

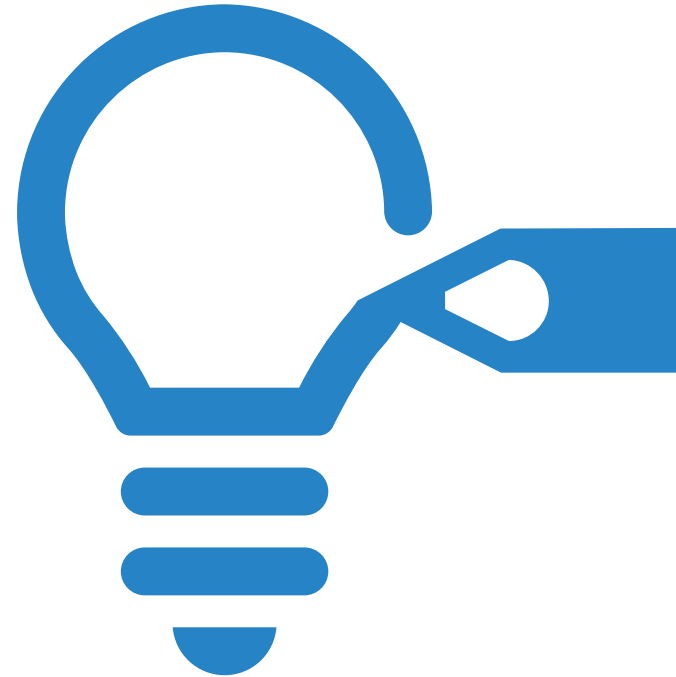
20th September 2023

Day 3: Getting words down on paper



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www.nord.no



Let's recap from yesterday

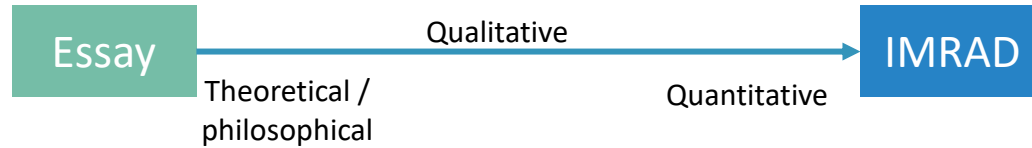
Agenda

- Morning
 - From consumer to producer of knowledge
 - Good writing habits and strategies
 - What can we learn about writing from reading?
 - Crafting a thesis statement
- Afternoon
 - In-class writing exercise
 - Picking an outlet for your paper
 - Open Access: Why, how and when



Academic writing

- Different traditions in different fields.



Source: Nygaard, L. P. (2015, p.102)

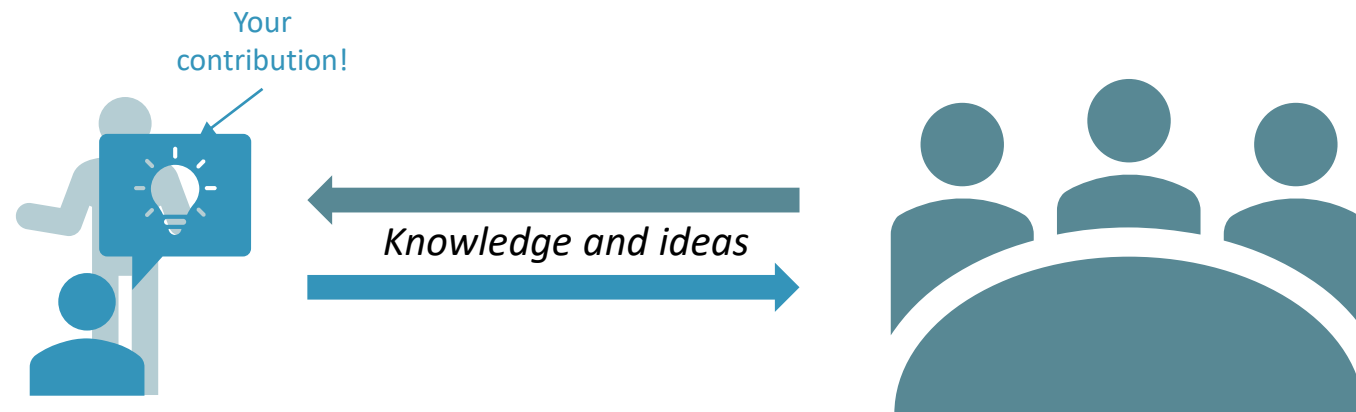
- Focus today is on:
 1. Academics as writers.
 2. Building your argumentation.
 3. The process of getting words down on paper → attitudes and behaviors that help you write more often and better.

