

# INTRODUCTION

## *Using This Workbook*

### **ITS GOALS**

The primary goals of this workbook are to aid you in revising a classroom essay, conference paper, BA or MA thesis, dissertation chapter, talk, or unpublished article and sending it to the editor of a suitable academic journal. That is, the goals are active and pragmatic. The workbook provides the instruction, tasks, structure, and deadlines needed to complete an effective revision. It will help you develop the habits of productivity that lead to confidence, the kind of confidence it takes to send a journal article out into the world. By aiding you in taking

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helps you overcome any anxiety about academic publishing. For those who don't have a draft to revise, I provide instructions in the chapter "Week 0: Writing Your Article from Scratch."

### **ITS FIELD-TESTED NATURE**

Nothing quite like this workbook exists. Most books about scholarly writing give advice based on the experiences of only the author or a few scholars in the same field as the author. This workbook isn't the product of one person's experience or thought. It wasn't written over just a semester or a year. This workbook is the product of decades of repeated experimenting, with and by hundreds of scholarly writers. I have revised it repeatedly based on my own experiences of running a peer-reviewed journal and regularly teaching the workbook around the world, as well as the feedback of its thousands of readers. By staying in touch with my students as they submitted articles to scholarly journals, I learned more and more about what actually succeeds in the peer-review process, not what is theorized to succeed. Based on this knowledge gathered from the field, the latest research, and the laboratory of the classroom, I wrote and then revised this workbook to make it as helpful as it could be. Very few books about scholarly writing have undergone the fire of testing among hundreds of scholars across a wide range of disciplines. This one has.

### **ITS PRAGMATIC EMPHASIS**

Most instruction books are prescriptive, setting up an ideal process and demanding that you adhere to it. I see such demands as impractical. My aim is helping graduate students, recent PhDs, postdoctoral fellows, adjunct instructors, junior faculty, and international faculty understand the rules of the academic publishing game so that they can flourish, not perish. Thus, this workbook is based on what works. I don't tell you to write eight hours a day; that doesn't work. I don't advise you to read everything in your field; you can't. I

don't describe how to write perfect articles; no one does. Publication, not perfection, is the goal here, so the workbook advises you based on what academics have told me they actually did, and what they were willing to do. This workbook is intended not for academic purists but for those in the academic trenches who sometimes grow discouraged and who fear that they are the only ones who haven't figured it all out.

As a result, the workbook details shortcuts and even a few tricks. And it always tells the truth, based as it is in the real world, however upsetting that world can sometimes be. Some journal editors don't like me saying that publishing in certain types of journals won't serve you well when it comes to getting hired or promoted at research universities and many colleges in the United States. Some professors don't like me saying that pre-tenure scholars should prioritize certain types of articles and research. Some academics don't like me saying that publishing in US journals is more prestigious. But I state these unfortunate truths anyway. And the workbook's advice continues to help academics achieve publishing success.

## **ITS RADICAL AUDIENCE**

Over the history of writing this workbook and teaching my courses, I have noticed that a preponderance of my students were women, people of color, non-Americans, and/or first-

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no idea!" This workbook fills a gap in graduate education training, and has been responsible for helping many on the margins—racially, economically, internationally, and politically—feel more confident and frame their work in ways that would be acceptable to peer reviewers. That's why several people have told me that I should call this an "underground" guide to entering the profession, since it demystifies Euro-American academic conventions. Sometimes I've struggled with the aim of the workbook, wondering if I'm wrong to be helping scholars succeed in the flawed academic system as it exists, rather than working to change it. Aren't I part of the problem if I aid scholars across the globe in formatting their ideas to be palatable to mostly American white male Protestant and middle-aged peer reviewers (or those trained by them)? But in the end, I always decide that it is right to level the playing field so that everyone can play the game and advance, even those disadvantaged by that very system. I believe that everyone should have access to the rules and a chance to succeed. My hope is that enabling more scholars from the periphery—whether in terms of their scholarship or their background—to publish in scholarly journals will improve (and radicalize) academic fields and disciplines for the better.

## **ITS REVISION FOCUS**

Most books about academic writing assume that the most difficult part of the writing process is arriving at good ideas. But in my experience, most academics, even as graduate students, have good ideas (even if they don't think so). The real problem is how many good ideas languish in unfinished, unpublished articles. What most academics need is a way to make publishable the research they have already conducted, or written about in graduate school, or taught. They know that their classroom essays, conference papers, BA or MA

theses, dissertation chapters, or unpublished articles aren't ready for journals, but they don't know how to improve them.

Thus, in my workshops I focused on guiding students through a revision of something they had already written, an exercise new to many. It turned out that revising their drafts was far more effective in training them to be better, more productive, and less anxious writers than having them start writing from scratch. Further, once they learned to diagnose and correct their erroneous tendencies by revising, they wrote their next article from scratch easily. I firmly believe that revision is the heart of good writing, and that many scholars are unpublished because they have never learned how to revise their drafts, not because they have bad ideas. This workbook focuses on revision as a key to publication.

If you think that you have no draft to revise for publication, read the section titled "Selecting a Paper for Revision" in the chapter "Week 1: Designing Your Plan for Writing." You may find that you do have something to revise. It doesn't matter if the draft is poor or little more than an outline—the workbook will still aid you in revising it (although you'll need to allot more time for writing). If you really don't have a suitable draft, please turn to the final chapter, "Week 0: Writing Your Article from Scratch."

Most books about academic writing are also excessively concerned with style. Half their pages are devoted to improving word choice and syntax. In my experience, this was the least of academics' problems. Scholarship about writing supported my own observation that what most authors need is a better grasp of macrorevising (such as making arguments, structuring the whole, and summarizing), not microrevising (such as improving style through better punctuation and the reduction of adverbs). Thus, this workbook is devoted to "deep revision" (Willis 1993), the changes that make the greatest difference to an article's quality and hence its success.

I designed this workbook to help you build both skills and self-assurance. Whether you have neither, one, or both—welcome.

## ITS DISCIPLINES

This workbook is useful for those in a wide range of disciplines, including the humanities, social sciences, health sciences, behavioral sciences, professional schools, and some applied sciences. I have divided these disciplines into two tracks. (Many people use the words *field* and *discipline* interchangeably, but I use *field* throughout to mean a subcategory of a discipline.)

Many scholars have used this workbook to write journal articles in the **humanities** or **interpretive social sciences** (abbreviated in the workbook as HumInt). The humanities disciplines include philosophy, religion, history, literature, and the arts (including visual arts like painting and photography; media arts like film and television; applied arts like architecture; and performing arts like dance, theater, and music). Some have used the workbook to write interdisciplinary articles about social constructions such as gender, sexuality, race, culture, ethnicity, nation, region, class, and ethics. And some have used it to write articles in the interpretive social sciences such as cultural anthropology, cultural sociology, human geography, political theory, and so on.

Other scholars have used the workbook to write experimental, quantitative, or qualitative journal articles in the **social, health, and behavioral science fields** (abbreviated in

the workbook as SciQua). These include the experiment-based fields in the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, psychology, and geography, and in the qualitative and quantitative disciplines like political science, economics, archaeology, and linguistics. Those in the health sciences have also used it to write up research in all branches of medicine, including public health, epidemiology, nursing, pharmacy, health literacy, medical decision-making, and preventive health behaviors like cancer screening, diet, and exercise.

Still others have used it to write about research in the **social science professions**, such as education, business management, communications, public policy, social welfare, urban planning, library science, criminology, development studies, forestry, or international relations. They follow the SciQua track if the article reports on a qualitative or quantitative study, or the HumInt track if the article is interpretive. Only a few have used it for legal writing.

The workbook was not originally written for those in the **natural sciences**. That's because I have no graduate degrees in the sciences (mine are all in the humanities and social sciences), and I have rarely taught scientists. However, so many scientists have told me that they are using the workbook that I've had to bow to reality and do more to address such readers in this edition. So those writing up research in most of the applied sciences (e.g., engineering, computer science, aerospace, agricultural science, operations research, robotics), most of the life sciences (e.g., ecology, biology, botany, paleontology, neuroscience, zoology), and perhaps even the formal sciences (e.g., mathematics, logic, theoretical computer science) and the physical sciences (e.g., astronomy, chemistry, physics, and the earth sciences) will find the workbook more useful than they had. They follow the SciQua track. However, such readers will have to do more than other readers to adapt the book for their purposes, especially regarding time frames. I still recommend that scientists read and use *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper* (Gastel and Day 2016), which is practical and accessible, although rather oriented toward biology; *Writing in the Sciences* (Penrose and Katz 2010), which includes writing grant proposals and conference papers; and the encyclopedic *Scientific Writing and Communication* (Hofmann 2016), which emphasizes sentence and paragraph structure.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Although I wish it were otherwise, this workbook doesn't work by osmosis. You can't just turn the pages, read the occasional text, and then magically have an article materialize by the time you turn the last page. Reading the workbook is just a fifth of the work you must do to ready an article for a journal. The workbook makes that work easier and more straightforward, but it doesn't do the work for you. If you read the workbook just to pick up some tips, you won't learn nearly as much as you will by completing the related tasks. And you probably won't retain much. Doing is learning.

### Using the Print or Electronic Version

Your reading in the workbook each week isn't passive: you must answer its questions, write in its boxes, and check off its forms. If you have the print version, go ahead and write your

responses directly on the pages. That's how the book was designed to work. If you don't want to write in your print copy or you have an e-book that you can't write in, you can download some of the forms and checklists as PDFs or Microsoft Word documents from my website, [wendybelcher.com](http://wendybelcher.com), at "Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks Forms." Then you can fill them out either electronically or by hand after printing them out. Also, check my website to see whether any interactive forms have been posted.

## Completing Tasks

Each workbook week consists of some instruction from me as well as specific tasks for you to complete each day for five days of that week.

### Daily Tasks

The daily tasks encourage limited but daily writing, so that the revision of your article can proceed steadily despite your other responsibilities, such as teaching, working at a full-time job, caring for family members, or writing your dissertation. That is, I founded this workbook on the research that shows that those who write daily publish more than those who write rarely. They are also happier! I'll tell you a lot more about this philosophy in "Week 1: Designing Your Plan for Writing."

### Task Timeline

If you happen to fall behind on the daily tasks, which take one to three hours per day, don't give up or feel guilty! The times listed for the duration of each task are minimums; some tasks may take quite a bit longer. If you fall behind, have a catch-up session or reset your twelve-week calendar accordingly. I have seen many cases where authors took twenty-four weeks or even twenty-four months to send their article to a journal, and were published just the same. Persevering is the key. By contrast, if you find that you have moved through a week's tasks more quickly than anticipated—for instance, if you already had a strong abstract or structure—don't stop working for that week. Either move right into the next week's tasks or spend the extra time reading related articles or books.

### Task Types

There are five types of tasks in this book. In *workbook* tasks, you read the workbook and complete the exercises. In *social* tasks, you talk about or share your writing with another academic, a writing partner, or a writing group. In *writing* tasks, you write some part of your article, such as the abstract, or something related to your article, such as a query letter. In *planning* tasks, you document your plans and track your success in achieving them. In *reading* tasks, you read journal articles in your field. The workbook doesn't provide any research tasks, nor does it include them in the total writing time, although you may need to do additional research to complete your article.

### Task Examples

Several scholars have blogged online about using the workbook to revise an article—including Lisa Munro (2016) and Ellie Mackin (2013). If you want some sense of how others completed the tasks or how the tasks helped them, check out such blogs.

## Following Disciplinary Tracks and Stage Pathways

Since scholars in different *disciplines* need different amounts of time to complete an article, you'll find two disciplinary tracks running through the workbook. Since scholars at different writing *stages* also need different amounts of time, you'll find two pathways running through the workbook as well. These are as follows:

- *Humanities and Interpretive Social Science* track: for scholars working on articles containing few to no statistics. Look for the abbreviation "HumInt."
- *Social, Health, Behavioral, and Natural Science Fields Revision* track: for scholars working on experimental, qualitative, or quantitative articles. Look for the abbreviation "SciQua."
- *Revising* pathway: for those who are revising drafts (e.g., of a classroom essay, conference paper, BA or MA thesis, dissertation chapter, talk, or unpublished article), not writing drafts from scratch. This track assumes that you have a rough draft based on some research, and that you will proceed through the workbook chapters in sequence. Start with "Week 1: Designing Your Plan for Writing."
- *Drafting* pathway: for those who are writing drafts from scratch. Start by reading "Week 0: Writing Your Article from Scratch."

No matter what your track or pathway is, start by reading the week 1 chapter. There you'll find instructions for each.

## Using the Workbook according to Your Temperament

Some readers follow the workbook step-by-step. If you like a structured approach and the security of detailed instructions, then proceed through the workbook in sequence. If you do that, you will complete and submit your article to a journal. There's a lot to be said for clear guidance.

Some readers hate to be told what to do, preferring not to follow detailed instructions. That's okay too! Instead, set aside an hour or two every week to read a workbook chapter and note its implications for your revision of your article, and set aside at least five hours a week to work on the actual revising. After reading "Week 1: Designing Your Plan for Writing," you can read the chapters in any order, focusing each week on the overall task of that chapter—for example, improving your argument or selecting a journal. When you have completed all the chapters, you are ready to send off your article to a journal. A warning about this second approach: freedom has its price—inertia. If you have a problem staying focused or haven't written much in a long time, follow the structured approach for the first three weeks.

## Using the Workbook by Yourself

Most readers use this workbook on their own. Some of the tasks require submitting parts of your journal article to another academic for comments—but otherwise, you can use this workbook independently.

## Using the Workbook in a Writing Group

You can also use this workbook in a writing group. Research shows that writing groups help you stay motivated, because they provide support and friendly pressure (Johnston et al. 2014; Brandon et al. 2015; Nairn et al. 2014). To use the workbook in this way, find three or more people who want to revise an article and are willing to commit to doing so in the same time frame.

**Selecting group members.** If your department already has a journal reading group or writing group, use it as a base. However, you don't need to be in the same discipline or field to participate in a writing group. In fact, it can sometimes be helpful to work with people who are unfamiliar with your content, which forces you to be clear about your topic. Such colleagues can bring a fresh perspective, getting you to see something from a new angle. Some combinations are good to avoid, though. Placing those in the theoretical humanities with quantitative social scientists probably won't work well. Power dynamics may negatively affect groups composed of graduate students and faculty from the same department, or groups including untenured and tenured faculty from the same university (although I know of some groups in Norway that have done just that with success). If you're a senior faculty member, don't put graduate students or junior faculty in the position of refusing your invitation to join you in a group.

**Completing tasks with group members.** As individuals, set aside time five days a week to work through that week's readings and tasks. As a group, commit to meeting once a week to talk through those readings and tasks and to hear members' reports on how you have each completed the week's goals as stated in the workbook. It's best to meet in person, but you can try video calls or even instant messaging or email. When the workbook task is to submit your journal article to someone else for review, do so with others from your group.

**Giving feedback to group members.** Before the first meeting, read the advice about how to give and receive feedback in "Week 6: Crafting Your Claims for Significance." Mainly, make sure that your group is a supportive environment for writing, not a graduate seminar for tearing writing apart. The first focuses on building strengths, the second on identifying limits. You are working together to become productive writers, not perfectionists. Also, be sure to monitor the discussion and make sure that the meeting time is mostly spent discussing writing, not fears and anxieties about the profession. Finally, treat all drafts and discussions as confidential, as the group must be a safe place for people to present their writing at any stage.

**Making a commitment to group members.** This endeavor will work only if your group takes it seriously. Make a written commitment to work together for an agreed amount of time. Although initially it may seem forced, people who make written commitments to each other find that they are more productive. You may either design your own agreement form or use the one on the next page. You can simply email the text of the agreement to one another in the body of the email, but it's best if every member signs a print copy that each can post as a reminder near a computer, front door, or refrigerator.

