image of a person in a white shirt and black vest holding up a large white sign that says 'Prewriting'. To the right of the sign is an orange vertical bar containing a list of prewriting activities, each preceded by a blue plus sign in a circle. The word 'Prewriting' is also written in a large, white, bubbly font across the middle of the graphic.

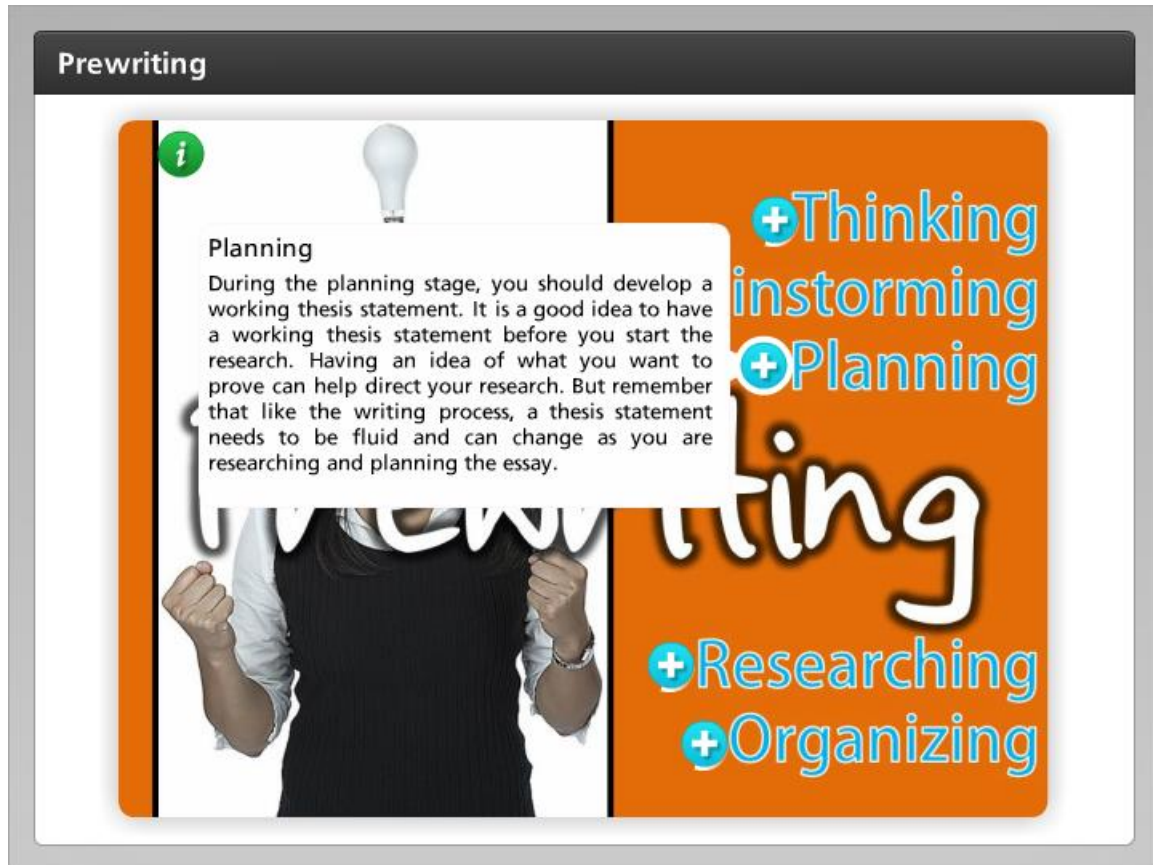
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Planning

Prewriting



Planning

During the planning stage, you should develop a working thesis statement. It is a good idea to have a working thesis statement before you start the research. Having an idea of what you want to prove can help direct your research. But remember that like the writing process, a thesis statement needs to be fluid and can change as you are researching and planning the essay.

- + Thinking
- + Informing
- + Planning
- + Researching
- + Organizing

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Researching

Prewriting



Researching
What do you know about the topic and what do you still need to know? Create a list of research questions to get started. Remember to keep track of your sources from the beginning. If you record citations from every source as you research, it will save you some trouble and effort later.

- + Thinking
- + Brainstorming
- + Planning
- + Researching
- + Organizing

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Organizing

The graphic is titled "Prewriting" in a dark grey header. It features a woman with a lightbulb above her head, symbolizing an idea. To the right, a list of prewriting activities is shown: Thinking, Brainstorming, Planning, Researching, and Organizing, each preceded by a blue plus sign. The word "Prewriting" is written in large, white, bubbly letters across the center. A white text box in the lower-left corner contains the heading "Organizing" and a paragraph of text.

