

The Process Essay

Third Lecture

What is a process?

- A process essay explains how to do something or how something occurs.
- An obvious example of process writing is a recipe.



Characteristics of Process Writing

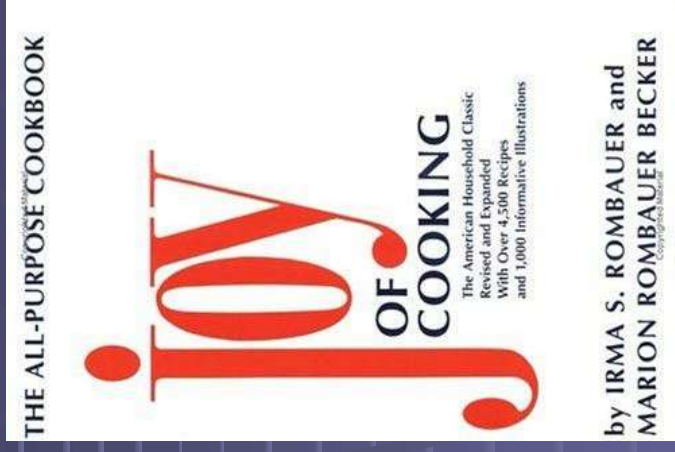
- Strict chronological order
- If the steps described are repeated, the same outcome should always be achieved.
- Fixed order
- Clarity extremely important
- Transitions essential



Two Types of Process Writing

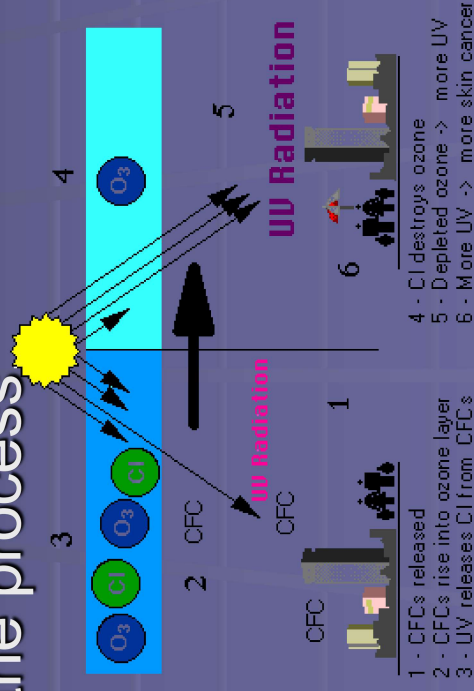
1. Directional (Gives Instructions):

- Enables readers to perform a process. Describes how to do something.
- A recipe, a handout, an operating manual are examples of instruction writing.
- Use imperative mood.
- Subject of sentences is “you” understood; speak directly to reader.



2. Process Explanation

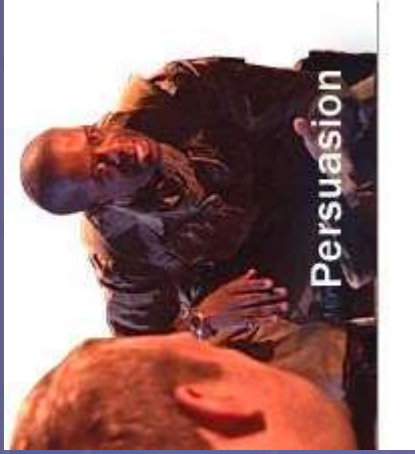
- Purpose is to help reader understand how a process is carried out i.e. explains how something happened.
- Use either 1st person or 3rd person; not second person or imperative mood.
- May be in present or past tense, depending on whether the writer is explaining a process that takes place regularly or one that occurred in the past, and on whether the writer or someone else carried out the process



	First Person	Third Person
Present Tense	“After I place the chemicals in the tray, I turn out the lights in the darkroom.” <i>(habitual process performed by the writer)</i>	“After photographers place the chemicals in the tray, they turn out the lights in the darkroom.” <i>(habitual process performed by someone other than the writer)</i>
Past Tense	“After I placed the chemicals in the tray, I turned out the lights in the darkroom.” <i>(process performed in the past by the writer)</i>	“After the photographer placed the chemicals in the tray, she turned out the lights in the darkroom.” <i>(process performed in the past by someone other than the writer)</i>