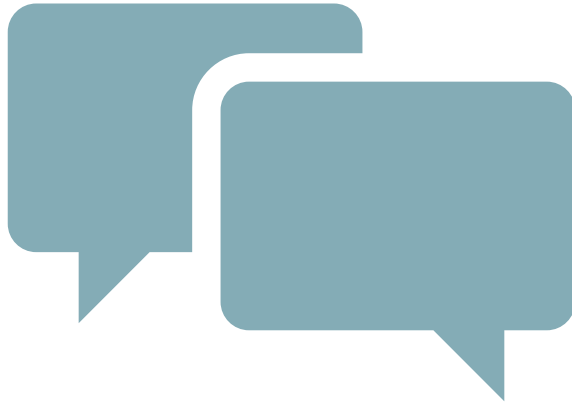


From consumer to producer
of knowledge

From consumer to producer of knowledge

- Doing a PhD involves a shift in mindset → you are transitioning from a consumer role to a producer role in the landscape of knowledge and ideas.
 - You become more than a passive listener in the debate.
 - Your voice gains more legitimacy.
- This naturally involves the acquisition of new skills!
 - Research design and methods is the most obvious.
 - Others refer to philosophy of science and sharper critical thinking concerning the quality of what you read, see, and consume.
 - Writing and presenting!
- From highly structured coursework or work directed by others, to a self-driven pursuit with little structure.

