The Writing Process

Brainstorming

What do you do before you write?
You brainstorm about the idea or topic you are writing about. Everybody
brainstorms before writing about something, even famous authors like J.K.
Rowling, Beverly Cleary, and Judy Blume. Brainstorming is a way to think up
ideas for a story or a book. Write down everything that comes to mind.
Any crazy thought might become a good story that you write. Brainstorming
can help you write about something serious, or just a story that you write
for fun. To get ideas, look around you, or read lots of books you like and you
could write the next book of a series that you like, or you could ask friends
or family for strange or funny ideas.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are a helpful way to organize information. Graphic
organizers are helpful because:
1. They help you understand how things go together.
2. They help you remember information better.
3. They make it easier to write your final draft.
4. They help organize any type of writing.

There are a lot of different kinds of graphic organizers for different kinds
of writing projects. You can use our graphic organizers for your class
projects – just pick the kind you want to use.

Cluster Diagrams - good for descriptive writing, especially when you have a
lot of different ideas.

Charts - good for writing directions of how to do something, or for keeping
a lot of different ideas in categories.

Venn Diagrams - good for comparing things that are the same and different.

Story Maps - good for retelling books, plays or stories.

Cause and Effect Diagrams - good for explaining how something happened.
Outlines - good for big topics with lots of main ideas and details. Outlines are also good for persuasive writing.

Timelines - good for telling the order of how things happen in time.

First Draft

First, to start writing, you need a pencil and paper, and a quiet place to work.
You also need references, like a dictionary and a thesaurus.
You might even need an encyclopedia, depending on what you're writing.
When you have everything you need, then you can start to write!
You will not get everything perfect on your first try.
It might even take you three or four times to get it right!
Remember that procrastination doesn't make manuscripts!

Revising

Revising means to change things in the text!
When you are done with the first draft you should always revise.
All you need to do is to make corrections in your story, report, assignment, etc.
For instance, if you wrote this: Me and my sister went to the park.
You should change it to: My sister and I went to the park.
Also, there might be things that you don't want, so this is the time to delete them.
As you read through the text make sure you're saying what you want to say.
If you forgot something, now is the time to add things.
You might want to reorganize things.
Maybe you put in a sentence that doesn't match or doesn't fit with the other sentences.
Revising is only a step before editing where you make the big changes!
If you write a story, you always have to edit. You have to check spelling, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary and if your story makes sense. Editing is all these things in a story. Editing is one of the most important parts of making a story. Who wants to read a story with every thing not making sense? If you didn't have editing why have a story? At a newspaper, editing is a important job. If punctuation is wrong a reader may not understand it, and if the grammar is wrong then the reader won’t get what you are saying.

One way you can edit your paper is by color editing. Color editing can be done right on your paper using colored pencils or pens, or you can use an overhead transparency and dry erase markers. Green: Underline every capital letter in green. Then put a green box around every letter that starts a sentence. Red: Put a red box around the punctuation mark (“, ”, “!” or the “?”) at the end of every sentence. Check: Do the number of green boxes equal the number of red boxes? If they don’t, something is wrong - because every beginning of a sentence has to have an ending! Orange: Circle the word "and" every time you use it in a story. Did you use it too much? Maybe you don’t use "and" too much, but what about the word "then" or "like". You know what words you use a lot - so look for those words by circling them in orange. Blue: Read your story out loud (not too loud if you're in class!) and put a dot above every word AS YOU SAY IT! This will help you find words that you missed. Black: Read the story backward and look for words that aren’t spelled right. Finally - reread your corrected story! See if it looks right and makes sense.

Final Copy

After you finish editing and correcting your writing, you must make sure it looks great! Nobody wants to read something that looks terrible or is hard to read. The final copy should be:
Neat - either type it on a computer or use your very best handwriting. Also, no wrinkles, holes or tears in the paper.
Clean - no dirty smudge marks or other blotches, or smeared ink.
Visible - the font should be large enough to read, but not so large that it takes up the whole page and looks silly.

**Format**

What is it that you are writing? Is it a letter? A book report, or bibliography? Make sure you use the correct format for whatever you are writing. Are you including the name of a book or what somebody has said? Make sure you underline the book name and put the person’s comments in quotation marks. This is all part of the format. If it is a story or book report, it should have an opening, a body, and a closing or conclusion. If it is a letter, it should have the date, a heading or greeting, a body and a closing. A bibliography goes something like this:

*Author’s Last Name, Author’s First Name, Title of Book, Publishing Company, Year Published, City Published*

**Example:**


The final copy should also have pictures, charts, tables of anything you can use to make your piece of writing more interesting. Everything should be labeled and an explanation should be included so the reader knows what he is looking at.