

## Writing Exercises

These are the exercises that can be done in class. Some of the exercises have to be finished at home.

### Building vocabulary through reading and writing

#### Exercise 1 (Goodson, pp. 62-63)

Choose one or two well-written journal or magazine articles. Read the article and jot down nouns, verbs, transitions, adjectives and adverbs. You may put adjectives and adverbs in one column. Developing the list will take about 15 minutes. Choose words you do not know or do not use in your own writing. You will do one ten-minute practice session each day. During your practice session, choose three words from each column and write generatively.

Example: I **grapple** with **unfamiliar** terminology, **despite sustained efforts** to master new vocabulary.

Aim: use between four to six new words every time you practice the exercise.

Positive outcome: our brain becomes familiar with new words while practicing them. In addition, we make associations among the words. With practice, the words will settle into our active vocabulary.

#### Exercise 2 (Goodson, pp. 65-67)

Build your own professional glossary

We think we know words in our field. A deeper understanding and mastery of these professional words not only allows for a better language proficiency, but it also increases a depth of learning in our fields. Have your students create a personal glossary.

Glossary is a list of terms in a special file.

Choose several articles in your field of study, recognized as valid sources. During ten minutes of a practice session, start reading and placing technical terms in your glossary. For each item, check how the authors defined it in the article and copy the definition with a reference. Look for a definition if the article does not define the term.

Find and use a thesaurus or a technical dictionary for your field.

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## Brainstorming for a Paper and Developing a Focus Statement

### Exercise:

Work with your peer. Ask your peer the following questions and note down his or her answers. Give your notes to your peer.

When you get back the notes about your paper, use these notes to draft a focus statement for your paper. Your first draft might be unfocused and long. As you keep revising, you will get more clarity on what you'd like to express with your paper.

- What is your paper about? What is the topic and the subject?
- What problem motivates you to explore the topic?
- Why should anyone care about your subject? What is the big point?
- When you are done writing your paper, what is the one point (message) that you would like to leave with your readers? Which three subpoints would you like to convey to your audience?
- If applicable, which theory and methods do you want to use? Why is that the appropriate method or theory?
- What evidence (data, sources, objects, or texts) do you plan to use?

## Getting Feedback

**Exercise 1** (Goodson, pp. 93-94): Getting feedback on your middle draft.

Have students find a peer they feel comfortable sharing their drafts with. Have your students say: "This is still a draft – not polished yet. I need to see this draft from the perspective of a reader. I need you to please read it and tell me:

- What do you learn from reading this piece?
- What impressed you the most?
- Are there sentences you need to reread more than once?
- Does the text flow coherently?
- Can you think of something I'm missing?"

Take notes so that you could reflect on the comments and make changes in your draft.

**Exercise 2** (Goodson, pp.104-105): Get regular feedback on your writing

You can start each session by having your students ask each other for different types of feedback.

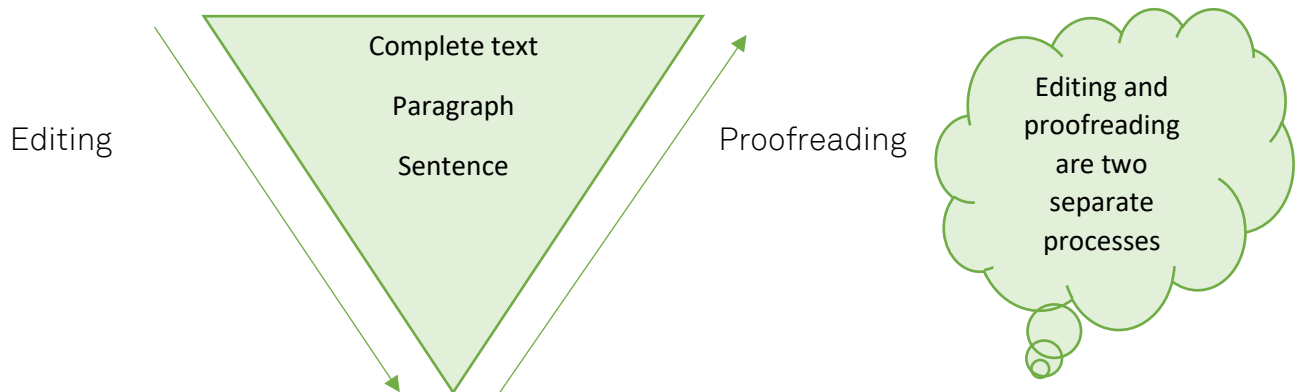
Reader-Based Feedback: Ask your readers to read your piece for • interest • main argument • beauty

