

Writing for the Boss:

Tips to the “staffer” writing on behalf of the boss, whether in agreement or not.

What is This Workshop About?

First, what it's not about:

Imitating today's political discourse.

The singular goal of reelection.

Working through ideological conflict.

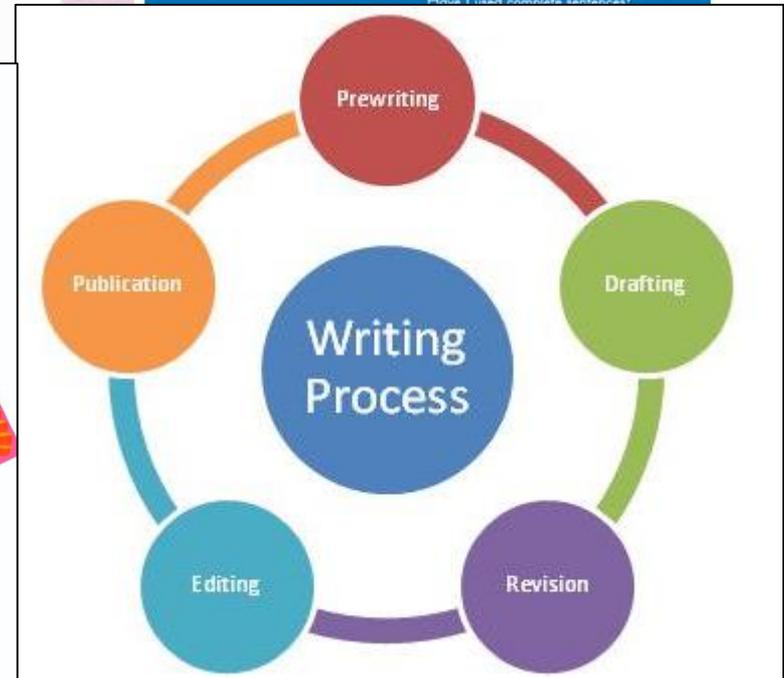
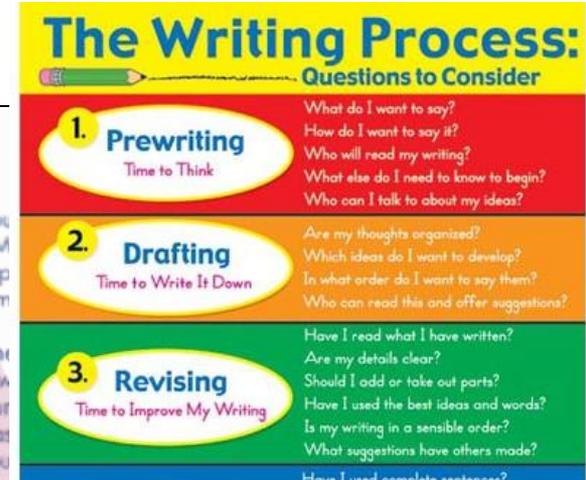
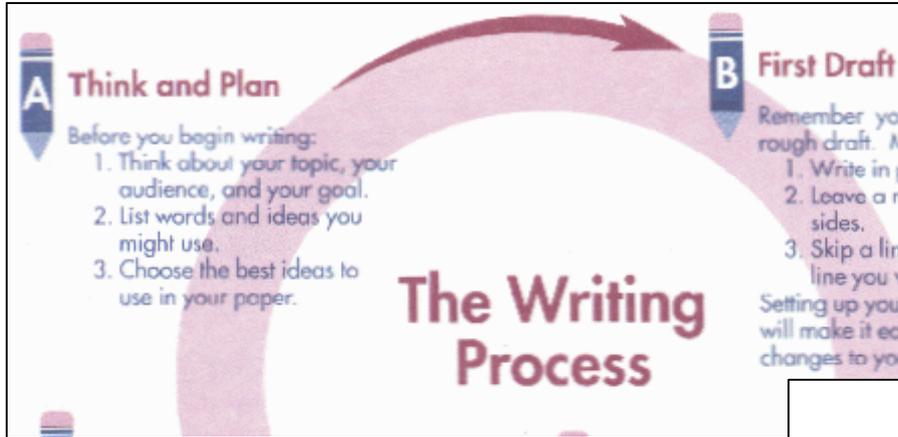
What is This Workshop About?

This is about having a process and strategy for staff writing...

...that does not depend on full agreement on every issue...

...that pursues broader goals that matter to you and to the boss.

The Writing Process



The Writing Process

Pre-Writing

Drafting

Revising

Editing

It's not magic. Writing is work that you know how to organize.

But we can talk about unique and additional considerations within this familiar process.

Pre-Writing

Consistency is important, and harder than it sounds.

Write to the intent, not to the policy.

Be a media consumer in your subject area.

If you disagree with a position, work twice as hard to understand it.

Pre-Writing

Consistency is important, and harder than it sounds.

Keep these organized...

- *Past writing on the subject.*
- *Votes on the issue or related issues.*
- *Writing that demands a follow-up action.*

Pre-Writing

Write to the intent, not to the policy.

What sort of intent might you have?



Pre-Writing

Consume media in your subject area.

Have a sense for what is already being written.

Find your territory, carve a niche.

Or, at least, don't be repetitive.

Pre-Writing

If you disagree with a position, work twice as hard to understand it.

Why is this worth emphasizing?



The First Draft



The First Draft

Write in your own voice.

But have some rules.

Write long.

But keep the goal in mind, don't get lost.

Abandon the talking points.

The First Draft

Write in your own voice.

Isn't this about writing the boss's voice?



The First Draft

But have some rules.

What sort of rules? How do they help?



The First Draft

Write long...but don't get lost.

A common and tempting pitfall?



The First Draft

**Writing in disagreement? Abandon the
'other side' talking points.**

Because you don't believe them yourself.

*Treat the issue and the argument with some
respect. Be diligent.*

Revising

More than syntax; it's about personality.

'Voice' is not a static entity.

Set parameters for your revision process.

If you're unsure, write it your own way.

Revising

More than syntax; it's about personality.

In practice, what does this mean?



Revising

‘Voice’ is not a static entity.

No reason to sound the same in every piece...



Revising

Set parameters for your revision process.

What might those parameters be?



Revising

If you're unsure, write it your own way.

*The boss is going to edit and approve anyway –
leave something to edit.*

Editing

Notes on word choice.

Read your final product from different perspectives.

Then read it from the media perspective.

But don't be too hard on yourself.

Editing

Notes on word choice.

You will recycle words too often. Be conscious of this and work against it.

Tempting to rely too much on the “I” pronoun.

**Also, please help me kill these words forever:
“Critical,” “Historic,” “Unprecedented,”
“The American Public.”**

Editing

Different Perspectives.

Supporters

Opposition

Media

Colleagues

Editing

But don't be too hard on yourself.

You will never please them all.

Some Loose Ends

**It's not just about reflecting the boss's ideas
(although...it might be)**

**Keep the communications work and the
policy work together.**

Standardize your fluff.

Some Loose Ends

Know where your material came from.

Keep track of useful bits.

Enjoy the process.

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