

## **THE LOOP WRITING PROCESS:**

Loop writing is a great way to work with students towards an extended piece of writing or a formal academic paper. Essentially, by approaching one topic or line of inquiry from a number of different angles, students can generate a lot of “raw materials” that can later be revised and incorporated into a longer piece.

### **A Few Loops:**

When you don't think you have anything to say, aren't interested in the topic, or are afraid of research:

- First thoughts
  - Write for at least 15 minutes to see what you already know about the topic
  - don't order or organize—just write first thoughts on the topic
  - you may have enough material from this
- Prejudices
  - Identify your biases or assumptions on the topic
  - Write from this biased point of view without any censorship
  - If it's hard to not censor yourself pretend you are someone else (a person with an extreme view) and write from this person's views.
- Instant Version
  - Deny the need for research, thinking and planning
  - Pretend you are writing the final version
  - To do this, you will have to pretend you know things, imagine you've made up your mind when you're not sure, make up facts, and leave out large parts (insert a symbol where additional information may go).

If you have conflicting feelings or are confused about the topic try:

- Dialogues
  - Give each conflicting feeling you have on the topic a voice
  - Write a dialogue between them
  - Dialogues are even valuable after you've researched a topic
  - Use the language of talking rather than the language of essays
  - For use if you have trouble writing analytically
- Narrative Thinking
  - Write the story of your thinking about the topic
  - Can help you see the issue clearly so that you can write an analytically
  - Helps you to identify your unconscious assumptions

Use this for writing letters of recommendation, a job analysis, evaluation of a person or project

- Stories
  - Write down all the stories or events surrounding person/job (funny, good, bad, etc.)

When analyzing literature and film:

- Scenes

- Take still photographs in your mind/individual moments in time about your subject from the reading and your experience.
- Valuable in an analysis of a novel, story, poem or movie
- Can lead you to insights that will help in your analysis
- Portraits
  - Write small one-two phrase portraits telling the qualities and characteristics of the people who come to mind as you are thinking about your topic (even if they don't seem relevant)

If you can't think of anything to say on your topic or everything you can think of seems dull or obvious.

- Vary the audience
  - Write the paper to someone very different from the real audience of your paper.
  - Clarifies your thinking or leads to new insights.
- Vary the writer
  - Write as if you are someone who's view on the topic is different or opposite from yours
  - Pretend to be someone who is impacted by the topic you are writing about
  - Write as if you are one of the characters in the novel, movie, or event you are writing about.
- Vary the Time
  - Write as though you were living in the past or the future

To make an issue that is confusing more clear, try:

- Errors
  - Write down things that are almost true, things you're tempted to think but are false about the topic

When your mind is unclear, try:

- Lies
  - Write all the strange or crazy things you can come up with about the topic
  - Keep writing nonsense for 10-15 minutes
  - Can clear your mind, even if you can't draw any conclusions from the "lies" you have written.

(Adapted from Peter Elbow's *Writing with Power*)

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as interpreted by Karen Kurt

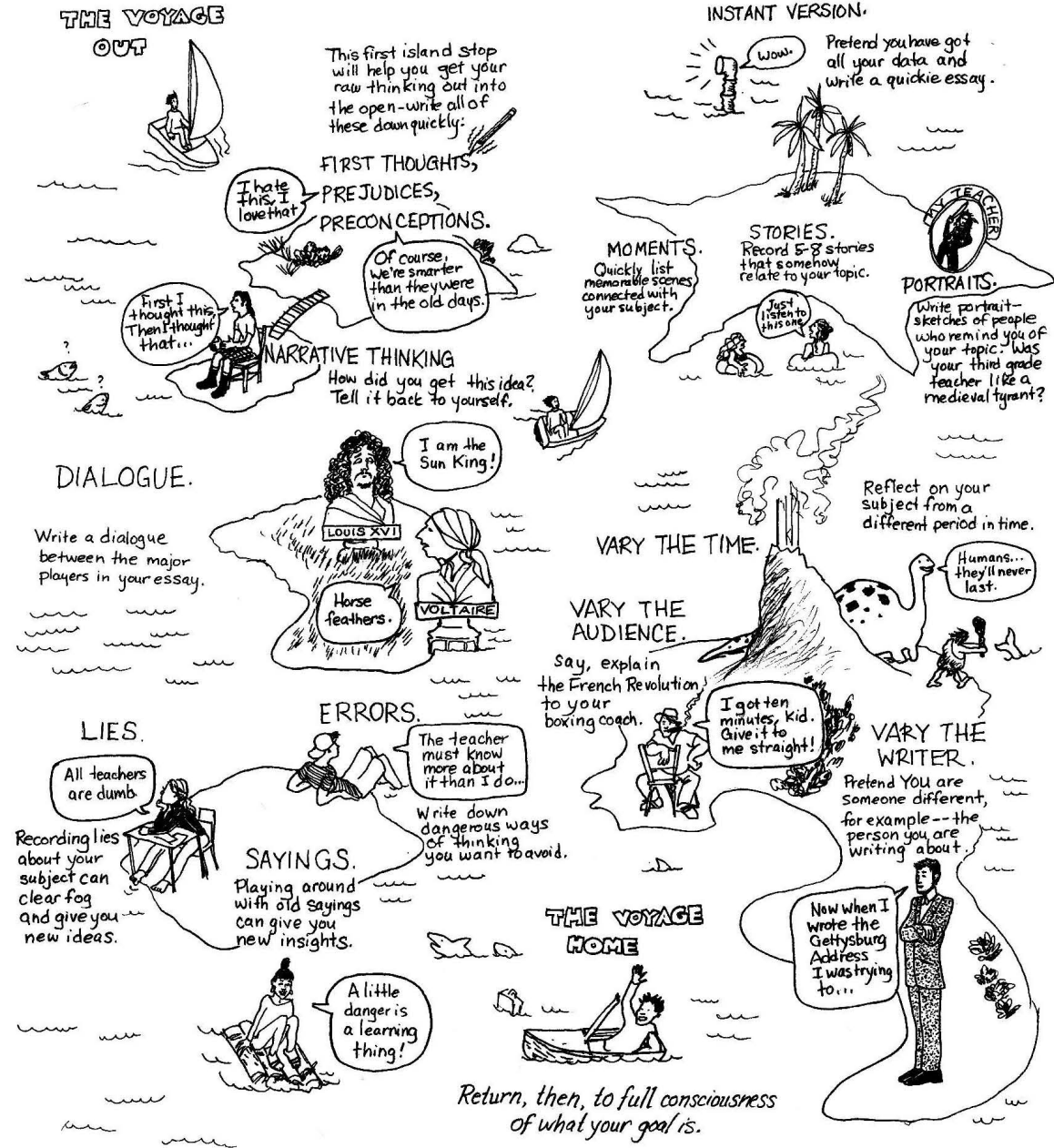


Figure 1 The Loop Writing Process