

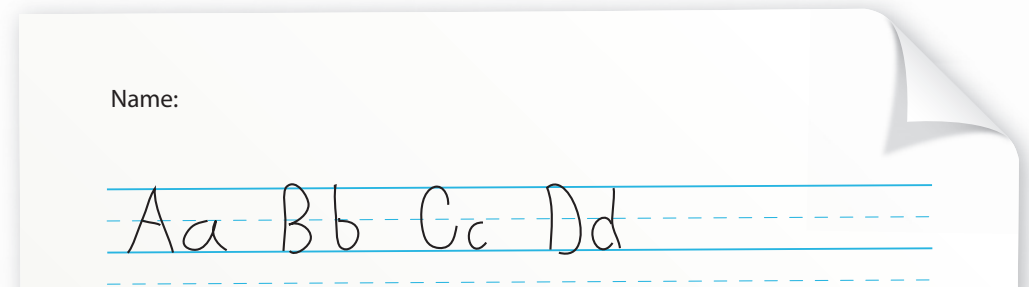
The importance of accuracy

When we make mistakes in spoken English, we can correct ourselves quickly – or say the same thing in a different way. But when we write, we need to be more **ACCURATE**. People don't tolerate mistakes in writing as generously as they do spoken errors.

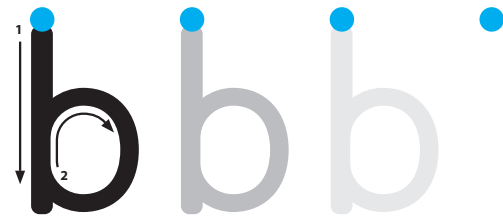
Teaching the 'nuts and bolts' of writing

Students need to learn a range of technical skills if they are to write successfully.

- Although many people use **COMPUTERS** or **MOBILE DEVICES** →86 for written communication, there are still many occasions when we use handwriting in English.
- Some students find English script difficult to master, especially if the way people write in their language (the symbols that they use) is very different from English. We will need to give them training in letter formation by using specially lined paper to help them imitate typical handwriting.



We can also give them gradually disappearing letters to teach them the pen strokes for each letter.



This kind of training is vital because readers often judge people on the basis of what their writing looks like.

- Students need to learn when to use **PUNCTUATION** features in writing →31. We can explain the rules and we can give them unpunctuated paragraphs like this and ask them to put in capital letters, **FULL STOPS (PERIODS)**, **COMMAS** and **INVERTED COMMAS (QUOTATION MARKS)**:

he remembered the day they had met in a café in new york after five minutes he said you're the one for me and she laughed that was twenty-five years ago

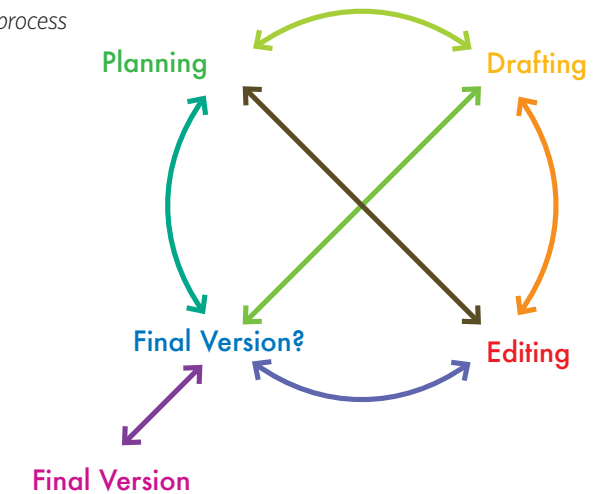
The process of writing

When we write in our first language, we usually think about what we are going to say before we do it, and we often check what we have written to see if it looks OK before we put the paper or card in the envelope or we click on *Send* on the computer. This is part of the **WRITING PROCESS**.

- In the **PLANNING STAGE** we think about what we want to write and, where appropriate, make notes. We also think about the **AUDIENCE** we are writing for →34.
- We can then start the first **DRAFT** (the first attempt) of what we want to write.

- We **REVIEW** what we have drafted and **EDIT** it before writing the final version.
- The writing process does not go in only one direction, however. For example, sometimes we plan what we are going to write, but after we have drafted it we go back and plan all over again. Sometimes at the last moment (the final version) we rethink what we have written and go back to the planning or the editing stage. The writing process is a bit like a wheel, in other words, and we tend to go round it and across it in many directions.

The writing process



- Sometimes (but not often) we have a thought, and with almost no planning we write a **TWEET** →32 or an **EMAIL** (for example) and send it without reviewing or editing it. As a result, our writing may have spelling and/or typing mistakes and if we had thought longer, we probably wouldn't have sent it! Reviewing and editing are almost always a good idea.
- We can encourage our students to think carefully about writing by having them plan what they are going to say. They can discuss ideas in **BUZZ GROUPS** →52. They can research ideas on the **INTERNET** or in the school library and make notes either on paper or on the screen.
- We can encourage the students to review and edit what they have written before they produce a final version. This is important for exam training. Students need to check through their answers before they hand them in.
- We can give the students a checklist to use while they are reviewing their work. For example, if they are writing emails, we might give them the following questions:

Checklist

- 1 What have you put in the subject line? Does it give a clear idea about the content of your message?
- 2 How do you greet the person you are writing to? Is it appropriate (not too informal or formal, for example)?
- 3 Have you made your message clear? Have you separated parts of your message into paragraphs? Why? Why not?
- 4 Have you used correct punctuation? Do you think it is necessary for this email?
- 5 How do you sign off? Is it appropriate for the person you are writing to?

- When the students have written a first draft, we can look at their work and **RESPOND** →72 to what they have done, making suggestions about the **CONTENT**, their use of English and whether or not their writing is **COHERENT** →34. We can become a kind of **EDITOR** →65.
- We can ask the students to look at each other's work and to make suggestions. This kind of **PEER REVIEW** only works when the students trust each other. We will have to watch carefully to make sure that everyone is happy with the idea.