

Learning the Craft Makes a Good Writer

According to [William Zinsser](#), the author of *On Writing Well*, the following attitudes make a good writer:

- Confidence
- Enjoyment
- Intention
- Integrity

I will add to Mr. Zinsser's list: passion for your subject, a willingness to learn the writing process, and the determination to work at the craft.

Also needed for graduate level papers:

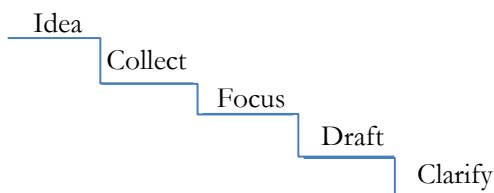
- The ability to think logically and communicate ideas clearly and effectively
- The knowledge that writing the first draft is only the beginning of the process and that the real WRITING work is done in the editing of second (and when necessary third or fourth) drafts
- The fearlessness to edit out every unnecessary word in the second and third drafts

From *10 Steps in Writing the Research Paper* by Peter Markman, Alison E. Heney PhD, Roberta Markman PhD & Marie L. Waddell

1. Find a subject that interest you
2. Read general articles
3. Form a temporary thesis; make an outline from it
4. Prepare a preliminary bibliography (relevant research sources)
5. Research; take notes
6. Revise outline and focus thesis based on research
7. Write first draft
8. Revise first draft; write introduction and conclusion
9. Check references within the paper for accuracy; prepare final bibliography
10. Create final draft

From *Writing Tools* by Roy Peter Clark

5 Writing Steps by Donald Murray



The Writing Process

Writing, like sewing or cooking or bricklaying, is a craft. Some people make art with it but it is basically a craft that anyone can learn.

It starts with an idea, moves into research, continues with placing word after word into a first draft, and finishes with a ruthless edit for meaning, structure, and form.

Writing is a necessary skill for expressing ideas in every job and any academic endeavor. It's also helpful in personal relationships.

People with a talent and passion for writing who are able to elevate it to art form deserve our admiration, just as any other person who is gifted in his or her field. But the rest of us can learn the craft without fear or intimidation from the art.

You'd never consider not cooking dinner because you can't cook like a Cordon Bleu chef. You cook because you need to eat.

You become a better cook with practice and by imitating the artists. The same holds true for writing.