

HOW TO PLAN YOUR TIME

You can't hope to write a decent research paper if you begin the night or even the week before it's due. This is confirmed not only by the experience of thousands of students but by studies of successful and unsuccessful writers. This research shows that the most successful writers tend to share some writing habits:

1. **They start drafting as early as possible**, before they think they have all the evidence they might need.
2. **They write in regular short periods** rather than in marathon bursts that dull their thinking and kill their interest.
3. **They set a goal** to produce a small number of pages every time they write, even if those pages are not very good.
4. **They report their progress** to someone else if possible, or on a chart if not.
5. **They anticipate that everything will take longer** than they think it should.

To be like these successful writers, follow these steps:

1. Set mini-goals with specific deadlines, starting backward from the paper's due date.
2. Give yourself at least one session to proofread.
3. Budget the time you'll need for finding and reading sources.
4. Plan for a day or two to find and test your research question.
5. Keep a calendar and track your progress as you go.