

Writing in a Foreign Language

APSU Writing Center Handout

Instead of writing in your native language and then translating, try composing directly in the intended language. Remember that not every word or phrase translates perfectly between languages.

Strategies

Allow More Time to Write

Acknowledge that writing in a second language will naturally take longer than writing in your first language.

Do Not Translate Word for Word

Try to write as much as possible in the intended language first.

Afterward, review your grammar and sentence structure for accuracy.

Read in the Intended Language

Notice how writing is organized and whether the tone is formal or informal.

Read different types of texts to see how native speakers express themselves in various contexts.

Ask a Native Speaker to Review Your Writing

Collaborate with a native speaker to help improve your sentence structure and catch writing errors.

Make a List of Words and Phrases You Overuse

Track repeated words or common mistakes in your drafts.

Use your list as a checklist to avoid repeating the same errors.

Consider Grammar and Style

Focus on writing grammatically correct sentences to strengthen your language skills.

Practice writing in both formal and informal tones, and in the past, present, and future tenses.

Keep Your Writing Simple

Find creative ways to express yourself using what you know to write short, clear sentences.

Writing is important for improving other language skills, such as accuracy. It allows you to focus on using language correctly and avoid future mistakes.

Revise Your Writing

After completing your first draft, use dictionaries and grammar resources to refine your writing and clarify your ideas.

Be Kind to Yourself

Recognize that you are writing in this language to communicate with your audience.

Remember that writing in another language takes time and practice

You will continue to improve the more you write!

References

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