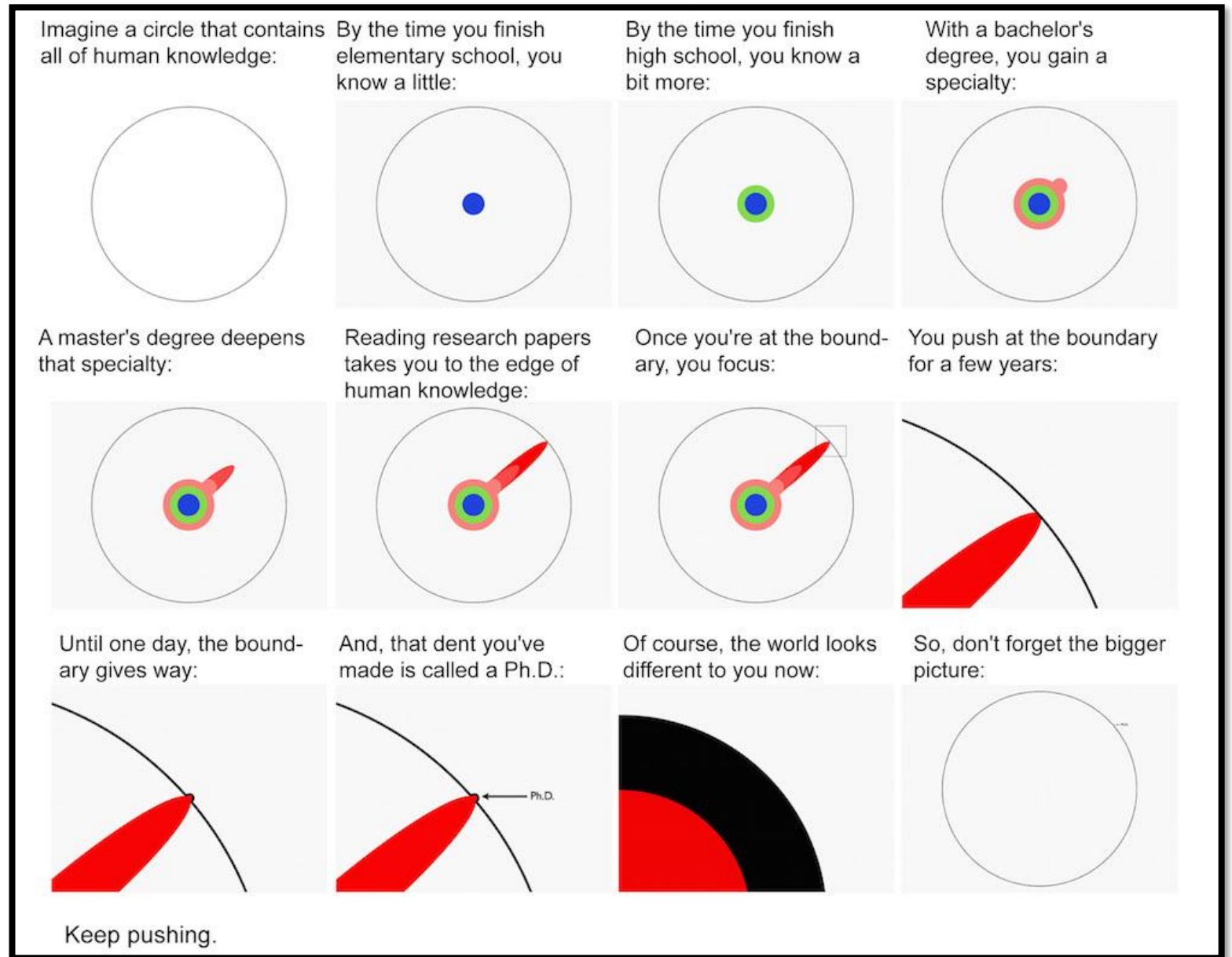




- How do you experience shifting from a consumer to producer of knowledge?
- Do you have any anxieties about making a **novel contribution** to the field?
- How much structure do you experience in your day to day? How do you cope with the lack of structure?

What a PhD means for the landscape for human knowledge

- One way of getting over this anxiety is keeping things in perspective.
 - This is not to make little of the effort and achievement of a PhD but taking a wider view.
- A PhD may be the most intellectually difficult thing you have done in your life, but from the perspective of the rest of the world it is a lot less dramatic.
- A PhD is an indication of research competence
 - Do not wait until you have changed the course of the field to hand it in.
 - You can do more research later, with a diploma in your hands.



Source: Might, M. (n.a.). *The illustrated guide to a Ph.D.* Accessed 14. august 2023, from <https://matt.might.net/articles/phd-school-in-pictures/>

Good writing habits and strategies

The degree of expectations we put on our writing often determine how we experience the process. We find writing hard when we are insecure, overwhelmed or unsure of what we want to say.

Why is writing so hard?

—or is it really?

Two attitudes towards writing

Writing as talent and inspiration

- An attribute that is out of your control – creative genius
- Focus is on the ability to impress others
- Performative, anxiety-inducing

Writing as craftsmanship

- A skill that can be learned
- Focus is on the ability to express your ideas better
- Disciplined and methodical

Reasons for writing



To entertain
your readers



To express
yourself



To inform
others about
something
you found out
about



To explain an
idea to your
audience



To persuade
the reader
→ argue for (or
against) an idea



To find out
what you
think

- Not all writing needs to be intended for others to read!
 - Writing for performance vs. writing for rehearsal
- Not all text fits in the final “product”
 - Many times, a piece of writing just helps you get there

Good writing habits and mental strategies

Be clear on your reasons for writing and why your writing matters

- Extrinsic motivators can be powerful (e.g., a deadline for a conference), but intrinsic motivators make the process more enjoyable.
- Why does the knowledge you produce matter? How does it contribute to the world?

Consider picturing a specific person as your reader

- Could be another scholar whose paper yours is in dialogue with.
- Could be a seminal author in your field or your supervisor, so long as you think of them more as a peer than an authority figure.

Create a mental separation between your internal writer and your internal editor/critic

- If you edit as you write your self-criticism will get in the way.
- Free yourself from the idea that your first drafts need to be perfect. They only need to be done.
- Then you can invite your internal critic back for the editing phase

Prioritize your writing → block writing time in your calendar and protect it from other demands on your time

- You can use social media blockers if you need the extra help.

BUT... don't wait for days you have uninterrupted amounts of free time

- You can do more than you think in a half-hour, if you are organized.

Don't wait for inspiration → focus on what is under your control and make it low-stakes

- Commit to a specific number of words/pages or writing time → every (work)day at the same time is ideal, but remember that often, “perfect is the enemy of good”.
- It is not about the text. It is about the habit of writing and the feeling of slow but steady progress.
- Make it so easy that the only way to fail is if you give up.

Strategies for getting started

Pre-writing

- Write as if you were just sketching notes (bullet points, outlining, writing by hand). The point is to get going.

