

FIFTY TIPS (PLUS ONE) FOR GETTING WRITING DONE IN THE REAL WORLD®

The complete list from *Developing a Sustainable Writing Routine*

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- 1) Understand writing as a priority.
- 2) Write everyday(-ish).
- 3) Write in the gaps. (Write less like Virginia Woolf and more like Gloria Anzaldua.)
- 4) Make writing a routine.
- 5) Make writing routine. (“Inspiration is for amateurs....”)
- 6) Never expect to feel ready to write.
- 7) Keep writing goals modest but consistent.
- 8) Schedule and protect writing time.
- 9) Don’t allow email to sap away your writing energies.
- 10) Make a realistic writing plan that reflects your actual writing capabilities and habits.
- 11) Learn to say “no.”
- 12) Assess and understand your natural writing habits, good and bad.
- 13) Commit to “sustainable” writing habits.
- 14) Plan based on your history rather than your hope.
- 15) Find the best time and place for you to write.
- 16) Set a daily quota based on number of words/pages rather than amount of time.
- 17) Think of writing as process rather than product.
- 18) Start where the interest is rather than at the beginning.
- 19) Never assume or expect a linear path.
- 20) Write first for yourself and then for your audience.
- 21) Trust that writing will help you figure things out. (Writing what you’re thinking about can be as important as writing what you know for sure.)
- 22) Know when to indulge writing tangents.
- 23) Write “marble” not “clay.”
- 24) Nothing cut is ever wasted.
- 25) Use what has to be cut for other projects.
- 26) Avoid perfectionism. Learn to live with good-enough-for-now.
- 27) Separate writing from reading and revision.
- 28) Don’t start your writing day by reading what you’ve previously written.
- 29) Don’t bother perfecting any writing that you’re not certain you’re going to use.
- 30) Simplify your voice.
- 31) Mix up your writing media.
- 32) Don’t expect every section of what you’re writing to be at the same point toward

- completion.
- 33) When stuck, ask “What am I trying to say? What do I want to be able to say, and what’s keeping me from saying it?”
 - 34) When setting a writing objective, questions are more generative than statements.
 - 35) Always finish a writing session by setting the agenda for your next writing session.
 - 36) Be as specific as you can be with each day’s writing goal.
 - 37) Only stop when you know what comes next.
 - 38) Give writing room for discovery and surprise.
 - 39) Set the writing objective by describing the finished result.
 - 40) Outline to organize what has been written rather than to prescribe what will be written.
 - 41) Beware of “writing flow fatigue.”
 - 42) Be practical and realistic when planning your writing semester.
 - 43) Plan ways to keep writing “buoyant” when your teaching responsibilities fluctuate.
 - 44) Break work down into manageable segments or categories.
 - 45) Make a year or multi-year plan for your writing.
 - 46) Engineer your year toward heavy writing during breaks but with ample planning.
 - 47) Write “small” during the school year and “big” during the breaks.
 - 48) Find a writing partner or group to help keep on task.
 - 49) Write while researching rather than after.
 - 50) Once content is established, research should be done with specific intention.
 - 51) Cultivate a meaningful relationship between writing projects and the courses you’re teaching.