

7 writing tips from RHETORICA® — a toolkit of 21 everyday writing techniques

TOP TIP #2: Honour the three steps of the writing process

Plan, draft, edit.

That may sound obvious, but many people try to do all three at once: they start drafting without planning, use the drafting process to clarify their ideas and do some half-hearted editing on the fly. Then they hit a roadblock; they realise there are gaps in their knowledge of the topic and the reader. They throw down tools and start planning properly, but they've wasted precious time.

Planning delivers three benefits:

1. Speed — you save time in the form of fewer drafts and no re-writes;
2. Effectiveness — you get the results you want;
3. Confidence — you control the process.

Only when you've nailed your plan should you start drafting. And your job here is to just get the text down, fast. This is your raw material; it will be rough and ready, with gaps and placeholders, but if you've planned properly it will be a good start.

When you've done your first draft, pull on your editor's green eyeshade and start checking and editing it. This will turn your first draft into powerful prose.

The best writers treat the three writing steps as structured, distinct and deliberate activities, each of which demands a different set of skills. To do anything else is an abuse of process.