Free-writing → commit to writing whatever comes to your mind

- Chose something (an object, an event, an idea --- anything you want) and write everything you can about it.
- This helps warming up, putting the critic to sleep and letting ideas emerge in your mind.

Shut up and write

- Structured writing sessions, usually in groups
- Peer-support

Divide large intimidating projects into manageable chunks

- A whole book is made by one word after another

“Park downhill” on your text to make it easier to start your next session

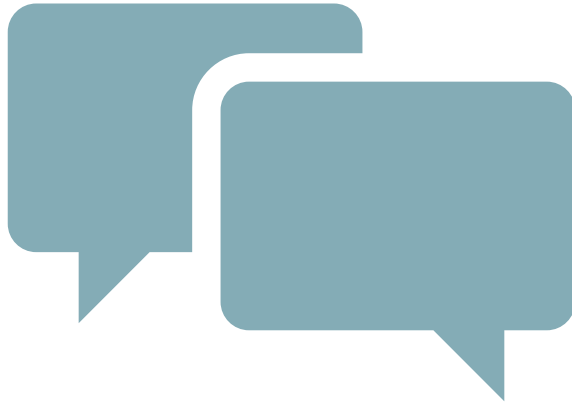
- It might be easier to start a working day on a session that is halfway through than on a whole new session or chapter.
- Before ending your working day, formulate one or two questions at the end of your draft, which you can start the next day answering for a quick return

If you absolutely can't write, think aloud to a voice recorder, then transcribe it

- Even if you do not use this transcription, moving your fingers while thinking about your subject will get you in the mood
- You can go for a walk with a voice recorder or a phone, so you can capture ideas that come up.

How can I make this more pleasurable or fun?

- Have some kind of ritual (e.g., a special writing beverage)
- Find out what works for you! → meditate, go for a walk, free-write, read for inspiration...

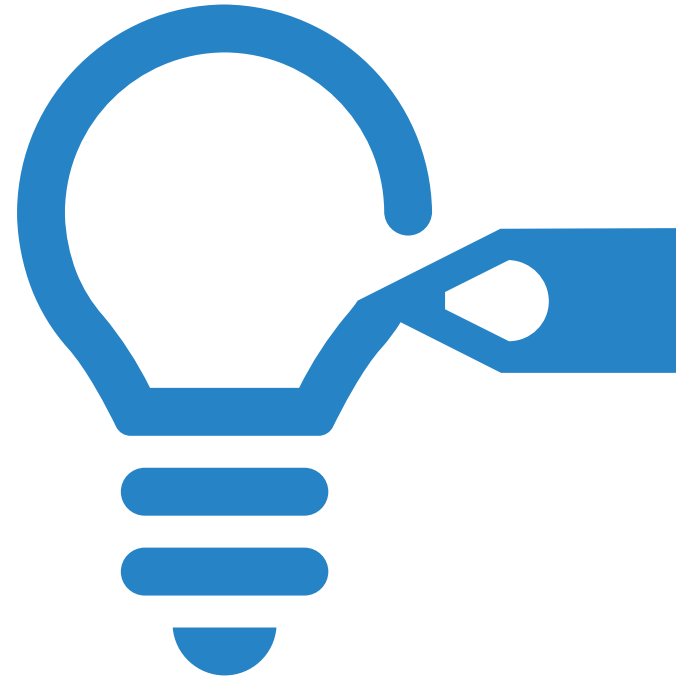


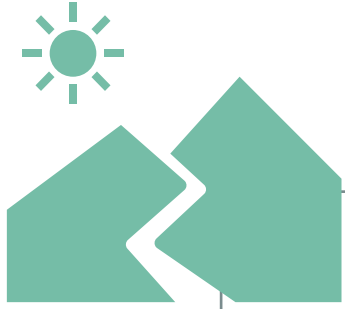
- Do you have any routines associated with your writing?
- Which of the strategies discussed thus far appeal most to you? Why?
- Do you thrive better as with a more or less structured approach?
- What do you do when you are stuck?

What can we learn about writing
from reading?

What can we learn about writing from reading?

