



How I Write by Emma

In my view, crafting a strong piece of writing is like growing a flower: I must have the right seeds, conditions, and attitude towards my plant if I want it to thrive. When I write, I attempt to systematically nourish all parts of my flower – from its roots to its petals – in order to grow a beautiful finished product.

The Seeds

The “seeds” of my writing – the crucial ingredients that cause my writing to grow and flourish – always remain the same: ingenuity, honesty, and passion. Ingenuity gives my writing value. Honesty gives my writing integrity. Passion gives my writing charisma. All three seeds must be present and tended to, right from the initial planning stages of the project, in order for me to produce my best work. If one of these seeds is missing – if my work is innovative and principled but I am not passionate about it, or if I am passionate about my work but it is not original – I know I have to go back to the drawing board.

The Roots

The “roots” of my writing are those elements that anchor my work and give it strength. Strong research questions, methodologies, and primary/secondary sources give my writing credibility while grounding it specifically within my field. I like to explicitly define these elements in writing before I embark on the writing process itself to ensure that my work will have a strong foundation and direction.

The Stem

The “stem” of my writing works to connect the roots to the flower. The stem is the vital piece of the writing process that guides ideas into fruition. Many people will look at a plant’s stem and see a linear progression, but like a body of writing, during the growth process the stem can deviate, wilt, snap, and grow in ways one never thought it would or could. When I write, I try to embrace these departures and surprises – to follow them, to see where they will take me. What I have found to be true is that, at times, the most beautiful flowers can be the most difficult to cultivate. I use tools like mind-maps, charts, and colour-coding, as well as resources like my professors, peers, and consultants to assist me when the “growing” process gets tough. Sometimes I find printing my drafts – having them physically in my hands – can give me a different perspective on the work than reading it on a screen. With the right care and attitude, a wilting stem can transform into a lovely Rose.

The Flower

The “flower” of my writing – the beautiful end result – is the part of the plant that I show off. The result of hard work, careful attention, and a lot of patience, the flower is the ultimate goal: it is the finished product that I show my audience, whether that be my professor, employer, or dog. What is important to remember is that a flower does not continue to survive on its own. Only by consistently attending to my writing, through reading and revisions, can I ensure that my writing remains strong, current, and alive.