### Writing Commitment Agreement for a Group

I commit to meeting with \_\_\_\_\_ [first names of group members] every week on \_\_\_\_\_ [day] at \_\_\_\_\_ [time]. During each of the next \_\_\_\_\_ [number of] weeks, I commit to reading the appropriate workbook chapter and completing the daily tasks. I also commit to spending at least \_\_\_\_\_ [number of] minutes a day, five days a week, on revising my article until it is ready for submission. If I need to adjust the time frame and order of tasks, I will do so in consultation with the group. I commit to carefully reading and reviewing other group members' articles twice. If I cannot meet any of these commitments because of a prolonged illness or a family emergency, I will inform the group immediately. If I cannot meet any of these commitments for any other reason, I will pay the following penalty: \_\_\_\_\_ [fee]. If any of us do meet all these commitments, we will gain the following: \_\_\_\_\_ [benefit].  
 \_\_\_\_\_ [signature] \_\_\_\_\_ [date]

**Designing incentives for group members.** Many people have found it useful to promise to pay a penalty for not following through on their commitment. One writing instructor required his students to write a \$25 check to a political organization that they abhorred and give the check to him in an envelope addressed to the organization (Boice 1990, 75). For those students who did not meet their commitment, the instructor promptly sent their check to that loathed organization (along with their phone number, so they got on annoying call lists). He claimed that this worked as a great motivator! Other possible penalties can be an act of penance (such as grading exams for the writing partner) or public shame (such as writing about the commitment failure to three friends or on social media). Most of us prefer the carrot to the stick, favoring positive incentives rather than negative ones. In that case, you can collect \$20 from each group member, put it in an envelope, and split the total among those who actually send out their article. Alternately, you can use the money toward a group activity when everyone sends off their article, such as a celebratory meal. Of course, the best reward will be your sense of accomplishment when you submit the article. There's no substitute for that!

### Using the Workbook with a Writing Partner

You can also use this workbook with a writing partner. This is a wonderfully effective method for completing your journal article. Since most academics' real writing challenge is getting the writing done, having a partner helps ensure that you persevere. Setting up writing partnerships can transform students' educational experiences, creating bonds that help them throughout their degree program and even afterward. The research shows that such partnerships also increase faculty productivity (Geller and Eodice 2013; Moss, Highberg, and Nicolas 2014).

To use the workbook in this way, follow the instructions above for "Using the Workbook



in a Writing Group.” It’s best to pick another academic whose goals and abilities are similar to yours and, just as importantly, is likely to persevere and keep you going. Some do their best with a competitor, others with someone who is supportive. Ideally, your partner will be both: someone who encourages you when you feel discouraged, but whose drive pushes you to keep up. You and your partner complete the tasks independently, but meet in person once a week to go over the assignments and exchange writing. Make a written commitment to each other to work together for an agreed amount of time, and agree on the possible penalties or benefits.

#### Writing Commitment Agreement for Two People

I commit to meeting with \_\_\_\_\_[partner’s name] every week on\_\_\_\_\_ [day] at \_\_\_\_\_ [time]. During each of the next \_\_\_\_\_ [number of] weeks, I commit to reading the appropriate workbook chapter and completing the daily tasks. I also commit to spending at least \_\_\_\_\_ [number of] minutes a day, five days a week, on revising my article until it is ready for submission. If I need to adjust the time frame and order of tasks, I will do so in consultation with my partner. I commit to carefully reading and reviewing \_\_\_\_\_ [partner’s name] article twice. If I cannot meet any of these commitments because of a prolonged illness or a family emergency, I will inform \_\_\_\_\_ [partner’s name] immediately. If I cannot meet any of these commitments for any other reason, I will pay the following: \_\_\_\_\_ [fee]. If I meet all these commitments, I will gain the following: \_\_\_\_\_ [benefit].  
 \_\_\_\_\_ [signature] \_\_\_\_\_ [date]

### Using the Workbook with Coauthors

If you’re writing the article on your own and then sending it to your coauthor (perhaps your advisor) for a brief review before sending it to a journal, follow the instructions in the section “Using the Workbook by Yourself.” If you and your coauthors are writing different sections separately and then combining your contributions later, follow the instructions in “Using the Workbook in a Writing Group.” If you’re working more closely, drafting practically every sentence together, read the workbook together and complete the tasks together as well. Remember that coauthoring requires careful discussion of author order; I will give more advice about this in the week 1 chapter.

### Using the Workbook to Teach a Class or Workshop

You can also use this workbook to teach a writing course or a professional development workshop. Hundreds of these have been taught using it—either regularly scheduled courses for students or faculty development workshops in Centers for Teaching and Learning (CTLs). To aid instructors and directors of such centers I have created syllabi based on the workbook, enabling you to teach a course or workshop that will be rewarding and relatively effortless for you. Each syllabus is anchored in discussion and participant peer

review and thus does not require more of instructors than to read the workbook, facilitate a two- to three-hour discussion and peer-review session once a week, and provide some feedback on abstracts, introductions, and a draft of each participant's whole article. Fill out my Google Form at [goo.gl/forms/TkpPrqGdoUmXxUV32](https://goo.gl/forms/TkpPrqGdoUmXxUV32) to request the syllabi in a Microsoft Word document format for 15-week, 12-week, 10-week, or 6-week courses or workshops. Be prepared for yours to be popular!

## SOME PUBLISHING TERMS AND PROCESSES

If you're a novice author, you may not know basic information about journals, articles, or the publication processes that articles go through at journals. Here is that information.

### What Is a Journal?

A *scholarly journal* is a periodical that publishes original research in one to fifty-two issues each year, with four to twenty research articles per issue. Each issue may also contain book reviews, review essays, response essays, and notes. The journal publishes research in one or more *disciplines* (branches of knowledge covered in university departments, e.g., English or anthropology) or *fields* (a subcategory of disciplines, e.g., eighteenth-century British literature or cultural anthropology). Almost all scholarly journals have a *peer-review* process, a quality control mechanism in which one to four scholars who are faculty experts in the author's field evaluate each article. These *peer reviewers* (also called *referees* or *readers*) identify inadequacies, misinterpretations, and errors; provide recommendations to the author for improvement; and aid the editor in making a decision about the value of the work. A journal's staff includes its *editor*, the faculty member in charge of the direction and intellectual processes of the journal; the *managing editor*, the staff member who manages the logistics of publishing the journal; the *editorial board* members, the faculty who agree to peer-review a certain number of articles per year; and the *advisory board*, the faculty who agree to have their prestigious name associated with the journal but who do not provide any labor for it. Good editors try to ensure that the journal has a short *turnaround* time (the time between your submission of the article and the journal's decision to accept or reject it, sometimes called *review time*) and a low *backlog* (the time between the editorial decision to accept your article and its actual publication date, sometimes called *publication lag*, as it depends on the number of articles the journal has already accepted for publication and are in the queue ahead of yours). You will learn more about journals in "Week 4: Selecting a Journal."

### What Is an Article?

A *journal article* is an academic genre of the essay, and it has standard features. It is generally five to forty pages (2,500 to 12,000 words) in length, and contains five to fifty citations. It discusses other scholars' writing, is vetted by other scholars (peer reviewers), and is based in the concerns of a discipline (or two). One of its features is the *literature review*, a brief analysis of those scholarly books and articles on the exact topic of the article; which I call the *related secondary literature* (as explained in the week 5 chapter). Another feature is the *argument*, a stance the scholar takes toward the literature or a problem (as explained

in week 2); still another feature is the *claim for significance*, the reason why scholars should be motivated to read the article (as explained in week 6). Other necessary features are the *evidence*, the confirmation for the argument collected by the author from written sources or a study (as explained in weeks 7 and 8); a *macrostructure*, the organization of the argument and evidence into a readable pattern (as explained in week 9); an *introduction*, including the article title, abstract, and initial paragraphs that orient the reader toward the meaning and value of the article (as explained in weeks 3 and 10); a *conclusion*, the final paragraphs that summarize the article's main takeaways and articulate its implications (as explained in week 10); and a *microstructure*, the organization of the article's words into a readable pattern (as explained in week 11). Most social, health, behavioral, and natural science articles also have a *Methods* section, summarizing how the study was conducted; a *Results* section, presenting the findings; and a *Discussion* section, analyzing the findings (as explained in weeks 8 and 9).

## What Processes Do Journal Articles Go Through?

The **publication process** that a submitted journal article goes through can vary radically, depending on the journal's mandate, its editor's personality and vision, its editorial board, its peer-review process, its support staff's knowledge and time, and its budget size, as well as whether the article is scheduled for a special issue. Generally, however, a journal article goes through the following stages:

**Submission.** The author(s) of any article must submit it to one (and only one) *peer-reviewed scholarly journal*. It is forbidden to simultaneously submit the same article to multiple journals. An article's author(s) must wait for each journal to decide whether to publish it before they send it to another journal (*single submission rule*). (The one exception is law journals.)

**Editorial review.** The journal editor skims all article submissions, evaluating whether an article meets basic criteria (e.g., fitting the journal's topic, citing any scholarship, being at least somewhat grammatically sound, and containing content not too similar to an article the journal just published) and has no massive flaws (e.g., having a problematic methodology or no argument). If the editor identifies basic problems, the journal rejects the article, which is called a *desk rejection*. Journal editors are increasingly exercising their discretion to reject articles without sending them on for peer review.

**Peer reviewer selection.** If the editor finds that the article has no major problems, that person selects peer reviewers for it. This is not easy. Editors must work hard to find scholars willing to provide reviews, sending out 28 percent more invitations to review in 2016 than they had just five years earlier (Didham, Leather, and Basset 2017, 2). They often ask one member of the journal's editorial board or scholars who recently published in the journal to peer-review the article. Some editors select one or two scholars who an author mentions in the article or who do similar work. Some journals ask the author to name potential reviewers, and they will select one of those candidates (but they will never select *only* those prospective reviewers). Those who agree to peer-review the article are rarely famous. Quite a few are emeriti professors, who have some time and want to

keep abreast of the field. Strictly speaking, reviewers are supposed to recuse themselves from reviewing articles they suspect were written by their friends or students. Reviewers are asked to return a written report quickly; they rarely do. Thus, nagging reviewers to submit their review is the main job of any journal editor.

**Peer review.** The peer reviewers read the manuscript, evaluating it for originality, contribution, clarity, relevance, sound scholarship, convincing findings, solid methods, interesting analysis, and strong argument. Some journals give peer reviewers clear instructions for reviewing (e.g., asking them to answer specific questions, fill out a form, or give a grade). The reviewers then send the editor *readers' reports*, which comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the article and suggest improvements to the author. They also recommend whether the editor should accept the article for publication or reject it.

The systems for that peer review can vary greatly. A *double-anonymous* (or *double-blind* or *double-masked*) peer review is that in which the peer reviewers of an article and its author(s) don't know one another's identities. This form is common in the humanities, the social sciences, and some medical fields. Given reviewers' proven bias against women, people of color, and those at less prestigious institutions, this type of review does the most to protect authors. It also aids reviewers in judging articles frankly, without fear of retribution should the author turn out to be in a position of power over the reviewer. *Single-anonymous* (or *single-blind*) peer review is that in which the peer reviewers know the identity of the author, but the author doesn't know the identities of the peer reviewers. This form is common in the life sciences, the physical sciences, and engineering, as well as for books in the humanities. *Open peer review* is that in which authors and peer reviewers know one another's identities. Some journals have experimented with other forms (such as postpublication review). Lots of research has been conducted on which form is fairest; I discuss it in "Week 4: Selecting a Journal."

**Editorial decision.** The editor now decides whether to accept the article for publication—based on the reviewers' recommendations and the number of manuscripts already accepted. If the peer reviewers all agree that the article is strong or weak, the decision is easy. The challenge comes when one reviewer recommends publication and another recommends rejection. In that case, the editor will sometimes send the article to yet another reviewer, to split the difference. At other journals, the editor will side with one of the reviewers, often the negative one, given how few articles a journal can accept each year. The editor then sends a *decision letter* to the author. Editors almost never accept the article as is, but rather send recommendations for revision (called a *revise-and-resubmit notice*) or else a *rejection*.

**Author response.** The author can give a variety of possible responses to the editor's decision. If the article is rejected, the author often sends the article to another journal, either with or without revisions. If the article receives a revise-and-resubmit notice, experienced authors always revise the article according to the editorial instructions and readers' reports, then resubmit the article to the editor with a detailed letter explaining the changes they made. Novice authors often let the process intimidate them; they fail to revise and resubmit their article, even though an article's chances of acceptance upon resubmission double.

**Editorial/peer-review second round.** If the recommended revisions were minor, the editor alone may vet the article in this second round of submission, without sending it back to the original peer reviewers. If the recommended revisions are major, the article will go back to those reviewers for vetting—or even to new reviewers altogether. Many articles go through multiple *review rounds*, with authors revising and resubmitting to peer reviewers two, three, or even four times.

**Copyediting, proofreading, and publication.** Once the editor has accepted a resubmitted article, it usually goes through *copyediting*, in which a copy editor edits the article's grammar, punctuation, documentation, style, and factual errors. The edited article is sent to the author for review, usually as a Microsoft Word document in which the Track Changes function has been turned on so that the editing is easy to see. The author usually has three to ten days to answer any questions the copy editor has, approve or reject that editor's suggestions, and ensure that no errors have been introduced. Limited authorial changes could be made at this point, although publishers frown on this and may charge the author if they are deemed too extensive. Next, the author sends the article back to the journal, along with any images, permissions for the publication of those images, and the copyright agreement (in which the author gives up certain rights to the article in return for its publication). Then the article is electronically composed and put into the journal's format, from which the article's next-to-final version, *proofs*, are produced. Sometimes there is a *proofreading* round, in which the author gets a final look at the article to make sure that no errors have entered in. The author usually has forty-eight hours to respond to proofs.

Depending on a variety of factors, journals publish articles one to three years after their initial submission. For more information about these stages, consult *The Chicago Manual of Style*, which is online at [www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html).

## GIVING FEEDBACK TO AUTHOR

Many readers of the first edition of this workbook sent me comments, which were incredibly helpful in preparing the second edition. Keep them coming! I welcome corrections (e.g., typos or grammatical mistakes that you caught) but also any examples from your work that you want to send me (e.g., how you revised a poor title into a strong one), insights on what makes a journal article publishable (e.g., how it works in your field), and successful exercises (e.g., setting up author-order dialogue). To contact me, please email [wbelcher@ucla.edu](mailto:wbelcher@ucla.edu) (my lifetime email). You can also go to my website, [wendybelcher.com](http://wendybelcher.com); follow me on Twitter at [@WendyLBelcher](https://twitter.com/WendyLBelcher); or search for the workbook's hashtags, [#12WeekArticle](https://twitter.com/hashtag/#12WeekArticle), [#WYJA](https://twitter.com/hashtag/#WYJA), or [#WayofWendy](https://twitter.com/hashtag/#WayofWendy).

# WEEK 1

## *Designing Your Plan for Writing*

Task Day	Week 1 Daily Writing Tasks	Estimated Task Time in Minutes	
		HumInt	SciQua
Day 1 (Monday?)	Read the introduction to the workbook and then from here until you reach the week 1, day 2 tasks, filling in any boxes, checking off any forms, and answering any questions as you read.	75	75
Day 2 (Tuesday?)	Design a daily and a weekly writing schedule for twelve weeks, and anticipate obstacles and interruptions.	180	180
Day 3 (Wednesday?)	Select a previously drafted paper (or outline) to develop for publication.	60+	60+
Day 4 (Thursday?)	Reread your chosen paper, discuss it, and then make a list of revision tasks.	150	60
Day 5 (Friday?)	Do some final setting up: addressing your writing site, citation management, backing up, and any author-order issues. Read a journal article.	45+	45+
Total estimated time for reading the workbook, completing the tasks, and writing your article		<b>8+ hours</b>	<b>7+ hours</b>

Each week, you'll have specific tasks designed to aid you in accomplishing your goal of sending your academic article to a journal in twelve weeks. Above is a brief list of the tasks for your first week, divided day by day for five days of work, and totaling about seven hours of work for the week (including reading the workbook, completing its tasks, and writing). This week has about twice the reading of any of the other weeks, so it will take you longer than normal to move through the chapter.