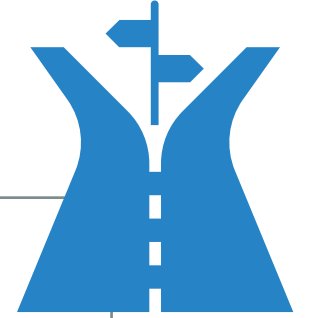
- The best way to learn how to write for your field's audience is by reading.
 - In addition to the content of the paper, pay attention to how the author organize and structure the paper, and they construct/present their argumentation and evidence.
- How do you go about reading a text?
 - How do you decide what to read and what to skim?
 - Do you have different approaches to reading? How to decide which to use?





Linear reading

- The “mystery novel” approach.
- Start at the beginning and keep on reading until the end.
- Easier to let it become a passive activity (if not used in combination with other techniques).



Non-linear reading

- The “encyclopedia” approach.
- Reading in several iterations with a text.
- Non-linear reading is not the same as skimming!
- Easier to get lost (if not planned and organized).



How to read actively

(adapted and expanded from Shore, 2016, chap 1.)

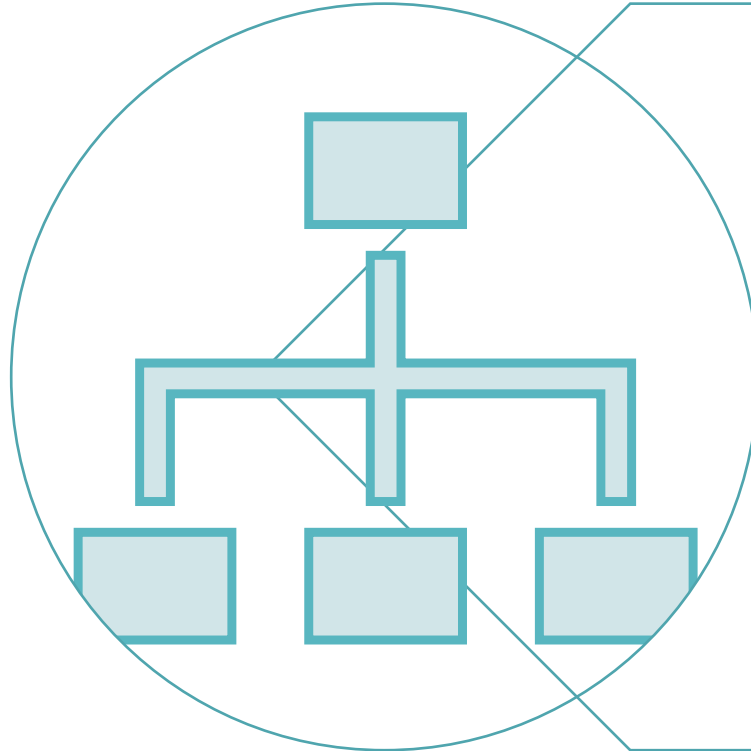
Before you start reading



Be clear on your reasons for reading a text

- I am reading this book / article because...
- What do you expect to gain from it?

The first pass



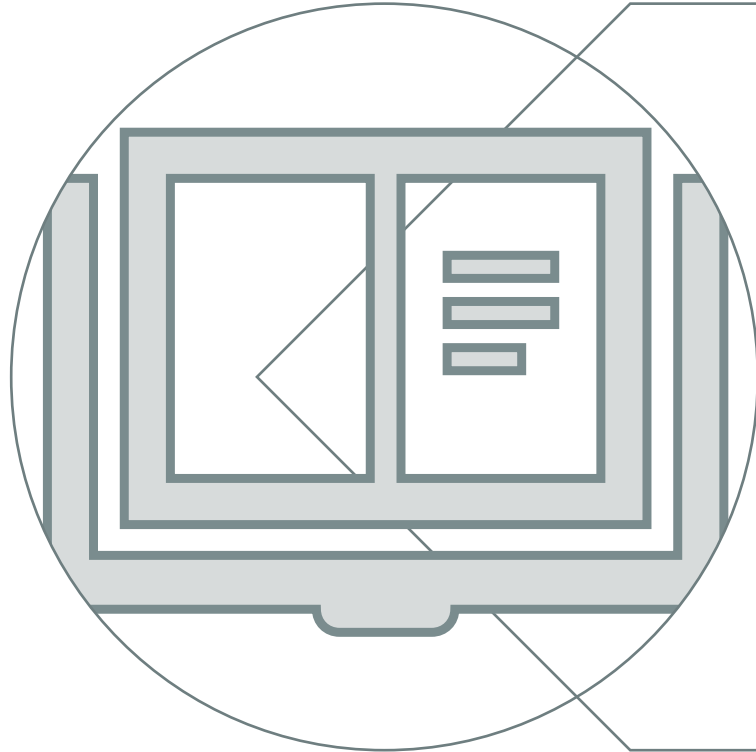
- Analyze the title and subtitle
- Scrutinize the table of contents (or the structure of a paper)
- Read the abstract and browse through the text
 - Consider looking quickly through the reference list and index
 - Observe how the text is organized and how it hangs together
- You should aim at being able to say what the text is about, what kind of text it is (conceptual paper, case study, literature review), some contextual information (e.g., what theory it is relates to).

