

PROCRASTINATION SAVIOR

How this is gonna go: 12 hour days, 36 hours total to write the paper. This is just a guideline, similar to our Writing TimeGuide. This is just a guide, so you can adjust the format to be done in more or less time as needed.

Be sure to take breaks (we recommend a 30-45 min break every 3 hours), remove any distractions, and get the help of a friend or roommate for accountability if needed.

If you have read the book, start at Day 2

If you have not read, start at Day 1

DAY 1

*If using a Lit 101 study guide, use it alongside hours 1-12

HOURS 1-3

Step 1, Preliminary Research

Before you paint a house, you have to do prep work. The same goes for writing a quality essay, even if you are pressed for time! Do as much preliminary research as you can on the book/text **before** you start reading. **Take notes as you research**, all of this is useful when we get to actual paper writing.

Use sources like:

- Class notes, your professor is the best resource because she/he will be the one reading and grading this paper!
- Online encyclopedia pages on the author, the text itself, and the time period it was written
- Any summaries or op-ed pieces of the text

If you are writing about a play, see if you can find live productions of it online, seeing a play acted out can help you better understand it.

Here is what's important to know before you open your book:

- When was the text written?
- Why was the text written? (ex: to make a political or social statement, to shock society, to be artful, to praise nature or beauty, to contemplate human nature, to warn about how our failures affect our future, etc)
- What genre of literature does it fall under (ex: Romantic, Gothic, Tragedy)
- How did the text affect society? How was it received by the public?
- Any critical acclaim the author received?

- Major plot points of the text

HOURS 3-9

Step 2, start reading/notetaking

It is best to use any guidance from an instructor on what to take notes on/what you are asked to write about. But at the very least, writing some basic notes will be necessary in order to write a complete paper.

Brainstorm on your paper as you read, jot down any points that come to you as you read.

The point is to **skim** what you are assigned. You will not read a 312 page book in 6 hours. Here is how you will do this:

- Note any major plot points found in your preliminary research, find them in the text and read those portions
- Find quotes that revolve around any major themes, motifs, or tropes you wish to discuss in your paper. Supporting a paper with quotes from the text is important. Create a list of quotes that you might wish to use, and where in the text you found them.
 - Ex: "quote here" (page #)

By the end of this step, you should be able to understand:

- The plot of the text from start to finish, including any major plot twists
- Any major literary themes, motifs, symbolism, tropes that are played out in this work
- Who the main characters are, how they serve the central theme of the text, how they interact with one another and any major literary themes they may be connected to

HOOR 9-12

Once you have taken notes, start formulating an argument you'd like to make (aka your thesis statement) - using the assignment your teacher provided as a guide.

The main thing about a thesis is to **make an argument that can be disagreed with. Then explain why you support that argument.**

Example: Hamlet is not a misogynistic play even though its female characters are treated poorly.

A reader can say, “I disagree, Hamlet is a misogynistic play and here is why...” and that is a good thing. Thesis statements should be refutable, meaning someone can disagree with them, and an argument can take place.

Step 3, finalize your thesis statement

Here are some sources on what makes a good thesis:

[Purdue Online Writing Lab](#)

[Brandeis University Writing Resources](#)

[Harvard College Writing Center](#).

Now, go get a good night’s rest, and be ready to budget another 12 hours of essay writing tomorrow.

DAY 2

HOURS 1-3

Step 1, do academic research - research peer-reviewed academic articles that support your thesis statement. Here are some places to look:

- JSTOR
- Google Scholar
- Project Muse
- WolframAlpha

Keep in mind, your college or university likely has resources available to you via your campus library website - **use them!**

Once you start finding articles that may be useful, take notes on your findings and how what scholars are saying support the argument you are making. Keyword research, condense scholarly text

***Tip:** keep track of what sources you will use in a separate document. By citing as you go, you save yourself a major headache at the end. More on citing Day 3.

HOURS 3-9

Step 2, flesh out thesis with your research findings, this become the body of your paper
Make 3 points supporting your argument, and write 3-5 sentences for each point **ACE**

Follow this template:

Thesis:

Point 1:

S1

S2

S3

S4

S5

Point 2:

S1

S2

S3

S4

S5

Point 3:

S1

S2

S3

S4

S5

You now have the outline of your paper written!

Step 3, decide how you are going to end the paper

Tips for a strong conclusion

- Leave the reader something to think about
- Tie in how we can learn from the text. Ex: “Even in our postmodern times, *Macbeth* reminds society to be wary of unchecked ambition.”

By the end of day 2, you should have

- Preliminary and academic research notes
- A good understanding of the text
- A solid thesis statement
- An outline of your paper, including intro, body, and conclusion

Rest up, tomorrow - we finish off strong!

DAY 3

HOURS 1-6

Step 1, begin writing your body paragraphs. Simply build off the outline you created yesterday. Be sure to write in a setting free of distractions.

Tips for writing strong body paragraphs:

- Avoid using informal you
- Instead of using “I think” or “it is my belief” make the statement as if it were fact
- Use supporting evidence from your research to support your argument, weave in research and connect to the original point you made in your thesis statement
- Quote the text moderately
- Ensure that you are continuously driving to the point made in your introductory paragraph

Noticing your paper isn’t quite long enough? Here is how to meet word count without sounding redundant:

- Use tools like a thesaurus to find synonyms for short, non-descriptive words
- Use longer quotes from the text or research sparingly, 1-3 longer quotes is sufficient and will lengthen your paper, but be sure that you use long quotes wisely and with purpose
- Connect, connect, connect. See if you can make a few more connecting points that flow well together.
- An example of how to create flow in your paper: “This critic says this - which contradicts or supports what this critic says - in class we spoke of this - but I find this to be true.”

That’s 4 points that will certainly lengthen your paper!

HOURS 6-7

Step 2, check for writing errors and edit as needed

Not sure what to look out for? Check out [Stanford's Top 20 Errors in Undergraduate Writing](#)

HOURS 7-9

Step 3, finish your works cited page, complete any final edits

Here are some resources from Purdue University's Writing Lab if you are unfamiliar with how to cite resources:

[Purdue OWL MLA guide](#)

[Purdue OWL APA guide](#)

[Purdue OWL Chicago Manual Guide](#)

***Tip:** read your paper out loud to catch any mistakes

Get a trusted friend or instructor to read what you have so far and take notes on any fallacies they may find.

Consider the following:

- How does the paper flow?
- Have you gotten all your points across and do they make sense to the person you are reading to?
- Are you happy with how you finished the paper, does it make the impact you were hoping for?

HOURS 10-12

Surprise! You have two hours to spare. After all revisions are complete, your paper is ready to submit. You just wrote a kick-ass paper in under 36 hours. Pat yourself on the back, and spend the last 2 hours on self care :)