

# WRITING APPLICATIONS

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# The Writing Process

The first part of this textbook presented a step-by-step program, or process, that enabled you to review grammar, sentence-building, usage, and punctuation. You were first given a bit of information in a frame; then you tried to apply it. If you did not get the correct answer the first time, you were given another opportunity to get the correct answer in another frame. You completed entire sections of this book using this process. When you write, you can also use a process that will give you additional opportunities to improve your writing. This process is called the **writing process**.<sup>1</sup> In this section of your textbook, you will be introduced to the six basic stages of the writing process. Once you have mastered these stages, you should be able to apply them in any writing task.

## WHY STUDY THE WRITING PROCESS?

You will be able to communicate more easily, meaningfully, and effectively by using the writing process. Since an important part of the writing process is evaluating and revising, you always have several opportunities to analyze and improve your writing before you prepare the final version.

Following this introduction (pages 543–548), you will find writing applications that correspond to each of the units in the first part of this book. The applications are designed to give you practice in applying the principles of grammar, sentence-building, usage, and punctuation that you reviewed and practiced in the first part of this textbook. They will also enable you to practice the writing process and to improve your writing skills. In addition, you may find that they help you organize your thoughts and give you practice in analyzing information.

## HOW TO USE THIS SECTION OF THE BOOK

After you read this section, refer to it to help you complete the writing applications. Use the basic models presented here whenever you need help composing. In this section, you will learn about and practice the six stages of the writing process. These six stages are: (1) prewriting, (2) writing the first draft, (3) evaluating, (4) revising, (5) proofreading, and (6) writing the final version.

## Prewriting

The prewriting stage enables you to formulate ideas before you write. During this thinking and planning stage, you will answer five important questions: Why am I writing? For whom am I writing? What will I write about? What will I say? How will I say it? More specifically, you will determine your purpose; identify your audience; choose and limit your topic; establish your tone; and gather, classify, and arrange information.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from pp. 3–34 in *English Composition and Grammar*, Benchmark Edition, Complete Course, by John E. Warriner. Copyright © 1988 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

## SELECTING A PURPOSE

Before you begin writing, you should have in mind a clear purpose. Your purpose will guide your writing and help determine the content and language you use. There are four basic purposes for writing: to tell a story or relate a series of events; to inform or explain; to describe a person, place, or thing; or to persuade or convince. Writing to tell a story is called **narrative** writing. Writing to inform or explain is called **expository** writing. Writing to describe a person, place, or thing is called **descriptive** writing. Finally, writing that attempts to persuade or convince is called **persuasive** writing.

## DETERMINING YOUR AUDIENCE

You will always write for an audience, but audiences may vary widely in age, background, and opinion. Like purpose, your audience will help guide your writing since you do not write the same way for all people. Determine carefully who your reading audience will be. Then decide whether they will need background information and whether your subject will interest them. Also, decide how simple or difficult the language you use should be.

## CHOOSING AND LIMITING A SUBJECT

Before you write, choose a subject that is interesting to you and your audience and is neither too complex nor too simple. Then limit your subject so that you can write about it adequately in the time and space you have. To limit your subject, consider your purpose and the form of writing you have chosen. A broad, general subject that has been limited is called a **topic**.

## ESTABLISHING TONE

Determine your attitude, or point of view, toward your topic to help you establish your tone. Tone is the expression of your attitude; for example, happiness, anger, or seriousness. You express your tone through the details and language you use in your writing.

## GATHERING INFORMATION

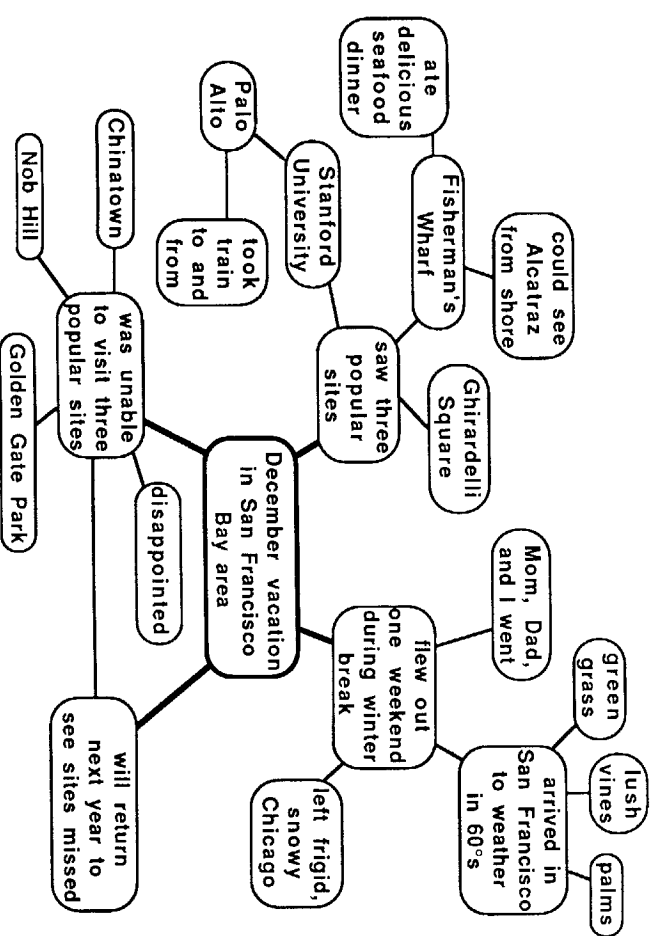
Gather information to include in your writing that is appropriate to your purpose. For example, if your purpose is to describe someone famous, you may want to gather facts about that person's life, appearance, and mannerisms. You can use several methods in gathering information. A few that are described here include brainstorming, clustering, asking the 5 *W-How?* questions, and asking point-of-view questions.