The second pass



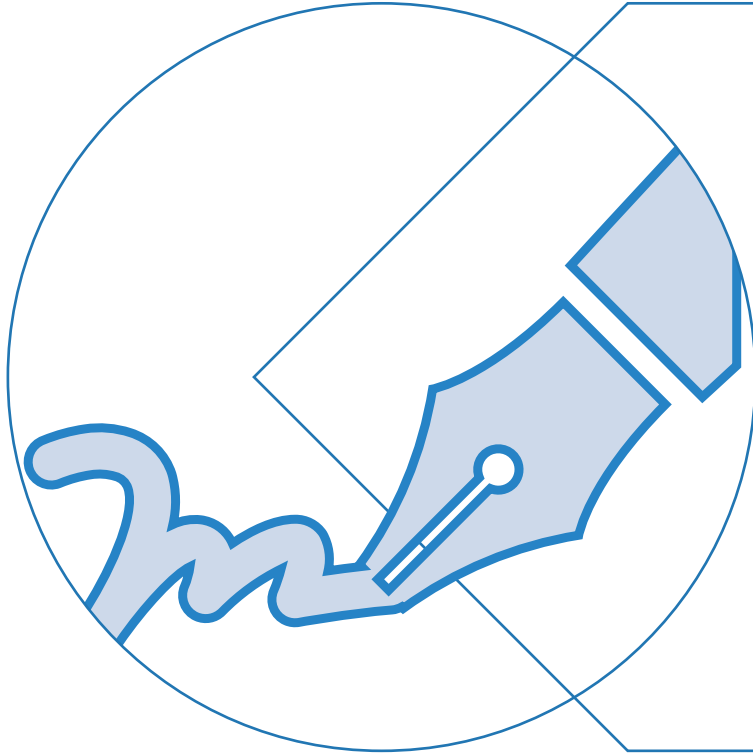
- Read the conclusion first, then the introduction
- Read the chapters or sections you consider the most important or interesting for your purposes
 - Decide if you are going to read these sections / chapters linearly or non-linearly
 - Non-linear: start with the opening statement or opening paragraph. Pay attention to the first and last sentences of a paragraphs.
- You should aim at being able to say what the main thesis is, what evidence or arguments are used to support it and what contribution the text makes to the literature.
- You should also have your own tentative critique of the text.

The third pass



- Linear and critical reading
 - Challenge author's statements and assumptions
 - Consider consulting supplemental materials (if available)
- Not all texts will reach this stage.
- At this stage, you should be able to read for the details and engage deeply with the author, their arguments and evidence they present, and how the text links to broader issues and debates

Think about it with pen on paper (or at least fingers on the keyboard)



- Formulate the message of what you have read **in your own words** and **write it down!**
- You can collect quotes if you'd like, but do not skip the step of writing on your own words.
- Add to your notes a few reflections about the text and write notes of your own critique.

What can reading teach us about writing?

- Few people will read your thesis / articles from cover to cover
 - Write in a way that helps readers navigate through your text.
 - Make sure the text is tied together
 - E.g., that you in fact answer the question you asked in the beginning
- You probably would like readers to engage deeply with your ideas.
 - Write clearly and with good organization, so that readers know where you are coming from and where you are going.
 - Readers won't be inspired to read more if they are confused.





“Your job is to **take the reader by the hand and guide her gently through your thought process.** You want your readers to know exactly how you got from A to Z: From the question that drives your paper to the answer you discovered. More than this, when your readers arrive at point Z (your answer to the paper’s question), **they should realize that your answer is the right one. It is your task to help them recognize it.** Learning how to do this is one of your most pressing aims in academia.”

