

Writing under deadline

Don't panic: organize!

Whether you are meeting a publication deadline, over-booked, or procrastinating

Step 1: Get in the zone

- **Think about it**
Mentally organize and think about developing your "story"
Turn off the cell phone when driving, walking, waiting, etc.
- **Keep a notebook to jot down**
thoughts on development and good phrases
- **Talk about the topic**
Your approach can benefit from having a live person react to your "story" or project
If the feedback is unclear, ask for clarification
Don't get defensive, don't argue--make a note and move on
(you don't have time to debate: it's a writing project!)
- **Designate a distraction-free area to help you write**
- **Organize all you will need**
to avoid hunting and disrupting your process
- **Make a rough schedule *working backwards* from the deadline**
Highlight major steps: due date, revision, draft, workspace organization, resource and information gathering
If dependent on others, make your timeframe clear

Step 2: Write

It's as simple as that

- **Don't interrupt your writing process to edit or research**
Avoid over-working a problem area and leave it to the revision
Don't get distracted by minor points--keep focus on the whole
- **Draw up a quick outline or concept map**
- **Write out your thesis to be developed**
Specific and suitable to the assignment
- **Introduce your topic sentence in the first paragraph**
Build it up with basic, relevant facts and context: who, what, when, where, why, how
Appeal to and involve your readers
- **Development:**
Anchor your paper and each paragraph with a topic sentence. Revise later.

- **As you write, note in bold, or color what you are unsure of**
Revisit all comments when you revise
- **Keep the "navigation" clear**
In the introduction, tell your audience what you are going to do, then do it

Revising

- **Take the place of your editor or teacher:** critique your own writing.
Treat your assignment as someone else's product for review
- **Spell check.**
Use search function to find words you overuse
- **Print and read your project aloud**
Printed text is easier to edit.
Does it sound right?
Highlight problem areas to revise after you finish.
(If you run out of breath reading a sentence, it is probably too long)
- **Review sentences:**
Focus on one idea in each
Short, focused sentences are clearer and reduce the need for commas
Ideal structure: subject - verb - object.
Avoid too many prepositional phrases
Convert negatives to positives
- **Keep your voice active and verbs strong**
Control/limit your vocabulary
Beware acronyms, slang, jargon
Special vocabulary should be kept limited, introduced early, defined, used consistently
- **Limit the use of numbers in each sentence**
Double check numbers!
- **Add graphics, illustrations, etc. with captions.**
Visual information should reinforce verbal information, and vice versa