

Intellectual Diary - Steps to Writing Well

1. Learning to write well requires that you write often. You cannot develop good writing skills by simply listening to a teacher or reading a textbook. Think about a sport; people aren't born excellent athletes, it requires practice.
2. The purpose of the Intellectual Diary is to help you improve your writing skills. Approach each assignment as an opportunity to become a better writer.
3. Writing is a good way to discover and clarify your thoughts. Use writing assignments as a tool of self-discovery.
4. Learn to write as naturally as you speak. Rather than trying to choose your words *before* you write, let words and ideas come to you *during* the writing assignment.
 - a. Keep your pen moving during the writing assignment. Each writing assignment is timed. You should not stop writing until you are told to stop by the teacher.
 - b. Turn of the critic in your head. Don't let anxiety or perfectionism get in the way of putting ideas on paper.
 - c. Avoid correcting mistakes while you write. If necessary, you can proofread and revise after you have put your thoughts on paper.
 - d. If your mind goes blank, write "I don't know what to think," or "My mind is blank." An idea will eventually come to you as long as you keep your pen moving and stay focused on the topic of the writing assignment.

Good writing is often about letting go of fear and affectation. Affectation itself, beginning with the need to define some sorts of writing as "good" and other sorts as "bad", is fearful behavior.

- Stephen King

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