A hand holding a pen is shown writing on a document. The document is overlaid with a grid pattern, suggesting a technical or structured writing process. The background is a light, neutral color.

# How to Teach Writing

Kenosha Literacy Council

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# Introduction

- Writing is important for any student trying to develop their language skills.
- However, tutors often have a difficult time getting students to write.
- Trying to put one's thoughts down in a way that makes sense and at the same time trying to remember all of the rules of grammar and spelling can be daunting to anyone, especially a new writer.

# Objectives

Today we will learn:

1. Effective ways to teach writing to all levels of literacy and esl students
2. A five step process to teach writing in a way that minimizes a student's anxiety
3. How to apply the writing process in both creative and real-life situations.

# Group Activity

What Am I Afraid Of?

1. Think about the reasons students give for not wanting to write.
2. Think about reasons why you might not like to write.
3. Write down some of those reasons.

# The Writing Process

Below is a 5-step process that minimizes many of the barriers to writing.

1. **Prewriting:** Identify a topic. Generate ideas and organize them.
2. **First Draft:** Get ideas down on paper in sentence and perhaps paragraph form. Sentences and paragraphs do not have to be correct - address structure later.
3. **Revising:** Add details, clarify, refine, and expand the content.
4. **Editing:** Correct errors in spelling, grammar and mechanics.
5. **Final Draft:** Rewrite the draft to include revisions and edits. Share with others.

# The Writing Process

## Creative Writing Activity

- This activity provides an opportunity to practice the writing process by writing a poem about yourself.
- This is a good activity for students because they are writing about themselves and the final product is impressive.
- This activity is adapted from *Voyager: Reading and Writing for Today's Adults* (Book 1, pp. 24-25, published by New Readers Press, 1999).

# Step 1: Prewriting

1. Read the poem about Sal
2. Think about the poem you just read.  
What did you learn about Sal?  
What does Sal like?  
What does he need?  
How does he feel?

# Step 1: Prewriting

3. Now, think about yourself.  
Write down some of your likes.  
Write down some of your needs.  
Write down some of your feelings.  
What words would you use to describe yourself?
4. You have just completed the first step in the writing process - Prewriting. Using Sal's poem as a model, you generated some ideas of things you might say about yourself.

# Step 1: Prewriting

1. Prewriting allows students to think of things they may want to say without worrying about choosing specific words to use in the actual poem.
2. Doing this process in a group allows students to expand their own ideas with ideas from other students.
3. Write the ideas down while students are generating them. This helps when students get ready to write their first draft because now they don't have to worry about the spelling.

# Step 2: First Draft

1. Now use Sal's poem, and ideas generated from the prewriting activity, to write a first draft of a poem about yourself.
2. Sentence starters provide support for beginning writers as they start to compose their poem. More advanced writers may not need this type of support. Later, when you create your final draft, you will notice that the sentence starter support has been reduced.
3. How did the prewriting process make creating a first draft easier?

# Step 3: Revising

1. Now it is time to revise your poem.
2. Remember, revising means looking at what you have written and making changes. Read the draft of your poem. Does it say what you want? Make desired changes.
3. Ask another person to read your poem for understanding and clarity. Revise once again.

# Step 4: Editing

1. Now it is time to edit your poem. Read each word of your poem. Is it spelled correctly? Does it need to be capitalized? Make changes as needed.
2. You can help students become comfortable with the editing process by focusing on one thing, such as capital letters, periods, or commas. As students learn more writing skills and become more comfortable with editing, help them develop an editing checklist to follow.

# Step 5: Final Draft

A hand holding a pen is shown writing on a document. The document is overlaid with a grid pattern, suggesting a structured or organized approach to writing. The background is a light blue gradient.

1. Now is the time to create the final draft of your poem.
2. What are some creative ways to publish the poem?

# Reflection

Think about the writing process used to create your poem.

1. How would you have reacted if you had just been asked to write a poem about yourself without going through this process?
2. What about this process made it easier to write your poem?
3. How do you think you can use this process with a student?

