

Writing: Trust the process

As you no doubt already know, good writing doesn't just "happen." Clear, effective writing is a result of an intentional **process**. To understand writing as a process, it's important to recognize that

- good writing takes time.
- becoming a successful writer does NOT mean learning how to "skip" or avoid the process, but how to use it.
- **starting writing projects at the last minute will not produce your best work**, even if you feel like the "pressure" of the deadline drives you.

Understanding writing as a process

There is no single, perfect writing process, but it's helpful to think of it as a general model that reflects what works for most writers. Key to understand about the process is that it includes a number of **"steps"** or phases, and it is a **recursive** process.

"Steps"/phases of the process

Here's a good image (at right) of the steps of the basic writing process model (from the

Writing Center at University of Kansas). Notice all the steps! Successful writers report moving through these steps with purpose, using the work of each step to "set up" the work of the next.

Notice that using a model requires some flexibility. For example, "researching" might mean conducting academic research, or it may mean collecting ideas from notes you've taken in a class or from your own experience, etc.

The writing process is recursive

"Recursive" refers to repetition, repeating, returning. The basic model above might suggest there is a "straight line" the writer follows through the process, but successful writers will circle back to earlier steps of the work to expand, continue, revise, or correct the work.

The second image reflects the recursive nature of the writing process in the arrows that circle back to earlier steps.

Again, your goal is not to avoid this process, but to **embrace it!** Everyone's process is a little different, and it will be different for different writing projects. Be purposeful about developing and revising your own writing process; it will build your confidence and lead to more successful results.

