

# Preparation for a writing session or Shut Up and Write

## Identify your next two tiny steps

To be able to write efficiently, preparing your writing sitting is key! The steps below are categorized according to the stage of the research process you are currently in. Of course, more steps are thinkable; the list is not exhaustive. Note that this list contains *optional* steps. I can very well imagine authors skipping steps because the goal of the step has already been achieved through another path.

### 1. You have just started your research project

- Fill in the question tool for the Introduction.
- Write a first rough draft of the Introduction.
- Search the literature for relevant knowledge and references that shape the territory of your paper - but first, read these [Reading Tips](#) and never forget to put the timer.
- Make a shortlist of the 'what we already know items' for the introduction - (question tool).
- Find similar papers in your field to study the layout of the Methods section - select the best one to serve as a template.
- Make the first outline for your Methods in blocks with headings and topics
- Look into [The Joy of Writing](#) for more detailed steps for writing the Methods
- Freewrite about your results: What do you expect? Why? What are the specific questions in your project? What will be the contribution of this project? Who will benefit?

### 2. You are in the process of gathering your data

- Any of the above
- Describe possible limitations that are emerging about your project (in your freewriting document)
- Describe unexpected developments in the process: did you change your plan or adjust the research question?
- Revisit your introduction
- Write the first draft of your abstract (leave the final paragraph blank)
- Compose a working title that describes the result of the study

### 3. All the data is there

- Any of the above.
- For the Results section: Always start with the tables and figures. Scan [this pdf](#) with tips.
- Fill out the Question Tool for the discussion.
- For each question in the Question Tool: make a list of possible subquestions to address for each move.
- Create a shortlist of critical reader's questions related to your results.
- Write a first sketch of the opening and closing paragraph of the discussion. These two paragraphs will be connected. Check similar articles to see how others did that.
- List the key messages your discussion should encompass.
- Compose a storyline for your discussion that is in line with the red thread in the Results.
- Check your targeted journal for the required templates (instructions to authors)

### 4. A first rough draft of any section is there

Check cohesion, style, and grammar (items below are part of the course's content):

- the use of key words and the four tools of cohesion
- sentence length (variety and location)
- connectedness of paragraphs: quality of topic sentences
- location of key sentences
- opening phrases of your sentences
- the (over)use of noun style – search for opportunities to add concrete verbs and nouns
- the use of the passive voice
- concision
- the use of verb tenses
- grammar pitfalls