



From: *Rojhano*  
To: *Writing session*  
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## EFFECTIVE WRITING

### Some basics and rules you need to know to be a better writer.

Writing isn't just something you do in a sudden burst of activity when the essay deadline starts to loom - this last-minute approach usually produces poorly organized and incoherent essays. You need to develop a sense of writing as a process with a number of phases, only the last few of which involve setting pen to paper (or finger to keyboard).

Students typically panic about writing because they feel they've nothing to say. This sense of mental blankness (writer's block) is, paradoxically, caused by being aware of too many possible things you *could* say. If you avoid committing yourself to any particular approach, your mind is unable to form a coherent mental picture of the topic, so that it seems impossible to form a connected argument.

You can escape from this mental blankness by defining the problem, which means not just copying out a definition from a dictionary, but systematically thinking through what the question is asking you to do and developing writing strategies on the basis of the research you've already done.

Writing is a natural set of steps that writers take to create a finished piece of work.

- It is a process of organizing ideas and creativity through text.
- The focus of process writing is on process, not on the end-product.
- It is useful for all skill levels, from children to published authors, to develop an authentic, creative work.
- It breaks the act of writing into steps:
  1. Prewriting (generating ideas): deciding purpose and audience; planning, brainstorming, clustering, mapping, outlining, reading, thinking, free writing, jotting, discussing, researching, journal, trying, discovering, etc.
  2. Drafting (putting ideas down into form)
  3. Conference (getting reader feedback).
  4. Revising (rethinking and editing; mini lessons).
  5. Proofreading (finding and fixing mistakes, correcting mechanics).
  6. Publishing (sharing with audience).
- The above steps do not exist in a linear way. Writers sometimes go back and forth among steps.

## 10 tips to help you improve your English writing skills

### 1. Write in English every day

This is the most important tip to improve your writing skills in English. Start by thinking of a theme, for example, you could start writing a diary of something that happens to you every day, you can write a few lines of a story each day or you could write emails to your friends in English. This might be difficult at first but the more you continue, the easier it will become and you might even end up enjoying it!

### 2. Improve your vocabulary

Having a wide range of vocabulary is very important when you're writing in English. An excellent way to improve your vocabulary is to read as much as possible. If you read books, newspapers or magazines in English, you will learn many new words and common English idioms. Remember to write down the new words and expressions you read and their meanings so you can learn them.



### **3. Ask someone to check your writing**

If you're studying at an English language school, you could ask your teacher to check your writing for you. Otherwise, why not ask a friend or relative who speaks English? I'm sure they'd be happy to help! You might even be able to do a writing language exchange – find an English person who is learning your language and write letters or emails to each other (you can write in English and they can write in your language). When you send a reply, you can also send their letter back to them with corrections and they can do the same for you!

### **4. Use a dictionary**

You might feel that using a dictionary when you write is 'cheating' but think again – it is actually a great way to improve your vocabulary and practise using words and phrases that you've heard but haven't used before. Remember to ask someone to check your writing to make sure you have used the vocabulary correctly.

### **5. Write about different topics**

If you write about the same thing every day, you could become very bored and you might end up using the same words and phrases over and over again! It is a good idea to find different topics to write about as this will help to widen your vocabulary and will be much more interesting for you. Writing about something you read in a newspaper or watched on TV is a good starting point.

### **6. Check your writing carefully**

After you have written something in English, you should always read it again, either straight away or the next day. When you do this, you will probably see a few mistakes that you didn't notice when you were writing it. Remember to check the spelling, grammar and vocabulary – have you used a particular word many times? Can you think of another way to say it?

### **7. Do your homework**

If you have classes at an English language school, your teacher probably gives you writing homework to do. It is really important that you do all your homework as your teacher knows your level of English and will be able to give you good advice on which parts of writing you need to improve most (e.g. vocabulary, spelling, grammar). This is extremely important if you are planning to take an English language exam.

### **8. Write to your friends**

Do you have friends who speak English (e.g. people you have met in your English classes)? If so, you should definitely practise your writing with them! There are many ways to do this – using social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.), sending emails, writing text messages, chatting on Skype etc. The best thing about writing to people who are also learning English is that you can correct each other's mistakes!

### **9. Write a blog**

It doesn't even matter if no one reads it, but writing a blog is a great way to practise writing in English. Set yourself a goal (e.g. upload one blog article a week) and start writing! The great thing about a blog is you can write about absolutely anything and there's a chance that you might even help or entertain someone who reads it!

### **10. Don't be afraid to make mistakes!**

It's easy to decide not to do any English writing as you are worried that you will make lots of mistakes. However, the more you write and get your writing corrected, the fewer mistakes you will make!

## ONE MORE THING: PUNCTUATION MARKS

### What are the punctuation marks?

Punctuation marks are symbols that are used to aid the clarity and comprehension of written language.

### Why do we need to use punctuation marks?

They show the reader where sentences start and finish and if they are used properly they make your writing easy to understand. This section gives practical guidance on how to use commas, semicolons, and other types of punctuation correctly, so that your writing will always be clear and effective.

