

# 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

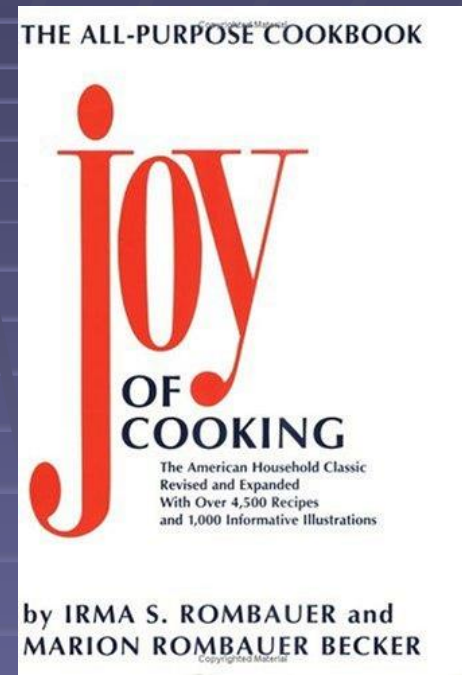
- Strict chronological order
- If the steps described are repeated, the same outcome should always be achieved.
- Fixed order
- Clarity extremely important
- Transitions essential



# Two Types of Process Writing

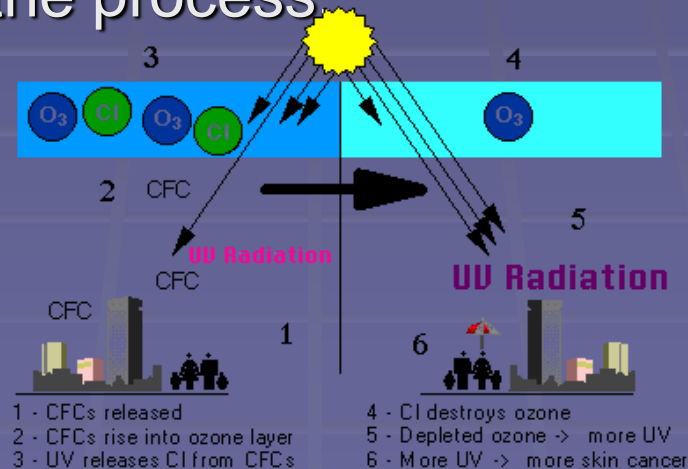
## 1. Directional (Gives Instructions):

- 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 1<sup>st</sup> person or 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

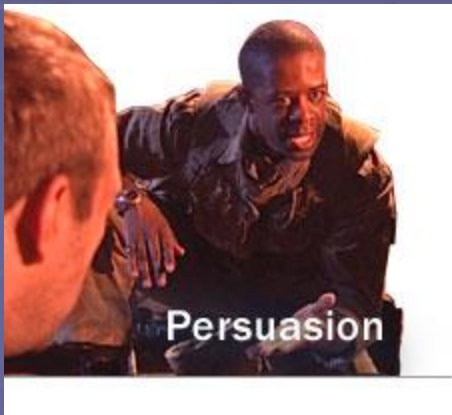


|               | First Person  | Third Person  |
|---------------|---|---|
| Present Tense | <p>“After I place the chemicals in the tray, I turn out the lights in the darkroom.”</p> <p><i>(habitual process performed by the writer)</i></p>       | <p>“After photographers place the chemicals in the tray,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



# 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

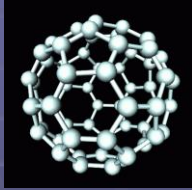
- Keep reader's needs in mind.
  - Explain reasons for performing steps.
  - Describe unfamiliar materials or equipment.
  - Define terms Avoid ambiguity.
  - Warn readers of possible problems they may encounter.
  - Avoid unnecessary shifts in tense, person, voice and mood.





# 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](#)

## 2<sup>nd</sup> 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?



Sidney Daily News / Erin Pence

# 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.

