

How to Make the Writing Process Less Overwhelming

“Where do I start?” “How do I start?” These are good questions. Whether composing business correspondence during your job search or tackling another writing task, the author must begin without knowing the answers to these questions. They just need to initiate the process. By putting fingers to keyboard or pen to paper, the ideas will begin to materialize. It takes a risk to start — but it doesn’t have to be perfect. Later, the written work can be changed and improved.

Some writers start by brainstorming ideas. Other writers simply write out their ideas; then they craft them into complete sentences and paragraphs until they feel satisfied with their message. Still, others outline their ideas in the form of a list. What’s your starting point?

If getting started is your problem then the first thing you need to do is... start! Write freely and quickly. Promise yourself that you’ll clean it up later.

Organizing

After you’ve written something, you’re going to need to put the material into an order that will make sense to a reader. Without organization, your correspondence will be meaningless to readers. When people can’t make sense out of what’s in front of them, they move on quickly. You don’t want your writing to be ignored because it wasn’t clear. Organization will help.

Put the ideas in a logical order so that they make sense to others. Place things in an order that will make the most sense to your audience: first to last, biggest to smallest, ingredients followed by procedures, earliest to latest, newest to oldest, etc. Practicing organization will ensure that you become good at doing it (it means you’ll be able to do it without “adult supervision,” so to speak).

When editing, you can consider the different elements that affect how your piece will be received. After all, you want it to be taken seriously. You want your words to move, motivate, and even inspire people!

The process of editing involves being aware of the following:

- **Audience:** Who is the audience?
- **Impact:** What is the message’s effect on the job search, employee, and customer?
- **Content:** What does the reader need to do/know?
- **Medium and Format:** How should this material be delivered?
- **Style:** How formal or informal should the writing be?

- **English Fundamentals:** What can I do to ensure the “correctness” of my writing?

When it comes to getting started with writing, you can:

- read about how to get started,
- set up your writing area so that it’s just perfect for you to get started, or
- think about how you’re going to get started.

The ironic thing in all of this preparation is that what needs to get done isn’t getting done! The most important point about getting started is that you just have to do it. Take the risk — type or write and don’t stop until you have a body of material to edit!

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