

Time Management for Writing

Marilyn Gray, PhD
Graduate Writing Center



Goal Setting for Writing

How do you set goals when you write?

How do you schedule time for writing?

1. Write for a certain amount of time
2. Write a certain amount of text
(number of words, number of pages)
3. Write through a certain section / part of outline
4. Write through a certain concept / idea

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Time management advice recommends
“S.M.A.R.T.” goals

S – Specific

M – Measurable

A – Action-oriented

R – Realistic

T – Time-targeted

Longer-Term Goal Setting

Working backwards from deadlines:

- Does the thesis/project have a deadline?
- Where do you want to be with your project
 - at the end of the year?
 - at the end of the quarter?
 - at the end of the month?
 - at the end of the week?

Weekly Planning Sheet

Date	Time block(s) to write	Section to work on & specific goal	Daily Reward
Mon			
Tues			
Wed			
Thurs			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Questions for Reflection

How do you set goals when you write?

- Write for a certain amount of time
- Write a certain amount of text
(number of words, number of pages)
- Write through a certain concept / idea
- Write through a certain section / part of outline

How did you plan your writing goals for the week?

What is a sustainable writing goal that you could meet on a daily or regular basis?

What are some strategies for setting realistic goals on an ongoing basis?

S.M.A.R.T. Goals - Obstacles

What are the main obstacles to S.M.A.R.T. goals?

S – Specific

M – Measurable

A – Action-oriented

R – Realistic

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Alternative 2: Pomodoro Technique

Basic Pomodoro Technique

- 25 minutes of work (use timer, web or phone app)
- 5 minute break
- Every four tomatoes, take a longer break of 15-30 minutes

Tracking Pomodoros

- Spend about a week using the Pomodoro Technique to see how long different tasks take you
- Log the information in a spreadsheet or table
- Project management apps (Kanbanflow, for example) incorporates tracking of pomodoros/time spent on tasks

Some Obstacles to Productivity

Suitable space

- Dedicated to work
- Clear / uncluttered
- Comfortable / ergonomic

Other obstacles

- Interruptions (external origins)
- Distractions (internal origins)
- Energy levels

Interruptions and Distractions

Interruptions (external) vs. distractions (internal)

Questions for thought:

- What interruptions and distractions get in the way of your writing productivity?
How do you manage these interruptions and distractions?
- What steps can you take to reduce them?

Make a list of your top 3-5 interruptions and distractions, esp. what pulls you away from writing

Energy and Productivity

- When during the day do you work best?
Morning, afternoon, or evening/night?
- Energy mapping exercise
 - Grade A: best and most alert
 - Grade B: not bad, but not great (in between)
 - Grade C: low energy/concentration

Energy and Productivity

Best Scenario: align most cognitively demanding tasks with the times when you are most alert

Realistically: we can't always set up the ideal schedule, but we can adjust our tasks based on our energy levels to an extent.

- **Grade A**: difficult analysis and challenging writing or revision tasks
- **Grade B**: straightforward data tasks and easier writing tasks, some editing
- **Grade C**: lower level tasks, emails, admin B.S.

Importance of Prioritizing Work

“Eating the Frog”

- Idea of doing the most important (and often most anxiety causing) tasks first
- Don't procrastinate by doing easy things first
- Within a “to do” list having sub-categories of what's important, what needs to be done today

Conceptualizing tasks

- by their importance
- by their urgency

Urgency Importance Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important		
Not Important		

Urgency Importance Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Urgent-Important	
Not Important		

Urgency Importance Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important		Not Urgent–Important
Not Important		

Urgency Importance Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important		Not Urgent–Important
Not Important		

Urgency Importance Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important		
Not Important	Urgent–Not Important	

Urgency Importance Matrix

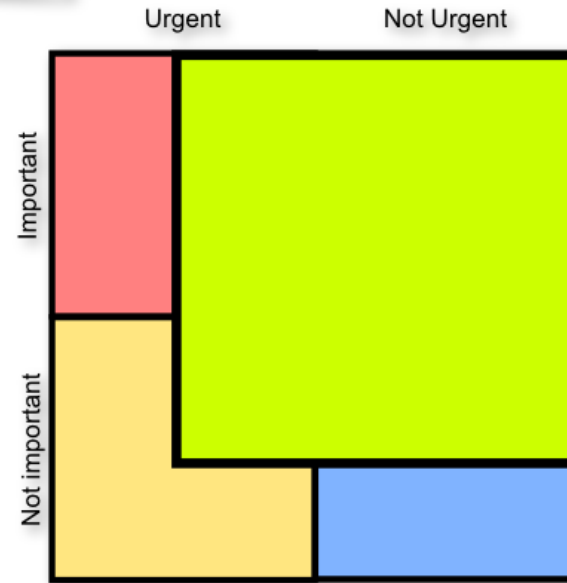
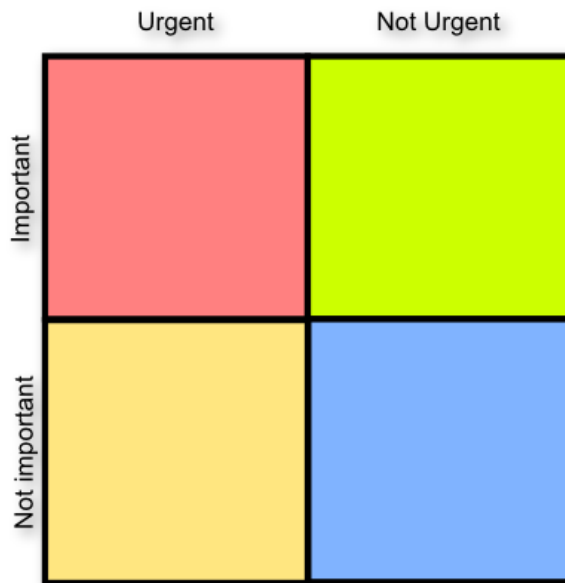
	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important		
Not Important		Not Urgent–Not Important

Urgency Importance Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important		
Not Important		

Ideal Urgency Importance Matrix

Good time management



Goal Setting & Productivity

Time Based Strategies

Write two hours a day during the work week.

Silvia, P. J. (2007). *How to write a lot: A practical guide to productive academic writing*. American Psychological Association.

Protect full days for research and writing.

Newport, C. (2016). *Deep work: Rules for focused success in a distracted world*. Hachette UK.

Goal Setting & Productivity

Quantity or Output Based Strategies

Write specific amount / section.

Professional creative writers swear by this

Motivating when schedule is flexible

Task based strategies

Trello and other apps to manage to do lists

Strategies for getting around obstacles

Simple Tips on Working from Home

- Set up a dedicated work space (ergonomic)
- Maintain positive work space (uncluttered, convenient, pleasant)
- Create boundaries to minimize distractions, especially if sharing space with others
- Put in place barriers to electronic distractions
- Have a consistent work schedule
- Have a specific plan for the day (“to do list”)
- Take breaks (look away from screen, stretch, take a walk)

Further Resources

- Other workshops on the GWC website
<https://gwc.gsrc.ucla.edu/Workshops>
https://gwc.gsrc.ucla.edu/workshop_videos
- Graduate Writing Center online appointments
<https://gwc.gsrc.ucla.edu/Appointments>
- Graduate Writing Center online writing groups
<https://gwc.gsrc.ucla.edu/Writing-Groups>
- Graduate Student Resource Center
<https://gsrc.ucla.edu/>
(current resources for graduate students)