Organizing

Outlines are plans for writing that map out the most important details. They are similar to a blueprint. Outlines can be as detailed or sparse as needed. Sometimes outlines can be created early in prewriting to organize basic ideas; then, after research or further brainstorming, the details are added to this outline. When writing a research paper, it is a good idea to add your sources to the outline to remind yourself why you wanted to use these sources and where you intended to use them in the paper.

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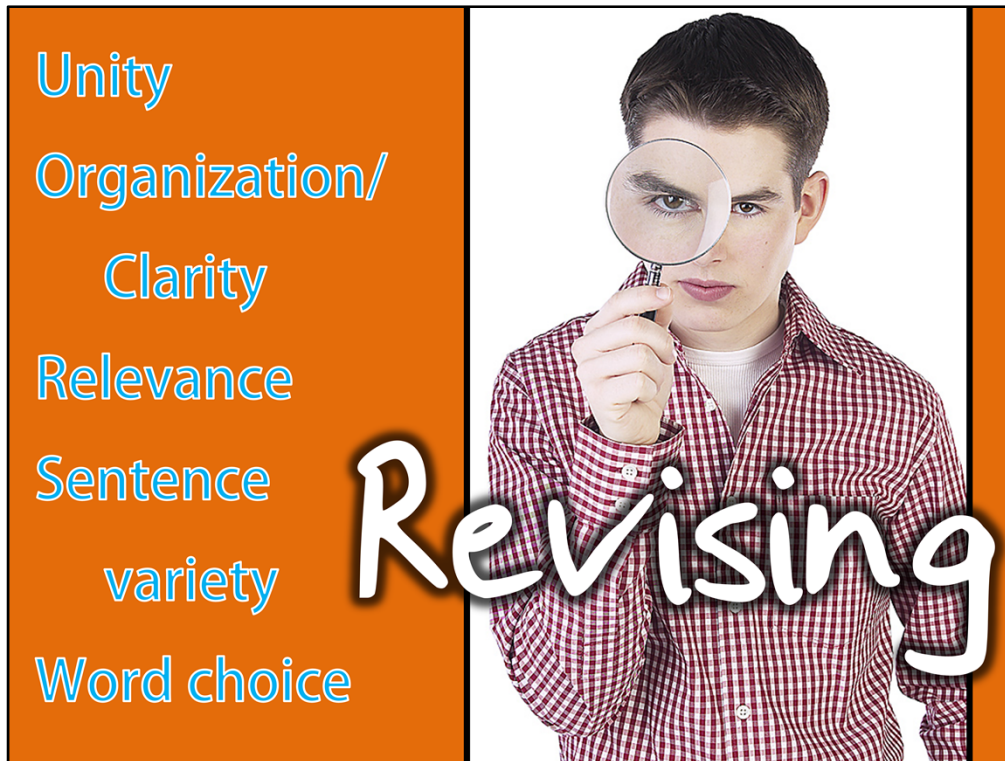


It is a good idea to hammer out the first draft of your paper while the prewriting is still fresh in your mind. When drafting, try to get as much down on paper before you lose those great ideas the prewriting stirred up. Refer back to your outline, or plan, often as you write. This will keep the ideas and words flowing and help to ensure that you are staying on topic and focused.

Do not let yourself get bogged down on any one paragraph or section of your writing. In the drafting stage, you do not have to write the introduction first or the conclusion last. If you are struggling to find the words for that perfect introduction, skip it, and come back to it later. Start with your body paragraphs or conclusion. Remember, this is just a draft and it may go through several revisions before you are finished. The first draft does not have to be perfect.

Refer back to your outline, but do not rule out new ideas if they come to you while writing. The writing process is fluid and ever-changing, so you need to be flexible. Also, be prepared to write more than one draft. Chances are you will not have a perfect paper after only one draft, and that is where the revising and editing part of the process comes into play.

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Revising your writing is extremely important. This is where you look for ways to improve your writing by concentrating on your writing's organization, unity, clarity, and relevance. When you revise, you need to re-read your draft. This works best if you can step away from it and come back to it with fresh eyes. It is also extremely helpful to have someone else read over the draft for you, as he or she may pick up on areas that need improvement that you cannot see. Re-read your draft multiple times. Try focusing on one area at a time.

Check each paragraph for unity with a clear main idea and supporting details. Look for areas where you may have gone off-topic. Ask yourself if you have too many details or too few details. Would adding or eliminating details improve the draft? Does what you say make sense?

