

### 3. The Writing Process

Writing is never a one-step action; it is an ongoing creative act. The process of writing has roughly four steps. In the first step, you create ideas. In the second step, you organize the ideas. In the third step, you write a rough draft. In the final step, you polish your rough draft by editing it and making revisions.

#### Step 01 : Prewriting

##### MODEL

The first step is called prewriting . Prewriting is a way to get ideas. In this step, you choose a topic and collect ideas to explain the topic. There exist many techniques that students can use to get ideas. Listing is a prewriting technique in which you write the topic at the top of a piece of paper and then quickly make a list of the words or phrases that come into your mind. Don't stop to wonder if an idea is good or not. Write it down! Keep on writing until the flow of ideas stops.

In the following example, the assignment was to write a paragraph about a person who has made a difference in the world, in the community, or in the writer's life. First, the writer made a list of people who have made a difference. Then he decided which person to write about and circled his choice, as illustrated below

A Person Who Has Made a Difference	
Albert Einstein	Bill Gates
Mother Teresa	Aunt Sarah
Martin Luther King, Jr.	Mr. Jakobsen (high school counselor)
Cesar Chavez	Grandfather

Next, the writer started a new list. He wrote his chosen topic, Grandfather, at the top of a new piece of paper and started writing words and phrases that came into his mind about his grandfather.

Grandfather	
uneducated (high school? eighth grade?)	started hospital in town — only hospital in big area
farmer	first farmer to terrace his land — now everyone does it
worked hard	improved farming techniques in his area
helped his community	smart
started community hospital	read about new things
respected in community	terracing helps prevent soil erosion
went to church every week	listened to experts
got up early	thought things over
worked late	made me laugh when I was little
was the first person in town to buy a car	
forward-thinking	

The writer ,then , looked at his second list and decided to write about how his grandfather helped his community. He circled that idea. Then he thought about how his grandfather helped his community. He circled two ideas and marked them A and B. The writer also crossed out anything that didn't belong to these two ideas.

Grandfather	
<del>uneducated (high school? eighth grade?)</del>	started hospital in town — only hospital in big area
<del>farmer</del>	first farmer to terrace his land — now everyone does it
<del>worked hard</del>	improved farming techniques in his area
<u>helped his community</u>	smart
<b>B</b> <u>started community hospital</u>	read about new things
<del>respected in community</del>	terracing helps prevent soil erosion
<del>went to church every week</del>	listened to experts
<del>got up early</del>	thought things over
<del>worked late</del>	made me laugh when I was little
<del>was the first person in town to buy a car</del>	
<del>forward-thinking</del>	

## Step 02 Organizing

The next step in the writing process is to organize the ideas into a simple outline. The writer of our models wrote a sentence that named the topic (his grandfather) and told the main idea (his grandfather helped his community). Below the first sentence, he listed the two main ideas and any other words and phrases from the list that gave more information about them.

MODEL	A Person Who Has Made a Difference: My Grandfather
Simple Paragraph Outline	My grandfather helped his community in two ways.
	A. He improved farming techniques in his area.
	• first farmer to terrace his land
	• terracing helps prevent soil erosion
	B. He started a community hospital.
	• only hospital in big area

### Step 03: Writing

The next step is to write a rough draft, using your outline as a guide. Write your rough draft as quickly as you can without stopping to think about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Just get your ideas down on paper. You will probably see many errors in your rough draft. This is perfectly usual and acceptable- after all. this is just a rough draft. You will fix the errors later. Notice that the writer added some ideas that were not in his outline. Notice also that he added a concluding sentence at the end.

