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10 Terrific Tips to Turn You Into A Great Academic Writer

by Suzanne Davis | Jul 19, 2018 | Academic Writing Skills |



Do you dream of being a successful academic writer in school?

Do you want to write amazing essays and research papers? The first piece to becoming a great academic writer in school is wanting to be one. But the rest of how you advance your academic writing is through the actions you take every day.

Actions that help you create a mindset for success and learn the techniques of great academic writers.

Here are 10 tips that will help you become a successful student that writes essays, papers and research projects that show your expertise.

10 Tips to Help You Become a Great Academic Writer

Tip 1: Set measurable writing goals.

Your writing goals could be a specific word count, sections of the writing project, (like the introduction, body, conclusion, etc.) or phase in the writing process. Don't stop writing for the day until you've reached your goal. I suggest taking a big goal like finishing a research paper and breaking it up into smaller goals. Each small goal leads up to achieving your big goal.

Tip 2: Visualize writing a great paper.

How you will feel and what will your writing project look like when you finish it. Will you feel excited? Will you see an A+ on your essay, paper or research project? Create a positive vision. Then close your eyes and focus on your vision. Do this every day before you start writing, and every night before you go to bed.

Tip 3: Plan what you will write each day.

When you plan your content ahead of time it will make your writing time more efficient. You could make a few notes, or write a detailed list or outline. Choose a method that will guide you in your writing. I like to write some bullet points on what I'm going to cover in my writing.

Tip 4: Use a timer to help you focus.

Decide on an amount of time where you'll only focus on the writing you need to do. Don't stop working on your essay or paper until the timer ends. This prevents you from being distracted by social media, text messages or anything else. For an academic writing project, I set a timer for 50 minutes and then take a 10-minute break. I write again for 50 minutes and then take a 30-minute break.

Try different amounts of writing time and breaks to see what works best for you. One of the most well-known timing methods is called the Pomodoro Technique, by Francesco Cirillo. To try this technique, set a timer for 25 minutes, and then take a 5-minute break. Repeat this cycle 3 more times. Then take a 15 to 20-minute break. Keep doing this until you have finished your writing for the day.

Check out the post, "The Pomodoro Technique: Is it right for you?"

<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/the-pomodoro-technique-is-it-right-for-you.html> to learn more about the Pomodoro Technique.

One nifty thing to do with a time is called a word sprint. Word sprints are where you write non-stop until your time is up, and then see how many words you wrote during that time. It's fun to realize how much writing you can accomplish in a set amount of time!

A timer is a great tool for writing, researching, studying or any other academic or professional task you need to do.

Tip 5: Create a writing habit.

There are 3 parts of a habit: trigger, action, and reward. Create your own writing habit by finding something to trigger your writing. Then write. When you finish writing reward yourself.

My trigger for writing is opening my laptop to my MS Word document. I leave the word document open every night, so it's the first thing I see in the morning. I see it and I immediately start to write. Then, I reward myself with a hot cinnamon coffee.

Choose your own writing habit and do it daily, so that it becomes automatic.

Tip 6: Eliminate all distractions.

Silence your cell phone, turn off your email notifications, ignore social media, and tell anyone that lives with you not to interrupt you (unless it's an emergency). Find a place where you can focus and write.

Try different places, until you know the best one for you. My favorite space is a library because I'm not alone, but everyone around me is quiet.

Tip 7: Write something every day.

It doesn't matter what you choose because any type of writing will help you improve how you express yourself in words. Here are some ideas for daily writing: journal entries, blog posts, freewriting exercises, and summaries or responses to what you're reading or learning in class.

When you write daily you build your vocabulary and develop your writing style. You also increase critical thinking and writing skills.


Tip 8: Write hot and edit cold.

This expression means that you should write a draft without stopping to correct things or change things. A first draft is called a rough draft (or ugly first draft) because it is messy, and will need a lot of revision and editing.

When you finish the first draft, take a break. I usually wait a day before I start revising and editing my academic writing. When you revise and edit imagine it is someone else's paper. Cut, change and rewrite everything that doesn't make sense. Be cold and calculating and unafraid to make big changes to your writing.

Tip 9: Get comments and suggestions on your academic writing.

I recommend peer-revision groups, and/or working with an academic writing tutor or teacher on revising an essay or paper.



10 TIPS FOR AMAZING ACADEMIC WRITING

- 1 SET MEASURABLE WRITING GOALS**
Your writing goals could be a specific word count, sections of the writing project (introduction, body, conclusion, etc.) or phase in the writing process. Keep working until you've met your writing goal.
- 2 VISUALIZE WRITING A GREAT PAPER**
Create a positive vision of how you will feel and what your writing project will look like when you finish it. Close your eyes and focus on your vision before you write and before you go to bed at night.
- 3 PLAN WHAT YOU WILL WRITE EACH DAY**
Write notes or outline details of the content you'll have in your writing. When you finish planning start writing.
- 4 USE A TIMER TO HELP YOU FOCUS**
Decide on an amount of time where you'll only focus on the writing you need to do. Don't stop working on your essay or paper until the timer ends.
- 5 CREATE A WRITING HABIT**
There are 3 parts of a habit: trigger, action, and reward. Decide on something to trigger your writing. Then write. When you finish writing reward yourself!
- 6 ELIMINATE ALL DISTRACTIONS**
Silence your cell phone, turn off email notifications, ignore social media, and tell anyone who lives with you not to interrupt you). Find a place where you can focus.
- 7 WRITE SOMETHING EVERY DAY**
Choose any type of writing you like. Some ideas for daily writing journal entries, blog posts, freewriting exercises or summaries or responses to what you learn in class.
- 8 WRITE HOT & EDIT COLD**
Write the first draft without stopping to correct things or change things. When you edit your work, cut and rewrite everything that doesn't make sense. Be unafraid to make big changes.
- 9 GET FEEDBACK ON YOUR ACADEMIC WRITING**
Work in peer-revision groups, and/or meet with a teacher or tutor for help on revising a paper. Ask how you can improve your writing.
- 10 READ ACADEMIC WRITING**
Read journal articles, books, blogs and other academic texts. Look for what you like about the author's writing. Try things you like with your own writing.

Suzanne Davis, Online Academic Writing Tutor
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If you are working in a peer-revision group ask others to say what they like about your paper, what's unclear or confusing, and what questions they have about your writing. Ask them to suggest ideas on how you can improve your paper. Listen to their ideas, and ask any questions you have about their comments.

If you work with a teacher or a tutor, that person can help you improve your essay or paper too. But they will also help you become a better academic writer overall.

Tip 10: Read, read and read academic writing.

Select writing from your classes, the field you study and other topics that interest you. Read journal articles, books, academic and professional blogs.

When you read a piece of writing look at the vocabulary, writing style and content. What do you see that you like about it? What do you see that you don't like?

Try using some of the things you like about another author's writing in your academic essays or papers. We learn from reading other writers. It's how you discover what works, and what doesn't work in academic writing.

Select the best tips to improve your academic writing

These tips set you up for success so that you'll write powerful academic essays, papers and other projects for class. Each tip helps you become a student who excels at writing. Think about how you can make changes that will improve your academic writing.

Try some or all these tips and add them to your daily routine. Commit to using them and see the change this makes in your writing.

What will you do to become a great academic writer? Comment and share your ideas!

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