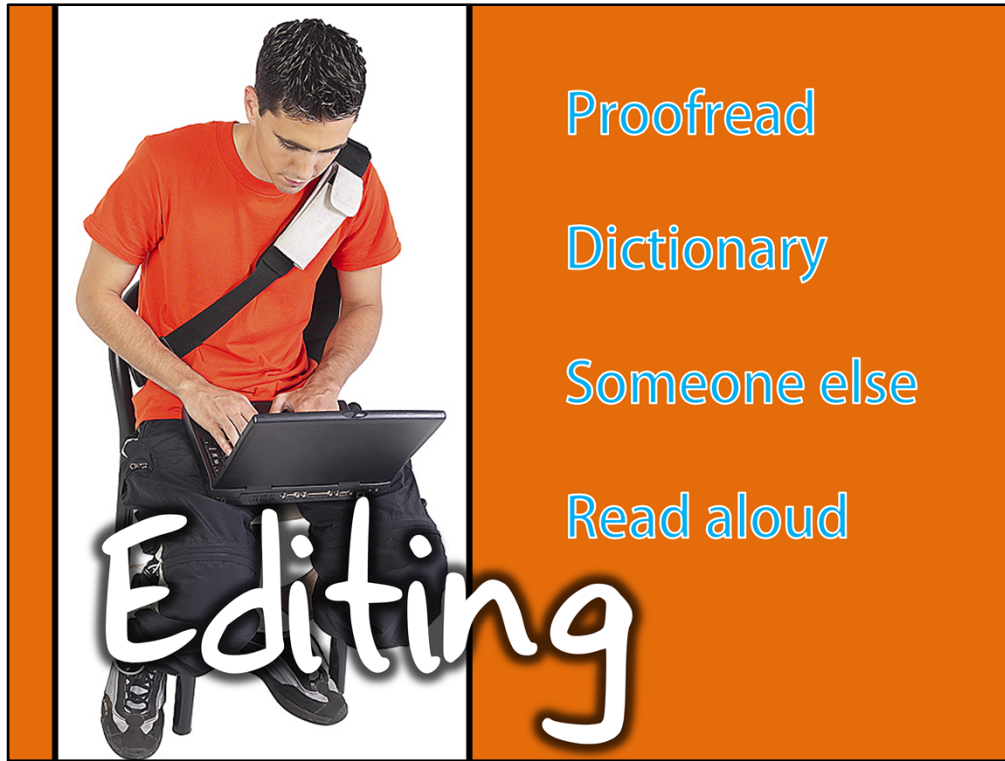
Look for organization and clarity. Ask yourself: Is the information in your paper or essay presented in a logical order? Can the reader follow what you are writing; does it have a natural flow? Do you grab your reader's attention in the opening sentence? Have you laid out the point of your paper in your thesis statement? Would your paper make more sense if you rearranged paragraphs?

When searching for relevance, consider the following questions: Have you achieved the purpose of the writing? Did you explain, inform, or persuade? Is your writing geared toward the correct audience? Have you met or satisfied the requirements of the assignment?

Make sure you spend some time focusing on sentence variety. Mix up the types of sentences and vary sentence beginnings, length, and structure. You do not want too many long complex sentences, but you do not want too many short choppy sentences. Would some sentences be better combined or broken up to help the reader understand your ideas?

When choosing your words, did you keep your audience in mind? Did you choose words your audience will understand? Did you establish the right tone, such as informal, formal, or conversational? Also, be sure to delete unnecessary words or phrases.

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When editing, proofread your most recent draft. Look for, and correct, mistakes in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage. Keep a dictionary handy, and have someone else read over your final draft. It is also helpful to read it aloud.

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Publishing your writing can take several forms. It does not have to mean that your finished product ends up in a journal, newspaper, or magazine. A published product could be a final draft submitted to your teacher or instructor for grading or placed into your writing portfolio.

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Introduction

Tailoring the Process for Your Purpose

Introduction

There are three main reasons for writing: to inform, to entertain, and to persuade. The process for each type of writing will be different, as will the format, style, and tone of the piece. Furthermore, the process and final writing product will also be shaped by the intended audience for each piece of writing.

Click on each of the spinning dots to learn how each style of writing requires a different approach.

