

FIVE WRITERS. Which one are *you* ...?

LEAPER ?



"I don't know, to begin with, where my ideas are going. I just start to write, to see where it takes me ..."

"I write the sections separately, each dealing with a key idea or topic area... when these are finished, I try to make them all fit together."



CRAZY PAVER ?

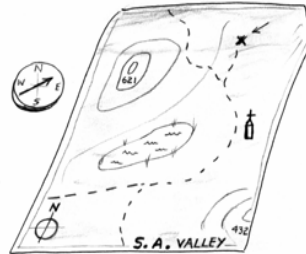
RUMINATOR ?



"I do all the reading and studying first; then, when *finally* it gels in my head, I write it down – sometimes in one go ..."

"I search for known landmarks, get some idea of the landscape – then steer a course through salient points, correcting my bearings as I go..."

MAP-READER / HIKER ?



BLUEPRINTER ?



"I usually 'see' the structure before the detail, maybe sketching a mind-map or diagram. Then I create a design for the whole piece, which I generally stick to."

OR A mixture of these? Something else? Depends on the assignment? It changes as you go?

Seminar : ‘FIVE WRITERS’ (55 mins)

AIMS To explore and understand 5 distinct kinds of thinker/writer. Highlight the differences between them; examine the possible strengths and weaknesses of each kind.

(a) Introduction. *Initial comments.* [2 minutes]

Whether for driving tests or Test Cricket, training is necessary. Why should writing, or study, be exempt? That’s not to say it’s *all* about practice, or using tools: to write well also means exploring and channelling the self. That’s a challenge; but an immense opportunity too. Being more aware of our ‘knee-jerk’ habits in writing, and learning from other styles, is essential.

(b) ‘Which writer are you ?’ *Work individually.* [8 minutes]

Peruse the cartoons overleaf. Which cartoon comes *closest* to the way you write? After a couple of minutes, take a show of hands. How many of each type in the room?

Important. Perhaps *none* of the types fit you, not even loosely (see ‘OR’ under the cartoons). If so, draw your *own* cartoon for how you work, plus 2-3 lines of description (eg ‘I use different approaches, depending on the situation, with no real favourite...’). Meanwhile, those happy with their type can customise it: ie question it (eg have you *always* been that type?); add personal detail.

(c) Differences; Strengths. *Work in small groups.*

Form into groups of the **SAME TYPE** (2 - 4 per group). If you’re the *only* person of a given type (or if, in your opinion, none of the types fit you) simply join any existing group.

(i) Jot down some key differences between your type and **each** of the others. [5 minutes]

(ii) Which of the qualities below (or their ‘opposites’, given in []) would you enter in your ‘row’ of the grid (see example for ‘Crazy Paver’)? Add your own ideas too. [10 minutes]

- | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| [Lack of] focus | [Lack of] fluency | [No] clear structure | [Lack of] thoroughness |
| A unified ‘whole’ | Scope/ breadth | Missing key ideas | Seizing the ‘ready-made’ |
| [In-] Coherence | Flexibility [Rigidity] | Irrelevant digression | Distorted interpretations |
| Attention to detail | Coping with bulk | Missed deadlines | Excessive word-count |

(iii) If you have any time left, choose a different row (i.e. not your own type) and repeat **(ii)**.

5 WRITERS: GRID	Potential Strengths (i.e. seems good for...)	Potential Weaknesses (i.e. may lead to...)
LEAPER		
CRAZY PAVER	Thoroughness?	Lack of fluency.
RUMINATOR		
BLUEPRINTER		
MAP-READER		

(d) Conclusions? *Return to the large group. (Tutor-led plenary.)*

(i) Briefly, share your insights concerning the differences between types. [5-10 min]

(ii) Pooling your results, create a ‘collective grid’ for strengths & weaknesses [if short of time, just pick a few of the grid’s ‘boxes’ at random, and compare what the different groups put in them]. Negotiate any disagreements. [10 min]

(iii) * “None of the 5 writers is inherently superior to the others.” [5-10 min]
 * “You don’t *always* have to plan things in advance, or in detail.”
 * “No writer/thinker can, or should, be pigeon-holed as ‘a type’.”
 * “We can’t be pigeon-holed? So, we’ve just been wasting our time...” ... **Discuss.**

(iv) What insights have you had about the way(s) in which you approach writing? In trying to improve, what could you learn from the other types? [5-10 min]

Post-seminar Create a ‘mnemonic’ (a memory aid) for: (i) the Five Writers (eg “a **crazy leap** into the **blue map-room**”); (ii) the possible strengths and weaknesses of your type.