Note the two **tracks**—one for humanities and interpretive social science scholars revising papers for publication (**HumInt track**) and the other for scholars revising experimental, quantitative, or qualitative papers, including social, health, behavioral, and natural science scholars (**SciQua track**). The first task for day 1 is to read the material that follows.

*Note:* If you're not revising a paper but instead are drafting one from the beginning, please read this whole chapter and then turn to "Week 0: Writing Your Article from Scratch."

## WEEK 1, DAY 1: READING AND TASKS

### UNDERSTANDING FEELINGS ABOUT WRITING

Writing is to academia what sex was to nineteenth-century Vienna: everybody does it and nobody talks about it. A leading scholar of productivity found that most academics were more willing to talk about their most personal problems, including sexual dysfunction, than about problems with writing (Boice 1990, 1). The prevalent belief among academics seems to be that writing, like sex, should come naturally, and should be performed in polite privacy.

Because of this silence, writing dysfunction is commonplace in academia. A survey of over sixteen thousand full-time faculty in the United States revealed that almost a fifth did not read or write scholarship in the past two years (Eagan et al. 2014, 9, 29–30, 33). In addition, almost a third had not published any piece of writing in that time. Over half of them spent less than an hour a day reading and writing scholarship. Furthermore, these statistics are self-reported and so reflect the activities of only those organized enough to respond to the survey. A large-scale study without this bias, of actual publication rates for all faculty members in a province, found that many did not publish: two-thirds of the humanities faculty and one third of the social science faculty had not published even one article in the past eight years (Larivière et al. 2010, 48). In other words, unproductive academics are common. Since publication is the major marker of productivity in academia, these statistics about low productivity are surprising. Or are they?

You don't have to be Freud to figure out that academia's silence about writing may be repressive. Writing is, after all, a creative process; and like any such process, it depends on human connection. If you try to create in an environment where sharing is discouraged, dysfunction is the inevitable result. Certainly, many have found that talking about their struggles with writing has been freeing. The lesson: learning to talk about writing is an important key to becoming a productive writer.

One of the reasons that academics don't talk about writing is that it involves talking about feelings. Academics tend to be more comfortable with the rational than the emotional. Therefore, even if we do manage to talk about writing, we're more likely to talk about content than process. So the first step to success is for you to acknowledge your feelings about writing. Mindfulness is essential.

Let's start with a broad question. What feelings come up when you contemplate writing? I recommend that you call, email, text, tweet, or instant-message someone to discuss this question before using the box below to jot down your answers. Many also use blogs to complete this task.

My Feelings about My Experience of Writing







Interestingly, the lessons students learned from these experiences are similar. Apparently, happy writers are all alike, to paraphrase Tolstoy. Academic writers who are successful share similar attitudes and work habits. I call them the keys to academic writing success.

## KEYS TO POSITIVE WRITING EXPERIENCES

I have designed this workbook to help you develop skills in the five keys to academic writing success. Knowing these keys can help you design your own program.

### Successful Academic Writers Write

“First and foremost, *get writing!*” is the advice given by the author of several academic classics (Morison 1953, 293).

It may sound tautological, but one key to a positive writing experience is to write. Most academics’ negative experiences of writing revolve around not writing (i.e., procrastinating), and most of their positive experiences revolve around actually doing it. That is, when academics write, they feel a sense of accomplishment and the pleasure of communicating their ideas. In this sense, writing is the same as physical exercise. Although it may be arduous at first, it does get easier and more pleasurable the more you do it. A legendary professor of film and Chicanx studies at UCLA, Chon A. Noriega, tells his graduate students when they embark on their dissertation, “One usually gets better at whatever one does on a regular basis. If one does *not* write on a regular basis, one will get better at *not* writing. In fact, one will develop an astonishing array of skills designed to improve and extend one’s *not* writing.” I saw this myself in graduate school: some students practiced yoga as an aid to writing, while others practiced it to escape writing. Don’t develop practices that help you avoid writing.

Now, those who don’t write often claim that they are “too busy.” Indeed, people today are very busy. Some academics have long commutes, others have heavy teaching loads, and still others have young children. So here’s the good news and the bad news. Many busy people have been productive writers. Are they just smarter? No. If you pay close attention to how you spend time, you’ll find that you may not be quite as busy as you suppose, and that writing doesn’t take as much time as you fear.

Robert Boice, a scholar of faculty productivity whose research informs much of this first chapter, demonstrated this truth by finding faculty members who claimed to be “too busy” to write and then following them around for a week. With Boice staring at them all day, most had to admit that “they rarely had workdays without at least one brief period of fifteen to sixty minutes open for free use” (1997a, 21). His subjects spent this free time in activities that were neither work nor play. Boice also found that those likely to describe themselves as extremely “busy” or very “stressed” did not produce as much as those who were writing steadily (1989, 608–9). In other words, you are not too busy to write—you are busy because you do not write. Busy-ness is what you do to explain your not writing. (If you skimmed over those last two sentences, I recommend that you go back and read them one more time.)

No matter how busy your life is, make a plan for writing. Successful academic writers

don't wait for inspiration. They don't wait until the last minute. They don't wait for big blocks of time. They make a plan for writing five days a week, and they strive to stick to it. Much of this workbook will be devoted to helping you develop writing into a habit. Short and steady sessions will win the race: "With but a few exceptions, writers who remained in a schedule requiring an hour or less a weekday of writing mastered a sequence of strategies for remaining truly productive over long periods of time" (Boice 1990, 3). As an anonymous person wisely commented online, "The only thing that improves writing is writing."

## Successful Academic Writers Read

The best way to learn to write journal articles is to read journal articles. Unfortunately, many students do not. The famous novelist Chris Abani once grumbled to me, "Everyone wants to be an Author, having written nothing and read less." What they don't realize is that "to be a good writer, you have to read a lot" (interview with Kevin Corley in Cloutier 2015, 75). Something surprising happens when you read a lot: your unconscious brain sees patterns your conscious brain does not, so you internalize the language and conventions of your field. As a result, your writing improves, in both form and content.

I know that reading works as an engine of writing because I have seen it in action. I now teach a course in which graduate students are required to select a different peer-reviewed journal every week and then "read" five years of it (i.e., read the titles and abstracts of all the articles published in that period, some of their introductions, and five to ten of the articles in their entirety). The first time I taught it, one of the students had given a dissertation chapter to her advisor before the course began and then another chapter near the end of the course. The advisor said to her, "Your writing, it's like night and day, it reads so much more professionally than it did just eight weeks ago. What happened?!" She replied, "What happened is that I read a hundred journal articles between now and then; I'm steeped in the form." Her reading many published articles enabled this student to write publishable prose. And not just her form improved, her content did as well. During her journal reading, she kept coming across a new theory in her field, one she thought was wrong-headed, so she began writing up her critique in an article. She went on to become one of the few graduate students to publish in the top journal in her field, because her article spoke directly to very recent field concerns and cited many recent articles. She had gained publishable knowledge through her reading.

If you aren't in the habit of reading, start small. One journalist reports that she started by reading "just one page of a book every night before bed." After she had been doing that for a while, she set a timer for fifteen minutes of reading every night. "Eventually I was reading for 30 minutes before bed and another 30 minutes most mornings. Just starting with one page added up: In 2013, I read seven books. In 2014, 22. In 2015, 33. That's almost five times what I read in 2013" (Cooper 2016).

How much should you read? Different fields have different norms. One study found that social science faculty read an average of five articles per week, while humanities faculty read an average of three articles per week (Ware and Mabe 2015, 58). All faculty combined

spend an average of 30 minutes to read one article, so the average faculty member is spending one to three hours a week at least skimming journal articles (7). If you're not spending some time each week skimming journals, you may not be reading enough recent journal articles to write them well.

## Successful Academic Writers Make Writing Social

The myth that writing should be a solo activity is just that, a myth. Yet the popular image persists of the writer as someone who works alone for months in a cold garret, subsisting on bread and cigarettes while coughing consumptively and churning out page after page of *sui generis* prose. It's a lonely, hard life, the myth goes, but that's what writing takes. And academics in the humanities often persist in believing that texts spring fully formed from the mind of their authors.

In the sciences, this myth is not so prevalent, since most science articles are the result of a team of researchers who publish as coauthors. Students in the sciences work as secondary authors, contributing sections or data to faculty members' articles, long before they ever become primary authors. That's why the rate of writing dysfunction in the sciences is so much lower. Scholars in the sciences see writing as collaboration. When this idea of teamwork is lost, many of the prevalent writing problems in the academic community arise—writer's block, anxiety over having one's ideas stolen, obsession with originality, fear of belatedness, difficulties with criticism, even plagiarism. All stem from the myth that writing should be a private and isolated activity.

Yet no writing is the product of just one person. And the best writing is created in community, with a strong sense of audience. One study of productive academic writers found that they were unusually aware of this truth, believing that "their ideas, both in terms of what they wrote and how they wrote it, were largely generated through their conversations with others" (Cloutier 2015, 72). Writing was an ongoing process: they spoke or emailed with faculty and students, then presented at conferences or shared drafts, and then interacted with editors and peer reviewers during the submission process. Many of them noted that their thoughts did not coalesce until they talked with someone else about them.

So work to make your writing more public and less private, more social and less solitary. Commit to writing activities that require you to show up in person. Start a writing group. Choose a writing buddy. Take a writing workshop. Meet a classmate or colleague at the library or a café to write for an hour. Persuade another academic to cowrite an article with you. Join a journal-article reading club.

The more you make your writing social, in person or virtually, the more positive your experience of writing will be. This is partly because others give you ideas and language. But it's also because you must relate your ideas to others'. You must know what theories scholars in your discipline are debating, what their primary research questions are, and what methodologies they consider appropriate. You can know this only if you're an active member of the community.

For instance, participating in an association's annual conference can give you a much better idea of trends. Sometimes a conversation with someone in your field can help you shape your ideas and direction better than reading twenty journal articles. If you present

your paper at the annual conference, you can also get a sense of how people in the field respond to it and then shape it accordingly. Journal editors often speak at these conferences, frequently describing the kinds of articles they're tired of seeing and the kinds they'd welcome most. You increase your chances of successfully targeting association journals by attending and presenting at their conferences.

You can also make your writing more social by joining virtual communities. Follow relevant scholars, groups, and discussions on social media, tracking hashtags in your field. Some readers have even found it productive to launch scholarly blogs, saying that writing their research in public gives them a keener awareness of audience, which stimulates them to write more clearly and directly (Munro 2016). When writing a journal article, it can be difficult to make your audience seem real to you, because you know it will be months or even years before your article reaches publication and readers. By contrast, with a blog post you know that someone might read and respond to it today, and that immediacy makes your writing more responsive, more dialogical.

Unfortunately, academics, particularly novice authors, experience several problems with making their writing more social. First, many feel real horror at the prospect of networking. Some feel awkward or invasive when attempting to contact someone they admire. Others view deliberate attempts at befriending someone as too nakedly self-serving or superficial. Certainly, reaching out socially takes courage and tact. Yet you'll find that others are often interested in meeting you, and even grateful to you for taking the first step. Many established scholars enjoy being asked for advice about their field. And social media now makes it easier to initiate contact in low-key ways, such as tweeting thanks to a scholar whose recent article you found useful. So whatever your comfort zone, try to push beyond it.

Second, many academics are hesitant about showing their writing to anyone. The university environment can encourage scholars to regard their colleagues as adversaries rather than advocates. They fear that sharing their work will reveal them as impostors and demonstrate their deep unsuitability for academia. And many classmates and professors will be too busy to read and comment on others' work. Fortunately, if you get up the courage to share your work and find someone who wants to share in return, you'll usually discover that you're not as much of an idiot as you thought you were. Moreover, the fresh eye of an outside reader can quickly identify omissions and logical breaks in your writing that would have taken you weeks to figure out. Of course, some readers will be too critical, and others will give you bad advice. But an essential part of becoming a writer is learning to differentiate useful criticisms from useless ones. The more often you experience others' subjective reactions to your work, the more readily you'll be able to cope with peer reviewers' comments down the road.

Third, some academics are good at sharing their work, but only when they consider the article complete. But waiting until their manuscript is "done" before sharing it doesn't work very well. You'll be disappointed when you don't receive compliments, but instead get recommendations for revision that you're little interested in addressing. The point of sharing your writing, though, is to improve it, not to convince others of your talents. So share your writing in its early stages. Show outlines to other academics. Exchange abstracts. Give out drafts, and ask for specific comments about aspects of your writing that you suspect are weak. Post ideas on social media, and develop those that inspire the most debate or commentary. Learn to share your writing at all stages.

Fourth, academics fear that sharing their work will lead to their ideas being stolen. Like so many of the anxieties named in this book, there is a rational reason for this fear: scholars' ideas *do* get stolen. Stories are always circulating among graduate students about which advisors are likely to steal work. But hiding your work won't solve this problem. In fact, getting your writing out to a number of people will help protect it. A saved email or blog post is evidence that the idea or phrasing had originated with you. Furthermore, no one can articulate your ideas like you can. You may suspect that anyone besides you could do a better job of presenting your ideas, but this workbook will help you see that simply isn't true.

All these social activities will help you counter the myth of the lonely writer. Nothing is as collaborative as good writing. All texts depend on other texts, all writers stand on the shoulders of other writers, all prose demands an editor, and all writing needs an audience. Without community, writing is inconceivable. This workbook will help you develop social writing habits and share your work. If you're using this workbook with a writing partner or in a group, you're making excellent progress already!

## Successful Academic Writers Persist despite Rejection

The writing life is filled with rejection. Being scorned by publishers is one of the few shared experiences of great writers and terrible ones. A quick read of *Rotten Reviews Redux* offers the comfort of knowing that most canonical authors (e.g., Herman Melville, T. S. Eliot, and Virginia Woolf) had their work rejected in the strongest possible terms (Henderson 2012). Jack London received 266 rejection slips in 1899 alone (Kingman 1979, 87)!

In academia, these rejections often seem to have no rhyme or reason. Peer review is so subjective that work rejected by one journal is often embraced by another. As just one example, an experienced author reported that an article of his that was brutally rejected by one journal for "lack of substance and lack of originality" was enthusiastically accepted without changes by another (Pannell 2002, 104). And an article eviscerated by reviewers at one journal, which he then altered slightly and submitted to another journal, received an award for the best journal article of the year in his field (105) He is not alone in these experiences. The economist George Akerlof received three rejections for a journal article that later won him the Nobel Prize (Gans and Shepherd 1994, 171). Indeed, studies of Nobel Prizewinners found that many early versions of their award-winning work had been rejected by journal editors (Campanario 1995, 1996, 2009). In other words, if you write, you will be rejected. If you send your articles to journals, they will sometimes be rejected. The important thing is not to let that stop you.

Although it's tempting to let others' criticism be the measure of your writing or even your own worth, don't let it be. Peer review is a subjective process rife with bias and carelessness. The difference between much-published authors and unpublished authors is most often persistence, not worthiness. Published authors just keep submitting their work.

Many have exemplified the importance of persistence. One productive Yale professor papered his office with his article rejection notices, claiming them as badges of honor and writing amid the negative notices of a lifetime. A graduate student in one of my courses, Carrie Petrucci, proved the lengths to which determined authors must sometimes go. She wrote an article she believed in, and was aware that resistance to its argument would be

high. She was committed to demonstrating that criminals apologizing to their victims provide real benefits to both victims and perpetrators. When the first journal she had submitted her article to rejected it, Petrucci stopped everything she was doing and took two days to make changes based on the comments she had received from the editor and readers. When the second journal rejected her article, she did the same. “What kept me going through two rejections,” she emailed me, “was the fact that I had had several people read it prior to my submitting it to any journal and a handful of those people, who had nothing to gain by it (including yourself), had given me the impression that it was strong. . . . Believe me; I clung to those comments as I got some pretty negative feedback on rounds one and two.” Then the third journal accepted her article, stating that “it is quite unusual to have a manuscript accepted without requiring any changes. But yours is a high quality product. Good job!” Petrucci won an award for this article, and later accepted a job in criminal justice reform. In the years since, her article has been cited over 120 times and is a founding text in a then-nascent field—no better evidence that her article has worth (Petrucci 2002).

