

Because every
writer needs
motivation



Because even
the best writers
need help



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Writing your dissertation

Íde O'Sullivan and Lawrence Cleary

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Workshop Outline



● ● ● | Presentation and Layout

A major report
or dissertation is
generally
divided into
three parts.

Preliminaries

Main Text

End Matter



The manuscript

- Introduction
- Literature review (See workshop 1.)
- Method
- Results/Analysis
- Discussion
- Conclusions



Introduction

- In academic writing, an introduction, or opening, has four purposes:
 - ✓ To introduce the topic of the paper
 - ✓ To indicate the context of the conversation through background information
 - ✓ To give some indication of the overall plan of the paper
 - ✓ To catch the reader's attention, usually by convincing the reader of its relevance.



Methodology and research design

Justification

- Why and how did you choose the targeted population/sample?
- Why did you choose the particular method?
- Is the methodology appropriate to your field of study?
- Is the methodology appropriate to the objectives of the study?



Methodology and research design

Justification

- Methods affect results
- Methods affect validity and reliability
- Methods affect conclusions



Results and discussion

- The results section must not only present the results; it must make the results meaningful for the reader.
- The discussion should not simply provide more detail about the results; it should interpret and explain the results.



Results / Findings

Organising the results

- Readability
- Accessibility (graphs, tables)
- Use of appendices for raw data
- Making the results meaningful
 - Explanation
 - Simplification
 - Trends
 - Significant results
 - Relationships/correlations



Discussion

Organising the discussion

- Summarise the main results in order to remind the reader of your key findings.
- Put the results of the research into context.
- Support the validity of the results by referring to similar results.
- Explain the differences between your findings and that of previous researchers.
- Can you explain the unexpected results?



Conclusion

- To what extent have the aims of the study been achieved?
- How has your primary and secondary research helped answer the research question posed?
- Have your hypotheses been proved/disproved/partially proved?
- Did the study raise any further questions?
- Any recommendations for future research?



End matter

- Appendices (if appropriate)
- Glossary (if appropriate)
- List of references
- Bibliography/Reference list



The writing process





Prewriting

- Planning
 - Evaluating the rhetorical situation, or context, into which you write
 - Choosing and focusing your topic
 - Establishing an organising principle
- Gathering information
 - Entering the discourse on your topic
 - Taking notes as a strategy to avoid charges of plagiarism
 - Evaluating sources



The writing process





Drafting

- Try to visualise your report/paper. Work toward that vision.
- Begin to structure it—establish your section headings; give them titles. These do not have to be permanent.
- Examine the logical order of ideas reflected in those titles.
- Do not get hung up on details; elements of the draft are subject to change in the revision stage.
- Start to write the sections that you are ready to write.

