



## Finding Your Own Type of Writing

According to the writing didactic Gerd Bräuer, it is possible to see a tendency while writing, located in-between the two poles of types of writing: "structure creators" and "structure followers". Both types of writing are theoretical models that do not exist in their pure forms. Nevertheless, the following quick test can help you find out about your individual strengths or weaknesses and in turn help optimize your working steps.

### Test: Types of Writing

Evaluate the following statements about how you work as follows:

0 = not true at all / 5 = completely true

Please check to always assign 5 points to each pair of questions (A+B= 5).

#### 1. Before writing

- A.  Before I start writing, I thoroughly think about my structure.
- B.  I start writing immediately.

#### 2. Research

- A.  If I find enough material, it is easy for me to finish with my research as planned.
- B.  Even if I find enough material, it is hard for me to finish my research in time.

#### 3. Draft text

- A.  I create my draft text with the help of my structure.
- B.  I start my draft text with few concrete ideas, the rest simply comes naturally while writing.

#### 4. Ideas for draft text

- A.  The ideas for my draft text are taken directly from my structure.
- B.  When writing, I am often surprised at the ideas I come up with.

## 5. New ideas

- A.  Once I have started writing down my structure, new aspects and ideas are more of a nuisance to me.
- B.  I think it is great to implement new aspects and ideas into my text.

## 6. After finishing the text

- A.  After finishing the text, I thoroughly revise it to find language and/or formal mistakes.
- B.  After finishing the text, I skim it quickly and check whether all parts of the text fit together well. At the same time, I correct the language mistakes as well as formal mistakes that I notice.

## Evaluation

$$A: \frac{(\dots) \cdot 10}{3} = \dots \%$$

*Equation 1: Structure follower*

$$B: \frac{(\dots) \cdot 10}{3} = \dots \%$$

*Equation 2: Structure creator*

## Type of writing: structure follower (A)

Structure followers have a complete and sound structure for the text early on in their working process and tend to follow that structure when producing their text. This type of writing is focussed on planning and controlling their writing process. They like to adopt text structures from their literature or create new structures with the help of a mind map or their outline of the text. Due to the structures created early on in the work process, their actions appear organised and efficient. However, these structural ideas can also narrow one's view and hinder the writing person from developing further ideas during text production. Often, structure followers can write the introduction and conclusion of a scientific text even before the first draft of the main text.

## Type of writing: structure creator (B)

Structure creators are people who aim to produce as much text as quickly as possible and whose text structure is created while writing. For this type of writer, it is easy to start writing early on in the process, produce a great amount of text and process information by writing. This kind of working process seems very flexible and inspiring. On the other hand, there is the danger of losing focus, since it takes a lot of time for the structure to manifest, or lose one's overview of the huge amount of material and ideas at some point. Often, structure creators only write the introduction after finishing the main part of the text.

## Identifying strengths and weaknesses in your way of writing

Table 1: Strengths and weaknesses of both types of writing

	... some of your strengths are	... some of your weaknesses are
<b>If you are a structure follower,...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Acting in a very planned way (i.e. with an outline and a work plan)</li> <li>➤ Focused, goal- and content-oriented working</li> <li>➤ Working flexibly on different parts of the text is possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Due to the existing structure you can have a narrow view on the topic</li> <li>➤ Fear of starting the draft text</li> <li>➤ Draft text is produced slowly since everything must be perfect</li> </ul>
<b>If you are a structure creator,...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Early, but thorough start with writing (in part already while researching and reading literature)</li> <li>➤ While writing, you have new ideas and insights – you learn while writing</li> <li>➤ Wish for feedback; motivated for text revision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Lack of focus for essential aspects of the working process</li> <li>➤ Excessive digressions in the text</li> <li>➤ At the end: Time-consuming revision of structure and language, usually under time pressure</li> </ul>

## Tips and tricks to optimize your writing

Table 2: Tips and tricks to optimize your writing

Type of writing	Tips and tricks
<b>If you are a structure follower</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ To avoid the tunnel view: What else is there concerning my topic? Collect ideas for each working step as key words, i.e. in a writing journal.</li><li>➤ To counter the fear of starting to write: Before you start with the actual draft, just start writing freely, without any notes and simply take down everything that comes to mind.</li><li>➤ To counter perfectionism in the draft text: Switch off the spell aid! Forget about whom you are actually writing for – start by writing for yourself and feel free to use “I”.</li></ul>
<b>If you are a structure creator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ To counter losing focus while working: Choose a specific focal point of your work and only work on that for a predefined amount of time.</li><li>➤ To counter being too elaborate in your text: Choose your resources that you want to use to present this certain point before you start working on it.</li><li>➤ To avoid too much pressure at the end: Work on the final revision of your text together with other people.</li></ul>

Adopted from: Handout Writing Center of Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg, 2014.

Compilation: Writing Center of TU Dresden, 2020.

Typesetting, accessibility, and translation: Leonie Reuter, 2023.

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