One student told a writing workshop about a friend who was more fainthearted. When this friend received a response from a journal to which she had submitted an article, she opened the letter with trepidation. The first paragraph included the sentence “The reviewers’ reports are in and both agree that your article is severely marred by poor writing.” Upset, she flung the letter aside and spent an hour in bed ruing her decision to enter academia. When her husband got home, he picked up the letter from the hallway floor, read it, and entered the bedroom saying, “Congratulations, honey! Why didn’t you call and tell me your article got accepted?” Upon reading the letter through, she found that the editors had accepted the article pending major revisions. She hired a copy editor to work with her on her prose and then resubmitted the article. The lesson here is that when starting out, harsh criticism can stop you in your tracks; but if you persist, you often find that things aren’t as bad as you fear.

## Successful Academic Writers Pursue Their Passions

When academics list positive experiences they’ve had with writing, they often note their genuine interest in a topic as a real motivator. Successful writers don’t write primarily for their colleagues, professors, classmates, or hiring and promotion committees. They must, of course, write for them in part—the structural demands of academia don’t allow them to be free of the neoliberal constraints of their job (Gill 2009). But within those constraints, so far as it is possible, successful academic writers focus on the questions that fascinate them. This enables them to write journal articles more quickly and to endure their rejection more easily. For example, a student was writing about the negative effect of welfare reform on Cambodian women. She drafted and revised her article in record time, because she was so angry about the policy’s consequences. A Korean student who grew up in Japan persevered despite several obstacles to publish her research showing that Koreans in Japan labor under legally imposed hardships. A student who wrote about pedigreed dogs and another who wrote about food metaphors always worked steadily, because the topics were also lifelong hobbies. Many academics use their own experiences of race, gender, sexuality, or nationality to reinterpret canonical texts, placing the tradition in a completely new light.

The lesson? The world changes quickly, so you're more likely to have positive writing experiences if you follow your deepest interests rather than passing fads. Write because "you think you can make some kind of a contribution to some part of the world that matters to you" (interview with Martha Feldman in Cloutier 2015, 82). My own model for this is an artist whose work I came across in the 1980s while researching street art in Washington, DC (Belcher 1987). The artist had spray-painted huge images of women's dress shoes in alleys, unafraid to depict the feminine footwear of pumps across an entire urban landscape. This artist had taken his or her idiosyncrasy and pushed it. So obsess about things, pursue your passions, don't get bullied. Whatever your pump is, paint it.

## DESIGNING A PLAN FOR SUBMITTING YOUR ARTICLE IN TWELVE WEEKS

Of course, simply knowing what the successful academic writer's habits are doesn't automatically put them within reach. Many of us find it especially hard to pick up the most difficult key to success: actually writing. The most important step to developing this habit is making a plan of action. When you design a plan, you set up goals and deadlines. Once they're tangible, you can realize these goals and deadlines. This workbook aids you in designing a plan to send an article to a journal in twelve weeks (or in fewer or more weeks, depending on how far along your article is and how much time for writing you have). So let's move into the planning exercise.

### Day 1 Tasks: Reading the Workbook

On the first day of your first writing week, start by reading the introduction to the workbook and continue by reading the week 1 chapter all the way through the next three paragraphs, answering all the questions posed. Write directly in the boxes provided or in your own document.

### Tracking Writing Time

Each week, you're going to spend about three minutes a day keeping track of how much time you spent writing. You can use the analog form on the next page or a digital one—a time-tracking phone app, an online tool like Toggl, or a digital calendar. If you use the form on the next page, you can post it—say, on your fridge or inside your office door—so you can easily see your progress and remember to mark off writing time each day. If you use digital tracking, just be sure that you can view the whole week at a glance.

This week, mark down everything you do. That includes a variety of writing tasks, such as time spent writing your article, reading and completing the exercises in this book, discussing your article, and writing other academic works like books, theses, or conference papers (perhaps using separate symbols or colors for each type of task). But it also includes recording what you did with the rest of your time that day. List everything: watching television, attending class, commuting, sleeping, caring for family members, laundry, cooking, and so on. This one-time exercise for finding out where your hours go is a useful tool for helping you use your time more efficiently.

Start by marking down the time you spent today completing the workbook tasks. Then on the following days return to this calendar to record what you did each day.



Week 1 Calendar for **Actual** (Not Planned) Time Spent Writing This Week

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
5:00 a.m.							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00 p.m.							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00 a.m.							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
<b>Total minutes</b>							
<b>Tasks completed</b>							

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**WEEK 1, DAYS 2-5: READING AND TASKS****Day 2 Tasks: Designing Your Writing Schedule**

Welcome to week 1, day 2 reading and tasks! Today you're going to design a writing schedule not only for this week but all the way through to submitting your article. Before you get started, let's address a few myths about writing schedules.

**The Pitch for Writing Most Days**

Many academics believe that in order to write, they must have long, uninterrupted stretches of time. Nothing will do but to be at their desk eight hours at a stretch, or all night, or all weekend. Only then will they be able to concentrate. Such stretches are elusive, however, so they wait for the weekend, and then for the break between courses, and then for the summer. Waiting becomes a permanent state, with writing becoming something they'll do after their qualifying exams or their first year teaching, for instance.

Others forcefully create blocks of time. As one student put it, "If I wait until the night before the paper is due to write it, I will only be miserable for eight hours!" Such academics believe that containing the writing process by restricting it will reduce the painfulness of the experience. What they don't understand is that this irregular practice is what's producing the painfulness! Imagine deciding that "running marathons is painful; I'm never going to run except on the day of the marathon." The marathon then becomes an excruciating experience you never want to repeat. By contrast, people who run a mile or two every day really enjoy running, and often feel lost without it.

Study after study shows that you don't need big blocks of time to write effectively (Boice 1982, 1992; Krashen 2002). In fact, writers who write a little bit most days produce more manuscripts than those who alternate extended writing sessions with weeks or months of not writing at all. Writing just thirty minutes a day can make you one of those unusual writers who publish several journal articles a year. According to the research,

those who write in regular, unemotional sessions of moderate length completed more pages, enjoyed more editorial acceptance, were less depressed and more creative than those authors who wrote in emotionally charged binges. (Boice 1997b, 435)

The word *binge* here describes a pathology, not a method, as pointed out by Jo VanEvery, an academic writing advisor who hosts the online Academic Writing Studio, and Pat Thomson, author of *Detox Your Writing* (Thomson and Kamler 2016). *Binge writing* is thus a technical term with a precise meaning (VanEvery 2013; Thomson 2013). It means not merely writing for extended periods but also writing in a mild manic state, after which you feel too anxious and exhausted to write for some time (Boice 1992, 201). Excessive, emotional writing such as this—where you don't write for weeks and then stay up all night (or the whole weekend) writing—is not associated with productivity. Indeed, research on many professions has found that requiring long work hours is counterproductive, and that periods of rest are essential to effective long-term productivity (Schwartz, Gomes, and McCarthy 2010). For instance, top athletes and performers rarely practice more than ninety minutes at a time or more than four and a half hours a day (Schwartz 2013; based on Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Römer 1993; Ericsson 2016). One author proved to himself that less is more. When he spent ten hours a day writing a book, he took a whole year to

finish. When he spent four hours a day writing his next book, he took only six months to finish (Schwartz 2013). Rest is essential to the creative process.

The moral? Writing *daily* works. Writing *rarely* doesn't. The less you write, the harder it becomes to write. Part of the reason academics feel they need big blocks of time is because it takes them so long to silence their inner critic. Absent the small but satisfying successes of daily writing, that critic becomes harsher and louder. An author writing most days doesn't have this problem. The more that writing becomes a habit, the more likely you are to complete your writing projects and to enjoy the writing process.

What happens when you commit to daily writing? Writing becomes not a choice but a habit. You might think that disciplined people are better at resisting the temptation to do other (more fun) things, but researchers were surprised to find that productive people are in fact worse at resisting temptation than others. Why? Because they rely on habit (Galla and Duckworth 2015). That is, disciplined people do not debate going to the gym or eating their greens; they do it without even thinking about it. For them, it's not a choice; it's a habit. Having a writing habit, a regular writing time and place, does more to enable you to write than some innate ability to resist the temptation to do other things.

Finally, and this may seem counterintuitive, focusing all your energy on writing won't result in increased productivity. In fact, research shows that whatever goal you make your highest priority will most likely not be attained. That's because "the most valued activity" always "carries demands for time and perfection that encourage its avoidance" (Boice 1997a, 23). (That's my favorite line in Boice.) Therefore, writers who make writing a modest, realistic priority are more productive.

So don't establish self-defeating writing goals that relegate everything else in your life to inferior status. Aiming for a forty-hour writing week will only make you feel guilty, not productive. Furthermore, the feeling that you should always be working will haunt every pleasurable moment. You don't resolve desires by entirely suppressing them. Make time to go to the beach, meet a friend for dinner, or play a game of soccer or bid whist. A well-balanced life—with time allotted for friends and family, games and sports, movies and light reading, as well as writing, research, and teaching—is the best ground for productive writing.

### Experiments with Writing Most Days

When I assert that short bursts of writing activity can accomplish much and are a common pattern among very productive individuals, most workshop participants look at me skeptically. It's the most controversial idea that I introduce—simultaneously the most contested and the most embraced. Not surprisingly, many immediately voice their disbelief. "No way!" I hear. "That's impossible!" When I ask why, this is what the participants tell me:

I need whole days to write; otherwise, I forget what I'm working on . . . I lose track. If I don't stay in one mental space for an entire week, my ideas don't cohere . . . I need to get up a head of steam and just keep on going, because if I stop, I'll never get started again.

I listen to their objections, but then ask them to indulge me. "Just as an experiment," I say, "try writing at least fifteen minutes every day for the next week." I remind everyone that we all manage to get to work, use a microwave, and answer email without forgetting how to do these things from one day to the next. "But writing is different," they argue. "It's intellectual; it's about ideas." "Just indulge me," I reply. If a participant still seems reluctant,

## WEEK 1 | DAYS 2-5

I ask, “You seem very convinced you must have big blocks of time. Have you ever tried it any other way?” To a one, these skeptics admit self-consciously, “Well, no.” Be wary of being so firmly against something you haven’t tried.

The next week, the person who had protested the most is usually the first to volunteer that wow, the fifteen-minute method really does work. One student told me that he had reorganized his entire life into fifteen-minute chunks arranged around work and child care. Another student told me she had solved an important revision problem while standing in line at the Department of Motor Vehicles. Yet another student set herself the goal of writing a two-thousand-word essay for a trade magazine in her field without ever writing more than fifteen minutes a day. In two weeks, she had submitted the essay. A student explained it like this:

I’m usually an environmental perfectionist when it comes to writing—I have to be at my computer, it has to be silent, and I must have coffee. But I was stuck waiting at the airport for a flight to a conference, and I thought about what you said. So I decided to try writing for fifteen minutes. It worked fine. Then I worried about having to take the time to type up my penciled notes, but I found that in transcribing them I revised them as well, so it was not wasted time. A busy airport would still not be my writing site of choice, but I can see how, by being flexible, I can ensure that I write a little bit every day and keep my ideas fresh.

Another student told me that writing in short daily bursts was especially helpful if he had time for more writing on the weekend. He found that two writing hours on Saturdays were more productive if he had spent fifteen minutes writing on each of the four previous days. It saved him warm-up time on Saturdays. Some find that the short sessions are best for revising and the long sessions for drafting—discover what works for you.

A faculty member told me that just opening the article file five days a week made a difference:

I can’t do the fifteen-minute thing. But I believe in the concept of writing daily, so the way that I’ve interpreted that concept for myself is that I always have whatever journal article I am working on open on my computer. That means that every work day at some point, I do something to the article—I add a citation, change the spaces in the table, cut a few words from the Methods section, and so on.

In the same spirit, another person told me that she set up a phone notification to go off during her morning walk to work, to remind her to at least think about her article once a day. Yet another told me that on his drive to campus, he listens to one of the University of Oregon’s popular *Research in Action* podcasts about writing, research, methods, and productivity, hosted by the indefatigable scholar and coach Katie Linder.

Almost all my workshop participants who follow the daily writing exercise admit that they got a useful amount of work done in fifteen minutes, and they had no problem remembering where they were the next day. Writing most days keeps the article in the forefront of your thoughts, so that you think about it while driving or washing dishes or taking a shower instead of forgetting about it. Furthermore, if you write a little bit before starting an extremely busy day, the feeling of accomplishment makes the rest of the day more manageable.

## Questions about Daily Writing

**Is fifteen minutes a minimum or a maximum?** It's a minimum. If you have more time to spend on writing most days and can do so without burning out, go for it. The principle of daily writing is that it teaches you to write more smoothly, less anxiously, and without depending on rare and irregular big blocks of time. If you're able to write regularly for three to four hours a day without burning out and while publishing your writing, you don't have a problem. Your writing is focused and productive. If you think about your article for fifteen minutes for four days and then write every weekend from eight o'clock Saturday evening to two o'clock Sunday morning, you don't have a problem. Writing for longer periods once or twice a week or occasionally attending an intensive writing boot camp to kick-start or restart a project are both fine. But your lifelong aim should be to do some writing most days, thus the fifteen-minute minimum.

For many of us, writing more than fifteen minutes a day is preferable; given the choice, we'll set aside one to four hours. If you have financial support and no other obligations, you can ratchet your hours as high as you can stand it. But what if you don't? What if you're a professor teaching three, four, or five new courses? Or a single parent who isn't getting much sleep? Or you have a debilitating autoimmune disorder? Large blocks of time don't exist for you. The good news is that you can get some writing done in the few minutes that do open up, and those minutes will be effective. It means that if you suddenly spend half an hour writing, you can be pleasantly surprised by your diligence, not disappointed that you failed to do more. You can rearrange your thinking to value any and all writing opportunities. Indeed, the scholar Tanya Golash-Boza (2012), at the forefront of the wider movement to return academics to a less frenzied pace, forbids writing more than two hours at a time. On her *Get a Life, PhD*, one of the most successful blogs about academic writing, she recommends everything in moderation. Kerry Ann Rockquemore's faculty mentoring program, the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, advises the same.

**What do you mean by "writing"?** This is one of the most frequent questions I get. People want exact details: "If I spend fifteen minutes reading a journal article and taking notes on it, does that count as my fifteen minutes? What about if I spend fifteen minutes hashing out my argument with a friend? What if I spend my fifteen minutes writing a paragraph that I then delete at the last second?" My answer is, "It depends." If all you ever do with your fifteen daily minutes of writing is take notes, discuss your article, or delete paragraphs, that's not writing. It's procrastination. And as Charles Dickens said, "procrastination is the thief of time," and we must arrest it (Dickens 1850, 131). But if you spend three days on those activities and then on the fourth day write a sentence that you keep in your article, then yes, all of it is writing. What's more—it's a perfectly normal writing process. So long as you keep your article progressing, any related activities are good. Finally, I count reading the workbook and completing its tasks as writing.

**How can this advice be good if I only binge-write and yet am productive?** Since this book first came out, a few academic authors have outed themselves as proud "binge" writers. They write for rare, intense, long days, and yet they publish regularly. A good example is the productive scholar of gender and sexuality Jane Ward (2016), who writes best on two- to five-day retreats far from home, which she schedules about four times a

year. She wrote her last book over the course of six writing retreats. Ward describes her writing retreats as “a pleasure,” because their rarity “means that I am often longing for it, and I have so many ideas at the ready that I can’t wait to unleash them!” Another example is the literary scholar Michael North, who has published a book about every four years since 1984 and has repeatedly told me that he writes only in the summer (1984, 1985, 1991, 1994, 1999, 2001, 2005, 2008, 2013). The socialist scholar of race Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor drafted her best-selling book *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* in two intensive months (2016). Finally, Helen Sword’s interviews with successful authors also revealed that quite a few did not write every single day (2016, 2017).

