

The 5 steps of the creative process

So the first thing I would say with this, is that these steps or stages, are iterative (they are not necessarily in a linear fashion). So sometimes you'll go back and forth between each of these different stages. So having said that let's go into the first part.

1. PREPARATION

In this stage you are immersing yourself in the domain. If you're a writer you are reading other writers in this area. If you are an artist you are looking at other artist's work in the area that you are looking at creating something in. If you are a scientist you are looking at all the background research. So this stage is normally best carried out in a quiet environment. It's really this stage that you are trying to absorb as much information as possible because this information will go into your sub-consciousness.

2. INCUBATION

In the second stage all the information that you have gathered the previous stage really goes back. It starts to churn in the back of your mind, in the sub-consciousness. This is an extremely important stage because sometimes it can take days, or weeks, or months or sometimes even years. That idea that you'll think about writing about a book or piece of music, and you're writing about it and you just leave it to the side for a while and then you come back to it. Now the interesting thing about this stage is that to a certain extent it is not really under your control how long it will take.

3. INSIGHT

The third stage is what most of the public think is a classic signal or sign of a creative person, the very idea of the 'Eureka' moment. Although it is probably the smallest part of the five steps, it is possible one of the most important parts. These moments most often happen when you are doing some kind of low-level physical activity; going for a shower, driving a car, having a walk. This is because your subconsciousness in the previous stages is bubbling away and this stage really allows the mind to work on something else and then bring these ideas to the forefront of your mind.

4. EVALUATION

The fourth stage is an area that a lot of creative people struggle with because often you have so many ideas and you have a limited amount of time. This stage requires self-criticism and reflection. It is asking yourself questions like: *"Is this a novel or new idea or is it one that is just re-hashed and has been done before?"*. It's the idea of going out to a small group of trusted friends and saying: *"I've had this idea, what do you think about this?"*

5. ELABORATION

The final stage is where you are actually doing the work. So many people think that the creative process is just the 'Eureka' moment. But really a creative individual isn't



complete, unless they can go through that and actually put in the hard work. The phase is what brings your intuition to life: testing the idea, working on the idea, hours spent in the laboratory if you are scientist, those days testing and micro-testing products.