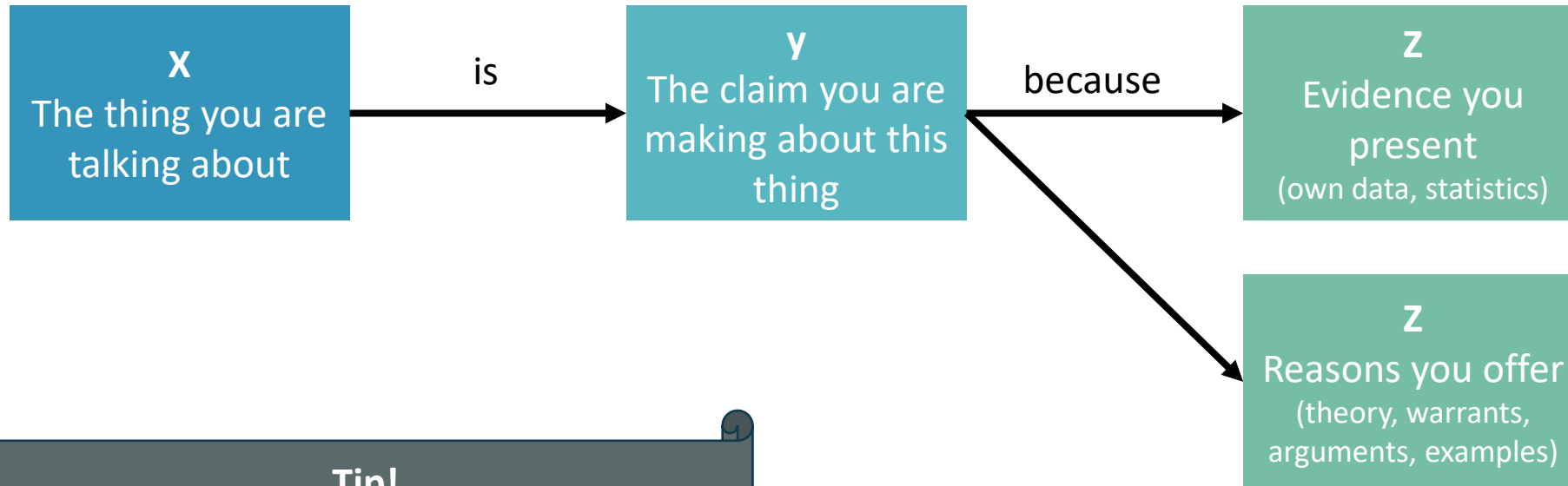
Source: Shore, Z. (2016). Grad school essentials: A crash course in scholarly skills (p.56). University of California Press.

Crafting a thesis statement

How you take your reader on your thought journey

- Be clear about your core argument
 - Both in your own mind and in your text
 - Ask a question and then answer it!
- The answer to your question can be called a “thesis statement”
 - The logical conclusion of your paper
- Use the formula “X is Y because of Z”
 - Use it as your writing guide
 - Build your writing in a way that leads the reader to this conclusion → Read through and examine if this is coherent
 - The question and the answer might change as the research process evolves
 - Being rigorous with the methods is not the same as being rigid with the writing.

A formula for your thesis statement



Tip!

You might also want to use the Toulmin model for an expanded version

Source: Nygaard, L. P. (2015; Chapter 5)

The salami approach



Photo by [Marcelino Ibericos](#) on Pexels.