In my experience, however, such writers have three rare qualities in common. First, unlike most, they quite enjoy these intensive writing periods, and they don’t develop a posttraumatic stress response after them of avoiding writing. So the negative word *bingeing* doesn’t describe their writing habits. Since they feel joy when writing, and write in bursts, let’s call them “spree” writers instead. Second, spree writers are light revisers. They write a draft quickly, read through it once, correct typos and a few infelicities, send it off, and get published. Third, spree writers are “in-head” writers. The classicist Michael Kulikowski told me that he composes large chunks of writing in his head—a habit he acquired by writing popular music reviews that way while walking to school as a teenager. Likewise, the prolific scholar and public intellectual Eddie Glaude constructs detailed outlines in his head for any piece of writing, complete with topic sentences and key turns of phrase, such that typing up those ideas happens quickly. That is, sitting down at a computer to write is a last step for such writers, not a discovery process. They use that time to record already thought-out thoughts. (Often, these are the same people who can give off-the-cuff lectures without preparation.) In other words, it’s the thinking *between* spree-writing sessions that makes these sessions possible. Ward (2016) says that in the months between her writing retreats, “I do research, take notes as ideas emerge and receive feedback from colleagues” as well as “formulat[e] ideas in my mind during my commute to campus or while doing dishes, designing and teaching courses that animate my next writing project, or, especially now, giving lectures, media interviews, etc., about my writing.” In fact, she’s not a rare writer but someone who spends most days writing, just in her head. So as the patron saint of scholarly writing Raul Pacheco-Vega (2016) rightly puts it on his terrific academic writing blog, spree writers are in fact “writing every single day.” (Many scholars use and follow his popular hashtags #GetYourManuscriptOut and #ScholarSunday.)

So if you’re the type of person who can think about your article sporadically all day long, draft it pleurably on rare writing retreats that actually happen, and then produce publishable prose that gets published, great. As Jo VanEvery (2013) states on her valuable academic writing blog, *Transforming Academic Lives*, “If you have a process that works for you, then you don’t need to go out looking for other better processes.”

But if you’re writing only once in a long while, not publishing regularly, and the very thought of writing makes you anxious, then you’re not a spree writer. Your process isn’t working, and you need to try writing daily. Similarly, if you’re a heavy reviser, going through dozens of drafts before sending your article to a publisher, the spree method won’t work for you. You’ll spend too much of the spree time revising what you had written the last time. To tell it to you plain, if you use spree writing to produce drafts that need a heavy revision or if your lightly revised prose doesn’t get published, then you’re

not a spree writer—you're a weak writer, and you need to switch over to the daily writing method.

Finally, don't fool yourself into thinking that spree writing takes less time. Ward goes on a lot of writing retreats. If a spree writer spends four days writing eight hours a day four times a year, plus an hour each week taking notes, talking about the work, and getting feedback, that comes to about 180 hours of writing a year, or 8 percent of the total work time (given that a forty-hour-a-week job takes about 2,000 hours per year). That's equivalent to writing about forty minutes a day, five days a week.

Any of these methods can work, but none of them work for everyone. You need to be honest about what does work for you. For many years I was not a daily writer. That's why there are twenty years between my first book and my second. Then I was placed in circumstances where I had to write every day, and my writing habits transformed. I don't always get around to writing every day when I'm teaching, but I never go for more than three or four days without writing. It's my *goal* to write every single day, and that has made all the difference.

### Obstacles to Writing Daily (or at All)

Before turning to making a writing schedule, it's wise to anticipate the kinds of interruptions to writing (and excuses for not writing) that are going to arise. What challenges lie ahead for you in becoming a writer with good writing habits?

I have listed some of the more common ones below. As you read them, check off those you think might be obstacles for you, and then write down any solutions you think of (either on the back of your daily writing calendar or in reminder software so that they pop up at your next scheduled writing session).

In the first edition, I listed solutions to common writing obstacles here in the workbook, but the list became too long for this edition, partly because people kept sharing obstacles I hadn't addressed, but mostly because people had so many great solutions. So I moved those solutions online, where you can find them at [wendybelcher.com](http://wendybelcher.com) at "Solutions to Common Academic Writing Obstacles." Some of the solutions there are easy, some are tough, and others are tough to hear. Some may surprise you by being valid reasons not to write. They are all useful.

#### Obstacles to Writing My Journal Article

**Motivational obstacles.**  I just can't get started writing.  I can't sit still to write.  If I have a long, productive writing day, somehow it's harder to get started the next day, rather than easier.  I will write just as soon as (fill in the blank).  I wish I could write as easily as I [exercise/cook/clean/or . . .].

**Emotional obstacles.**  I'm not in the right mood to write.  I'm afraid of writing because my idea is very controversial or triggering.  I'm afraid of writing because publication is so permanent.  I feel guilty about not writing.  I feel like I have to amputate significant parts of myself to write.  I feel like I have to suck the life out of my work to squeeze it into the square box of academic writing.

**Health obstacles.**  I'm too depressed to write.  I have serious health issues; I think I may need a break from writing to deal with them.  When I write, weird things happen with food.  I have terrible insomnia and therefore foggy mornings, so writing is tough.  I get terrible back pain when I sit at my computer writing too long.





### Solutions to Writing Obstacles

Now, what can you do to interrupt your interruptions and overcome your obstacles to writing? Check out “Solutions to Writing Obstacles” on my website.

Possible Solutions to My Writing Interruptions and Obstacles

### Setting a Realistic Daily Writing and Article Submission Goal

If you’re already a daily academic writer, congratulations! If you’re not, I can guarantee you dramatic improvement as a writer if you commit to being at your writing site and writing five days a week, for fifteen minutes to two hours per session.

You now have a choice of what to do next. If you would find it helpful, the following will help you set up a reasonable schedule and deadline for sending your article to a journal. However, if you feel that too much is up in the air right now—you’re unsure about which article you’ll revise or how much revision it will need—you can return to this section in week 3 and make a plan then. I will remind you there.

1. **Find or print the two workbook calendars.** To start setting up a reasonable daily writing schedule, you need to study your current overall schedule. To complete this assignment, you will need two workbook forms: the Week 1 Calendar for Planned (Not Actual) Time Spent Writing This Week and the Twelve-Week Calendar for Planning Article Writing Schedule. You can fill out the ones on the next two pages or print out a

now. Doing this work by hand, not electronically, is best.

2. **Mark down this week’s current daily schedule.** Under each of the seven days in the Week 1 Calendar for Planned (Not Actual) Article Writing Schedule, cross out the times unavailable for writing over the next seven days, such as when you’ll be in class, at work, at appointments, eating, sleeping, caring for relatives, and so on. (If this week won’t be typical, you might try completing this task twice, once for this week and then for a more normal week.)

3. What times of day might you use for writing? Under each of the seven days in this same weekly calendar, fill in the exact times when you plan to do your daily writing (which includes reading the workbook and completing the tasks).

While thinking about what daily times might work, make sure that your goal is realistic rather than ambitious. For instance, research suggests that being a morning or an evening person has deep psychological roots that you ignore to your detriment (Diaz-Morales 2007). If you’re not a morning person, don’t resolve to get up every

Week 1 Calendar for **Planned** (Not Actual) Time Spent Writing This Week

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
5:00 a.m.							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00 p.m.							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00 a.m.							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
<b>Total minutes I plan to work</b>							
<b>Tasks I aim to complete</b>							

Twelve-Week Calendar for **Planning** Article Writing Schedule

Week	Task	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Total hours	Note
<i>Example</i> May 1-7	<i>Example</i>	8-9 a.m., June 1	8-9 a.m., June 2	0 minutes grad conf	0 minutes grad conf	8-9 a.m., June 5	1-5 p.m., June 6	1-2 p.m., June 7	8 hours	
Week 1	Designing your plan for writing									
Week 2	Advancing your argument									
Week 3	Abstracting your article									
Week 4	Selecting a journal									
Week 5	Refining your works cited									
Week 6	Crafting your claims for significance									
Week 7	Analyzing your evidence									
Week 8	Presenting your evidence									
Week 9	Strengthening your structure									
Week 10	Opening and concluding your article									
Week 11	Editing your sentences									
Week 12	Sending your article!									

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## WEEK 1 | DAYS 2-5

morning at four thirty to write. This isn't realistic. Choose a time of day when you're more alert and energetic. Likewise, if you work full time Monday through Friday, don't decide to write every evening for four hours or to set aside your entire weekend. This isn't a realistic goal; striving for it will only discourage you. Aim instead, for example, to write fifteen minutes a day during the week and for several hours on Saturday or Sunday afternoon. If your schedule is to write one hour on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, still try to get in fifteen minutes of writing on Tuesday and Thursday so that you get started quickly and smoothly on the longer writing days. If you can schedule the writing for the same time most days, all the better. If you can't, still try to come up with a regular pattern. Some attach their writing activity to another task, such as immediately after driving the kids to school.

Of course, the most unrealistic writing schedule is none at all. Don't believe that somehow, by some miracle, your article will get written in the next couple of months simply because you need it to be submitted. You have to have a plan.

4. **Note the total planned writing time and tasks.** At the bottom of the same weekly calendar, fill in the total number of minutes that you plan to spend writing that day as well as the tasks you hope to complete that day.

**Tell someone your plan.** Email someone now—whether a friend, writing partner,

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whether you met your writing goals. A little social pressure often helps us!

6. **Mark down the daily schedule for the next twelve weeks.** Now turn to the Twelve-Week Calendar for Planning Article Writing Schedule on the previous page. Look at your own datebook or calendar, and note which days over the next twelve weeks will contain obstacles to writing. For instance, perhaps you are hosting a conference, undergoing surgery, taking a vacation, or meeting a deadline for another piece of writing. Such interruptions are normal and acceptable; you just need to consider them when identifying whether sending an article in the next twelve weeks is realistic. Next, write in these obstacles on the twelve-week calendar (e.g., conference hosting takes two days out of a particular week; a family vacation takes seven days out of another). Then, given the days remaining, write down the amount of time for each date that you can spend writing. Finally, add up the times in the Total Hours column.
7. **Choose a realistic article submission deadline.** Now that you have a more scientific understanding of your daily schedule for the next twelve weeks, you can make an informed decision about whether the workbook's goal of revising and submitting a journal article in twelve weeks is going to work for you. When can you plan to send your submission to a journal?

The workbook estimates that those writing HumInt articles will spend an average of 8 hours per week writing and 92 hours in total to complete and send their article. It estimates that those writing SciQua articles will spend an average of 6 hours per week for a total of 72 hours. However, the amount of time that your article will take depends

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scholarly field or discipline, and the state of your article. Many of those variables may be unknown quantities to you right now (e.g., the level of revision your paper will need). However, we're going to make some guesstimates to help you set up a plan that you can adjust as you go along.

If your article needs a major revision or you can't write for more than three or four

hours a week, you'll likely have to spread out each daily task over several days. If your article needs only minor revision or you can write for more than twelve hours a week, you'll likely be able to complete several daily tasks in one day. Those aiming to submit their article in six weeks will need to complete two chapters per week.


The flowchart below collates some of the variables to give you a very rough estimate of the time it will take you to complete and send your article. Use it to make an educated guess about the number of weeks you're going to devote to revision. Then use it to fill out the My Writing Plan Decisions form that follows it.

Estimated Article Writing Time Flowchart			
Is your article in the HumInt track?	Does it require a minor revision?	Will you write 4 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 20 wks
		Will you write 8 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 10 wks
		Will you write 16 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 5 wks
	Does it require a medium revision?	Will you write 4 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 24 wks
		Will you write 8 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 12 wks
		Will you write 16 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 6 wks
	Does it require a major revision?	Will you write 8 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 48 wks
		Will you write 16 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 24 wks
		Will you write 24 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 12 wks
	Are you drafting from scratch?	Will you write 8 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 54 wks
		Will you write 16 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 36 wks
		Will you write 24 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 18 wks
Is your article in the SciQua track?	Does it require a minor revision?	Will you write 3 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 20 wks
		Will you write 6 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 10 wks
		Will you write 12 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 5 wks
	Does it require a medium revision?	Will you write 3 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 24 wks
		Will you write 6 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 12 wks
		Will you write 12 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 6 wks
	Does it require a major revision?	Will you write 6 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 48 wks
		Will you write 12 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 24 wks
		Will you write 18 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 12 wks
	Are you drafting from scratch?	Will you write 6 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 54 wks
		Will you write 12 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 36 wks
		Will you write 18 hours a week?	Plan on sending it in 18 wks

## WEEK 1 | DAYS 2-5

8. **Choose start and end dates.** If you've read this far in the workbook, completing all the tasks, in practice you've already set this week as your start date. Congratulations! If you're just skimming and don't feel that this is a good week to begin, choose next week. You could even choose the week after or set the book aside for next summer, but I don't recommend this. Then you'd be falling into the trap of thinking you can write only if you have large, uninterrupted chunks of time. There is no time like the present. Since I designed this workbook to accommodate writing to your life rather than the other way around, you can reach your goal of submitting your article even if it's a busy time. Check off the relevant boxes in the My Writing Plan Decisions form below. Then redo the Twelve-Week Calendar for Planning Article Writing Schedule with your current plan.

My Writing Plan Decisions	
Track and pathway	<input type="checkbox"/> HumInt track <input type="checkbox"/> SciQua track <input type="checkbox"/> Revision pathway <input type="checkbox"/> Drafting pathway <input type="checkbox"/> Minor revision <input type="checkbox"/> Medium revision <input type="checkbox"/> Major revision <input type="checkbox"/> I'm not sure yet
Number of weeks	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 10 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 8 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 6 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 5 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 18 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 20 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 24 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 48 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 36 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 54 weeks
Minutes per day	I plan to write _____ hours per week (_____ minutes per day, five days a week).
Start date	I already started, on _____ (month/day/year). I will start on _____ (month/day/year).
End date	I plan to submit my article to a journal on _____ (month/day/year).

9.  Decisions form and the Twelve-Week Calendar for Planning Article Writing Schedule, post them somewhere visible. If you need to change the plan, don't worry—it's perfectly normal. Just revise it and post it again. Keeping it up to date with actual patterns and progress is important.

### Tracking Writing Time

Don't forget to mark down the times that you wrote, using your Week 1 Calendar for Actual (Not Planned) Time Spent Writing This Week to do so.

### Day 3 Tasks: Selecting a Paper for Revision

Welcome to day 3 of week 1! Today you'll learn about article types and select a paper for revision. Many academics believe that in order to get published, they must start from scratch. Nothing will do but to begin a brand-new article on a brave new topic. This is not true. Most academics, even graduate students, have already written a classroom essay, conference paper, BA or MA thesis, dissertation chapter, or talk that contains the seed of a publishable journal article. The trick is to identify which text provides you with this fertilizable seed. Even if you're convinced that you have no text that contains such a seed, do read the next section: it may prompt you to recall one that does. Nothing will teach you better how to write well than revising a text that you've already drafted.

Before you choose an article to revise, let's look at types of articles. Knowing the types can help you best determine which text to select for revising with this workbook as your guide, especially since not all journals publish all types of articles. I have listed the following types in reverse order of importance, from those carrying the least weight with hiring and promotion committees at research universities and many colleges to those carrying the most. I have also indicated those texts that you shouldn't select for revision using this workbook, while nevertheless including some advice on how to publish them.

### **Types of Academic Articles Not Suitable for Revision with This Workbook**

**Interview.** For our purposes, a brief introduction to and transcript of an interview with another scholar, political figure, or artist. If you feel that you have an interesting topic and interviewee, submitting the interview for a journal's consideration can be a good experience and establish you as someone who supports the field and has connections. However, interviews require some care and planning. If the interviewee is famous and you're not, you may have trouble getting the subject to agree to be interviewed. This workbook aids those writing articles, and is not suitable for publishing interviews.

