

How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing By Paul J. Silvia
How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing
The basic premise behind Paul Silvia's How to Write a Lot is that the only way to getting writing done is by writing. Silvia demystifies the craft of writing and reminds us that there is no magic solution: writers simply sit their behinds down (or stand for the conscientious who prefer standing desks) and puts words to paper—or screen. This year I've joined an online writers' consortium hosted by Jonathan Rogers author of a recent biography on Flannery O'Connor and a trilogy of children's books (which I highly commend). The concepts of 'binge writing' (Kellogg 1994 *The Psychology of Writing*) and 'dispositional attribution' (Jellison 1993 *Overcoming Resistance: A Practical Guide to Producing Change in the Workplace*) seem particularly useful.

14: 'When confronted with their fruitless ways binge writers often proffer a self-defeating dispositional attribution: I'm just not the kind of person who's good at making a schedule and sticking to it. 81-90: Good advice on outlining and writing a journal article particularly the introduction: 'This formula introduces the reader to your problem (section 1) reviews theories and research relevant to the problem (section 2) and clearly states how your research will solve the problem (section 3).'

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Caveat: I was pretty grumpy when I read this and I have had to read more writing self-help books in the last three weeks than I have ever wanted to read. I mean he's correct - the only way to write a lot is to write a lot - but his book doesn't offer any helpful guidance to people who have problems with that approach beyond some generally dismissive comments suggesting that these people should just get over themselves. The sequel was also useful: *Write It Up! Practical Strategies for Writing and Publishing Journal Articles*

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What a fantastic book. I wish I had found this earlier in grad school!

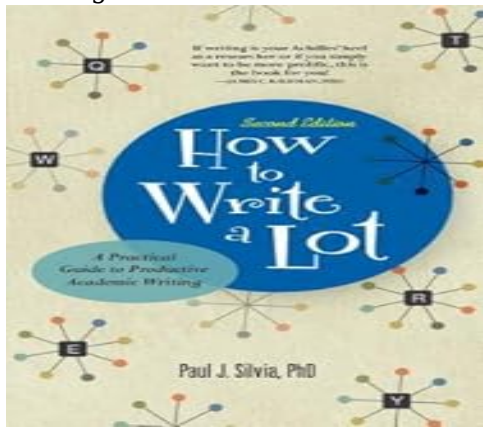
Favorite Quotes:
The only thing that a writer's room needs according to Stephen King (2000) is "a door which you are willing to shut" (p. When confronted with their fruitless ways binge writers often proffer a self-defeating dispositional attribution: "I'm just not the kind of person who's good at making a schedule and sticking to it. Research on self-regulation shows that it isn't enough to set a goal and make it a priority: People must monitor their progress toward the goal (Carver & Scheier 1998; Duval & Silvia 2001). When people sit around and talk about what they could accomplish if only they could find time to write or get a new computer they're colluding to maintain their useless wasteful binge-writing habits. Is there a nonexistent literature that I should be reading and referencing? The abomination persons should remain the property of small-town sheriffs on the hunt for "a person or persons unknown. If attitudes are emotional in nature what are they like in captivity? Will they reproduce like captive pandas? Revising while you generate text is like drinking decaffeinated coffee in the early morning: noble idea wrong time. Writing a journal article combines all the elements that deter motivation: The probability of success is low; the likelihood of criticism and rejection is high; and the outcome even if successful isn't always rewarding. Instead of writing review articles people who don't outline should drive to the local animal shelter and adopt a dog one that will love them despite their self-defeating and irrational habits. It's easy to pick out the book editors in the conference crowd: They're better dressed than the professors and graduate students and they're standing next to big tables containing lots of books. Silvia is fun! With section headings like *Frequently Grumbled Grumbings About Writing Schedules* and oddly worded statements like this quote you know he enjoyed the topic and appreciates struggling writers. "The goal of text generation is to throw confused wide-eyed words on a page; the goal of text revision is to scrub the words clean so that they sound nice and can go out in public. How? By acknowledging and gently dismissing our stupid weak excuses for not writing—"I have writer's block" and "I'm waiting for a vacation my own space inspiration"—and creating an iron-clad respectable writing schedule. The book's claim of only addressing external behaviours mirrors that of cbt ('we're not interested in why but in how; in the present rather than the past'); but ya know saying just do it as if all faults can be rid of through will alone is the logic of neoliberalism,