## Punctuation marks

.	<b>period</b>	Use a period at the end of declarative and imperative sentences and when writing abbreviations.
?	<b>question mark</b>	Use a question mark at the end of a question.
!	<b>exclamation point</b>	Use an exclamation point at the end of a sentence that expresses strong emotion.
,	<b>comma</b>	Use a comma to separate items in a series, to join independent clauses with a conjunction, and to set off a direct quotation in a sentence.
“ ”	<b>quotation marks</b>	Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations and some titles.
’	<b>apostrophe</b>	Use an apostrophe when writing possessive nouns and contractions.
:	<b>colon</b>	Use a colon before certain lists and when writing the time.
;	<b>semicolon</b>	Use a semicolon between two independent clauses if a conjunction is not used.
-	<b>hyphen</b>	Use a hyphen to join certain words that are put together to form a single idea, and when writing fraction words and some number words.
( )	<b>parentheses</b>	Use a pair of parentheses to enclose explanations and other extra information in a sentence.



## PAST AND FUTURE TENSES

### Unscramble the sentences below

#### ***Past events: What did Peter do last summer?***

1. summer, a ranch. and went Last friends to Peter his  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. the ranch with outside Peter worked hands. Everyday  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. a rode also Peter horse.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. around a everyone At night ate campfire. dinner  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. told hands ranch The stories. also  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. friends. new Peter made and friends a lot his of  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. back there Next going again. summer they're go to  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. did do summer? Peter last What  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. to went a He ranch.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. next to summer? going Peter What's do  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### ***Future Living: Will robots do the chores?***

### Unscramble the sentences below

1. DVD There player. a and is sofa radio,  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. future. can the house You of see the  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. be will lamps. There  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. be Will there stairs?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. won't. No. there  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. the chores? Will do robots  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. plants. won't water Robots the  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. set table will in future. the Robots  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. his the go? and will boy mum Where  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. will they go How there?  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Practice writing emails

Choose the correct answers to complete the emails.

1

Dear Ms Köpke,

I have been 1.  your name by Maëlle Corbineau in Paris, who has recently used your agency for the recruitment of three Czech engineers.

We are 2.  to open a new R & D unit in Poland in three months' time, and we are 3.  in your playing a headhunting role for us in that country.

I would therefore be 4.  if we could meet up some time soon to discuss our needs in more detail. Please 5.  me know when and where this might be possible.

I look forward to 6.  from you shortly.

Yours sincerely,  
Didier Bergognoux  
Trollberg Engineering

2

Dear Mr Capello,

Thank you for your email of 17/10 1.  the damaged packaging on your last order. I am 2.  that this was due to a technical defect on the packaging machine, which was not detected by the Quality Control team.

The machine has now been 3.  and we are currently working on an action plan to prevent such an error in the future. I appreciate that you find this situation 4. . However, I would like to 5.  your attention to the fact that our quality record so far this year has been excellent, and I hope you will see this incident as just a one-off.

I do apologize once again for the inconvenience 6.  to your logistics team.

Yours sincerely,  
Danny Ladlow

3

Hi Mark,

1.  writing to say thanks again for agreeing to take my place at the fair next week. I've just got the video and 2.  send it round so you can have a look at it. It's better than the old one.

Joe wasn't sure if he'd be free, but he can go with you 3.  so you'll have help. He'll pick you up at home in the van. Is there any way 4.  could get Rita to go with you too - her German is pretty good, isn't it? Our contact guy over there - Norbert Kaufmann - is very helpful, so I 5.  think you'll have any problems. Thanks again

for 6. .  
Leo



4

Dear Luisa,

Thank you for the work you've done so far on researching a venue for our international promotional event. Unfortunately, the places you have found so far aren't exactly what I had in <sup>1.</sup>

First of all, I asked you to find venues that were in a beautiful and peaceful setting. In other <sup>2.</sup> , out-of-town places with inspiring views, in order <sup>3.</sup>  attract the maximum number of visitors to the event. I certainly wasn't <sup>4.</sup>  a hotel complex on the edge of a business park.

Secondly, when I said that the conference centre should be within driving distance of an international airport, I <sup>5.</sup>  less than half an hour.

<sup>6.</sup>  we're really looking for here is an exceptional venue to launch an outstanding new range of products. Sorry, but could you have another go at it?

Best wishes,  
Otto

5

Dear Mr Zakario,

I feel you should be made <sup>1.</sup>  of the quality of the service offered by your translator Ms Angelo during our recent trip to Athens. As you know, we were accompanied by a potential client interested in outsourcing work to a local factory.

During our visit to the site, it became obvious that her English was nowhere near the standard needed for such an important

negotiation. This <sup>2.</sup>  to a series of breakdowns in communication. <sup>3.</sup>  you will appreciate, it was absolutely <sup>4.</sup>  for all concerned to have someone highly trained in this field. <sup>5.</sup>  we

can be assured of the services of a professional translator, we will have no <sup>6.</sup>  but to cancel our contract with you and contact another company.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,  
Bernard Tripp