

Work Phases in Scientific Writing Projects

In order to keep an overview and to plan your writing project, it is helpful to break down writing into single, manageable steps. Models such as the one pictured below provide orientation. The model breaks down the writing process into six major phases and can serve as a basis for your individual work and time schedule.

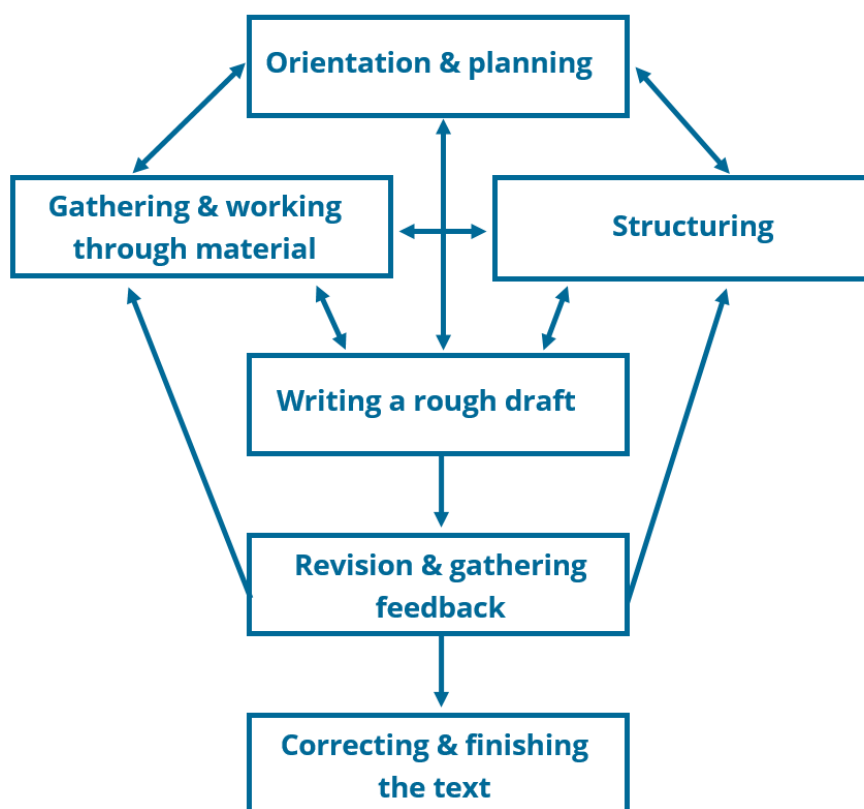


Figure 1: Phases of the scientific writing process. Own illustration according to Grieshammer et al. p. 58

The **arrows** show that the work phases do not follow a linear order. They influence each other. You might even revise work steps and repeat them (cf. Grieshammer et al. p. 58). The work steps "Gathering & working through material" and "Structuring" usually take place at the same time.

Two examples: 1) If, for example, a gap in content becomes apparent during the revision, you go back to literature research and reading. Newly discovered aspects

during this research may lead to a different chapter structure. 2) If new findings emerge during reading or writing the rough draft, the research question will be reformulated.

Work phases – a closer look

What needs to be done in each case differs depending on the subject area and the type of text. The following explanations are general and are intended to provide guidance.

What runs across the entire writing process is to read, write, and talk about the writing project.

Table 1: Work phases & activities

Work phase	Activity
Orientation & planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clarify writing assignment and expectations ➤ first research ➤ find topic, define objective / research question ➤ clarify questions regarding content and organization with your supervisor ➤ choose your methodology ➤ develop a first outline (working tool for the whole writing process; It is helpful to develop the outline early and to keep readjusting it during the process) <p>(cf. ibid. p. 62 f.)</p>
Gathering and working through material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ research literature ➤ read up on the topic ➤ record / evaluate what you have read ➤ collect / evaluate data (e.g. experiments, simulations, calculations, surveys) <p>(cf. ibid. p. 64 f.)</p>
Structuring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organize and structure data / literature you have read (what goes in which section of the text?) ➤ Further develop the outline <p>(cf. ibid. p. 66 f.)</p>

Work phase	Activity
Writing a rough draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Using writing as a tool for thinking: What do I want to say? (writer-oriented) ➤ Write down a first version of the text quickly, without demanding perfection in terms of content / style / language ➤ Mark inconsistencies / things to be added (incl. literature) for revision <p>(cf. ibid. p. 68 f.)</p>
Revision and gathering feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Present knowledge in a way that is comprehensible to others (reader-oriented) ➤ Revise the rough draft step by step: 1. content & structure, 2. references & visual data, 3. style & language ➤ Get feedback <p>(cf. ibid. p. 69 f.)</p>
Correcting and finishing the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Final proofreading: check spelling, grammar, punctuation, layout, indexes, etc. ➤ Have your text proofread <p>(cf. ibid. p. 71)</p>
Keep an eye on...during the whole work process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Time management: What do I want to have done by when? How much time do I plan for what? At what time of day am I most productive? What routines help me start my work? ➤ Reflecting on your writing strategies and working methods and adapting them if necessary (for this purpose, use the writing consultation of SZD) <p>(cf. ibid. p. 60 f.)</p>

Reading, writing and speaking in the writing process

Reading, writing (with its various functions), and talking about the writing project can be found throughout the entire writing process:

Table 2: Work phases and activities: reading, writing, speaking

	Reading	Writing	Speaking
Orientation & planning	Quick reading/ skim literature/ get an overview of the topic	Writing journal, notes, freewriting, clustering, bibliography, schedule	Discussions with supervisors on content-related and organizational issues (e.g. to narrow down the topic)
Gathering and working through material, structuring	Focused reading, relevant passages are read thoroughly	Exposé, outline, excerpts, freewriting, mind maps, first text fragments, notes on own ideas, writing journal	Discussions with supervisor about the outline, with fellow students about the text in order to develop further ideas
Writing a rough draft	Read own auxiliary texts (notes, excerpts, mind maps) for texts or read sources selectively	Writing down the rough draft quickly (first draft of a coherent text), clusters, mind maps, freewriting, writing journal	Discussing the writing process, e.g. writing strategies or what time of day you are most productive
Revision and gathering feedback	Critical reading, rereading rough draft considering different aspects (content, structure, literature references, style, language)	Write missing parts (e.g. transitions), rewrite passages, reflection on process in writing journal	Gather feedback
Correcting and finishing the text	Final critical reading of your text	Continue writing other texts ;)	Get feedback from proofreaders and after the submission of your text from your supervisor

Sources:

p. 1-3: Grieshammer, Ella, et al. *Zukunftsmodell Schreibberatung: Eine Anleitung zur Begleitung von Schreibenden im Studium*. Schneider Verlag, 2016. pp. 58-71.

p. 4-5: Girgensohn, Kathrin and Nadja Sennewald. *Schreiben lehren, Schreiben lernen. Eine Einführung*. WBG, 2012. p. 102.

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