

The concept of writing is often misunderstood. Often, students tend to think they can either write or not write; that writing must look and fit a certain mold or set of conventions. And for the most part it does in an academic setting, but helping my students out of that headspace is what consistently improves their writing and their overall confidence in how they go about writing.

There are a few ways that I would like to introduce the concept of writing. I would first use a Gertrude Stein quote that says, “To write is to write is to write is to write...” The idea that any kind of writing is writing -- and the idea of good or bad writing should not be a student’s concern, but rather the need to write as much as possible is priority: mileage! And the second way I would introduce the concept of writing, is to chat about the process of writing: brainstorming, organizing, drafting, refining, etc. This concept helps students break down the writing into smaller chunks. For example, so many students jump into a writing assignment by sitting in front of their computer -- engh! Wrong! -- brainstorming is one of the first items to tackle. Has the student read about, created any notes/mind maps, or spoken to anyone about their topic? That first step is an important one to make headway with regards to their writing topic (thesis), their supportive research, and how they want to go about crafting their thoughts -- it truly is a process.

Lastly, if I were to explain writing with a visual analogy, I would liken it to ironing. I heard this concept from writer P.T. Anderson, who said that each time you write, you go back over what you’ve written but then a little further, then back again and a little further, and a little further... and so on. It’s not perfect; it’s writing.



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