

The **FOUR DRAFT** Writing Process



"The way to do a piece of writing is three or four times over, never once."

John McPhee

Writing is daunting. This 'four draft' approach* demonstrates how you can break down the writing process, allowing you to develop your piece one step at a time.

*inspired by John McPhee's essay "Draft No. 4"



FIRST DRAFT

It's all about the **IDEAS**

Figure out:

- what you want to write
- who you want to write for
- what the angle is

Don't worry about the words or writing style:

- **Fling words down**
- **Write 'stream of consciousness' style**
- **Put it in a list**

Put it to the side and leave it. Let your mind mull it over.

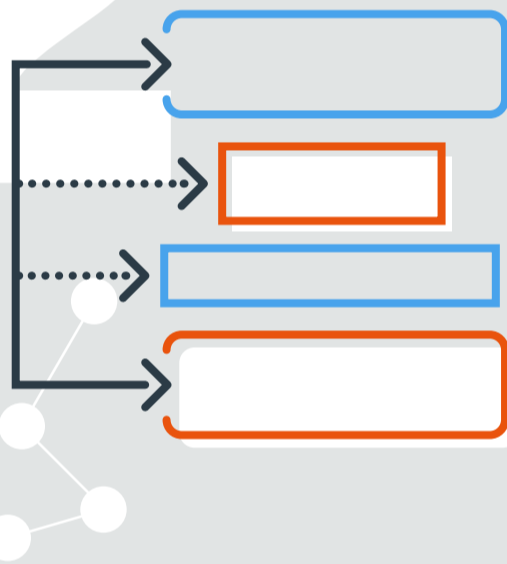
SECOND DRAFT

It's all about the **STRUCTURE**

Get it closer to what you're aiming for. Turn your thoughts into full sentences, then into paragraphs.

Figure out the narrative, the order, the flow.

Again, **forget about the words**, and write without concern.



THIRD DRAFT

It's all about the **WORDS**

Focus on the words. The flow of the piece. Do the sentences read well together? No? Add variety. **Make your piece sing.**

Highlight words that could be improved. Phrases that don't ring true. Anything you think could be transformed.

Then transform them. Make it something you want people to see.

Read it again. Does it meet your aims?

FOURTH DRAFT

It's all about the **POLISH**

Give it one last read.

You have something that resembles what you're looking for. You like the way it sounds.

- **But are there any typos?**
- **Is the grammar correct?**
- **Have you missed out any words?**

In an ideal world, this draft is a **final check** before handing it over to someone else to proofread.

