

DEVELOPING A WRITING ROUTINE...AND THE CONDITIONS TO SUPPORT IT

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1. Weekly Schedule

Research/writing is often the thing that gets cut in a busy schedule because its ends are more long-term and therefore seem less urgent in lived time. The aim is to see writing as a daily (or at least weekly) task. This also demystifies the process as a routine habit, not a waiting game of romantic inspiration or deadline-driven desperation. On a weekly calendar, fill in:

- First, your fixed commitments. Make this short. Be honest about what's not moveable.
- Next, schedule at least five hours of writing time. (I recommend closer to ten.) Avoid one binge session.
- Next, any periodic research needs. (e.g., library run, lab set-up, deep reading)
- Then, schedule everything else. *Note: Teaching will fill up whatever time you give it. But you will figure out how to do it within any time constraints. You have control.*

2. Session routine/conditions

Where will you write? Do you need coffee, tea, or peanut m&m's? Music? Certain books from the library? Take care of this before your session begins, akin to making a shopping list before heading to the store. Writing time is for writing, not preparing to write.

3. Session goals

What will be your goal at a given session? I recommend an achievable goal and consider self-rewards for exceeding them. Will it be measured in time, word count, or product? I recommend word count, regardless of quality. Just write! *Fun fact: If you write 300 words a day, that will yield 109,500 words in a year. Surely some of that will be useable!*

4. Support/accountability structure

How will you create the conditions to affirm your scheduled research time, or make you accountable for it? Suggestions: peer writing group, digital calendar with alerts, apps that allow you to log finished tasks (e.g., Chains), research buddy with weekly check-ins, etc.

5. Longer-term goals / external deadlines

Now that you've set in place the conditions for a writing routine, get out your annual calendar. What are the writing projects you hope to accomplish? Can you create external deadlines for different stages, such as a peer writing group session, a faculty writing retreat, a research brownbag, an abstract submission, or conference presentation. Also, have at least two venues in mind for any given piece so that if the first meets rejection, you have a plan for the next step. Also, work on another project while something is out for peer review.

Some writing resources:

- Wendy Belcher, *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success*
- Robert Boice, *Professors as Writers: A Self-Help Guide to Productive Writing*
- William Germano, *From Dissertation to Book*
- W. Germano, *Getting it Published: A Guide to Scholars and Anyone Else Serious about Serious Books*
- Paul Silva, *How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing*
- Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Clockwork Muse: A Practical Guide to Writing Theses, Dissertations, & Books*