

How to Start Writing
APSU Writing Center Handout

Writing a Paper

- You can do this! Don't let an assignment sheet or word count scare you. Starting is often the hardest part, but you can overcome procrastination.
- It's okay to start writing in the middle and come back to your introduction or thesis later.
- The thesis statement is just the main idea of your paper. It can change as you write.
- Sometimes, writing anything that comes to mind, even a few words, can help your ideas flow.

Steps to Get Started

- Pick a topic that interests you if one isn't assigned.
- Set a timer for 10 minutes.
- Write everything you know or want to know about the topic. Don't worry about organization yet.
- Look over what you wrote and choose three main points to focus on.
- Create an Outline.
 - List your three main points and add a few details under each one.
- Reread the assignment sheet.
 - Make sure your outline matches the assignment requirements.

Research and Resources

- Search your university library databases for sources on your topic.

- Ask yourself: Do these sources fit my three focus areas? Do they inspire a new perspective?
- For each helpful source, save:
 - URL
 - Title
 - Author or citation
 - Notes about what is useful

How to Overcome Procrastination

- If you're busy: Talk about your assignment out loud with a friend or classmate.
- If you're alone: Explain your ideas to yourself out loud.
- If you need more ideas: Listen to a podcast or video on the topic.
- Use a timer: Set a timer for 10 minutes and write in the morning, afternoon, or night.

Even small steps like jotting down ideas or doing a bit of research will add up overtime.

References

Johns Hopkins University Academic Support. (2025). Overcoming Procrastination.

<https://academicsupport.jhu.edu/resources/study-aids/overcoming-procrastination/>

McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning. (2007). Understanding and overcoming procrastination. Princeton University.

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University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (2012). Overcoming Procrastination.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/procrastination/>