<b>MODEL</b> <i>Rough Draft</i>	<p><b>A Person Who Has Made a Difference: My Grandfather</b></p> <p>My Grandfather help his community in two ways. My Grandfather born in 1880. He was farmer. Not well educated. (Maybe he only went to high school for one or two year. In those days, children were needed to work on the farm.) He was first farmer in his community to terrace his fields. Then, people thought he was crazy, but now, every farmer does it. Terracing helps prevent soil erosion. This improved farming techniques in his area. After he is too old to work at farming, my Grandfather get the idea that his town needs a Hospital, so he spend his time raising money to build one. There is no hospitals nearby, and people have to go long distance to see doctor. People again think he really crazy, but he succeed. Now a small Hospital in community, and two doctor. Each of the doctors have lots of patients. The Hospital is named the james walker community hospital. It was named for my Grandfather. My Grandfather just a simple, uneducated farmer, but he helped his community a lot.</p>
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### Step 04: Polishing, Revising and Editing

In this step, you polish what you have written. This step is also called revising and editing. Polishing is most successful if you do it in two steps. First, attack the big issues of content and organization (revising). Then work on the smaller issues of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics (editing).

Consider the following versions :

**Peer Editing** A peer editor is a classmate who reads your paper and helps improve the content and organization. A peer editor's job is to read, ask questions, and comment on what's good and on what might be changed or made clearer. He or she should not check the grammar or punctuation.

In the following model, the peer editor's comments and the writer's replies are on both sides of the page.

**MODEL**  
Revising

**A Person Who Has Made a Difference: My Grandfather**

My Grandfather help his community in two ways. My Grandfather born in 1880. He was farmer. Not well educated. (maybe he only went to high school for one or two year. In those days, children were needed to work on the farm.) He was first farmer in his community to terrace his fields. Then, people thought he was crazy, but now, every farmer does it. Terracing helps prevent soil erosion. This improved farming techniques in his area. After he is too old to work at farming, my Grandfather get the idea that his town needs a hospital, so he spend his time raising money to build one. There is no hospitals nearby, and people have to go long distance to see doctor. People again think he really crazy, but he succeed. Now a small hospital in community, and two doctor. Each of the doctors have lots of patients. The hospital is named the james walker community hospital. It was named for my grandfather. My Grandfather just a simple, uneducated farmer, but he helped his community a lot.

I don't understand what "terracing" is. Please explain it. Also, what is "soil erosion"?

*Good paragraph!*

*I especially like the part about the new hospital.*

*You use the word "crazy" a lot. Isn't it slang? I can't think of a better word.*

*Are these sentences important? I don't think so. You're right.*

*I don't think your grandfather would like this part!! 😊*

**Self-Editing.** This student writer checked his paper with the Self-Editing Worksheet, found and corrected most of his errors, and wrote the following final draft.

**MODEL**  
Second Draft

**A Person Who Has Made a Difference: My Grandfather**

My Grandfather help his community in two ways. He was farmer and lives in a small village. he was first farmer in his community to terrace his fields. Terracing is technique of making rows of little dams on hilly land. Terracing save water and keep soil from washing away in rainstorms. Then, people thought he was crazy, but now, all of the farmers in the area do it. Terracing helps keep the soil from washing away in rainstorms. This improved farming techniques in his area. then my Grandfather get the idea that his town need a Hospital, so he spend his time raising money to build one. There is no hospitals nearby, and people had to go long distance to see doctor. People again think he really crazy, but he succeed. Now a small Hospital in community, and two doctor. Each of the doctors have lots of patients. The Hospital is named the james walker community hospital. It was named for my Grandfather. My Grandfather just a simple, uneducated farmer, but he helped his community a lot.



**MODEL**

*Final Copy*

**A Person Who Has Made a Difference: My Grandfather**

My grandfather helped his community in two ways. He was a farmer and lived in a small village. He was the first farmer in his community to terrace his fields. Terracing is the technique of making rows of little dams on hilly land. Terracing saves water and keeps soil from washing away in rainstorms. Then, people thought he was crazy, but now, all the farmers in the area do it. This improved farming techniques in his area. Then my grandfather got the idea that his town needed a hospital, so he spent his time raising money to build one. There were no hospitals nearby, and people had to go long distances to see a doctor. People again thought he was really crazy, but he succeeded. Now there is a small hospital in the community and two doctors. The hospital is named the James Walker Community Hospital. It was named for my grandfather. My grandfather was just a simple, uneducated farmer, but he helped his community a lot.