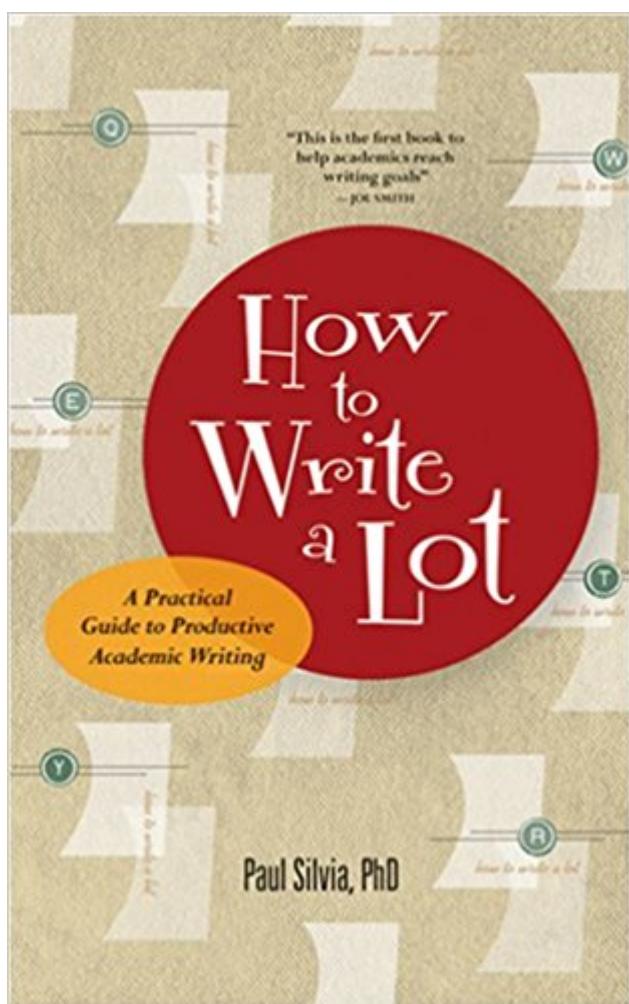


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# How To Write A Lot: A Practical Guide To Productive Academic Writing (Lifetools: Books For The General Public)



## **Synopsis**

All students and professors need to write, and many struggle to finish their stalled dissertations, journal articles, book chapters, or grant proposals. Writing is hard work and can be difficult to wedge into a frenetic academic schedule. In this practical, light-hearted, and encouraging book, Paul Silvia explains that writing productively does not require innate skills or special traits but specific tactics and actions. Drawing examples from his own field of psychology, he shows readers how to overcome motivational roadblocks and become prolific without sacrificing evenings, weekends, and vacations. After describing strategies for writing productively, the author gives detailed advice from the trenches on how to write, submit, revise, and resubmit articles, how to improve writing quality, and how to write and publish academic work.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

A contemporary admonition tells us, "If you talk the talk, you have to be able to walk the walk." Paul Silvia does both; he writes effectively about how to write effectively. Without being either a scold or a Pollyanna, he identifies ways in which each of us can achieve our goals of being more proficient authors. --Lawrence S. Wrightsman, Professor of Psychology, University of Kansas, Lawrence; author of *The Psychology of the Supreme Court* and coauthor of *Forensic Psychology* (2nd ed.) with Sol Fulero. A common complaint among faculty and graduate students alike is that writing often takes a backseat to other professional and personal commitments. For those who have trouble writing enough, Paul Silvia explains how to write more. For those who already write plenty, he

shows how to do so more efficiently and with lower cost to one's other obligations. Every researcher will benefit from the gems of advice in this book. --Mark R. Leary, Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina Paul Silvia's new book is just the tonic for academics who want to be more productive. Silvia demolishes all of the typical excuses that people use to put off getting to work, and he gives a few concise, practical tips that will help anyone to write more. Psychologists are the target reader, but professors in any discipline would benefit from the advice in this book. --R. Keith Sawyer, Associate Professor, Department of Education, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri; author of seven books, editor or coauthor of three more, and author of more than 50 articles.

Paul J. Silvia received his PhD in Psychology from the University of Kansas in 2001. He studies the psychology of emotion, particularly what makes things interesting, the role of emotions in the arts, and how emotions intersect with personality. He received the Berlyne Award, an early-career award given by American Psychological Association Division 10, for his research on aesthetic emotions. Dr. Silvia is the author of *Exploring the Psychology of Interest* (2006) and *Self-Awareness and Causal Attribution* (with T. S. Duval, 2001). In his free time, he drinks coffee; pets Lia, his Bernese mountain dog; and enjoys not writing.

