

How to write an academic paper

- Tips, tricks, & tools
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Academic paper

- Purpose?
- Peer-review & Readers
- Clear, accurate, concise



Qualitative research

Introduction

- Start with an intriguing example
 - Explain its broader relevance for the paper's main argument
- **Or** start broad
- Summarize the **main argument** and indicate the paper's **structure**
- Identify your primary **sources** (documents, interviews, media)

State of Art [use a more specific title]

- Include the most relevant areas (including theory)
- *Explicitly* explain how your research contributes to the existing literature and what is its specific contribution

Main body of article

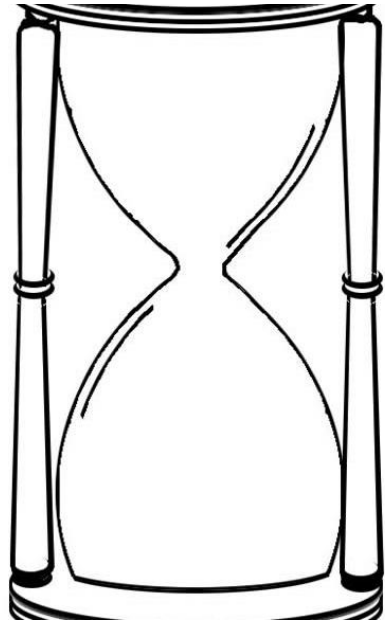
- Proceed from general (i.e., context) to specific

Conclusion

- Sum up the main findings
- Discussion, interpretation, conclusions

Quantitative research

- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- and
- Discussion



- Start broad, hook the reader
- Why is my research interesting?
 - *“Collective rituals are a puzzling aspect of human behavior...”*
- Summarize what has been done
- **HOWEVER!**
 - Critical need
 - *Only a few studies have controlled for confounding factors such....*
- Suggest your innovation to improve previous research
- Hypothesis must follow from theory!!
 - *Based on the above, memory for agents (i.e. humans and animals) should be stronger*

Your
experience
with writing
process?



The writing process

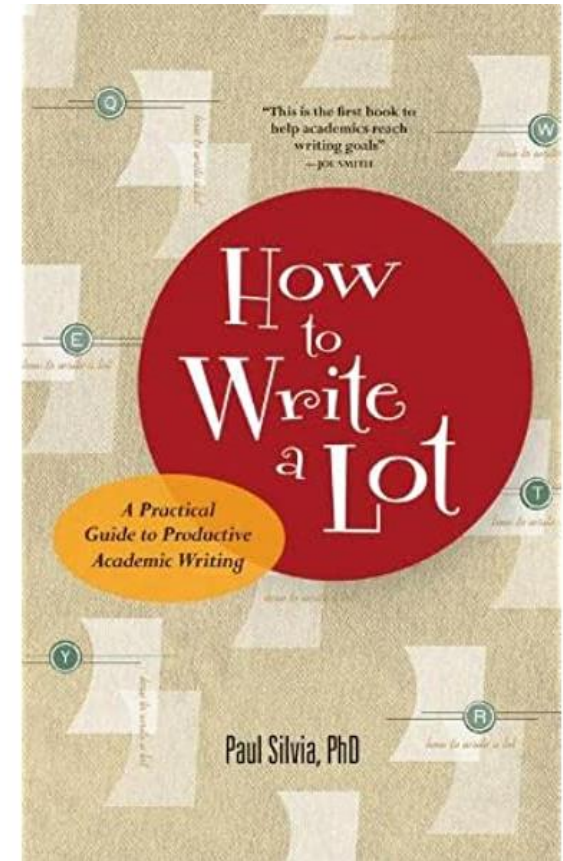
When to write? Regularly!

carve out some defensible time!

Tips:

- Do not wait until **inspiration** hits
- Do not wait **too long** to start!
 - Writing is like workout – doing it more makes it easier
- Try to see if your ideas are **ripening**, or if you are **stuck**, feel the difference
- Don't **edit** while writing

“My first drafts tend to be dreadful, but my published work is much better. In between, I do *surgery* on my prose.”



The writing process

- Determine the purpose of your paper.
- Determine the audience you are writing for.
- Develop the thesis of your paper.

- Then:

- **Brainstorm:** List all the ideas that you want to include in your paper.
- **Organize:** Group related ideas together.
- **Order:** Arrange material in subsections from general to specific or from abstract to concrete.
- **Label:** Create main and sub headings.





Tips

- active vs passive voice
 - don't be afraid of the active voice, FWIW you did the research!
- unclear pronoun references
 - English is an analytic language with simple declension “This explains...”
- articles “a”, “the”
 - if plural, you do not need to use
 - if singular, use “a” as an substitute of “one” and “the” when you talk about something specific as “the one”



Tips

- One main idea per paragraph
 - organize relevant quotes (ideally already paraphrased), your own ideas under these paragraphs
 - To be as effective as possible, a paragraph should contain each of the following: **Unity, Coherence, A Topic Sentence, and Adequate Development**





Tips

- Write more beautifully/clearly. Have fun!
- Advice on writing:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= NNkWdvodA...](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNkWdvodA...)
- **Verbs are better than nouns:**
There is a difference between x and y.
x *differs* from y.
- **Adverbs are better than adjectives**
He is a clear writer.
He writes *clearly*.



Tips

- Search for the right expression on Google, avoid „Czenglish”.
 - **Tool:** double quotation marks “enter the exact phrase”
- *In media res* – start writing from the main argument
- **Read in English!** Both academic and *non-academic* genres
- Check **journal style**, read guidelines for authors



Tips

- **Read draft aloud!** Before regarding a piece of writing as finished, test it by **ear**.
- Before submitting the final draft
 - Proofreading, language editing by a professional!!



Tips

This sentence has five words. Here are five more words.
Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is getting boring. The sound of it drones. It's like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety.

Now listen. I vary the sentence length, and I create music. Music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of medium length. And sometimes when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals—sounds that say listen to this, it is important.

So write with a combination of short, medium, and long sentences. Create a sound that pleases the reader's ear. Don't just write words. Write music.

-Gary Provost



Tips

- Version history – and how to utilize parts that did not make the final cut



Avoid

- Straw-man argument
 - Person 1 asserts proposition X.
 - Person 2 argues against a superficially similar proposition Y, falsely, as if an argument against Y were an argument against X.
- Red herring arguments
 - “The level of mercury in seafood may be unsafe, but what will fishers do to support their families.”
- Non-sequiturs
- Long sentences and paragraphs
- Very, really, *to be*

Tools

- <https://www.thesaurus.com/>
- <https://www.deepl.com/en/translator#cs/en/>
- <https://ludwig.guru/>
- <https://app.grammarly.com/>
- *or just plain old Google!*

- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/index.html

Discussion

- Outline vs spontaneous writing
- Further [thoughts](#) on spontaneous writing
- A Twitter [thread](#) with specific practical writing tips

ing on the details. When you create the first draft, do not succumb to the temptation of editing. Do not slow down to choose a better word or better phrase; do not halt to improve your sentence structure. Pour your ideas into the paper and leave revision and editing for later. As Paul Silvia explains, “Revising while you generate text is like drinking decaffeinated coffee in the early morning: noble idea, wrong time” [2].

"FINAL".doc



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