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10 Steps to an Effective Piece of Writing
or PREWRITING is MORE Important than Writing
or Determine, Recognize, Create, Select, Identify, Choose, Find, Prepare, Draft, Revise and Edit

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1. Determine your purpose for writing.
    a. Carefully read and review the writing prompt or assignment (a question is also a prompt). Understanding the assignment is one of the <u>most important</u> prewriting steps.
    b. Look for CUE WORDS in the prompt or directions to determine the writing purpose.
    c. Decide if you will be explaining, persuading, reporting, informing, analyzing, creating, judging, etc. This will help you decide what you will be communicating to your audience.
    d. Write down your purpose.

2. Recognize your audience.
    a. Look for clues about your audience in the writing prompt or directions.
    b. The audience has an important impact on later decisions such as the method of organization.
    c. If a specific audience is noted, be sure to write for that audience.
    d. If the audience cannot be determined, write for a general audience.
    e. When writing for a general audience, write so that anyone who reads the piece will understand the subject without seeing the directions or prompt.
    f. Write down your audience.

3. Create your jot list.
    a. Again, carefully examine the prompt or directions and determine the general SUBJECT of the writing. Do NOT use a writing web to brainstorm ideas.
    b. Begin by writing the general SUBJECT on your paper.
    c. Quickly begin LISTING (jotting) every word, idea or phrase that comes to mind in connection to the general subject in order to CAPTURE your thinking.
    d. If you're stuck, write down the prompt words "who, what, where, when, why, and how" on your planning paper. Find words, ideas and phrases for each of these areas.
    e. Now, begin expanding on the list. Write down examples or experiences connected to the subject or items on the list.
    f. Write down details connected to the subject or items on the list.
    g. Write straight down the page and go for quantity.

4. Select your focus.
    a. Stop and reread the directions or prompt.
    b. Remember your purpose and audience.
    c. Examine your jot list and **select** the FOCUS for your piece that will best fit your writing purpose.
    d. Remember, your FOCUS is NOT the GENERAL SUBJECT of the writing prompt.
    e. To choose your focus, find the one idea on your jot list that could best answer the prompt and illustrate your purpose.

5. Identify the main points to support your focus.
    a. Examine your jot list again.
    b. Identify which ideas / points on your list will best SUPPORT the FOCUS of your piece.
    c. **<u>LATER,</u>** you will write one paragraph in connection to each of these points (in a five-paragraph essay, you need three main points).
    d. It **<u>IS necessary</u>** to create a new smaller jot list about your FOCUS in order to determine the main points.
    e. The main points / ideas are closely tied to the method of organization you choose.
    f. REMEMBER, the other words or phrases on your jot list may be used as examples or details connected to your main points.

6. Choose your method of organization.
     a. In order to write an effective piece, you must have organization and structure.
     b. There are many METHODS OF ORGANIZATION. You must learn about these methods to use them in your own writing.
     c. Examples of methods of organization include: analysis, cause and effect, chronological order, description, feature-by-feature, order of importance, persuasive writing, problem-solution writing, spatial order, subject-by-subject, etc.
     d. In order to choose your method, you must think about the PURPOSE, AUDIENCE and the FOCUS of your writing.
     e. Choose the method that best communicates your focus to your audience while keeping your purpose in mind.
     f. Organization words and phrases (transition words and phrases) are necessary for a quality piece. Certain words and phrases are used in connection with different methods of organization.

7. Find a way into your writing.
     a. DO NOT PUSH your audience directly into the main focus of your piece.
     b. A quality piece leads the reader into the focus by beginning with a general statement about the general subject of the piece.
     c. The writer makes this general point about the subject that most audience members will agree with.
     d. Next, the writer expands on the general statement within a few sentences in such a way **that the sentences lead to the main focus.** We call this an **introduction**.
     e. Introductions are important because the audience member needs to follow our thinking through the process and writing. Lose your audience and you do NOT have a QUALITY PIECE.

8. Prepare a map for your piece.
     a. Create an outline for the piece.
     b. Each part of the outline should connect to one sentence in your piece.
     c. Be sure to include concrete examples and details in your outline. Without concrete examples that the reader can relate to, your piece will fail.
     d. Use the outline as the map to write your piece.
     e. Fill in missing information ("holes") as you write the outline and also as you write the piece.

9. Draft (write) your piece.
     a. Write the piece.
     b. Be sure to follow the basic expectations for clear communication such as remembering readable handwriting, indenting for paragraphs, upper and lowercase letters, etc.
     c. In timed writing, the draft will be your final piece.
     d. In extended academic writing, you may write several drafts and have several opportunities to improve and revise the piece.

10. Revise and edit your piece.
     a. In any writing situation, it is important to read the piece that you have written. Simple mistakes can be avoided.
     b. In timed writing, you will not have time to revise your piece (this should be done during the outlining process).
     c. In extended academic writing, you should follow all of the rules associated with revision, including special attention to ensuring that all information in the piece is directly connected to the focus of the piece.
     d. Edit the piece for grammar, word usage, and spelling.