

Recommendation 2 *(continued)*

Understanding the Writing Process

The writing process is the means through which a writer composes text. Writing is not a linear process, like following a recipe to bake a cake. It is flexible; writers should learn to move easily back and forth between components of the writing process, often altering their plans and revising their text along the way. Components of the writing process include planning, drafting, sharing, evaluating, revising, and editing. An additional component, publishing, may be included to develop and share a final product.

Planning often involves developing goals and generating ideas; gathering information from reading, prior knowledge, and discussions with others; and organizing ideas for writing based on the purpose of the text (see Recommendation 2b for more information about writing for a variety of purposes). Students should write down these goals and ideas so that they can refer to and modify them throughout the writing process.

Drafting focuses on creating a preliminary version of a text. When drafting, students must select the words and construct the sentences that most accurately convey their ideas, and then transcribe those words and sentences into written language. Skills such as spelling, handwriting, and capitalization and punctuation also are important when drafting, but these skills should not be the focus of students' effort at this stage (see Recommendation 3 for more information about these skills).

Sharing ideas or drafts with teachers, other adults, and peers throughout the writing process enables students to obtain feedback and suggestions for improving their writing.

Evaluating can be carried out by individual writers as they reread all or part of their text and carefully consider whether they are meeting their original writing goals. Evaluation also can be conducted by teachers and peers who provide the writer with feedback

Technology Tip

Word processing can make it easier for many students to carry out the writing process. For instance, text can be added, moved, deleted, or rewritten easily, encouraging students to move flexibly between components of the writing process. Some software programs help students organize their ideas for writing, provide feedback on what they write, and allow students to publish their writing in a variety of forms and formats.

(see Recommendation 4 for more information about providing students with opportunities to give and receive feedback throughout the writing process).

Revising and editing require that writers make changes to their text based on evaluations of their writing. **Revising** involves making content changes after students first have evaluated problems within their text that obscure their intended meaning. Students should make changes to clarify or enhance their meaning. These changes may include reorganizing their ideas, adding or removing whole sections of text, and refining their word choice and sentence structure.

Editing involves making changes to ensure that a text correctly adheres to the conventions of written English. Students should be particularly concerned with reviewing their spelling and grammar and making any necessary corrections. Editing changes make a text readable for external audiences and can make the writer's intended meaning clearer.

Publishing typically occurs at the end of the writing process, as students produce a final product that is shared publicly in written form, oral form, or both. Not all student writing needs to be published, but students should be given opportunities to publish their writing and celebrate their accomplishments (see Recommendation 4 for more information about publishing students' writing).