

Your lips to PTA

Writing an article for PTA publications does not take genius or literary flair. It just takes having an idea you know would help others. Here is an easy five-step process to take the ideas out of your head and put them onto the paper.



First, say in one sentence the key point you want to make. What is the one thing you hope readers will remember? That is your focus. Speak to that central point with all the information you include in your article.

If you find yourself straying off-topic, you have the start of a second article to work on later. Or, you may want to rethink your key point.

Second, list three groups you hope to reach with this article. Consider their needs and their viewpoints. Speak to those needs and address those viewpoints as you write your article.

Third, write a rough outline. Put your key on paper and list arguments, statistics or anecdotes you'll use to make or explain your point. List related or secondary issues and supporting ideas. In elementary school they called this "mind mapping."

Fourth, write a first draft based on your outline. Don't take a lot of time writing at this stage – smoothing and adding pizzazz will come later.

Have family or friends read it over. Even those without PTA background will be able to sense the tone of your writing and rework areas that need clarifying or simplifying. Discussions often give you that great phrase to pull it together.

It's very common to cut out one-quarter to one-third of the article in this step to streamline the writing and strengthen the message.

Fifth, send it to your chairman or president for review in plenty of time to meet the due date – before if possible. Voila! You're an author.