



From Start to Finish

Overview

Do you ever wonder how other writers get from start to finish? Have you ever procrastinated on an assignment because you didn't know where to start or how to continue? Do you stop writing because you don't like the way your current draft looks? You are not the only one. It is very easy for any writer to get discouraged. Don't give up! Instead, consider using the following twelve tricks to help you get from start to finish. They have been adapted from a great book for anyone who wants to learn about academic writing, *Surviving Your Dissertation* by Rudestam, Kjell Erik and Rae R. Newton (pp. 218-221):

1. At least in your first draft, use the first person singular [I] to keep you in touch with your reactions, your beliefs, and your understandings... Enjoy your voice as AUTHOR.
2. Write as flamboyantly as you like in your first draft to give voice to your passion.
3. If it makes you nervous to assert your own position, qualify it as often as possible in your first draft. Brave statements seem less dangerous with lots of phrases like "in my opinion," "I think," "It seems to me," as well as "probably," "perhaps," and "in some instances."
4. In the beginning, try to forget how your audience might evaluate what you write or how you write it.
5. Try to write in short sentences, especially in your first draft, so that you don't get tangled up in long, convoluted sentences that can obscure your meaning.
6. Try to find your own comfortable writing style and way of developing ideas. Be respectful of your style.
7. Don't be afraid to use the writing of others as a model.
8. Introduce discipline into your writing task by committing yourself to spend a given number of hours (or minutes) writing or to produce a given amount of written text every day.

Later on, when your first draft is finished and you are ready to revise your work:

9. Remove all the adverbs and adjectives you so joyously put in your first draft and restore only those that are absolutely necessary to your meaning.
10. Eliminate all your qualifying statements and restore only those that are necessary to be honest and to retain your meaning.
11. If your short sentences sound choppy and telegraphic, combine some of your sentences to make a better flow.
12. Don't accept the foregoing rules or any other rule of writing that can't be broken or doesn't work for you.

How We Can Help

These tricks can be very helpful, yet a bit general. In Writing Support, we can help you move through a specific struggle you are experiencing. We will listen and offer you specific strategies to get you moving again. We are here to help you become a better writer and to get you to the finish line. Give us a try!

Resources

Useful and comprehensive [Online Citation Resource Guide](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/) for MLA, APA, and Chicago, from Purdue University (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>)