



The Seven-Step Writing Recipe

Step One: Research

Who's in Charge

The Scribe

What You Need

- Focused attention for reading and note-taking
- Periods of open attention to look for connections and avenues of research
- Interviews, books, online sources
- Pen/paper or word processor for freewriting
- Tools for taking notes (Evernote, etc.)

Steps

1. Gather the research or conduct interviews
 2. Freewrite to explore
 3. Consolidate and review your notes
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Step Two: Incubation

Who's in Charge

The Muse

What You Need

- Open attention and solitude
- A break in time and distance
- A piece of paper and pencil, or note-taking technology (in case sudden brilliance strikes)

Steps

1. Review the notes. Focus on one or two unresolved issues.
 2. Step away from the work and do other things.
 3. Take note of any insights that might arise.
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Step Three: Structure

Who's in Charge

The Scribe

What You Need

- Focused attention
- Notes from the research phase
- Your favorite outlining tools: pen or pencil and paper, word processor, mind-mapping software, notecards and markers, whiteboard, etc.

Steps

1. Clarify your objectives
 2. Review your research and notes
 3. Create the structure
 4. Paste your notes into the outline structure to prime the drafting
 5. Share with others (if required)
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Step Four: Drafting

Who's in Charge

The Scribe and the Muse collaborate (when you realize flow) or contribute in alternating bursts (the rest of the time)

What You Need

- Periods of both focused and open attention
- A distraction-free place to work (your ideal environment for flow)
- Your favorite tools for drafting

Steps

1. Define your objectives
 2. Write without self-criticism
 3. Rest
 4. Revisit and continue
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Step Five: Let the Draft Rest

Who's in Charge

The Scribe *must* take a break during this phase; the Muse may choose to return

What You Need

- At least one full night of sleep
- Elapsed time

Steps

1. Make a wish list of the problems you'd like to solve.
 2. Let time pass.
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Step Six: Revise

Who's in Charge

The Scribe runs this phase, ideally with occasional input from the Muse

What You Need

- Focused attention
- The rough draft
- Editing tools (paper, electronic)
- Friends, editors, colleagues
- Patience

Steps

1. Start with structure and work your way down
2. Revise tone and style for reader's flow; look for cultural biases, the fallacy of sounding smart, the Curse of Knowledge, and self-indulgence
3. Edit iteratively
4. Proofread

Enlist outside help for any or all of these steps.

Step Seven: Publishing

Who's in Charge

The Scribe

What You Need

- A deadline (external or internal)
- Patience to get it right
- Impatience to get the words into the world

Steps

1. Let the draft sit at least overnight.
 2. Decide to publish.
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