

Elmbrook Qualities of Good Writing

Meaning

Meaning influences almost all of the decisions a writer makes while composing a text.

Focus

Writers focus their writing by choosing which part of an event, or which aspect of a topic, to write about. To focus a text, writers think about the meaning they want to communicate, and use this meaning to help them decide which parts to include in the structure of the text.

Structure refers to the parts of sections of a text, and their roles and interrelationships within a text.

- A writer's meaning helps to decide which parts to include (or focus on) in a text. The role of each part, then, is to help develop meaning.
- A writer decides which kinds of parts to include in a text.
- In narrative genres, a writer orders the parts in time; in non-narrative texts, logic binds the parts together.
- Leads, endings and transitions help guide the reader along the path towards creating meaning.
- A writer weights some parts more than others because they play a more crucial role in developing meaning.

Elaboration or Detail refers to the particulars or specifics of a piece of writing.

- Every detail plays a role in helping a writer develop what he/she is trying to say about the topic.
- Writers use a range of detail to develop meaning. In their details, writers use specific words that describe exactly what happens in a narrative, or that describe exactly the subject of a non-narrative.
- Writers may also elaborate through illustration.

Voice is the author's style, the quality that makes his or her writing unique, and which conveys the author's attitude, personality, and character.

- Good writers create voice by writing sentences in ways that cue readers to inflect their actual voice.
- Good writers write sentences in ways that signal us to read them with a certain rhythm, a certain beat, a certain sound.
- Good writers choose an appropriate voice to match their audience and the purpose of their writing.

Conventions include spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and paragraphing. The writer should use conventions to enhance the readability of the paper.