Informative

Entertaining

Persuasive

Tailoring the PROCESS

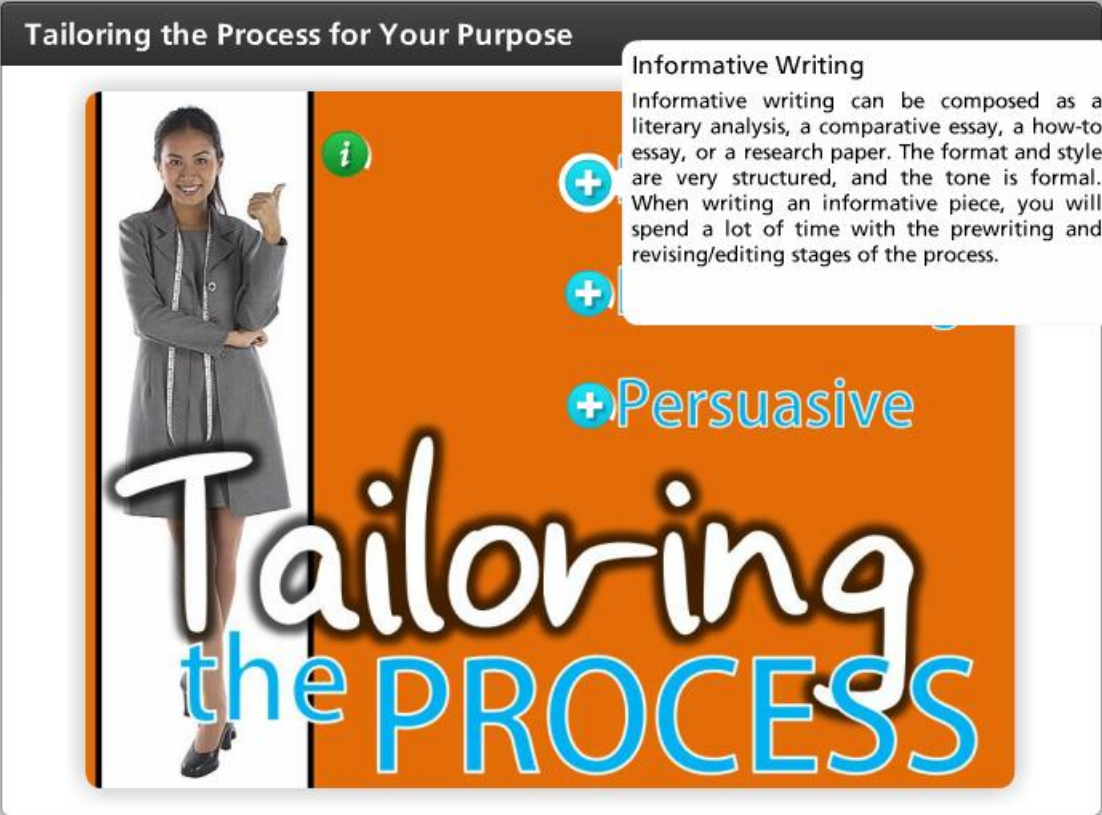
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Informative Writing

Tailoring the Process for Your Purpose



Informative Writing

Informative writing can be composed as a literary analysis, a comparative essay, a how-to essay, or a research paper. The format and style are very structured, and the tone is formal. When writing an informative piece, you will spend a lot of time with the prewriting and revising/editing stages of the process.

+ Persuasive

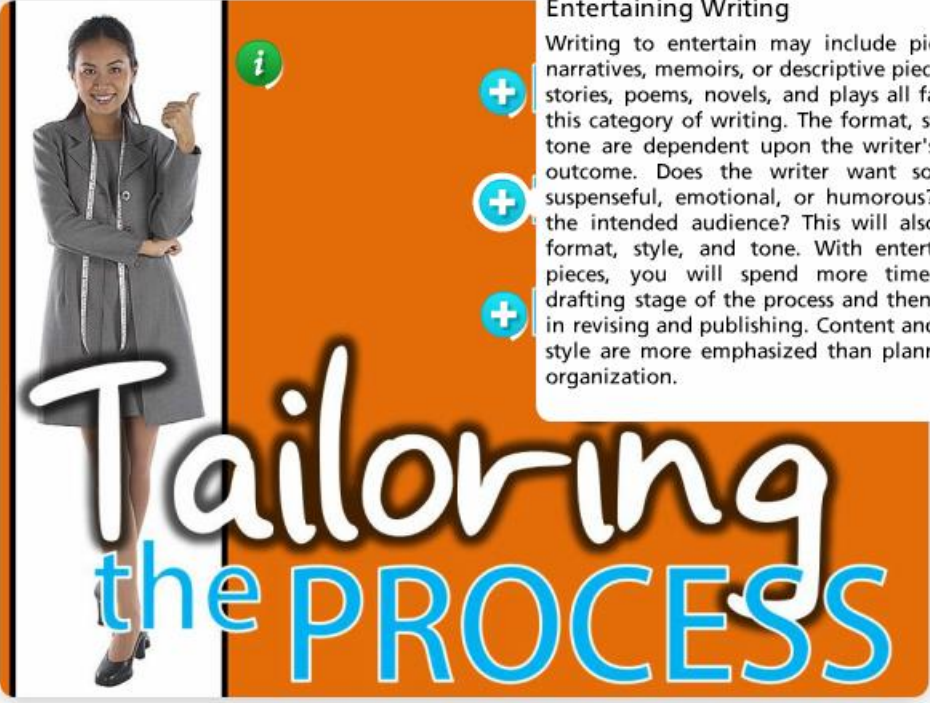
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Entertaining Writing