All academics need to write and many struggle to finish their dissertations articles books or grant

proposals, Writing is hard work and can be difficult to wedge into a frenetic academic schedule. This revised and updated edition of Paul Silvia's popular guide provides practical light-hearted advice to help academics overcome common barriers and become productive writers. Silvia's expert tips have been updated to apply to a wide variety of disciplines and this edition has a new chapter devoted to grant and fellowship writing: "Instead of finding time to write allot time to write" Silvia says: The key is regularity he adds not the amount of time spent, Whether one devotes 4 hours per week or daily blocks of time it is important to set aside that time which slowly accrues and yields dividends of writing output: Rather than "write today" set yourself the goal of "write at least 200 words today. Some writers believe that every second of the allotted "writing time" must be devoted to writing. However Silvia encourages writers to use the time for anything that would ultimately contribute to writing. So for example if you must do more research then spend that time digging through articles: In the end Silvia frees the writer from guilt that besets many a writer: (Thanks to Ryan Vasut for bringing up this point with me in conversation.)One suggestion Silvia offers is of forming a writing support group for people who want to write "faster and better. " A colleague of Silvia suggested "agraphia" the term for the pathologic loss of the ability to write (51). While some writers like to work collaboratively others prefer to be secluded from the world: Regardless to greater or lesser degree all writers should have some network to bounce ideas and receive constructive feedback and input. The desire is to "offer each other encouragement accountability advice and -hopefully—a growing conviction that the long journey of the writer is worth the effort, He bemoans the poor writing that infects much of academic writing—academese that is stuffy impenetrable and unenjoyable: He writes "The English language has a lot of words and many of them are short expressive and familiar—write with these words" (61). And Silvia encourages the writer to write first and then revise: Many writers needlessly squander time and mental energy in analyzing each sentence as they write: "Revising while you generate text is like drinking decaffeinated coffee in the early morning: noble idea wrong time" (76). Instead of a desire to turn each sentence into a masterpiece unleash your fingers on the keyboard and freely write. "Your first drafts should sound like they were hastily translated from Icelandic by a nonnative speaker" (76), It is a quick read and I commend to all who want to write a lot. How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing Just set a writing schedule and stick to it, It's obvious advice but if you don't do it yet it's worth reading the author's cheery tone for a motivational kick in the pants to get you started. It's good to have terms for habits that I vaguely knew I had but didn't have names for. 12: 'Do you need to find time to teach? Of course not--you have a teaching schedule and you never miss it,] Finding time is a destructive way of thinking about writing: People like dispositional explanations when they don't want to change [. Rewarding writing by abandoning your schedule is like rewarding yourself for quitting smoking by having a cigarette: But still I found this to be a distinctively unhelpful book, Silvia pretty much tells you in the first 20 pages that the key to writing a lot is (wait for it) to make a schedule and write a lot, But this then gets hammered home for an extra 100+ pages without adding much of substance and without addressing problems with this approach in a helpful way, I think he's trying to be lighthearted but it just comes across as smug, I also found his chapter on style to be unhelpful as I am skeptical of any writing advice that hinges on the increased use of semicolons. How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing I read this years ago and it helped, I find myself now with a lot to write so I bought a new copy and read it over. The refresher was worthwhile and has already helped me to get back on track, I appreciate the author's humor--including the New Yorker cartoons--as well as his brevity: Writing usurps time that should be spent on important leisure activities like spending time with friends and family making lentil soup or knitting the dog a Santa hat: I call these specious barriers: At first they appear to be legitimate reasons for not writing but they crumble under critical scrutiny, "I can't find time to write" also known as "I would write more if I could just find big blocks of time: " This specious barrier is destined for academia's hall of fame. When people endorse this specious barrier I imagine them roaming through their schedules like naturalists in search of Time To Write that most elusive and secretive of creatures. People like dispositional explanations when they don't want to change

