

REFLECTING ON YOUR WRITING PROCESSES

Reflection allows us to identify which of our habits are effective and which habits may need to be reconsidered to become effective. Writers reflect on how they work in order to understand what it is they do that helps them successfully communicate their ideas through writing, get motivated to start writing, stay focused or on-task, and work through procrastination. Sometimes reflection helps us discover things we need to change temporarily or permanently with our writing processes to be more successful.

This handout provides questions for writers to reflect upon their approach to the act of writing.

WHAT ARE YOUR ATTITUDES ABOUT WRITING?

First, it can be helpful to get a sense of what your attitudes are. Identifying even small aspects of writing that you enjoy or think are strengths can help motivate you as you write. Identifying aspects of writing that you think are weaknesses can help you focus on what strategies or types of support you should look for to help you improve.

- What, if anything, do you like about writing?
- What, if anything, do you dislike about writing?
- What is one (or more) of your writing strengths?
- What is one (or more) of your writing weaknesses?

WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU?

Consider some of the actions, decisions, and locations that work best for you when you write. You might find that doing more of these things or positioning yourself in similar environments will help you when you are trying to write.

- What are the most successful strategies you use when writing? Why?
- What tools/technology have you used that have been helpful for your writing process?
- What rules about writing have helped you?
- What environment works best for you to write? (Consider light, sound, space, and body position)
- How have you talked about your ideas or your writing processes with someone else in ways that have been helpful?
- What kind(s) of feedback from a reader are most useful for you to improve your writing or know you are on the right track?

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WHAT SHOULD YOU RECONSIDER?

Consider some of the actions, decisions, and locations that have not worked very well for you when you write. You might find that you are doing things that make it harder for you to write or to motivate yourself and focus on your writing. This could be a good moment for you to make some changes and try something different to see what helps you feel more successful when writing.

- What are the least successful strategies you use when writing? Why?
- What tools/technology have you used that have not been helpful for your writing process?
- What rules about writing have helped or frustrated you? Is this a real rule that you actually need to follow all the time?
- What environment distracts you when you write? (Consider light, sound, space, and body position)
- How have you talked about your ideas or your writing processes with someone else in ways that have not been helpful?
- What kind(s) of feedback from a reader are least useful for you to improve your writing or know you are on the right track?

WHAT ARE YOUR WRITING HABITS?

Taking stock of your writing habits can help you pinpoint what is and is not aiding your writing process. Doing so can help you determine what tools, technologies, or strategies aid you in the moment and which might be worth changing up when you get stuck or start to struggle. Not all habits and tools work well all the time, so find some backups you can go to when you realize something you are doing isn't working.

- Where do you go to write? What do you need to have with you or around you?
- How do you organize your time before the deadline? How do you break down an assignment to think through the work you have to do? How do you decide what to work on when? How do you carve out time to write?
- How do you interact with the assignment prompt? When and how often do you look back at it to see if you are fulfilling requirements? Do you make notes or annotate it?
- How do you start a writing task? Do you outline, free-write, or map out your ideas? Do you start with the first sentence of the introduction or do you jump into the idea that you know the most about?
- Do you write for long periods of time or short bursts? Do you complete a whole section before moving on or do you jump around? Do you edit as you write? When do you get feedback?
- How and when do you revise and edit? What lets you know the piece of writing is finally finished?
- At what point(s) in your writing or at what time(s) do you get stuck? Why do you get stuck at this point?
- What are some of the feelings or reactions you have when you get stuck? What do you do to try to work through them?
- How do you procrastinate?
- How do you motivate yourself to get back to writing, especially when you don't want to?