



# Summer Bridge Activities™!

## The Writing Process

Writing is just like any other process, because it has steps, or stages, that should be done in a certain order. Following the steps of the writing process will help you write a great essay.

### Step 1: Planning and Prewriting

Although this is the first step in the writing process, it is also an ongoing part of the writing process. This means that you should be planning what you want to write about through the whole project. Before you write anything, make sure that you understand the assignment. Ask yourself, "What do I know about this topic, and what do I need to learn?" Research your topic in books, magazines, and newspapers. The Internet is also a good place to do research, but you should be careful when conducting research online. Many Web sites look like reputable resources, but they are not good places to get information. Look for Web sites that end in *.edu*, *.gov*, or *.org*. Talk to people who are knowledgeable about your topic. Write down facts that you think are important or ideas that you might want to include in your essay. While doing research, narrow your topic to something that is easy to work with and write about. As you narrow your topic, consider how much time you have to write the essay and the length that it needs to be. For example, if you have one week to write a two-page essay, it will be impossible to write about the history of your country.

After you have done your research, make an outline of your essay. An outline shows the concepts that you want to write about and the order in which you want to write about them. An outline should be brief and concise. If your outline seems too long for the time or space that you have, narrow your topic even more. Creating an outline is also a good way to see where you need to do more research.

### Step 2: Writing a Rough Draft

Begin writing the essay. Follow your outline and use complete sentences and paragraphs. Do not worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar at this stage. Instead, focus on writing your ideas in some sort of organized fashion. Do not edit or revise as you write, because you may lose your concentration.

### Step 3: Revising

Most of your time will be spent during this step of the writing process. In the revision stage, you are looking at content (what you have said about your topic) and organization (how you have said it). Have you included all of the important information about your topic? Does it flow well from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph? Have you stayed on topic and not included unnecessary information? If you are not sure that your essay flows well and makes sense, read it out loud to a parent or a teacher. Do not focus on your grammar, spelling, and punctuation yet. Perfect spelling and punctuation will not hide a disorganized essay. Most writers revise their writing many times before they are satisfied with the content and organization.

### Step 4: Editing

Once you are satisfied with the content and organization of your essay, it is time to fix any spelling, grammar, mechanics, and usage problems. If you are using a word processing program, use the spell- and grammar-check options. These options are useful for a first check of spelling and grammar, but do not rely on them to catch all of your mistakes. If you are having trouble finding your punctuation and spelling mistakes, you can: 1.) Read your essay out loud to another person, or have another person read it out loud to you. It is much easier to catch your mistakes if you or another reader are stumbling over the words. 2.) Read your essay backwards, from last sentence to first. Isolate each sentence and read it out loud. This will focus your attention on any errors in that sentence, and you will not be distracted by the rest of the essay. If you are still worried about errors in your essay, ask a parent or a teacher to read it for you.

### Step 5: Publishing

Make sure your essay is printed or neatly handwritten on clean white paper with blue or black ink. Fancy lettering on colorful paper may look nice, but it is hard to read. Put your essay away and keep it neat until it is time to turn it in. Take pride in your writing and present it to your teacher like the work of art that it is!