**Brainstorming.** In brainstorming, you generate information by writing down ideas that come freely to mind. First, write your topic at the top of a sheet of paper. Then, think about your topic, listing any ideas that you associate with your topic. Do not worry if some of the ideas seem silly or incomplete. You will be able to eliminate or expand these ideas later.

**EXAMPLE** Topic: December vacation in San Francisco Bay area

*Ideas:* Took weekend vacation with Mom and Dad during winter break  
Arrived in San Francisco to 60° weather—green grass, lush vines, and palms  
Visited several popular tourist sites: Ghirardelli Square, Fisherman's Wharf, and Stanford University  
Saw Alcatraz from Fisherman's Wharf  
Ate delicious seafood while there  
Disappointed that did not see Chinatown, Nob Hill, and Golden Gate Park  
Will fly out there again next winter break

**Clustering.** Clustering is like brainstorming in that you write down ideas as they come freely to mind. In clustering, however, you arrange the ideas in groups, or clusters. To begin clustering ideas, write your topic in the center of your paper and circle it. Then begin thinking about ideas that relate to the topic. Write down and circle these ideas also. Draw lines to connect ideas to the topic.



**Asking the 5 W-How? Questions.** Another technique for gathering information is asking the 5 W-How? questions. The 5 W-How? questions are *Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?* Ask yourself these questions to find out specific details about your topic. You may not be able to use every question with every topic, but you will always be able to use at least several of the questions.

**EXAMPLE** Topic: December vacation in San Francisco Bay area

*Who went?* (Mom, Dad, and I)  
*What did we do?* (flew out to San Francisco Bay area)  
*When* in December did we take this vacation? (one week during winter break)  
*Where* did we go in the San Francisco area? (Ghirardelli Square, Fisherman's Wharf, and Stanford University)  
*Why* did we fly to San Francisco? (to rest, to enjoy a change of weather and scenery, and to visit a city we had never seen before)  
*How* did we travel to California? (flew in from Chicago)

**Asking Point-of-View Questions.** Still another technique that can be used to gather information is to look at a topic from three different points of view. To determine the point of view, ask these three questions: (1) What is it? (2) How does it change or vary? (3) What are its relationships?

**EXAMPLE** Topic: December vacation in San Francisco Bay area

1. What is a December vacation in San Francisco? (a winter break from school and work; a change of scenery and weather)
2. How did our trip start? (We flew in from frigid, snowy Chicago; we arrived to find 60° weather and greenery everywhere.)  
How did our trip progress? (visited Ghirardelli Square, Fisherman's Wharf, and Stanford University)  
How did our trip end? (ate delicious seafood at Fisherman's Wharf before leaving for airport to fly home)
3. What sites or events did we enjoy most? (All were exciting, but the biggest thrill was the change in landscape.)  
What experiences were unpleasant? (none, other than not having time to visit Chinatown, Nob Hill, and Golden Gate Park)

### CLASSIFYING INFORMATION

The next step in the writing process is to classify, or sort, your ideas and information into related groups. Classifying helps you organize your information for writing. One of the simplest ways to classify information is to look for similarities and differences. Another way is to determine which ideas are more important than others. The more important ideas may become the main ideas of your paragraphs. The less important ideas are likely to become supporting details.

**EXAMPLE** Topic: December vacation in San Francisco Bay area

Time	Weather	Pleasant Memories	Unpleasant Memories
December during winter break	60° in San Francisco frigid, snowy in Chicago	Visiting Ghirardelli Square, Fisherman's Wharf, and Stanford University Greenery everywhere	Not having time to visit Chinatown, Nob Hill, and Golden Gate Park