Tailoring the Process for Your Purpose



Entertaining Writing

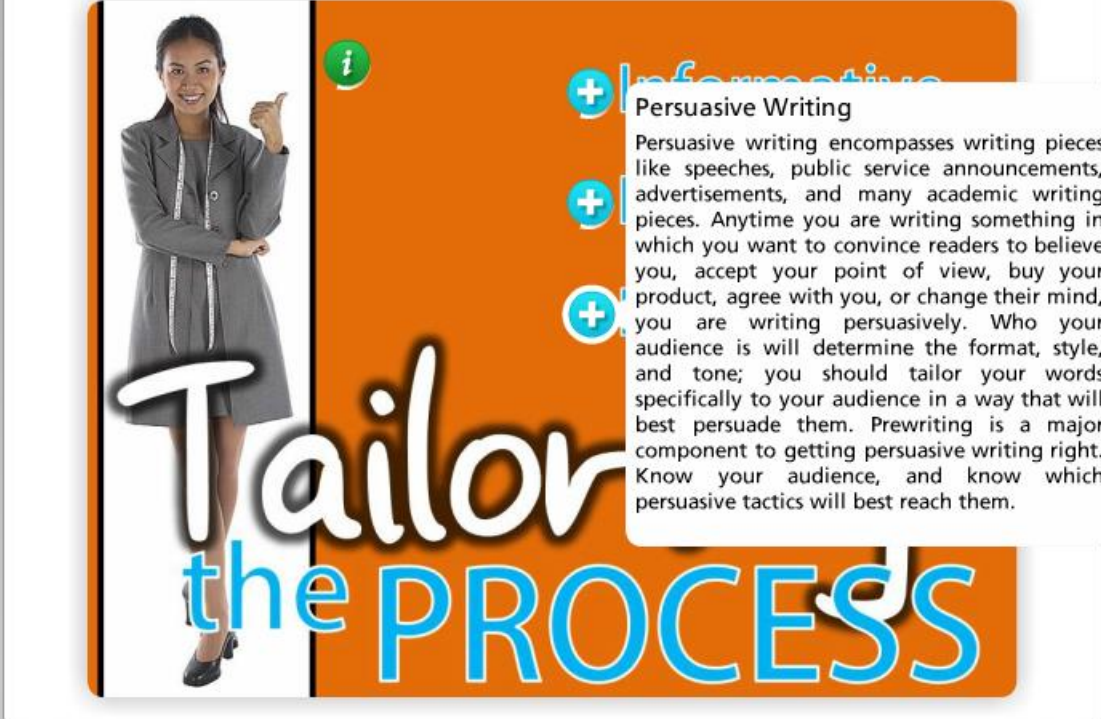
Writing to entertain may include pieces like narratives, memoirs, or descriptive pieces. Short stories, poems, novels, and plays all fall under this category of writing. The format, style, and tone are dependent upon the writer's desired outcome. Does the writer want something suspenseful, emotional, or humorous? Who is the intended audience? This will also dictate format, style, and tone. With entertainment pieces, you will spend more time in the drafting stage of the process and then perhaps in revising and publishing. Content and writing style are more emphasized than planning and organization.

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Persuasive Writing

Tailoring the Process for Your Purpose



Informative

Persuasive Writing
Persuasive writing encompasses writing pieces like speeches, public service announcements, advertisements, and many academic writing pieces. Anytime you are writing something in which you want to convince readers to believe you, accept your point of view, buy your product, agree with you, or change their mind, you are writing persuasively. Who your audience is will determine the format, style, and tone; you should tailor your words specifically to your audience in a way that will best persuade them. Prewriting is a major component to getting persuasive writing right. Know your audience, and know which persuasive tactics will best reach them.

Narrative Writing

Tailor the PROCESS

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