Help! I’m having trouble getting started

Erika Rolfsnes
Writers’ Night
Spring 2020
That thing you are still supposed to be writing. From “Piled higher and deeper,” by J. Cham, 2015 (http://phdcomics.com/comics/archive.php?comicid=1832).
Writing warm-up
Freewriting

Sheet of paper
Pick a writing prompt from the next slide
Write continuously for 10 minutes

Post-it note
Every time you stop, write down the reason (no matter what it is)

● Are you the same person on social media as you are in real life?
● Does your digital life have side effects?
● Should we feel guilty when we travel?
● Are you a procrastinator?
● Do we still need libraries?
● Where is your place of solace?
● What are your best tips for studying?
● How much of a priority do you make sleep?
● Is social media making us more narcissistic?
● How do you know if what you read online is true?
● Do you think that you will have a career that you love?

What were your reasons for stopping?

1. Look over and discuss your reasons for stopping
2. Discuss what you can ‘do’

Reason

Stuck for a word or spelling
Searching for ideas
Feelings of discomfort
Thinking about what others are doing
Wanting it "right"

Solution

Put in an ellipsis (...) or BLAH - and move on
Jot down ideas/ brainstorm before you write
Do you like quiet or noise, bright lights, etc.? Were you hungry, tired?
Try a study carrel or location with few distractions
Save perfection for later - just write!

How to get started and keep going

- Freewrite
- Pomodoro technique
- Brainstorm (mind map/outline)
- Preliminary research question
- Timeline
Pomodoro technique
to structure your writing sessions

1. Make a task list
2. Set a timer for 25 minutes
3. Work until the timer rings (no checking messages/social media 😜)
4. Take a short break (5 minutes)*
5. Cross out completed tasks

*Take a longer break after every 4th “pomodoro”

Focus Keeper app
Mind map

- What theories will you present/discuss?
- What key terms will you define?

Introduction
- What is the context/bigger picture?
- What is your research question?

Topic

Theory/Key terms
- What will you do to gather data?
- How will you analyze the data?

Methods

Literature review
- What previous work will you present?
- How does it relate?
Research question

- helps you to narrow the topic and keep your focus
  (road map for your paper)
- can be formulated as:
  - a question (which cannot be answered with yes or no)
  - a claim/argument/hypothesis that will for example be investigated, proven or discussed
  - a purpose
- precise
- feasible
Topic

narrow

Research question

What?

Who?

When?

Where?

Which?

Why?
Time management
# Reflection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Strategy for improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do I use my time effectively?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What or who distracts me?</td>
<td>checking phone and sending messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do I need to plan out my time?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Do I waste time getting started?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Do I make the most of spare moments?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Do I find time passes and I don’t know what has happened?</td>
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Timeline 1

- Planning
- Find & read literature
- Course in EndNote/Zotero/LaTeX?
- Collect data
- Write draft for introduction and methods sections (remember references!)
- Analyze data
- Write draft for results and discussion sections (remember references!)
- Revise
- Proofread
- Submit 😊
### Timeline 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks:</th>
<th>Week:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38 39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>40 41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Find &amp; read literature</td>
<td>42 43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course in EndNote/Zotero/Latex?</td>
<td>44 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect data</td>
<td>46 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write draft for introduction and methods</td>
<td>48 49</td>
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<tr>
<td>sections (remember references!)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze data</td>
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<td>Write draft for results and discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proofread</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit 😊</td>
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</table>
Review your timeline on a regular basis!

1. What have you completed?
2. What do you still need to do?
3. If you haven’t complete the scheduled tasks, what is the reason?
4. What can you improve?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANDAG</th>
<th>TIRSDAG</th>
<th>ONSDAG</th>
<th>TORSDAG</th>
<th>FREDAG</th>
<th>LØRDAG</th>
<th>SØNDAG</th>
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<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Find &amp; read literature</td>
<td>Jog with friend</td>
<td>Search for literature</td>
<td>Search for literature</td>
<td>Begin reading literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finish preliminary outline for Tuesday’s meeting Library</td>
<td>Jog with friend Sørmarka Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meet with advisor Room 123</td>
<td>Search for literature Library</td>
<td>Search for literature Library</td>
<td>Begin reading literature Library</td>
<td>Begin reading literature Library</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for literature Library</td>
<td>Zotero course KE A-259</td>
<td>Lunch with friend Line huset</td>
<td>Review this week’s tasks and make plan for next week Library</td>
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How to keep writing?

- Postpone perfection. You can always rewrite!
- Divide your paper into smaller, more manageable parts.
- Make small goals!
- Make routines for writing (e.g., location, time of day)
- Reward yourself along the way
- Stop before you get stuck and write down suggestions and keywords for how you plan to continue
- Write down any thoughts and ideas you think of so you don’t lose them
- Write multiple parts at a time
- Write even though you don’t feel up to it, don’t wait for inspiration

The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.

Mark Twain

https://libguides.uis.no/LSS