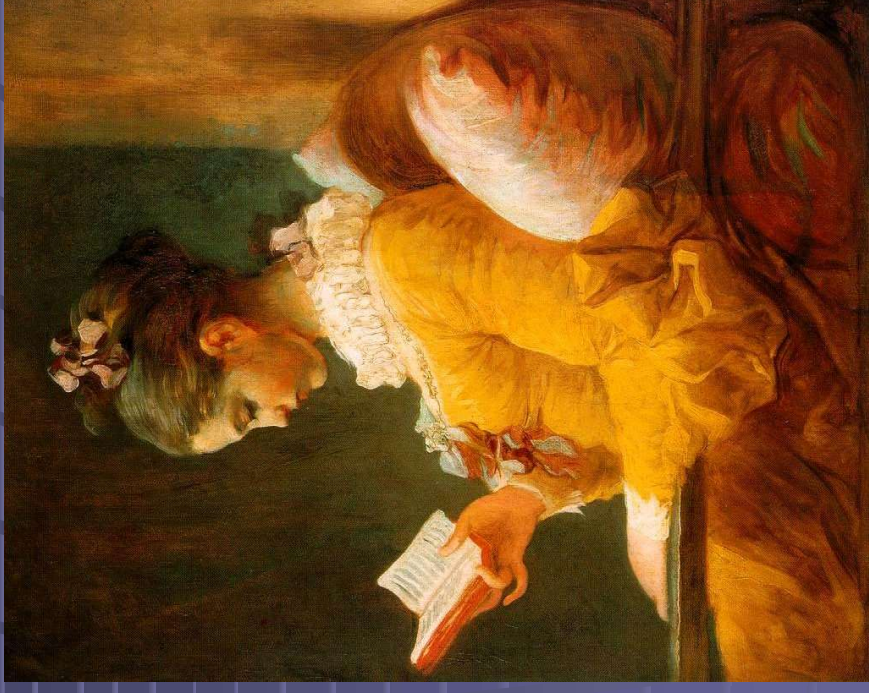
Using Process Writing

- College writing for science, literature, history, or any other subject.
- Use process writing to persuade or to inform.
- A process essay should have a clear thesis statement that identifies **the process and tells why it is performed.**



Planning a process essay

- Keep reader's needs in mind.
 - Explain reasons for performing steps.
 - Describe unfamiliar materials or equipment.
 - Define terms Avoid ambiguity.
- Warn readers of possible problems they may encounter.
- Avoid unnecessary shifts in tense, person, voice and mood.



Using transitions

- Check list of transitions our booklet
- Specifically useful are such transitions as *first, second, meanwhile, after this, next, then, at the same time, when you have finished, and finally.*
- Use transitions to establish sequential and chronological relationships between steps in process.



Structure of Process Essay

- **Introduction:**
- Introduce your topic in an interesting way.
- Present your thesis statement.
- Identifies the process and indicates why and under what circumstances it is performed.



Structure of Process Essay

- **Body of essay**
 - One major stage of the process in each body paragraph.
 - Each stage may involve several steps.
 - Your body should be like this:
 - 1- Topic sentence (Main idea)
 - 2- Supporting details (Examples, fact, statistic, short story)
 - 3- Closing remark (The function of this step)



Structure of Process Essay, cont.

- **Formal Conclusion**
 - Show the result of the process.
 - Briefly summarize your major stages
 - Reinforce and restate the thesis statement.
 - Include interesting, humorous, or inspiring closing remarks.



Revising Checklist for a Process Essay

- Does your assignment call for a set of instructions or a process explanation?
- Does your writing style clearly and consistently indicate whether you are writing a set of instructions or process explanation?
- Does your essay have a clearly stated thesis that identifies the process and perhaps tells why it is (or was) performed?
- Have you included all necessary reminders and cautions?
- Have you included all necessary steps?
- Are the steps presented in strict chronological order?
- Do transitions clearly indicate where one step ends and the next begins?

Grammar in context

- Avoid unnecessary shifts in verb tense, voice and mood, and in pronoun person.
- [Link to Verb Tense explanation and exercises.](#)
- [Link to Verb Voice explanation and exercises.](#)
- [Link to Verb Mood explanation and exercises.](#)
- [Link to Pronoun Person explanation and exercises](#)

2nd Assignment (1 pt.)

Due next lecture

Write a process essay (No less than 400 words).

Possible topics:

- How to lose weight without losing your mind
- How a particular accident occurred
- How to end a relationship
- How to avoid a nervous breakdown during exams
- How to kick a bad habit

In Class Process Writing Exercise

Look at the photograph to the right.
How is this jack-o'-lantern different
from the pumpkin from which it was
carved?

List the steps involved in the
process of carving a pumpkin into a
jack-o'-lantern. Where does the
process begin? Where does it end?

What cautions and reminders might
be helpful to someone who has
never made a jack-o'-lantern?



Journal Entry

- Write a set of instructions for someone who has never made a jack-o'-lantern. Using commands and present tense, explain each step in the order in which it occurs, including all necessary cautions and reminders.

