

Visual planning

- Try making a mind map of the whole structure or each section/chapter.
- Different branches in the mind map could become points in your writing.



Flexible planning

- Use index cards or post-it notes to write down key points. PowerPoint slides can also be used instead to represent points.
- Move the points around until you are happy with the order.



Overcoming writer's block

- You don't have to write in order! Begin with areas you feel more confident about.
- Try freewriting (writing without worrying about typos under timed conditions).
- Write in short bursts; try 25 minutes, followed by a 5 minute break (Pomodoro technique).
- Set specific writing goals e.g. to finish a particular section or reach a word count.

Find out more



Read:

- Francis, P. (2009) *Inspiring writing in art and design: taking a line for a write*. Bristol: Intellect Books.
- Cooper, H. and Schoolbred, M. (2016) *Where's your argument?* Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Crème and Lea (1997) *Writing at university*. 2nd edn. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Elbow, P. (1998) *Writing with power*. Oxford: Oxford Uni Press.



Watch:

- Hull University (2023) *Getting started with essays*. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/mr3d6f4n> (Accessed: 07 March 2025).

Study Skills



Starting to Write



Scan the QR code to book a tutorial/workshop, or access remote resources.

Get in touch:
study.skills@norwich.ac.uk



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Where to begin?



- Map map or list initial ideas.



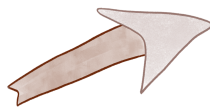
- Start by writing a list of questions you'd like to answer. Use the 6 journalistic questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
- **Examples:** When and where did it occur? Who was involved?



- Another technique is to divide a page in half. Use the left-hand side to capture your current knowledge; use the right-hand side for areas you could research.

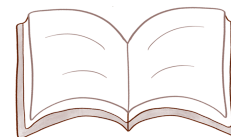
Form a title

- Helps focus research & writing.
- Include 3 key elements.



Instruction

This may be an instruction verb (such as discuss, compare or evaluate), or a question word (such as 'how', 'why' or 'to what extent').



Topic/ Aspect

Main area of research.

Usually starts wide, and needs to be narrowed.



Focus

The focus narrows your general topic e.g. you could consider time, place, category, perspective or issue.

Types of planner



Diver: Lunge straight in; need to do initial writing to understand thoughts.

Grand Planner: Spend time reading and note-taking to develop clear ideas.

Architect: Design a clear plan before starting. Fill in details when writing.

Patchwork: Write early on. Make connections and join information like a patchwork on the go.

Approaching writing



- Everyone will approach writing differently.
- Crème and Lea (1997, pp. 79-83) outline four types of planner on the next page.
- Which approach best describes you?

Outline planning

- Make a list of the main points to cover.
- Consider evidence to support points.
- Experiment with the order of the points.
- Which sequence is most logical?

Title of Assignment
Introduction (10% of word count)
Point 1: Keyword for Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note areas to include. • Evidence to support point. • Alternative viewpoints?
↓
Pattern is continued
Conclusion (10 % of word count)