

## 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.