



MERRIMACK COLLEGE

Managing Your Writing Process

Merrimack College Writing Center

Goals

- Identify weaknesses in your personal writing and research processes
- Develop a strategy for writing and research process development that enables you to write and research well.



A College Student's Process?

- How much time do you give yourself
 - to **write**?
 - to analyze the assignment for **guidelines**?
 - to **read** the research on a research paper?
 - to **think** about the ideas you want to share?
 - to get **feedback**?
 - to **fix** problems?



It's enough to inspire some feelings...



So let's try to get a handle on things...



How Do You Plan a Writing Project?

- It depends on the project—the *content*, and the *form*!
 - Content is what goes into the paper--the knowledge
 - Form is the way it should look (genre, style guide, etc.)
 - Your professor, the journal, the employer, etc., will specify some of this.
- Some Examples...
 - Reflections
 - You are the source, connecting past experience to future practice
 - Generally a short paper or journal entry
 - Essay
 - Sources might be personal, but could be secondary (other scholars' research)
 - May or may not have a documentation style
 - Might be shorter (4-7 pages)... but not necessarily



How Do You Plan a Writing Project?

- Some More Examples...
 - Research Paper
 - Sources will come from primary data collection and secondary sources
 - Will be longer (8-10 pages or more)
 - Has a particular structure, often dependent upon discipline
 - Ex. Humanities History uses a repeating pattern of Description, Narrative, and Analysis. Social Science History often doesn't do much Narrative.
 - Lab Reports
 - Shorter, but depending on the experiment length, could take longer!
 - Do you know the specialized language of the discipline?
 - Form requirements generally include Problem, Review of Literature, Methodology, Findings, Discussion, and Conclusion

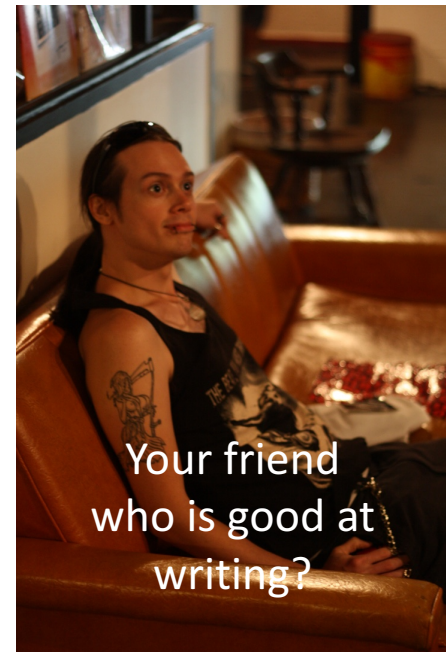


How Do You Plan a Writing Project?

- Work backwards from the due date.
- Estimate time needed for process, given the assignment.
 - Document Preparation & Submission (printing, getting to class, Internet access, etc.)
 - Editing (cleaning up the grammar, punctuation, citations, documentation, formatting)
 - Revision (reorganizing ideas and adding support, plus getting feedback from the professor, the writing center, a tutor, or a peer in the class)
 - Drafting (writing the paper down, yes, but also additional reading and thinking about the best way to make your argument, as well as any early revision and editing)
 - Invention (freewriting, but also reading, thinking, notetaking, brainstorming, and analyzing the assignment)



Who is a good reviewer?



Most Often, These are the Best Reviewers



So Let's Recap:

1. Don't plan for what you actually do, because *done* is different than *good*. Rather, plan for what you **should** do, for what you **need** to do the job right.
2. Work **backwards** from the due date to see how much time you need.
3. Plan to **use good reviewers** for focused feedback. Prepare and ask strategic questions.



Bonus Slide: How Do You Decide on POV?

Point of View	1 st Person	2 nd Person	3 rd Person
What it does	Puts the focus on you, or puts you in the same situation as your reader.	Commands the reader; recommends action and gives direction.	Places emphasis on the thing being studied; disconnects action from responsibility.
How it affects audience	Allows you to build empathy, to bridge differences.	While it gives the reader direction, too much can sound pushy!	Focuses reader on subject, but can also sound dispassionate.
Example words	I, me, my we, us, our	You, you, your (sing. & plural forms)	He, him, his She, her, her It, it, its They, them, their
Where might it work best (but always ask your professor, and always be consistent—don't switch at random if you can avoid it)	reflective writing, personal narratives, sometimes limited use in humanities and education research	Narratives and essays, instructions (you is understood, not necessarily expressed)	Research papers in the natural sciences, sometimes in the social sciences, business, arts, and humanities



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