**Book review.** An article that analyzes a recently published scholarly book. Publishing this type of writing gets you in the habit of briefly summarizing and analyzing others' work. So if you can produce book reviews quickly (e.g., reading the book and writing the review all in three or four days), go for it. You can use the advice at my web page "How to Write an Academic Book Review." If you work at a slow rate, however, I regretfully must inform you to avoid them. Depending on your discipline, you must publish six to ten book reviews before you have something equivalent in weight to a research article. In some fields or departments, book reviews never add up, counting for nothing. Further, some professors warn graduate students not to publish book reviews, since the authors you review may turn up on hiring or promotion committees someday. I wouldn't go that far, but I would recommend that novice authors review only books that they think are good, a significant contribution to their field. While it can be satisfying to tear into bad books and warn your field about them, you may not want to go on record lambasting their authors if you're pre-tenure. Finally, if you have never published a book, you're not always aware of their acceptable limits. A professor was complaining to me that a graduate student's book review had castigated him for not citing a book published just six months before his book came out, revealing the student's ignorance of book production timelines. Having said all that, book reviews represent an important service in the humanities, being essential to the growth of fields—and the advancement of scholars, as hiring and promotion committees prefer books that get reviewed.

**Trade/professional article.** An article that distills academic research for a nonacademic audience. To get the word out about their work, academics sometimes write articles for newspapers, popular magazines, trade journals, practitioner newsletters, or websites. They do so to shape policy, change community practices, advance causes, or decry injustices. Some authors regularly publish a distilled version of their academic article in such journals, efficiently getting two publications out of one idea. Such articles can do a great job of getting your name out there and changing the world we live in, but they don't carry much weight with hiring and promotion committees at research universities and many

colleges. If you can produce trade or professional articles quickly and would like your research to have a real-world impact, do so for your own satisfaction. Just don't let them become a substitute for writing a research article or a substitute that's so close to a research article that a peer-reviewed journal wouldn't view a related submission as original (more on this in "Week 4: Selecting a Journal"). Working on such an article with this workbook would be overkill, as trade articles need far less apparatus, citations, and evidence.

**Note.** A brief article that documents a small finding. A note is a short article, usually around five hundred to one thousand words, and typically takes the form of a case history, a methodological innovation, a single observation about a text, a definition of a term, and so on. Scholars publish a note when they have an insight that's too slight for a full-length article or when they don't wish to spend the time to develop an idea (perhaps because it's unrelated to the rest of their research). I recommend that you not devote time to developing notes for academic journals, and send them only notes that you've already written (say, because it was cut from an article). That is, notes are good for offloading interesting sections that you can't fit into any of your research articles without digressing. If the observation directly relates to your research, consider developing it into a research article. Articles published in journals' note sections won't "count" for as much with hiring and promotion committees at research universities and many colleges, although they frequently count for more than a book review or trade article. Using this workbook to work on note articles would be overkill, because they don't include arguments.

**Microarticle.** An article that's a new scientific form launched by Elsevier, which publishes hundreds of peer-reviewed journals. This short-format science article is no more than two pages long and is intended for publishing "interesting data that have not grown into a full piece of research. Or to share a follow-up research result to a previously published paper. Or [to provide] a description of a failed experiment, which provides a great new insight" (Elsevier 2016). In other words, microarticles are a way to publish "valuable research results (including intermediate and null/negative results), that might otherwise remain unpublished" (Ware and Mabe 2015, 146). Elsevier is also launching short article forms for materials and methods as well as data. Working on such an article with this workbook would be excessive, as microarticles have slim findings.

**Translation.** An article translating an article written by someone other than the translator. Again, this is a lot of work for a publication without much weight. Still, if it familiarizes you with another's work or introduces an important work to a new audience, then proceed for your own satisfaction. Translating works of theory tends to provide the most boost to your curriculum vitae. Indeed, many important academics launched their career, and made their name, through translating such: the literary scholars Gayatri Spivak and Barbara Johnson by translating Jacques Derrida (Derrida 1976, 1981), Caryl Emerson by translating Mikhail Bakhtin (Bakhtin 1984), and Daniel Heller-Roazen by translating Giorgio Agamben (Agamben 1998). If you're aiming for a US journal, you'll need to translate into English; if you're aiming for journals outside the United States, you can translate into another language, but such translations won't count for as much with US faculty committees. This workbook aids those writing original articles, not translating articles that others have written.



**Response article.** An article that provides feedback to a recently published article and is published in the same journal as that article (Parker and Riley 1995, 65). It's usually shorter than a research article and easier to write, since it addresses only one article rather than an entire body of literature. It's like a long letter to the editor. It's also easier to get published, because most journal editors want to spark debate and increase attention to their publication. The drawback is that such an article, precisely because it's easier to write than a full research article, can count for less. Still, it counts for more than the previously listed article types and can be valuable in spreading your name. If you've read an article published in the past year that sparks your interest and you can confirm, contradict, or expand on the author's argument, it can be worthwhile to write a response and send it to the editor of that journal. If you're a pre-tenured scholar, just be careful about using this as an opportunity to firebomb another author. People wait for tenure to publish controversial work for a reason: tenure protects the honest from the sensitive. However, as a final word, graduate students with something timely to say and who can articulate it in a considered manner have done well with this form. The Australian sociologist Noela Davis (2009), a graduate student at the time, published a respectful and well-researched response article in the *European Journal of Women's Studies* that rebutted the claims of one of its recent articles, by the feminist professor Sara Ahmed (2008). Davis's article was successful: her response has been cited over seventy times, and no doubt is part of the reason that Ahmed's article has been cited over 220 times. But here again, working on a response article with this workbook would be overkill, since response articles are generally of a narrower scope than peer-reviewed journal articles, being extended criticism of one piece of work.

**Review article.** An article that surveys the literature on a particular topic. To be published, such an article can't be just a summary of relevant articles and books. It must also provide a critical perspective, pointing out contradictions, gaps, and enigmas in the literature, and suggesting directions for future research. The ordinary dissertation literature review is insufficient in this instance. In some social, health, behavioral, and natural science fields, review articles (sometimes also called synthesis research or systematic reviews) are multiplying at twice the rate of original research articles (Ketcham and Crawford 2007, 1177), suggesting that many scholars write them and many journals publish them, perhaps because they can garner significant citations (Agarwal et al. 2016). But concerns about quality (Ketcham and Crawford 2007) and the impact on the citation of original research (NCB editors 2009; DrugMonkey 2013) remain. Also, many review articles are invited, not submitted; that is, editors solicit them from prominent scholars. While popular with researchers, hiring and promotion committees at research universities and many colleges still consider review articles to be lesser than original research articles. Some people have used the workbook to write review articles, but these don't contain original evidence, so the workbook is not quite apt for the task.

### **Types of Academic Articles Suitable for Revision with This Workbook**

**Social science research article.** An article reporting on data collected about human behavior. Such articles are the standard in the social, health, and behavioral science fields, including anthropology, archaeology, sociology, psychology, political science, economics, public health, geography, education, and business. They can be classified in many ways, and many of them mix methods, but for our purposes I divide such research arti-

cles into four types. I define them below, showing how each would differently approach the question of whether judges have biases against certain defendants.

**Experimental research article.** An article reporting on a study in which the researcher, under tightly controlled conditions, manipulates a variable to determine what causes an effect in human behavior. Such an article usually includes a literature review, description of methods, and discussion of results. For instance, a researcher may show to fifty randomly selected judges the exact same criminal record document, but with different defendant photographs attached to test whether a certain characteristic of defendants (e.g., their gender, race, or age) leads judges to give different sentences in the same case. The defendant characteristic is the manipulated variable. Most experiments are conducted in laboratories, but some are conducted in the field (in which case they are sometimes called natural experiments or quasi experiments). The collected data are analyzed using statistics (often cross-tabulation), so some call this type of article an experimental quantitative study. It is more common in the behavioral sciences than in the social or health sciences. Follow the SciQua track for writing this type of article.

**Quantitative research article.** An article reporting on a study in which the researcher observes relationships among variables to identify correlations in human behavior. Such an article usually includes a literature review, description of methods, and discussion of results. The research it details doesn't depend on manipulating a variable, nor does it take place in a laboratory. For instance, a researcher may collect information from a state government database on hundreds or thousands of court trials to measure whether judges give different sentences to defendants of certain genders, races, or ages but charged with the same offense. Or the researcher may ask all the judges in a particular state to answer a survey that includes questions about their perceptions of defendants. This type of research is sometimes called a descriptive study, because it describes variables rather than manipulating them and cannot establish causality, only correlation. Typical quantitative methods include working with government data or publicly available survey data or conducting independent surveys, polls, and interviews (whether online, over the phone, in person, or on paper) with one hundred or more people. Owing to their larger sample size, commonly designed to be representative of the population of interest, quantitative studies can provide more generalizable results than experimental studies. Since the 1950s, this type of research article counts as the most prestigious type to publish in the nonexperimental sciences. Follow the SciQua track for writing this type of article.

**Qualitative research article.** An article reporting on data collected in natural settings using ethnographic research to understand human behavior. The data are generally not quantified and may be described only in words. Such an article often doesn't have strict Methods or Discussion sections, looking more like a humanities article. For instance, a researcher may conduct interviews in person with six to ten judges about their perceptions of defendants or possibly spend several months in a single courtroom observing whether a judge gives different sentences to defendants charged with similar offenses. Typical qualitative methods are lengthy open-ended or structured interviews with a few

individuals or observations of a real-life situation (either in person or through recordings). Such exploratory studies are useful in gaining insight into underlying human motivations and designing hypotheses for larger quantitative studies. For instance, the researcher observing the single courtroom may notice how judges react to defendants' clothing, particularly whether they're wearing a jail uniform. Quantitative researchers could then design an experiment in which they make the manipulated variable defendants' clothing. (Of course, the reverse may happen as well, with the findings of a quantitative study leading to an in-depth qualitative study.)

Despite its tremendous value, some disciplines, scholars, and journals will consider qualitative research less serious or reliable than quantitative research. For writing this type of article, you most likely should follow the SciQua track, but not always. Keep reading both types of examples until it becomes clear which track is most helpful for your article.

**Interpretive research article.** Some social, health, behavioral, and natural science research articles aren't based on experimental, quantitative, or qualitative studies. They don't involve numerical data or direct observation; rather, they're theoretical. For instance, the researcher may write about the history of bias in the US courtroom or the relation of biopower and sovereignty. Follow the HumInt track for writing this type of article.

**Humanities research article.** An article presenting a new analysis of human expression. Such an article is the standard in the disciplines of literature, art history, religion, philosophy, musicology, and history as well as architecture, film, television, digital media, and theater; it's also the standard at the intersection of such disciplines (interdisciplinary work). Humanities articles have widely varied structures and objectives, largely because most aren't based on inductive reasoning but are instead devoted to valuing the particular over the general. Unsurprisingly, disciplines that treasure the unique tend to have varied article structures. Follow the HumInt track for writing this type of article.

**Humanities theoretical article.** An article that reviews and advances theory. Such an article traces the development of a certain theory and then goes on to propose a new theory, lambaste errors in the old one, or suggest that one theory is better than another. It rarely has any concrete evidence; sometimes it includes a brief textual example. Advanced scholars usually write these articles. The weight of a theoretical article depends on the era, the field, and the hiring or promotion committee. In certain times and places, a theoretical article can carry tremendous weight. In others, it can be dismissed as too rarefied. I mention this possible drawback only because so many novice authors feel that they must write theoretical articles. You don't have to. But if you have a strong, original contribution to make to theory building, by all means do so. Follow the HumInt track for writing this type of article.

**Natural science research article.** An article reporting on data collected about the physical world. Such an article is the standard in the formal, physical, applied, and life sciences, including disciplines like biology, mathematics, chemistry, physics, computer science, and astronomy. As the natural sciences vary quite a bit from the social sciences, this workbook was not originally designed for scientific articles, which have highly specific

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structures and approaches. However, some have used the workbook to write such articles, adapting the experimental or quantitative research article form described earlier. Follow the SciQua track for writing this type of article.

### Deciding My Article Type

Based on what I know so far, what type of article am I likely to be developing with this workbook?	<input type="checkbox"/> Experimental research article <input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical research article <input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative research article <input type="checkbox"/> Humanities research article <input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative research article <input type="checkbox"/> Humanities theoretical article <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed methods article <input type="checkbox"/> Social science interpretive article <input type="checkbox"/> Natural science research article
Given that type, what track should I be following?	<input type="checkbox"/> SciQua track <input type="checkbox"/> HumInt track

### Considering a Text You Have Already Written

Now that you know the types of academic articles, you're in a better position to select an article for revision. Answer the questions below by writing in the title of a text that you wrote. If the same text is the answer to more than one question, just write "ditto" in the box and consider it a good one to focus on revising. Parts of papers may work for developing into an article as well. You may find it useful to complete this task with the file folders on your computer open as prompts. Even if you're certain that you want to start writing your article from scratch, read what follows first, just in case it reminds you of a paper that would be a good choice.

**Praise.** Has a colleague or professor ever suggested that you submit a text you wrote for a prize or publication? If not, has anyone ever suggested that a text you wrote was particularly strong or intriguing?

Title:	
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**Pleasure.** Is there any text you wrote that you enjoyed researching and that you still think back on with gratification?

Title:	
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**Relevance.** Does any text you wrote address some aspect of a current debate in your discipline? In your recent reading or conversations, do you find yourself thinking of something you wrote and its relevance?

Title:	
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**Research.** Is any text you wrote particularly well researched? Did you do substantial reading for one and still have all the sources or data?

Title:

**Findings.** Does any text you wrote have particularly strong or unusual findings? Does any contain an original insight that could carry a whole article?

Title:

**Argument.** Does any text you wrote take a strong stand, trying to persuade your readers to believe something?

Title:

**Jobs/promotion.** Does any text you wrote, if you were to publish it, help you make a stronger case for being hired or promoted in your field? (For example, if you are haven't published much and are positioning yourself as a scholar of early twentieth-century modernism, publishing an article about twenty-first-century realism may not help your case.)

Title:

**Conference paper.** Have you ever given a conference paper? Did you receive a positive response? Did you get useful comments that would help you in revising the paper for publication? (Several studies suggest that about 50 percent of conference papers are later published as articles [e.g., Autorino et al. 2007, 835].)

Title:

**Thesis.** Have you written a BA thesis, an MA thesis, or PhD dissertation? What parts of it are worth revisiting for possible publication?

Title:

**Rejected article.** Have you ever submitted an article for publication and received a revise-and-resubmit notice? If not, have you ever received a rejection notice?

Title:

### Texts That Offer Particular Challenges

If reading through the above brings several texts to mind, remember the following when making your final choice of which one to work on:

**General: BA or MA thesis.** It's a great idea to revise your thesis for publication. Indeed, nowadays many social, health, behavioral, and natural science departments have students write their thesis in article style, in which case you're all set. But most humanities departments still have students write long theses, in which case you may struggle with the amount of cutting required to get yours to article length. Of the students I know who've been successful in turning a long thesis into a publication, most of them read through the thesis, opened an empty electronic document, and then typed up what they remembered. It may seem counterintuitive, but they found that starting over took less time than cutting. If you can use this method, theses tend to fare quite well in the peer-review process, as they have an attractive thickness, a distilled density of argument and evidence that impresses reviewers. However, a few editors will have a problem publishing an article that originated from an electronically available master's thesis or dissertation. In 2011, a survey of humanities and social science editors revealed that 83 percent of them would consider publishing theses revised into articles, but 3 percent would not under any circumstances (Ramirez et al. 2013, 372-73). If your thesis or dissertation is or will be available electronically, it would be wise to ask prospective journal editors if this is a problem (regarding contacting editors with query letters, see "Week 4: Selecting a Journal").

