

Write according to a schedule. “The secret is regularity, not the number of days or the number of hours. [...] Just find a set of regular times, write them in your weekly planner, and write during those times” (Silvia 13).

Set goals. Break your project into a list of smaller, more accomplishable goals. Once you’ve done this, prioritize each item on the list and “set a concrete goal for each day of writing” (Silvia 31). Good examples of daily goals include “write at least 200 words” or “write the first three paragraphs of section X” (32).

Keep track of your progress. This could be as simple as marking a calendar when you’ve met your daily goal, writing down how much you’ve written each day (Silvia 40). Other ideas include keeping a research log or blog to “record your thoughts” on the reading and writing you are doing (Lunsford 179).

Take notes and annotate your sources. Save yourself time by documenting your sources as you go (some academics keep a notebook/log, a Word file, or index cards). “Regardless of the method, however, you should (1) record enough information to help you recall the major points of the source; (2) put the information in the form in which you are most likely to incorporate it into your research essay[...]; and (3) note all of the information you will need to cite the source accurately” (Lunsford 205).

Reward yourself when finish a goal. “Buy yourself a nice cup of coffee, a good lunch,” or do whatever will help reinforce your progress and achievement (Silvia 44).

Work around writer’s block. If the words aren’t coming to you, try working on a different part of your project (write out of sequence), or consider a short generative writing in your research log to help you explore an unformed idea.

Try playful methods of time management. For example, some academics recommend using the Pomodoro technique, which is named after a tomato shaped kitchen timer. There are “five basic steps” (Bohon):

1. Identify your tasks to be completed
2. Set your timer to 25-minutes (or 1 Pomodoro) and begin working
3. When the timer ends, put a checkmark beside the completed tasks
4. Take a 5-minute break to rejuvenate yourself before the next work session
5. Wash, rinse, and repeat

Write first, revise later. “Generating text and revising text are distinct parts of writing—don’t do both at once. [...] The quest for the perfect first draft is misguided” (Silvia 75). Create a revision plan that includes time for peer review and rewriting.

Works Cited

- Bohon, Cory. “The Pomodoro Technique.” *Profhacker: Tips about Teaching, Technology, and Productivity*. The Chronicle of Higher Education, 9 Mar. 2011. Web. 5 Nov. 2013.
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- Silvia, Paul J. *How to write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing*. Washington, DC: APA, 2007. Print.