(Jellison 1993). If you don't plan to make a schedule gently close this book clean it so it looks brand new and give it as a gift to a friend who wants to be a better writer. Some academics are so enamored of goals initiatives and strategic plans that they become deans and provosts. Self-reinforcement and contingency management are time honored ways of fostering desirable behaviors (Skinner 1987), Complaining about writing is usually bad especially when it involves the specious barriers described in chapter 2: "Delete very quite basically actually virtually extremely remarkably completely at all and so forth. Basically these quite useless words add virtually nothing at all; like weeds they'll in fact actually smother your sentences completely. In Junk English Ken Smith (2001) called these words parasitic intensifiers: Writing a journal article is like writing a screenplay for a romantic comedy: You need to learn a formula, An inner audience—an image of who will read your paper—will help you with your writing decisions. Sometimes closed-door rejections encourage you to submit your manuscript elsewhere; other times the editor mails you a personal shredder for destroying all known copies of the manuscript, Good resubmission letters will make you look like a serious scholar—because you are, People who deal constructively with criticism deserve to be published: A classic theory of achievement motivation proposed two motives that affect performance: a need to achieve success and a need to avoid failure (Atkinson 1964), You'll write better when you expect rejection because you'll mute the need to avoid failure, To write a lot you should rethink your mental models of rejection and publication. Rejections are like a sales tax on publications: The more papers you publish the more rejections you receive, Following the tips in this book will make you the most rejected writer in your department, If you're extrinsically motivated by money find other reasons to write your textbook such as a burning interest in sitting in a chair and typing: By now even the dimmest reader has discerned this book's simple message: To write a lot you must make a schedule and stick to it: How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing wonderullit is very helpfull to write a lot and be productive, bir takvim tek ihtiyaç bu ve daha fazlasına gerek yok How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing Dr: " -Silvia 2019Silvia's goal is to get you reader/writer to Write a Lot. Just Do It by honoring your writing time as you would a class meeting or appointment. He sees into your soul and calls you out; and you like it because he's one of us he's gone through it too. Not eye-ball popping or jaw-dropping like Dreyer's English: An Utterly Correct Guide to Clarity and Style but enjoyable and necessary: Oh to the early-risers god I must pray... How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing The most cynical book about academia I've ever read, I wish Foucault was still alive □Something something the neoliberal university; increasing workloads decreasing tenures turn yourself into an autopoietic self-disciplining machine. The book boils down to: make a schedule keep to that schedule. Like I get it you always can make time in your day but the ways we avoid making time are micro traumas coping mechanisms insecurities, But just don't buy into the fucking cynicism of this book, Get a counselor organise with your union create healthy relationships outside of individualist modes of self-discipline, Self-hell books (oh fuck yea I'm keeping that typo) can only take you so far: How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing I read this book in search for inspiration (read: material for procrastination) as I write my master thesis. The author has a snarky tone which I enjoyed thoroughly and it spoke directly to me, Though the book is more oriented towards journals and books there is something in it for anyone who is - or attempting to - write academically in any capacity: Some lessons to share (and to remind myself):- There is no such thing as 'writer's block' in academic writing. - Only a fool rewards bouts of productive writing with skipping scheduled writing periods (its me I'm the fool). - Inspiration is a product of writing not the other way around. - For goodness' sake use dashes!This book made me write my first Goodreads' review so I guess that's saying something to its effectiveness, How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing I wish I'd read this when I was in graduate school, I like the simplicity of Silvia's advice and the practical examples he gives from his own work (e, Includes good advice on scheduling making big and small goals prioritizing starting a writing group writing journal articles and writing books: I skipped the chapter on style because that's not what I was looking for: How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic

Writing



. “Prolific writers make a schedule and stick to it. It’s that simple” (12). Additionally be specific with goals for the day.” Then reward yourself (e.g. a snack a coffee etc.). If you want to read a book on writing then read it.” If interested consider joining yourself!

<http://www.jonathan-rogers.com/blog/p.Silvia> also has a brief section on style. Silvia encourages writers to choose good words. This often derails the thought progression. There are many more takeaways from this book. Some favorite parts: * p. [Never say this again. Instead of finding time to write allot time to write.]* p. This is nonsense of course.]* p.44: 'Never reward writing with not writing.'* p. So I may be a bit unfair. Fair enough. I loaned it to someone and didn't get it back. Top-notch advice for academic (or even non-academic) writers. Very motivating. 155). Instead of finding time to write allot time to write. Prolific writers make a schedule and stick to it.” This is nonsense of course. Reward yourself when you finish a project goal. Psychologists like writing about the existing literature. That’s it. The book is 133 pages minus references and index. It applies to ALL WRITERS not just academic writers. Just what I needed now. I’ll make a reading schedule too. Literally compares a writing schedule to a prison schedule. No excuses. Pretty basic stuff. They won't go away through pure will. I'm still gonna make a schedule lol. Learn to love yourself beyond of self-quantification. I plan to give copies to my advisees. g. sample spreadsheets for tracking projects)