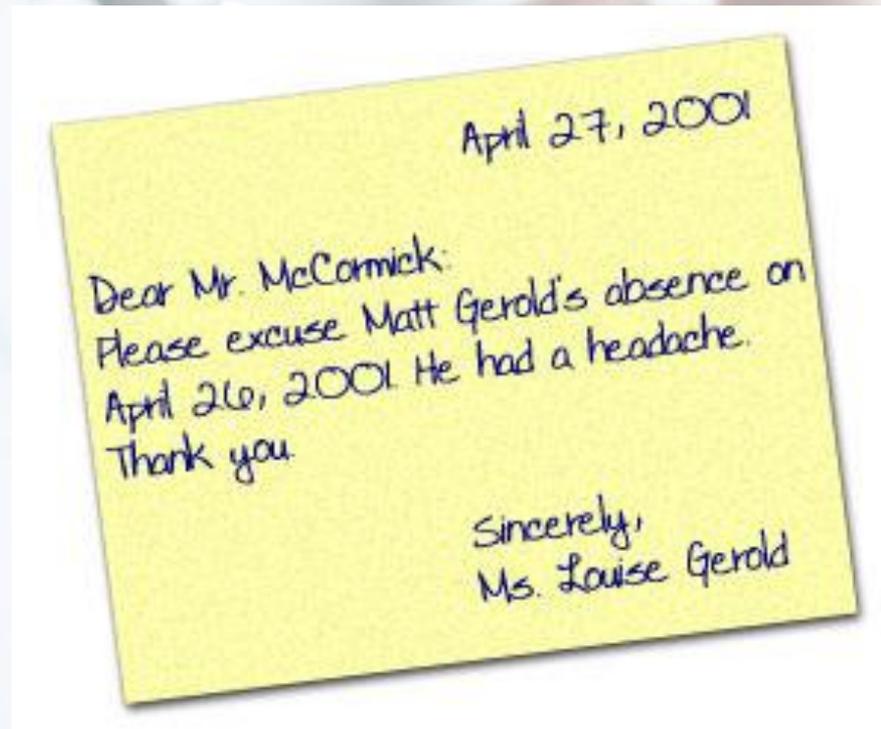
# The Writing Process

## Real-Life Writing Activity

1. Students can also use models to develop templates to help meet some of their everyday writing needs.
2. In this activity you will use a model of an absentee note to design a template for writing notes in the future.
3. If you do not have a child, or your child is not in school yet, feel free to make up responses to the questions.
4. You will still be able to participate and can practice using a different example.
5. This activity is adapted from *Writing It Down* (p 56, published by New Readers Press, 1989).

# Step 1: Prewriting

First look at the example of an absentee note below.



# Step 1: Prewriting

Think about what you like and dislike about the note.

1. What type of information do you see in this absentee note that you would expect to see in any absentee note?
2. Are there any other pieces of information you would like to include in an absentee note? If so, write them down.

Using the list of the types of information to include in an absentee note, write down the specific information to use in your note. Beside each item, write down the specific information you will use.

# Step 2: First Draft

Copy the example below, replacing the underlined information in the note with your information. If you have things on your list that are not in the note, don't worry about them right now.



# Step 2: First Draft

1. It may be difficult for the student to copy the model and substitute his or her own information at the same time.
2. For short pieces, try writing each word of the model on a flashcard. Put the flashcards down on a table just as they appear in the model.
3. Ask the student to write his or her information on flashcards, one piece of information per flashcard.
4. Work with the student to use the flashcards to replace the information in the model with his or her information.
5. The student can then copy from the new flashcard text.

# Step 3: Revising

Read your absentee note.

1. Does it make sense?
2. Have you included everything you wanted to include?
3. Can you think of anything else to include?

Remember, Step 3 of the 5-Step Writing Process provides a way to clarify and expand the content of writing to reflect what we want to communicate. Now is the time to make any desired changes.

# Step 4: Editing

Sometimes sentences won't be complete because the information being added doesn't quite fit. Reread the note. Are all sentences complete? Make changes as appropriate.

## Step 5: Final Draft

Rewrite the absentee note, incorporating revisions and edits.

# Reflection

1. Do you think using a template would be helpful?
2. Can you think of any other situations where a student might use a model and a template?