**General: Completed dissertation chapter.** Revising a chapter from a defended dissertation is a standard route to publication. In fact, publication of three journal articles is now accepted as the equivalent of a dissertation in certain disciplines (e.g., political science, geography, sociology) at some universities. Two challenges face you in this regard, however. First, revising a dissertation chapter for publication is not just a matter of cutting the chapter out of the dissertation and sending it to a journal, unchanged. You must both shorten and lengthen the chapter to make it a journal article. You must shorten it because chapters are often twice the length of journal articles; but you must also lengthen it in some places because the article must stand alone, unlike the chapter. When cutting, be ruthless; when adding, be judicious. Readers often need less background information than authors assume they do, and peer reviewers readily ask for more if they need it. Second, if you plan to publish your dissertation as a book, don't publish too much of it as journal articles. Book editors vary in their advice, but at least one prominent editor has said that authors shouldn't publish more than one journal article from any dissertation they want to publish as a book. Some also say that authors shouldn't publish any journal article that contains the argument of their whole book. Because of the ready availability of journal articles along with dwindling library budgets, editors fear that consumers won't buy a book if much of it is available in cheaper forms. Other editors claim that this is alarmist thinking, and that two articles published in reputable journals would make them more interested in publishing the book from which these came, not less (Cassuto 2011). Further, I have seen graduate students, as well as recent PhDs, postdoctoral fellows, and adjunct instructors, obtain tenure-track jobs based on their revised dissertation chapter being published in top journals.

So what should you do? If you're in a book-publishing discipline and have two strong pieces of writing, one of which is a dissertation chapter and the other a classroom essay, choose the classroom essay. It's a safer choice for your book publication prospects, and it indicates that you're a scholar with range. That is, if you're entering the tenure-track job market with one journal article and its topic is clearly the same as that of your dissertation, that application isn't as strong as one with a journal article on a topic different

from your dissertation's. In addition, hiring and promotion committees frown on scholars whose published journal articles are only from their dissertation. Having said all that, if you don't currently have a strong second piece of writing or if you really want to publish a dissertation chapter, don't hesitate to select the dissertation chapter. The benefits of publishing any article will always outweigh the risks. Just don't ever publish a summary of your entire dissertation in one journal article (although this advice is moot, since dissertation summaries tend not to fare well in the journal's peer-review process [Bowen 2010]). Additional information about what types of dissertation chapters to choose appears later.

**General: Chapter from an incomplete dissertation.** If you're in your first years of graduate school and you have a paper that you think is going to be an important chapter in your dissertation, think twice about revising it for publication now. All the reasons given above for not publishing chapters from a completed dissertation apply twice as much for chapters from incomplete ones. Journal articles and dissertation chapters are very different genres, so it won't help you draft that chapter. In addition, your ideas may change radically as you write the dissertation, and then you may wish you had waited to publish on the topic. If you really want to work on a prospective dissertation chapter for publication now, don't let my advice here stop you. But if you're debating which of two pieces of writing you want to revise—a future dissertation chapter or something that won't appear in your dissertation—I recommend the latter. Likewise, if you think you'll be writing your dissertation on a particular author/place/culture and you have one paper about that subject that contains your dissertation argument and another that does not, choose the latter paper for revision. Finally, completed or incomplete chapters that never made it into the dissertation are great choices for revision, since they have no other destiny.

**General: Reports.** Experts in international development, the environment, public health, and so on often work for public agencies. As a result, they write many reports, whether for funding agencies, policy makers, or internal purposes. While such reports can hold amazing data not available in print, a report is rarely argumentative, something an article must be. But if the data in the paper were carefully collected and support a strong argument, and that argument is relevant to a current scholarly debate, then go ahead and select it, but be prepared to do much revising. In general, reports exist to tell readers what to *do* about a problem; journal articles exist to tell readers how to *think* about a problem. While social, health, and behavioral science articles often offer recommendations and solutions in their conclusion, the analysis of the problem takes up the articles' body.

**General: Broad surveys.** Peer-reviewed journals rarely publish articles surveying the field or the state of the discipline. When they do, veterans in the field are the authors. The conventional wisdom is that a junior scholar hasn't been following the debates long enough to be able to weigh in on such matters. If you're a novice author and a professor tells you that you're an exception to this rule, go for it. Otherwise, why attempt to scale entrenched obstacles? You don't have to throw the work away—use the survey to write an introduction to an article or a literature review.

**General: Purely theoretical.** Peer-reviewed journals rarely publish articles that explore only the strengths and weaknesses of a particular theory. Also rarely published are

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articles that propose a theory without a case study (in the social, health, and behavioral science fields, collected information about human behavior, such as experimental data, government data, interviews, student papers, and so on) or a primary source (in the humanities, a human creation such as a novel, folktale, sculpture, musical score, ship's log, graffiti, and so on). Most important theories were launched with case studies or primary sources. For instance, one of the great theorists of the twentieth century, Michel Foucault, was obsessed with primary sources and spent a huge amount of time in archives (James Miller 1993, 97, 108–9); his reading at the beginning of *The Order of Things* (1966) of the primary source Diego Velázquez's painting *Las Meninas* was his launching case study for theorizing systems of representation.

An article making pronouncements without a case study or primary source fares poorly in the journal-article submission process. Also, novice authors can make the mistake of assuming that writing a paper to help themselves understand a theory will be useful to others. Most often, however, such an article is too rudimentary, its author too unaware of the thousands of articles already published on that theory. It's better to save such writing for a classroom lecture you might wish to give on the topic. If you've never published and truly think that your purely theoretical article is publishable, ask a faculty member in your field to read the article and identify whether it is a fresh contribution. Editors will quickly reject theoretical articles on topics that they think have been exhausted or are virtually unassailable. Also, make sure that if you write a purely theoretical article, you send it to a journal that would be open to such writing.

**General: Dated research.** If your paper is quite old and subsequent research may have vitiating its findings, you may want to think twice about picking it for revision. Some research articles are “evergreen,” as they say in the magazine business, especially in the humanities. But most address an academic concern that has waned or include findings that have been superseded or disproved. Such papers can be updated, but you'll need to do additional research. In SciQua fields, adding a longitudinal component might work—going back to interview or survey the original study subjects. If you're unsure where your paper stands, you may want to ask someone in your field to read it with an eye for its current relevance. It's safe to say that choosing to revise anything you wrote more than ten years ago will take a lot of extra work; for something you wrote five or six years ago, carefully review for relevance.

**General: Outside your discipline.** It's very difficult to write for a discipline other than your own. Just because you took one film course and wrote a paper for it despite being in the political science department doesn't mean that you know how to write for film scholars. You might know—but be sure that someone in that field has sanctioned your approach. Often, your ideas won't be new enough or clearly enough related to the field to warrant publication. One older study showed that those from outside a discipline were significantly less likely to get published in a journal within that discipline (Goodrich 1945, 722). If you're doing interdisciplinary work, that's okay, but selecting the right journal will be essential to avoiding rejection on disciplinary grounds. Finally, it can even be difficult to write within your own discipline if it's outside your field; for example, writing on eighteenth-century Chinese art if you focus on twenty-first-century French art. You'll need to share your articles that are outside your field or period with scholars in that field before sending those articles to peer review.



**General: Polemics.** The world is a racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, classist, and (insert your own concern here) place. I agree! But you can't get published in scholarly journals imply by asserting that this is the case, no matter how much the journal editor may agree with you. You must do more than declare that an institution isn't working, that a certain artwork is problematic, that an academic field is biased, or that a social condition is egregious. You must have evidence. Solid academic evidence. Without evidence, you're simply writing a newspaper editorial, sermon, manifesto, or blog post, none of which are genres that scholarly journals publish. So if you've written a classroom essay stating that Latinas in the United States face many obstacles in graduating from college or that welfare is destroying the fabric of US society, you must have evidence other than your own casual observations and experiences. Both can be extremely helpful to you in designing a study to test your hypothesis, but without a study, you have no evidence.

In the humanities, even if you do have evidence, you must have something interesting to say apart from pointing out blatant racist or sexist statements in a famous text. For example, a graduate student was writing on anti-Semitism in a short story by the famous children's author Roald Dahl, but she soon gave it up because she couldn't muster the energy to develop an argument that would surprise no one. Dahl was an unapologetic anti-Semite, a widely known fact; few would find it useful for their own research to read an article pointing out examples of anti-Semitism in his stories. To get published, then, this student was going to have to make a more intriguing argument about how such a text operates. She could, for instance, select some anti-Semitic children's book authors and categorize how anti-Semitism works differently in their books than anti-Semitic elements do in books for adults. She would then be offering a schema based on evidence, not simply pointing to examples of racism. In another case, a student was writing about the bias against spirituality in feminist studies but without examining the classic works of feminism, probing classic formulations of feminism, or quoting feminist arguments against spirituality. The student is undoubtedly right about the bias, but without evidence the article is a screed, not a publishable article. You can sometimes get published by arguing against the common wisdom and asserting that a text widely thought to be racist is actually more tolerant, or that a praised text is covertly sexist. Just be aware that assertions without evidence, without interesting evidence, won't get your work into peer-reviewed journals.

**General: Not in English.** This workbook aids you in revising an English-language article. If you're planning to revise and submit an article in a language other than English, be aware that non-English-language journals often have publication standards that are quite different from English-language ones. Therefore, you may have to extrapolate quite a bit from this workbook. If, however, you plan to revise in that other language but translate the completed article into English, the workbook can help. A perennial debate in my international workshops is whether nonnative speakers of English are best off drafting articles in their own language and then translating them into English, or whether they should start drafting articles in English from the very beginning. Some authors insist that they find it better to draft in their own language and then translate the article. They like the smoothness and logical flow this drafting process enables, although they find they spend some time rooting out the syntax and structure of the original language when rendering their prose into English. Others say that it's easier to be analytical or argumentative in English than in other languages, because English contains more scholarly terms; consequently, it's better

to start from the beginning in English. Some worry, though, that scholars writing in others' languages initially express their ideas in awkward or even naïve ways. Weigh these trade-offs before deciding how to proceed with an article that's not in English.

**General: Too introductory or descriptive.** To get published, your paper will have to go beyond introducing an object or practice, or merely summarizing the research about an object or practice. Some academics have papers that do little more than describe a geographic feature, agricultural technique, painting style, literary movement, and so on. Without an argument, a theoretical approach, or a study, such a piece of writing is more suited to an encyclopedia or edited volume than a journal.

**General: Parts published earlier.** Don't select for revision a paper that's too similar to texts that you've already published; if you do, you may be accused of self-plagiarism. Many journals now run all submissions through plagiarism-detection software such as iThenticate or CrossCheck. Rules of thumb vary, but using the exact phrases and sentences that appear in a published article will always be a bad idea. Even just one paragraph repeated without attribution from a previous article will anger editors. You can sometimes repeat three to four paragraphs verbatim from a published work of yours, but only if you clearly state that in the text or in the notes. Even then, such paragraphs must be from minor sections, such as Background, Context, or Methods, which don't contain your argument or evidence. Yet repeating text verbatim isn't the only possible self-plagiarism. Yes, most scholars would consider it unwise to select for revision an article that has the same argument and evidence as a published text of yours. However, you could select an article with the same argument but different evidence from your already published article (or the same evidence but a new argument), so long as you don't use the exact same sentences or paragraphs. Some say that so long as you're correlating different variables or looking at a new dependent variable, the evidence can be the same. Some authors say that 50 percent of the ideas in the article can be the same, but I think that most editors would limit this to no more than 10 percent. Some journals allow you to repeat your Methods section verbatim from previously published work without attribution; other journals consider that a scandal. If you're uncertain, you may get the opinion of a journal editor by writing a brief email providing a concise description of your article and its similarities to your previous work.

Having said all that, I should add that some famous scholars developed their "brand" precisely by repeating their ideas a lot in print. It's very difficult to launch a field-changing idea from just one publication. I once commented to the highly cited feminist philosopher Sondra G. Harding that the prolific globalization theorist Arjun Appadurai had only ever really written or published one article, and that was part of the reason why he was so highly cited. She laughed and said she often felt that she had done the same. When your ideas become admired, particularly if they are broadly useful think pieces such as Harding and Appadurai produce, editors will be constantly asking you to submit articles to their journal issues or edited volumes. But, you simply cannot produce that much prose. So when asked, Harding would open a brand-new electronic document, not even glancing at her previous publications, and then write up her ideas from scratch—some of these she had stated in previous works, although of course all would change slightly in the writing. For many people, the sin of self-plagiarism lies in using the exact same language, not in writing up similar ideas. But if you're starting out, be careful. Err on the side of caution.

**General: Summary of others' research.** Many novice authors would like to publish as an article a literature review from their dissertation or thesis—that is, a long summary of others' research. “I spent so much time on this section!” they tell me. “It should be good for something.” But journals in the humanities rarely publish literature reviews. Editors can spot them a mile away and usually reject them without even sending them into peer review. In some social, health, and behavioral science fields, certain types of literature reviews do get published, but they're not easy to write. You'd need to have read almost everything on a topic for which there is no published literature review, then offer a new and useful critical take on the previous research. Even then, although they are useful for the discipline, they don't count for as much as original research. If you really think that you have something original to offer in the form of a literature review, then proceed, but be sure to ask people in your field first.

**General: Weak evidence.** If you have a paper that has null findings, few findings, or little evidence to support your argument, you'll need to collect better evidence or select another paper.

**General: Rumination on teaching.** At some point in their career, scholars want to write an article musing on their teaching experiences in a particular course or on a particular topic. I'm not talking here about those who have produced a scientific educational study with rigorous methods, but rather those who have some personal ponderings and unsystematic observations about what works. A few journals in the field of scholarship on teaching and learning (SoTL) will sometimes publish such articles. (I myself did! Belcher 2009). However, almost no other peer-reviewed journal is interested in publishing such meditations—they want original research. They want articles based on a scientific study of a course, with quantifiable data. If you're not in SoTL, your options are to develop a real study; publish your musings in an academic newspaper, magazine, or blog; or submit that as a chapter to an edited volume.

**Humanities: Narrow close readings.** As an undergraduate in literature, doing a close reading of a single literary text can gain you admiration and an A. Among peer-reviewed journals, it's likely to gain you a rejection. Journal editors want to see something more than an unpacking of the various meanings of one text. Many journals still publish single-text articles, but they will still expect such articles to speak to disciplinary debates. If you have a single-text paper, make sure that you can take it beyond merely unpacking your chosen text. It helps if you are using the single text as a leaping-off point for broad theorizing, or if that text is obscure but important.

**Humanities: Popular text studies.** Be wary of choosing a paper you've written on a widely discussed text. I know of one top interdisciplinary journal that used to reject automatically any paper that focused closely on Morrison's extraordinary novel *Beloved*, because it received dozens and dozens of such celebratory articles every year. (Someone needs to launch the *Journal of Toni Morrison Studies* so that such articles can get published!) It isn't easy to know what a popular text is—especially in literary fields that focus on canonical texts—but it probably includes any text that's taught in every literature department in the country and yet doesn't have a journal devoted solely to its author (e.g., *Chaucer Review*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*). If you feel that you really do have a new interpretation of this text that would be of broad interest, go for it: just select your journal carefully.

## WEEK 1 | DAYS 2-5

**SciQua studies: Small sample size.** If you have based your research article on a qualitative study with just a few subjects, even qualitative journals may reject it. Most social, health, and behavioral science fields are so quantitative nowadays that the sample size of even qualitative studies has become an issue. Speaking to others in your field can be helpful in identifying an adequate sample size for both your field and your argument, but anything under 5 subjects is likely too small. The average number of subjects in qualitative dissertations is 31; so various researchers have argued that any study with fewer than 15, 20, or even 25 subjects is too small (Mason 2010). If you want to publish a study with a small number of subjects, articulate in your Methods section why that number represents saturation (the point when adding additional subjects would not further illuminate the matter under study), including the limited nature of your claim, the high quality of your data, the homogeneous population under study, the difficulties of longitudinal studies, and so on (for advice, see Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam 2003; Green and Thorogood 2009). Another strategy is to focus specifically on the outliers in your study. That is, the goal of small samples is not to achieve a certain frequency for cross-tabulations but rather to arrive at unique small case studies.

As one caution, the sociologist Mario L. Small (2009) has noted the increasing trend, driven by quantitative peer reviewers, of qualitative scholars attempting to present the findings of small-scale qualitative studies as representative of much larger groups. Those defending qualitative methods state that such defenses are unnecessary. For instance, a qualitative study of thirty poor African Americans living on one short Philadelphia street need not say anything about the struggles of all African Americans in the United States; it's enough that it's documenting the reality of a particular group of people in a particular place. Small's article is worth reading in full if you're debating what to do about these issues.

