

My Shitty First Drafts; or, How I Write

Due two days after Session 2

As a way for me to get to know you as a writer, the close reading assignment for this week (250 *wds* maximum! No more, and no less – well, give or take 15-20 words!) asks you to write a small paragraph about your “shitty first drafts” experience. Essentially, tell me about your essay drafting process; in other words, how is it that you begin writing and continue writing.

At the end of class today, I gifted you an essay, entitled “Shitty First Drafts.” Read it. This is how she writes shitty first drafts. Your small paragraph should be written in the likeness of Anne Lamott’s **paragraph 5**. Essentially, you are telling me about your drafting and writing process – the pain and suffering of it all. Simply put: “How do you write?”

Easy, right? I hope so. The only challenge, perhaps: Do not begin drafting this paragraph 30 minutes before it is due. Rather, the point is that you’ll engage in the dreadful *drafting process* – maybe throw something onto a blank screen the second you wake up in the morning (30 minutes of writing), then maybe before dinner you’ll return to that rough draft and **rework its sentences** (40 minutes), and then maybe you’ll return to it again on the final day to give it one last look and polish (20 minutes). In other words, the idea of telling me about your terrible first efforts **should not** be anything like the polished piece you’ll submit! Kapeesh. Bueno.

A few things to keep in mind:

- Anne Lamott writes from the “I” perspective, you should, too!
- Notice the quick staccato movement of her sentences in paragraph 5 – “I’m ruined. I’m through. I’m toast.” – try imitating her style and sentence structure.
- Lamott is somewhat self-deprecating (she can laugh at herself) so it’s okay for you to do this too, but do keep it light and fun.
- Notice her ability to speak of the pain and suffering with a comical slant. Give it a try.

Add your first and last name to the top left corner with the course #:

Hillary Clinton
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ADD YOUR OWN FUNNY TITLE

Happy writing and I’m looking forward to learning about how each of you writes!

Professor Martinez

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21L.021 Comedy
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