

# Writing is an Individual Activity

C. David Pugazhenth, Ph.D. Research Scholar (English)

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## Introduction

Writing is one of the most significant human activities. Writing allows us to communicate, either at a distant place or at a distant time. In writing, we can record our own memory. Writing comes last in learning the four language skills, LSRW. However writing has its own place, its own ability and its own importance in the general scheme of learning language skills.

## Learning Writing

No one invented the art of writing just as no one invented the art of speech. But both are the results of a long period of endeavours. In the earliest stage, learning writing involved low level skills like learning to write with fingers on sand. Then writing moved to the next stage with iron needles on the palm leaves. The credit goes to John Gutenberg who invented the printing machine and paved the way for the development of writing on paper.

## Definition of the Word *Writing*

The word *write* comes from Indo-European root 'wrid'-tear, scratch. In Greek 'rhine' means file, rasp. Early Indo-European writing meant 'searching marks' on the surface. The oldest English form 'writan' means score, draw and later, write.

Writing has three basic methods. Writing is a completely new phenomenon. Writing is borrowed from one language and applied to a new language. Later on a new script has been developed, not as a new phenomenon, but as a new form of writing.

## History of Writing

The earliest writing was invented by the Sumarians in Mesopotamia about five thousand years ago. Again, a thousand and five hundred years later, the Chinese invented writing. The last invention of writing was two thousand years ago by the Mayans in Meso-America. Some scholars claim that the Egyptians and Indus valley people also invented writing.

Although the invention of writing was not common, the borrowing of writing from one culture by another was common among countries. The Egyptians were inspired by the early Mesopotamian writing. The Egyptians developed a writing system for their language. The

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Etruscans in Italy borrowed the Greek alphabet. The Roman alphabet spread all over the world and many languages used it.

### **Writing is an Individual Activity**

In writing, different structures are used, but writing is an individual activity. Writing English helps us to improve occupational and personal writing skills. Raimes (1983) suggests that writing makes the learners experience a new way of learning. While writing the text a learner uses the knowledge of the language he has already gained, and he or she is able to use the vocabulary and new and old information. Penny (1996) says, ‘The objective of writing in a foreign language is to get learners acquire the abilities and skills they need’ (162).

### **Elements of the Writing Process**

In writing, the individual composes hidden thoughts, often in privacy and reduces the thoughts to writing. Writing is an individual effort and work, and it must follow the rules. In writing, the discrete nature of linguistic signs should be appreciated consciously. The learner must recognize the structure of each word, dissect it and reproduce it in alphabetical symbols which he must have studied and memorized before. This preparedness is needed to put words in sequence to form a sentence. (Thirumalai 1977)

We need to recognize that since writing is governed by rules of grammar, we may commit more errors in writing. Errors in speaking may be considered somewhat transitory since we do not often tend to have any record of it. On the other hand, writing creates a record and our errors are easily recognized. Writing is the expression of the mind of the writer. Most writers write when they have some inner feelings related to their own self, or someone else, or surroundings, or the political and economic situation of the state, and such.

### **Conclusion**

Writing is a significant activity of human beings. In writing a writer records his memory. Writing is the result of a long period of endeavour. In the beginning writing was borrowed from one language by another language and later on a new script was invented. The Roman alphabet spread all over the world. The individual composes his or her thoughts in privacy and reduces his or her thought to writing. Thus writing is an individual endeavour.

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C. David Pugazhenti, Ph.D. Research Scholar (English)  
Department of English  
Karunya University  
Coimbatore  
Tamilnadu  
India  
[davidchinnappan@gmail.com](mailto:davidchinnappan@gmail.com)