This book was recommended at a workshop at my university (I'm a faculty member), and I'm very glad I bought it. Though it's aimed at psychologists, it's fantastic for all academic writers. (You can skim a few parts, if you're not a psychologist.) Very short and to the point, which I also appreciated. The one thing I will note, for folks for whom it's relevant: the author clearly doesn't have children, and it's not written with parents of young children in mind. As long as you understand the perspective, should be a very useful book for anyone who wishes they were writing more.

A good guide to help psychology academics write without neglecting other aspects of their lives. Keys include scheduling, goal setting, monitoring progress and writing effective, clear paragraphs.

Or, I suppose if I follow Professor Silvia's advice, I should re-title this review, "This is such a great book I actually felt like giving it a review". He is direct, solution-focused, and cuts right through all the "specious excuses" for why academics don't write. Spoiler: 1. Make a writing schedule 2. Actually use it. (with a number of relevant observations and supporting details) Academics have an unnecessary penchant towards complexity in most likely the entirety of our endeavors. In other words, we're bad

at keeping things simple. This book is a great help in fighting that terrible habit when it comes to writing.

Hi, I'm Chris and I'm a binge writer. I'm currently reading this book and it makes sense. To : However I'd like to be able to read the figures in 2.2. They appear so small I doubt there is a number, perhaps below 1. If I'm reading a Kindle book on a Kindle reader I expect to be able to read all the figures, tables, and data related information. Perhaps a magnification setting would be appropriate like on Apple Touch 4G. A long press with your finger brings up a magnifier of the specific words you are looking at so you can edit. To readers: I would also like to request more academic writing suggestions for Applied Linguistics. My program was weak so I need to teach myself. So if you have any book recommendations or website recommendations please advise. To get the ball rolling, I recommend Writing Under Pressure, by Sanford Kaye. Thanks in advance

This is a practical, encouraging guide through many of the land mines in the field of academic writing. Silva identifies several mental roadblocks and how to overcome them, and offers guidance that comes from having been down the same road before. I found this book funny, refreshing, and encouraging. The principles aren't earth-shattering, but the process that Silva offers will help you get down to the business of writing productively. He offers good guidance, too, about how to prepare an article for submission to a journal, and how to craft your resubmission. Well worth the read. I'm looking forward to getting another of his writing books.

Changing my writing habits according to the clear and congenially presented roadmap in this book took the stress out of my writing life. Dr. Silvia coached me past complaining, procrastination, and "writer's block." As a result, I have lost out on a major source of academic bonding: I no longer commiserate with colleagues over "not being able to get writing done." Instead, I write. If I don't, I am reassured by the knowledge that this is attributable not to some mysterious, malevolent, cosmic force that prevented me from "finding time," but simply to the fact that I did not take the initiative to close my door, sit down, and type. Some of the text is written as though addressing psychologists, but the techniques and almost all the information are directly relevant to academics in any discipline. I recommend it to everyone who will listen. What's that you say, esteemed colleague? Oh, I think Dr. Silvia would say that yes, you do too have time to read this book. All you have to do is reallocate a few minutes of your regularly scheduled complaining time. I will now stop writing this review and return to my regularly scheduled writing time.

I picked up this book knowing that it was going to tell me to stick to a writing schedule. I thought, "Well, I'll just ignore that part and pick out the stuff I like." I really did not want to hear that in order to be productive, I would have to schedule several hours a week in order to write. I am a busy person; where on earth will I "find the time"? Long weekends and school breaks are when the writing will get done. Well, P. J. Silvia shattered that illusion into a million pieces... He made it clear that I will never complete my papers if I keep waiting for the perfect moment, because during those perfect moments I will find something else that needs to be done (e.g. catch up on sleep, call my mother, wash the laundry, etc.). Unfortunately, it is my job to write. Problem, no? But you see, I DETEST writing. I become paralyzed by anxiety, and I dread the exhaustion that inevitably follows a bout with my computer. So, I avoid it. But Dr Silvia argues that if I wrote at a specific time, on specific days, every week--and gave myself small goals for that session (e.g. write 200 words)--there would be no anxiety. Afterall, who can't write 200 words in an hour or two? Moreover, that small task won't drain me of energy. Research would not become enjoyable, but it would lose its status as cruel and unusual punishment. It would simply become an unpleasant part of my work, comparable to having to attend boring committee meetings. I picked up this book intending to ignore the nasty scheduling piece, and I left converted. This book shatters any illusions you may have about binge writing being the "technique" that works for you. So, if you don't want to schedule writing time, maybe you should ask yourself why--and then read this book.

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