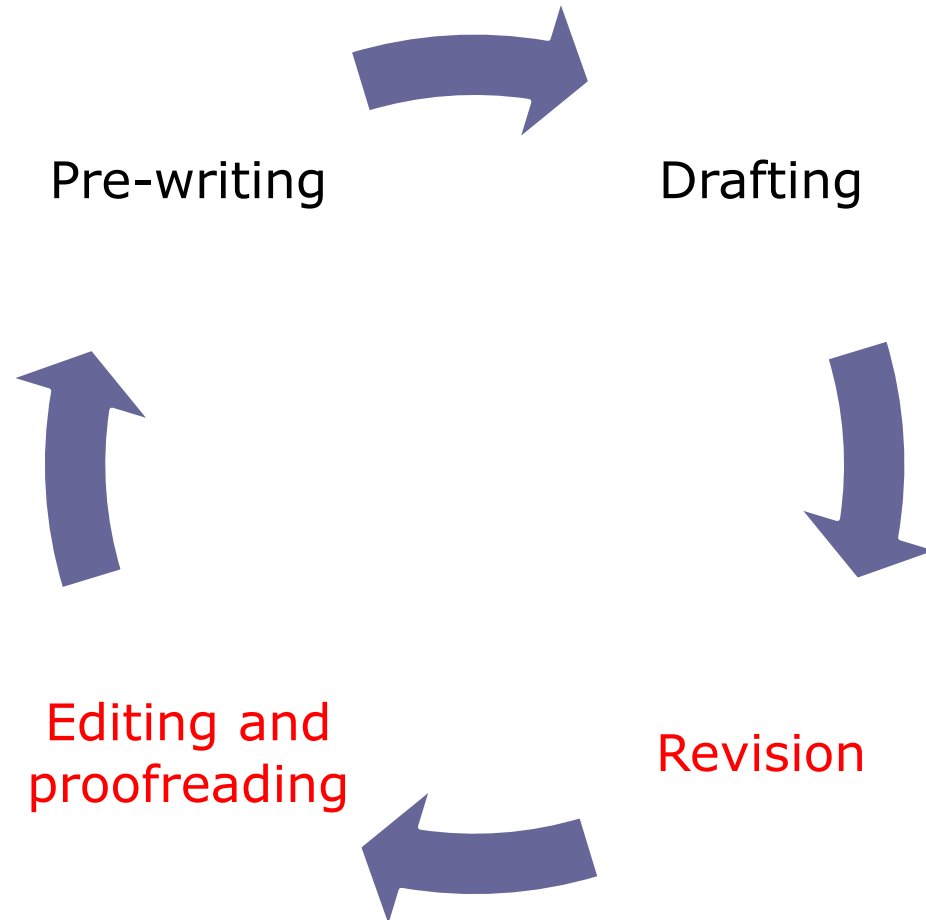


Drafting

- Continue to reassess your rhetorical situation.
- Does what you have written so far contribute to the achievement of your purpose?
- Experiment with organisation and methods of development.
- Don't get bogged-down in details; focus on the big issues: organisation and logical development.



The writing process





Importance of revision

“There is no such thing as good writing – just good rewriting”.

(Moore *et al.* 2010: 101)



Revision (global issues)

Organisation and structure

- Does the text achieve your writing goals as established in your evaluation of the rhetorical situation (writing context) and by your research question?
- How does the introduction fit in with the body of the paper? Did you address what you said you would address? Did you fulfil your promises?
- Is information logically arranged, and is the organisation of your text clear?
- Is each section in the right place to fulfil your purpose? Does each section contribute to your reader's understanding of your topic?
- Have you drawn connections between the sections?



Revision (global)

- Does each paragraph treat in a controlled manner an identifiable idea, and does that idea follow logically the ideas expressed in previous paragraphs and do they allow readers to predict the ideas expressed in the paragraphs that follow?
- Does each paragraph have a topic sentence and is the paragraph cogent, coherent and unified? Take a close look at [paragraphs](#).
- Is there deviation, wander and digression?
- Does your conclusion take into account the discoveries made during your research and writing processes?
- Strategy: Reverse outline



Revision (local)

Editing and proofreading

- Look at logical and grammatical relations as expressed within paragraph boundaries.
- Do your sentences express complete ideas, and do you vary your structures? Are they grammatical?
- Is the relationship between pronouns and noun substitutes and the things they represent clear?
- Verbs express relationships of time and indicate person, number and mood. Are those relationships consistent and appropriate?



Copyediting / Proofreading

- This is the careful editing of each line and each graphic to ensure that the material is expressed in clear, correct English, checking errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, format and sentence structure.
- Proofreading is not editing in the broader sense – it is an effort to achieve correctness in the elements mentioned above.
- Read passages aloud.
- Get others involved.



What mistakes do you typically make?

- Punctuation
- Using capital letters in the wrong places
- Sentences without verbs
- Inappropriate use of verbs – e.g. ‘elicit’ when they mean ‘produce’
- No paragraphs in long sections of text
- Poor spelling
- Poor understanding of conjunctions and connections
- Citations



Tips for editing

- Purdue OWL: Proofreading
 - <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/561/1/>
- Personalising proofreading
 - What mistakes do you typically make?
 - How can you fix these errors?
- Peer review



Writing clearly

- Logical method of development
- Effective transition signals
- Good signposting
- Consistent point of view
- Conciseness (careful word choice)
- Clarity of expression
- Paragraph structure
 - Unity
 - Coherence



Stylistic differences that mark academic writing

- Complexity
- Formality
- Objectivity
- Accuracy
- Precision
- Explicitness
- Hedging
- Responsibility

(Gillet 2015)

- Intertextuality



Resources

- Cite it Right:
http://libguides.ul.ie/ld.php?content_id=8693093
- Regional Writing Centre, UL: <http://www.ul.ie/rwc/>
- Using English for Academic Purposes:
www.uefap.com/writing
- Academic Phrasebank, University of Manchester:
<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>
- Purdue Online Writing Lab:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill:
<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>