

Having trouble starting to write? Whether it's a 3-page reflection paper, a 20-page term paper or a 60-page thesis, writing can be intimidating if we don't think of ourselves as natural writers. Here are some tips on getting started.

1. Read in the genre/discipline of your field (N. Goldberg, Thunder and Lightning, p. 77) Notice the structure of writing. Notice the diction or words used. In academic writing, notice the amount of referencing or footnoting. Notice the difference in all of these (structure, diction, referencing) between the disciplines you are studying in your classes.

When it comes time for you to choose your own topic and your own genre/discipline of writing, you should be more aware of the structures, diction, and referencing that is appropriate.

2. Choose an exemplar or model piece of writing that you esteem and want to emulate. The piece does not have to be on the same topic as yours. But if you are engaged in academic writing, such as a thesis, you will want to choose an exemplar in the same field/discipline as your chosen field. (See Anne Sigismund Huff, Writing for Scholarly Publication for tips on finding an exemplar.)

3. Schedule your writing. Take the time to structure your life in a way that gives time to your writing. Schedule your writing into your daily or weekly schedule. Be precise when you write it into your calendar; include the time frame (from 10:00-10:30 on Tuesday or 3:00-6:00 on Saturday) and be precise where you will write (at Doe Library Reference Room). Make a date with yourself and stick to it.

Respect yourself and your writing by scheduling writing into your calendar. Respect other people (including professors) and their writing, too, by honoring their scheduled writing time. Do not presume they will or should change their writing time to meet your desires to meet with them.

4. Form a [writing group](#) that meets regularly to read each other's work and to keep you on task.