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Criterion-Based Feedback: Ask your readers to read your piece for • organization (Does the text flow, or does the reader stumble?) • clarity • grammar (look for patterns of grammatical errors) • usage

## Proofreading

**Exercise 1:** Have your students proofread their pieces only after they have edited them.



Do in small chunks and over several days or sessions

Give your students a list of typical errors you'd like them to fix. Here is one based on Strunk and White:

1. Use the active voice
2. Put statements in positive form
3. Omit needless words
4. Express coordinated ideas in similar form
5. Keep related words together, etc.

You'll do one round for each item on the list. Examine your text sentence by sentence. Begin with the last paragraph in the text and work backwards through the entire piece. First, highlight the error and move on. After you've highlighted the errors, start correcting them. Repeat for each item on the list.

An option: You can introduce your students to online editing tools that will highlight and categorize their mistakes. In the next step, you discuss how they corrected the mistake.

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**Exercise 2:** Proofreading line by line (Goodson, pp. 138-140)

Style manuals are thick books. Have your students develop a personal style sheet for a project. The style sheet has to be based on the manual or assignment. *Personal style sheets* are much easier to refer to. Here is an example:

- Paragraph formatting: Indent first line; bold font, TNR size 12, double-spaced, no space after paragraphs
- Heading Level 1: ALL CAPS, TNR size 12
- Heading Level 2: First Letter Capitalized, bold font, TNR size 10
- Usage: health educator –not capitalized

Return to your final draft. Reformat it by making it look completely different. Change the font, font size, format the text into two columns, etc. Now you will see your manuscript differently. Print a hard copy of your text and start editing s-l-o-w-l-y.

Techniques to slow down: read out loud each sentence, highlight the line you're editing with a colored marker. Focus on one line at a time. Mark all the mistakes, and only then return to the beginning and start correcting the mistakes.

**Writing paper section**

Adapted from Goodson, p. 171.

**Exercise 1:**

Talk to your students about mind maps. Have them develop one for their paper or separate mind maps for each section. Next, have them free-write about one branch of the map.

**Exercise 2:**

Without stopping to think or correct, write down as fast as you can about the purpose and supporting details for your paper.

**Exercise 3:**

Write as many variations as you can of the answer to this question: What is the purpose of this paper/report?

**Exercise 4:**

Using template-sentences, start writing sentences for different parts of your paper. Go to Academic Phrasebank for template-sentences:

<https://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>

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## Making Writing Fun

Adapted from Teaching Made Practical,  
<https://teachingmadepractical.com/making-writing-fun/>

### Exercise 1: Think-Write-Pass

Put students in groups of four. Tell students they will be writing a story on any (or given) topic. Each student writes their name on a piece of paper. Have them write for two-three minutes. Everyone stops writing as you say “freeze.” Students pass their sheets to another student in the group. Each student in the group will have to read, continue the writing, and pass the paper again two or three minutes later. When each student gets their own paper back, they get a few minutes to complete the story. Students share their stories.

### Exercise 2: Silly Pictures

Find funny pictures without captions and have your students write about what is happening or have them come up with a title.



Teamwork Makes the Dream Work: <https://parade.com/1190026/marynliles/funny-pictures/>

### *Resources:*

Goodson, P. (2017). *Becoming an academic writer: 50 exercises for paced, productive, and powerful writing*. Sage.

In-Class Writing Exercises. The Writing Center, University of North Carolina. <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/faculty-resources/tips-on-teaching-writing/in-class-writing-exercises/>

Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Exercises, [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl\\_exercises/](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl_exercises/)

Writing Skills. British council. <https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/writing>

Writing Practice Worksheets. EnglishForEveryone. <https://englishforeveryone.org/Topics/Writing-Practice.html>

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