

RED THREAD – COMMON THEME

The method “the red thread” will help you to formulate a sound structure and will make it easier for you to start with a draft text.

Once your question is more detailed, you gathered material, delved into the topic and formulated your first structure, it can be hard to continue with the next step: create a well thought out structure and start drafting texts. This technique helps you to keep the argumentative structure of your text in mind while creating a common theme throughout the text. Starting with the question, the following structure can be deduced:

- What content aspect need to be discussed in which chapter to answer my question in the end?
- Do these aspects support a certain chapter order?

Instructions

1. You need: Your structure, a few sheets of paper.
2. Have your draft structure ready.
3. It is better to do this exercise with pen and paper. This way, you cannot get lost while typing on the computer. To start with this exercise, write each point in your structure on paper and leave space for 2-3 sentences in-between each.
4. Now quickly write about three sentences for each point. These three sentences contain the main arguments for each point. It is important that you keep writing and note down the first things that come to mind. If there are information missing, formulate assumptions or make up hypotheses. Continue to write your sentences without any gaps and in one go. (20-30 minutes)
5. Once you are done, you can use this “red thread” to help you orient yourself in your structure. You can, for example, hang it above your desk.

How can this “red thread” be used?

- Early on, you gain a solid overview over your work – far more detailed than just a structure.
- You notice where your structure does not comply with your argumentation and where it needs to be compressed, adapted or expanded.
- You already formulate thoughts into words which will help you later on, when you start drafting your text.
- You gain the positive feeling that you already “have something” for each point and can start writing.
- You can always use the “red thread” to prove if you are still in line with your theme or if you just don’t know how to continue.

Source following:

Scheuermann, Ulrike. Die Schreibfitness-Mappe: 60 Checklisten, Beispiele und Übungen für alle, die beruflich schreiben. Linde Verlag GmbH, 2012.

Concept: Writing Centre of TU Dresden, 2016.

Further information on our support services, writing advice, workshops, writing marathon, etc. on our website: www.tu-dresden.de/deinstudienerfolg/szd