



Glass Campus

Writing Tutorials & Articles



Maybe you've thought about writing a tutorial for a class or something to be published as a magazine article? Perhaps you want to produce an ebook or material for an online webinar? Even if you've never done it before, here's no reason you can't. Put together a good plan, organize your plan and get started. Now is as good a time to start as any. Why wait?

Everybody works in their own way and everyone teaches in their own way. A quote I love from Louis Tiffany is,

"Usually the best way to do something is the way you best like doing it".

Just as different musicians have a different style and different artists have a different style, so do teachers have a different style. How you write tutorials and articles should reflect your personal style. I can't tell you what your style should be. You'll have to decide for yourself what that is. What I can do is tell you how I do it and hope it helps you get started to find your style.

I believe preparation and organization is important to everything we do and use the following structure for classes, class handouts, written tutorials, magazine articles and webinars.

1. **IDEA** – what is your idea?
2. **PREPARATION** – collect everything ready to use.
3. **PLAN** – draft a plan for what you want to do
4. **ORGANIZATION** – sort everything into the best order.
5. **PRODUCTION** – putting everything together.
6. **REVISION** – polish to perfection.



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The Idea

Okay. You've decided you want to produce something. Let's expand on your idea. You could just start with, "I want to write an article" and start writing things down as they pop into your mind but writing that article will be a lot easier and come out a lot better if you start by making a few decisions about what the article will be about.

- Why are you writing the article? Revenue? Exposure? Promotion?
- What is your objective? Do you want to sell something or want to teach something?
- What size? Do you plan a short article for posting online, a tutorial as a class handout, a magazine article or a complete book?
- Is this the only project you plan or do you expect it to later become part of a larger project?
- Frame the subject. What all do you plan to cover? What should be omitted or avoided?
- Do you plan it to be a generalized overview or detailed specifics?
- Identify your audience. Who do you want the article to be for?
- What medium? Will it be text only? Will it include photos? Will it need graphics and drawings. Will it include videos? Do you have all the information and skills needed to do this or will you need help? Do you know where to find that help?



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Preparation

Start by collecting lots of material. Collect everything you think you might need. Collect notes and articles and photos and videos. Create files to organize your notes and photos and videos. Take photos and video whenever you can. Not just what you're sure you'll need. Embrace the slogan, ***"It's better to have and not need than to need and not have"***. Much of the material you've collected but don't use for this project might be important for your next project. There should always be a next project.

Keep Notes

Make notes constantly. Whenever you think of something, write it down. Of all the memory improvement techniques, none work better than remembering to write it down. Make notes when you first think of things. Don't fool yourself into believing you'll remember to write it down later. Do it now. Right now. I keep a voice recorder with me at all times and a note pad beside my bed. Whenever I think of something that should be added or remembered, I leave a voice memo to myself or write a note. I especially love sticky notes and have them stuck all over the place. Some of my best ideas come while I'm lying in bed just drifting off to sleep. I expect many of us have had the experience of waking up in the morning thinking,

"I had this terrific idea last night. I can't remember what that idea was but I do remember thinking it was a terrific idea".

When you have one of your terrific ideas, maybe it would be a terrific idea to write it down or record it before it gets terrifically forgotten?

Create a Multi-Purpose Library

There are a few differences in how you write for different applications but all writing has in common the need to organize material and carefully plan everything before you start writing. When you're collecting materials and taking photos and recording videos you might focus on only what you need for a specific project or article. Maybe it would be better to collect material whenever it's available to have available to use sometime later for other projects? If you build a library of articles and photos and videos, you will have material ready when you want it to include later in other projects. Material you originally wrote for a class handout or a website tutorial might form the foundation of a magazine article or become part of an online webinar. A project you did for a class demonstration might be something to include in an article or webinar.



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Instead of just writing articles or taking photos or videos just for some specific project, do them as additions to your multi-purpose library for future applications. Write notes and record ideas when you think of them. Take photos and videos whenever you have a chance. Add them to your library for possible future use.

The Plan

This is coming along nicely. You've collected a bunch of material to use for an article or tutorial.. Your next step is a plan. Everything should start with a plan. Let's revisit some of the questions from your ideas and use them to form your plan.

- What are you going to produce? Is it a short tutorial? Is it a magazine article? Is it an ebook?
- Do you have everything you need to complete the project? Is something missing? Will you need more photos or graphic drawings?
- Have you decided what your audience will be?
- Can you do this alone or will you need help?

Organization

If you want your audience to understand what you tell them, it's important that you present information in a way that's easy for them to understand. The more organized your presentation is, the easier it is for viewers to understand.

- **Collect Material.** Collect everything you think you will use.
- **Create a List.** List everything you plan to include.
- **Organize Your List.** Create categories. Organize the categories into the most logical order.
- **Organize the elements** in each category in the most logical order



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Production

Putting it Together

Your project is coming together. You've collected all your material and you've drafted an organized plan for how to use it. Now it's time for you to put it all together. One of the most effective ways to present information is in three stages.

1. Start with an Introduction. This is usually an overview or outline of what you are about to present.
2. Present your material.
3. Close with a brief review of what you presented.

Writing Guidelines

Planning and organization matters a lot. Everyone has a different writing style but some things are universal and apply to all writing.

- **Present tense.** Describe doing it now.
- **Action words.** Describe actively doing it rather than thinking about doing it.
- **Logical order.** Write instructions in the order they will most logically be done.
- **Careful word choice.** Choose your words carefully. Write for the expected age and skill level of your audience. Unless it's essential, avoid using any trade jargon.
- **Positive actions.** You should say "do this" rather than "this is how it is done"
- **Write in second person.** Say, "You do this". Make it personal.
- **Include alternatives.** Suggest different ways you might get the same results
- **Graphics.** Use photos and graphics to help explain what you're saying.



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Revision

Now that you've put everything together you want to take some time to review and polish it before sending it out. You can't make it perfect but can always make it better.

Rough Draft. Write your first draft.

Review. Review your draft and ask yourself if there are any needed changes. Are there some things you missed? What could be added to improve it? Photos? Drawings? Should some things be deleted? Should the material be in a different order?

Second Draft. Rewrite with the changes from your review.

Get Help. Have someone else read what you wrote and offer suggestions.

Final Draft. Make any final changes and additions.

Move on. It's done. Congratulate yourself for all your hard work. Thank everyone that helped you. Move onto another project. There should always be another project.