



## APSU Writing Center

### How to Start Writing

#### Getting Started: You've Got This!

*The art of writing is the art of applying the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair.  
—Mary Heaton Vorse*

Getting started can be the toughest part of any assignment. We give ourselves permission to push it to the next day, but this can only go on for so long. Procrastination is a tough habit to break, but it is possible. This resource has some great information to aid your quest:  
<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/procrastination/>

It is OKAY to start in the middle. Sometimes, all you need is to have something down on paper for the rest of the content to start flowing. This could be a few sentences, a messy list, or just key words.

#### Steps for Starting:

***\*\*After completing each step, assess where you are. If you have 20 more minutes in you, do a bit of research (if required) or write about one of your three areas. If you feel burnt out, step away for a break. This can be a day break or a 20 minute break depending on the deadline you are working with.\*\****

- Set a timer for 10 minutes (you can always add more if you are inspired).
- **Choose a topic** (if one is not given)
  - Write down everything you know/want to know about the topic.
  - Choose three main angles/subtopics/areas to focus on.
- **Start Outlining**
  - Revisit the assignment topic and be sure your three areas can properly address the assignment.
  - This does not have to be formal, structured, or follow any rules. Just write your topics at the top, middle, and bottom of the paper and add notes to each.
- **Research and Preliminary Resource Pages**
  - Search the APSU Woodward Library Databases for your topic in general.
    - Do any of the search results:
      - align with your three planned areas of focus?
      - inspire you to focus on another area of the topic? Be flexible!
  - For every source that is helpful, add the resource URL, title, author, or citation to a word document. If you add a small note underneath to remind yourself what was helpful in that source, it's a bonus later!



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- **If you are busy:**

- In the car, talk out loud about your assignment to your friend, significant other, parent or anyone you know. Get their ideas. Maybe they will inspire you. Maybe they will keep you accountable.
  - If you are by yourself, still talk out loud! If you need to do research, find a podcast on the topic.

- **Set a timer:**

- Use ten minutes first thing in the morning, last thing in the evening or right after lunch. Just jotting down ideas, reading a bit of research, or working on formatting will go a long way over time.

**Overall:** Don't let the jargon intimidate you. A thesis is just the main ideas of your paper. It controls the ideas and sets up the reader. This **can change** as you write. If you are researching and discover your original thesis can be improved, do it! There is an art to writing.