**Social, health, behavioral, and natural sciences: No study.** In some rare social, health, behavioral, or natural science fields, it's perfectly acceptable to theorize and conjecture without an experiment or quantitative/qualitative study; in most, it's unacceptable. As one senior faculty member impatiently remarked in a workshop, "You cannot sit at home and write up analysis based on conversations with your friends over beer and call it political science. That's just bad journalism." If you have a paper in which you speculate on the causes of social conditions or the motivations of individuals but do not have a study to back up your speculations, find out whether your field is one that accepts such work. Most journals will want to see a study showing that racism is the cause of student failure, sexism is preventing men in nursing from doing their job adequately, or parents would be willing to pay for their children to attend better public schools. You'll need interviews with or surveys of such students, nurses, or parents to back up your claims. As mentioned, some SoTL journals will publish articles about teaching without studies, but usually only by authors with a fair amount of teaching experience.

### Prioritizing among Several Paper Choices

The preceding section should have helped you rule out some papers as unsuitable for reworking for publication in a journal, and focus on others as having potential. On the one hand, if reading that section caused you to abandon all the papers you thought might be publishable, don't get discouraged! Keep reading, and then turn to the chapter "Week 0: Writing Your Article from Scratch" when instructed. On the other hand, if you're left with

a single good paper, great! Select it for revision. If several papers made the cut and you're unsure which one to pick, consider the following.

**Professor approved.** If your professor recommended that you think about publishing a classroom paper, consider that paper.

**Journal approved.** If you received a revise-and-resubmit notice from a journal awhile ago, select this article. It always surprises me how many academics are sitting on articles that journals have asked them to revise. Many novice authors read revise-and-resubmit notices as rejections, but that's not what they are. It's better to think of them as an editing stage in the publication process. Even if a journal rejected your article, you may want to consider it for revision, especially if the reviewers gave you solid recommendations for that process. If the reviewers gave you conflicting advice and you aren't sure how to proceed, you might want to read "Week X: Revising and Resubmitting Your Article" now.

**Your energy and enthusiasm.** If neither of the situations above is the case, you can choose the paper that you think requires the least amount of work to get ready for publication or the one you feel most excited about working on. For those just embarking on a publication career, it's wise to choose a paper that will provide you with the energy to remain motivated.

### Deciding Which Paper to Revise

Keeping all the above in mind, use the box below to identify the paper you'll revise. Feel free to talk this over with others first.

My chosen title	
Aspects of my selected text that may provide challenges	
<input type="checkbox"/> Thesis length <input type="checkbox"/> Currently a diss. chapter <input type="checkbox"/> Currently a report <input type="checkbox"/> Currently a broad survey <input type="checkbox"/> Purely theoretical <input type="checkbox"/> Dated <input type="checkbox"/> Outside my discipline <input type="checkbox"/> Polemical <input type="checkbox"/> Not in English <input type="checkbox"/> Too introductory or descriptive <input type="checkbox"/> Too similar to what has already been published <input type="checkbox"/> Just a summary of others' research <input type="checkbox"/> A narrow close reading <input type="checkbox"/> A popular text study <input type="checkbox"/> Personal musings on teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Small sample size <input type="checkbox"/> Weak evidence <input type="checkbox"/> No study	

### Tracking Writing Time

Don't forget to mark down the times that you wrote, using your Week 1 Calendar for Actual (Not Planned) Time Spent Writing This Week to do so.

### Day 4 Tasks: Rereading Your Paper to Identify Revision Tasks

Welcome to day 4 of week 1! Today you'll work on getting reacquainted with your paper. Upon rereading it, don't worry if it's not quite as good as you remember it. Or just as bad! All you need is a seed.

1. **Locate the latest version of your paper on your computer.** There is little more frustrating than starting to revise a paper, only to realize that you're not working on the



## Day 5 Tasks: Completing Miscellaneous Setting-Up Tasks

Welcome to day 5 of week 1! Today you'll work on some last setting-up tasks for writing.

### Setting Up Your Writing Site

Having a customary writing site or two is part of forming the habit of writing regularly. When you enter a space where you usually write, it serves as a cue to write—its distinctive features prompt you (Kellogg 1999, 188). So if you can pick one spot as your writing site, that works best. However, many academics tell me that having one writing site is impossible given their complicated life. Instead, they have a variety of sites—including library stacks, reading rooms, coffee shops, bedrooms, and kitchen tables. Some academics also tell me that they are itinerant writers by choice. Fixating on one writing spot doesn't work for them because, after working in a space for a week or two, the place no longer energizes them or it becomes actively associated with feelings of frustration. The point of writing regularly is to develop a habit of writing, and part of that is having a habitual writing spot (or two or three). Use the box below to indicate your writing sites.

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Regular writing site							
Backup writing site							

In addition to having a regular writing site, you need it to be comfortable, especially since you'll be writing there most days. What changes will you make to your writing site to ensure that it's convenient, conducive, and comfortable? In terms of comfort, chairs and tables (or sofas and beds) that worked when you wrote rarely may not work when you are writing regularly. Make sure that you have a good chair, and place your keyboard and screen at the proper height so you don't develop back problems. If feeling lonely while writing is a problem (as it is for many), you might want to consider writing at a nearby café or university common room. If the distractions of a busy household are a problem, you might want to buy earphones. If you can't afford necessary changes to your writing site, try to think of cheap solutions. For instance, when I wanted to work standing up, I found that placing my laptop on a stack of books that were on top of a medium-height bookshelf worked even better than a standing desk, because it also put my books right at hand. Use the box below to indicate what improvements you'll need to make to your regular and backup writing sites to ensure that they're comfortable and conducive.

Regular writing site improvements	
Backup writing site improvements	

### Setting Up Citation Software

If you're not already using dedicated citation software, you must read this section and let me harangue you. (If you've been using this software, great—you can skip this section.)

It's impossible to overemphasize the importance of such software to your productivity,

happiness, and ethical obligations. You simply must use reference-management software (RMS). No ifs, ands, or buts! Once set up, these programs are so much easier to use, not to mention more accurate. Simply highlight a title and download. That's it—no typing. While citations used to take five hundred seconds to produce by hand, with errors, with RMS they now take five seconds.

Yes, RMS programs are fiddly to set up, and can be frustrating at times; but over your career, they'll save you hundreds of hours of time and twice that in headaches. Further, they'll increase your chances of publication by ensuring that your citations appear properly. Journal editors see disorderly citations as a bad sign; as one commented, "I've noticed that sloppy documentation almost always signals sloppy reasoning!" (Argersinger and CELJ 2006). If you had tried an RMS program before and didn't like it, try again—many problems with earlier versions have been resolved. For instance, you don't have to type in citations from your old articles by hand. So if you have avoided RMS for a long time, stop! Spend at least fifteen minutes today acquainting yourself with one of the programs or at least signing up for a university library workshop on them, if available.

Now, if you are squirming, saying, "I know, I know! I should have set it up a long time ago," guess what? Per usual, you're not alone in your feelings. The 25 percent of scholars who still have not set up an RMS program (Melles and Unsworth 2015; Francese 2013; Ollé and Borrego 2010; Carpenter 2012; M. Wu and Chen 2012) has failed to do so because they feel guilty that they've put it off for so long. But abandon your guilt about what happened in the past. All that matters today, the day you're reading this paragraph, is the future.

What are your options? You have over thirty RMS programs to choose from—some simple, some complicated; some free, some expensive; some that work with Mac operating systems, some that don't; some web-based, some on your desktop; some easily available in your country, some not; and so on. At this writing, four were the most popular in the United States: Endnote, Zotero, Mendeley, and RefWorks, in that order (Melles and Unsworth 2015; Emanuel 2013; Francese 2013). However, according to Google Trends, regional variation is huge, with the most popular RMS program in France being Zotero; in Germany, Citavi; in Brazil and Italy, Mendeley; and in India and the United Kingdom, Papers 3 (now ReadCube Papers 3). Technology changes quickly, so new software is popping up all the time. All have advantages and disadvantages; checking your university library will likely reveal a useful web page discussing them.

Many in the humanities and social sciences like Zotero because it's free, open source, and user friendly. When a friend's advanced research class tested and critiqued all the RMS programs, they unanimously chose Zotero as the best, which suggests a large uptake among junior scholars and that Zotero could become the most popular in the United States. Those in the sciences use Mendeley more frequently, perhaps because it works best for those who have many PDFs of journal articles, and it has a freemium version, meaning that the program owner tempts you with a free version to try to get you to buy the paid version. It's owned by Elsevier, however, and thus is not open source. RefWorks is best suited for people who have huge databases of citations, since it currently has more storage space than Zotero and Mendeley. Thomson Reuters's Endnote is the most sophisticated and the most powerful RMS program, perhaps because it was launched in 1988 and thus has been developed the longest. It has a free-mium version, but many universities have a premium subscription available for free to faculty and students. I've used Endnote since 2001 and have been very happy with



it. Precisely because it is so sophisticated, it can be time-consuming. For me, however, it's been worth it.

If after reading up on your options you still don't want to set up an RMS program (say it isn't so!), at least install the Google Scholar button on your browser. With it, you just highlight the title of the work on any web page, and Google Scholar provides you with a citation you can copy and paste into your document. If you're still typing the titles of widely available journal articles and books into your word-processing document, you aren't doing research properly. You must move into the twenty-first century!

If I do not use RMS, which one(s) will I check out (and install) today?	<input type="checkbox"/> Zotero	<input type="checkbox"/> Endnote	<input type="checkbox"/> Mendeley	<input type="checkbox"/> RefWorks
	<input type="checkbox"/> Citavi	<input type="checkbox"/> Papers 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

### Setting Up a File Backup System

I can't tell you how many people I know who have lost entire articles or even books owing to poor backup systems. I have heard from two people who used a thumb drive for backup purposes and then had someone steal their computer and the backpack with the thumb drive in it. I have heard from someone who experienced an online storage site accidentally synchronizing her files in ways that replaced newer files with older ones. I know someone who used a universitywide automatic backup of his computer, only to find, when he needed the backup, that the computer had been set up improperly and wasn't backing up his files. So you need to have several systems in place, and you should stop and set that up now. One easy solution is one of the most effective: the old-fashioned technique of regularly emailing your article to yourself.

If I don't have adequate backup, which one(s) will I check out (and decide to use) today?	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial cloud backup	<input type="checkbox"/> University cloud backup
	<input type="checkbox"/> Portable hard-drive backup	<input type="checkbox"/> Emailing my file to myself
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

### Addressing Coauthorship

A dean at UCLA once told me that he spent much of every workday adjudicating author order disputes—that is, deciding which of several coauthors' names would appear first on a publication, as well as second, third, and so on. Coauthors disagree about author order a surprising amount of the time. One study found that two-thirds of the 918 coauthors of two hundred articles published in a medical journal disagreed about their relative contribution (Ilakovic et al. 2007, 43).

Disputes about author order arise in part because it's not that easy to assign author order. What matters more: drafting the article or analyzing the statistics? Developing the hypothesis or designing the experiment that tests the hypothesis? If these matters were crystal clear, there would be no disputes.

The other reason they arise is because of "egocentric bias." That is, everyone tends to overestimate their own contribution and underestimate others', whether these are to a basketball team, a marriage, or a coauthorship (Ross and Sicoly 1979; Caruso, Epley, and Bazerman 2006). We all have an excellent sense of what we do, and a poor sense of what others do, especially out of our sight.

Despite how common author order disputes are, you have some options for staying out of that swamp.

## WEEK 1 | DAYS 2-5

**Don't have coauthors.** If you're in a field where you don't have to have coauthors but are thinking about it, keep the following in mind. On the one hand, coauthored articles are cited more often and get into top-tier journals more frequently than solo-authored articles (Garbati and Samuels 2013, 363). And coauthors with a good collaborative relationship produce more work and better work together. So collaborations can be a good idea. On the other hand, research shows that in the tenure process, women receive less credit for coauthored articles than men do. "Men are tenured at roughly the same rate regardless of whether they coauthor or solo-author. Women, however, become less likely to receive tenure the more they coauthor. The result is most pronounced for women coauthoring with only men and is less pronounced among women who coauthor with other women" (Sarsons 2015). So women should take extra care when coauthoring.

**Have fewer coauthors.** If you have control over who coauthors this article with you, don't ask too many to participate: "Smaller teams are more enjoyable and more productive. Large teams can get bogged down with the process of coordination and communication and keeping everybody happy" (Pannell 2002, 102).

**Know the conventions.** Positions like corresponding author, first author, and last author signal different things in different fields. In some fields, the first author to be listed in an article byline made the largest contribution to the article; in other fields, the last author is the most important. In still other fields, author order is determined randomly, alphabetically, or by seniority. Most associations now have detailed guidelines on authorship order, and some journals require authors to answer a series of questions about who conceived the hypothesis, who designed the experiment, who managed the laboratory, who collected the data, who analyzed the data, who drafted the article, and who revised the article so that editors can accurately determine authorship. An excellent website to consult, with a wealth of information about a variety of ethical issues including author order, is the Committee on Publication Ethics at [publicationethics.org](http://publicationethics.org). One of the site's more useful documents is "How to Handle Authorship Disputes: A Guide for New Researchers."

**Agree in advance.** If possible, make a written agreement with the other authors before you even start drafting the article. If you're publishing with peers or a group that you're leading, host individual or group meetings to discuss what constitutes a first-author credit. It will help you avoid author order disputes if you hammer out the duties of a first author or second author in advance. Having a plan, laying out expectations, establishing timelines, and then documenting contributions will also help. Leaving the author order decision to later is inviting trouble.

**Learn to ask questions of senior coauthors.** If you're a junior scholar working with senior coauthors, such as your advisor, you may not have much room to insist on fairness. But raise the issue of author order now—especially if you're a woman or a person of color—because doing so is what professionals do, and demonstrating that you're a professional is part of advancing in academia. In addition, you need to get used to having such conversations.

If it helps, think about these conversations as not about making demands but building your understanding of conventions. Don't start a conversation with senior coauthors by asking about your specific work together. Rather, ask more generally about their experiences of coauthorship and author order, any disputes that have arisen, and their sense of how author order is determined in your field.

Your senior coauthors may be assertive and say that every article they published as a graduate student had their advisor's name appear first in the byline, and that they won't change the practice now that they are an advisor, are on tenure track, and can insist on appearing first. In response, you can choose to protest this, but you'll probably get further in your career if you nod, say you accept this, and then ask under what conditions your advisor would change his or her mind. Either way, you will have put your advisor on alert that you're aware of these issues. Academia is playing the long game, as the expression goes—sometimes you need to go along to get to a place where you have enough power to get your work recognized.

Of course, if the hypothesis/argument, analysis/experiment, and article drafting are all yours and your advisor claims the honor of most prominent author, that's not right. And you have every right to protest. Indeed, some would call it an obligation. Bringing this theft to the attention of your university's administration will help protect other junior scholars, as I can guarantee you that an advisor who has done this once has done it repeatedly. But if you choose to let this violation go, you will hear no criticism from me. A publication is still a publication; you will publish many more.

### Deciding What to Do about Coauthors

If I have coauthors, do I need to schedule an author order conversation? Do I need to find out the conventions in this regard?

### Reading a Journal Article

As noted earlier, to be a good writer of journal articles, you must read journal articles. Next week, you'll go through a guided journal article reading exercise. This week, if you've already set up your workspace, RMS, and author order, find an article published in your field in the last six months and study it. Ignore the content and focus on how it works. For instance, how long is the article and its parts? How many citations does it have? Part of the purpose of this workbook is to get you in the habit of reading journal articles, so today is a good day to start.

### Tracking Writing Time

Today don't forget to mark down the times that you wrote, using your Week 1 Calendar for Actual (Not Planned) Time Spent Writing This Week to do so.

Then, here at the end of the week, look at your time tracker and consider your accomplishments. Even if you didn't get as much done as you hoped, you have gained an understanding of your patterns and are poised to do better next week. Remember, feeling too much guilt is counterproductive!