

Planning and Sustaining Writing Projects



What are some ways to get started on a writing project?

Be sure you understand the project expectations. Here are some strategies to make sure you are clear about what you are supposed to do:

- Re-write the prompt or assignment description in your own words in order to articulate to yourself what you're supposed to do.
- Look back over class notes and other materials to notice how this assignment builds on what you have been doing as a class.
- If unsure about any of the expectations, email or visit your instructor to discuss the assignment.

Beginning to write is often one of the most difficult parts of completing a writing project. To get started, try some low-stakes writing. Low-stakes writing could include any of these strategies:

- Freewrite: write quickly and without judgment in order to get in touch with your ideas in their rawest form
- Make a visual: create a visual representation of your ideas, anything besides prose or lines in a row: concept maps, diagrams, lists

Successful writers often have conversations about what they plan to write about before they start writing. Feel free to talk through your ideas.

- Visit the University Writing Center before you start writing.
- Talk to a friend or family member about your ideas, questions, and concerns while they record you or write down what you say.

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What are some useful ways to keep writing when working on a project?

- Imagine how your writing project can be broken into pieces or tasks. Commit to working on these tasks over time. You don't have to write the final draft the first time.
- Get feedback on your writing early and often. Visit the writing center to talk to someone about your progress, or discuss your progress with a friend or other member of the class.
- Return to the low-stakes writing strategies you used to get started. Often these same strategies can help you get unstuck or allow you to see your project from a different perspective.