

FINDING YOUR OWN TYPE OF WRITING

According to the writing didactic Gerd Bräuer, it is possible to see a tendency while writing, which finds itself 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. Nonetheless can the following quick test help to find out about individual strengths or weaknesses and in turn help to optimize working steps.

Test: Types of Writing

Weigh the following statements about how you work as follows:

- 0 = is not true at all / 5 = is completely true
- Please check to always spend 5 points on each pair of questions (A+B= 5).

	Pair of questions	Points
1	A Before I write, I thoroughly think about my structure.	(__)
	B I start writing immediately.	(__)
2	A If I find enough material, it is easy for me to finish with my research as planned.	(__)
	B Even after I found enough material, it is hard for me to finish my research on time.	(__)
3	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 by on its own while writing.	(__)
4	A The ideas for my draft text are taken directly from the structure.	(__)
	B I am often surprised with new ideas while writing.	(__)
5	A Once I 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	A After writing, I read through the text thoroughly to find mistakes in language and formal aspects.	(__)
	B After writing, I read over the text quickly and check for discrepancies in the paragraphs, while, at the same time, I check language and formal aspects.	(__)

Evaluation

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

→ structure follower

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

→ structure creator

Type of writing: structure creator

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 lot of text and to work through the information by writing. This kind of working process appears to be 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 the overview over 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.

Type of writing: structure follower

Structure followers have a complete and sound structure for the text early on in their process and they tend to follow that structure when producing text. This type of writer is planned and controlled one. S/he likes to adopt text structure from their literature or create new structure with the help of a MindMap or the structure of the text. Due to the early on created structure, their actions appear organised and efficient. These structured expectations can narrow down the points of view or hinder the creation of new ideas during further steps of working. Often, structure followers are able to write the introduction and the conclusion before they started the main part.

Identifying strengths and weaknesses in your way of writing

Table 1: Strength and weaknesses of both types of writing

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

Tipps and tricks to optimize your writing

Table 2: Tipps and tricks to optimize your writing

If you are a structure follower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To avoid the tunnel view: What else is there concerning this topic? Collect ideas for each working step as key words, i.e. in a writing journal. 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. To counter perfectionism in the draft text: Switch off the spell aid! Forget about for whom you are actually writing – start by writing for yourself and feel free to use "I".
If you are a structure creator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To counter losing focus while working: Choose a certain point of your content and only work on that for a defined amount of time. 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. To avoid too much pressure at the end: Work on the final revision of your text together with friends.

In dependence on: Handout Schreibzentrum der Pädagogischen Hochschule Freiburg, 2014.

Concept: Writing Centre of TU Dresden, 2016.