The burger approach

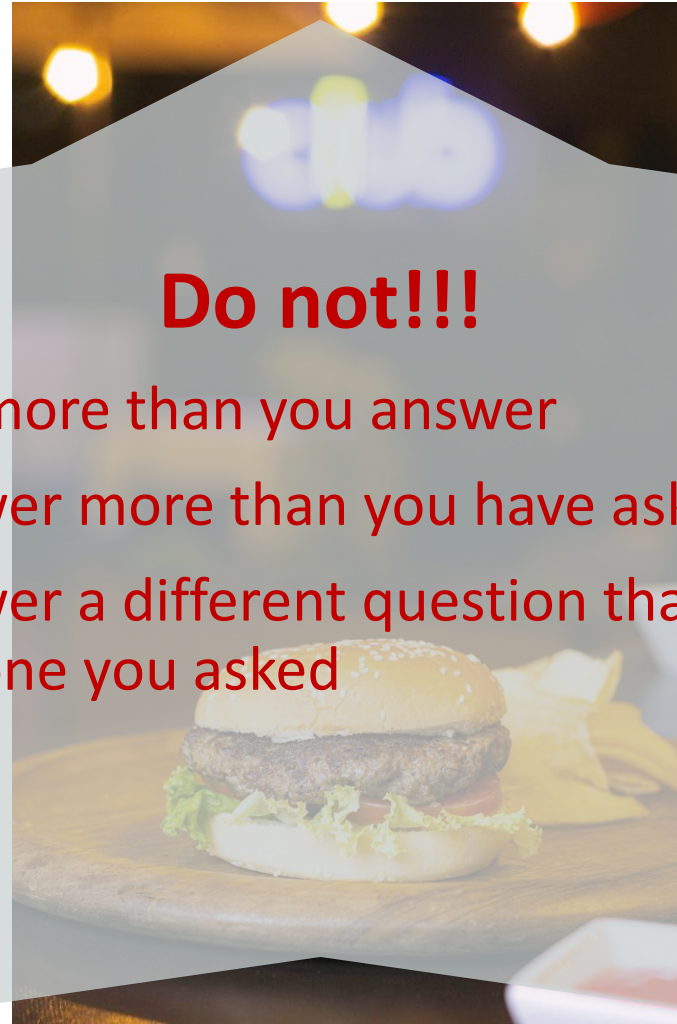


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The burrito approach



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In-class writing exercise



Writing exercise

1. Free writing on your thesis statement
 - We will use the Pomodoro technique (25 min intensive writing + 5 min rest)
2. Prompt: what do I want to say in this piece of writing?
3. Craft a one-sentence thesis statement based on this messy free writing (15 min)

Picking an outlet for your paper

When to pick a journal

Early in your writing process

• Advantages

- You can read and use existing literature with a clear purpose.
- You can learn the writing style of the journal and tailor your writing accordingly.
- You can get the formalities right from the beginning.

• Disadvantages

- Rejections happen to everyone, and it is even more disappointing to face rejection once you are set on an outlet.
- It might be burdensome to simply adapt the paper for re-submission. You might need to rewrite it substantially.

Later, when you have a finished draft

• Advantages

- Once you are very clear on your key message, it can be easier to see where it might belong.
- You might feel like you have more options of where to publish.

• Disadvantages

- It might be more difficult to find a 'perfect fit' between your message and the debates going on in relevant journals.
- It can be discouraging to spend time adapting a paper to suit a specific journal once your mind tells you it is done.
- You might find out that your article disqualifies from a certain journal you were interested in because you did not take certain precautions from the start.

How to pick a journal

Scholarly considerations

Who is the target audience of your paper?

- A piece of research can often be aimed at more than one audience, but the article needs to be sharp and specific
- With whom do you want to be in conversation with?
- Where do your peers publish?

Which journals do you cite the most in your reference list?

- It is important to place your contributions in the debates going on along different editions of the journal
- Read the guide for authors very carefully! → the devil is in the details

Consider the tradeoffs between a niche journal and a more general-audience journal

Practical considerations

What are the licensing conditions that your preferred journals impose on authors?

- Rules for reuse or reprint
- Read the guide for authors very carefully! → the devil is in the details
- Understand the difference between moral rights and economic rights

What are the OA requirements of your university/employer?

What are the OA requirements of your funder (NFR, EU, etc.)?

Some useful sites

- [Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers](#)
- [NPi – Norwegian Publication indicator](#)

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Bibliographic Information

International Title:	Nature		
p-ISSN:	0028-0836	Period:	[1869 ..]
e-ISSN:	1476-4687	Period:	[1869 ..]
Language:	English		
Country of publication:	United Kingdom		
URL:	http://www.nature.com/nature/		
Publisher:	Nature Portfolio		
ITAR Code:	11795		
NPI Scientific Field:	Interdisciplinary Natural Sciences		

Minimum Criteria

- Scientific editorial board
- Peer reviewed
- International authorship
- Approved ISSN

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Journals	00401625	1970-2022	Homepage How to publish in this journal Contact
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Business and International Management	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1
Management of Technology and Innovation	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1

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Technological Forecasting and Social Change

Q1 Applied Psychology best quartile

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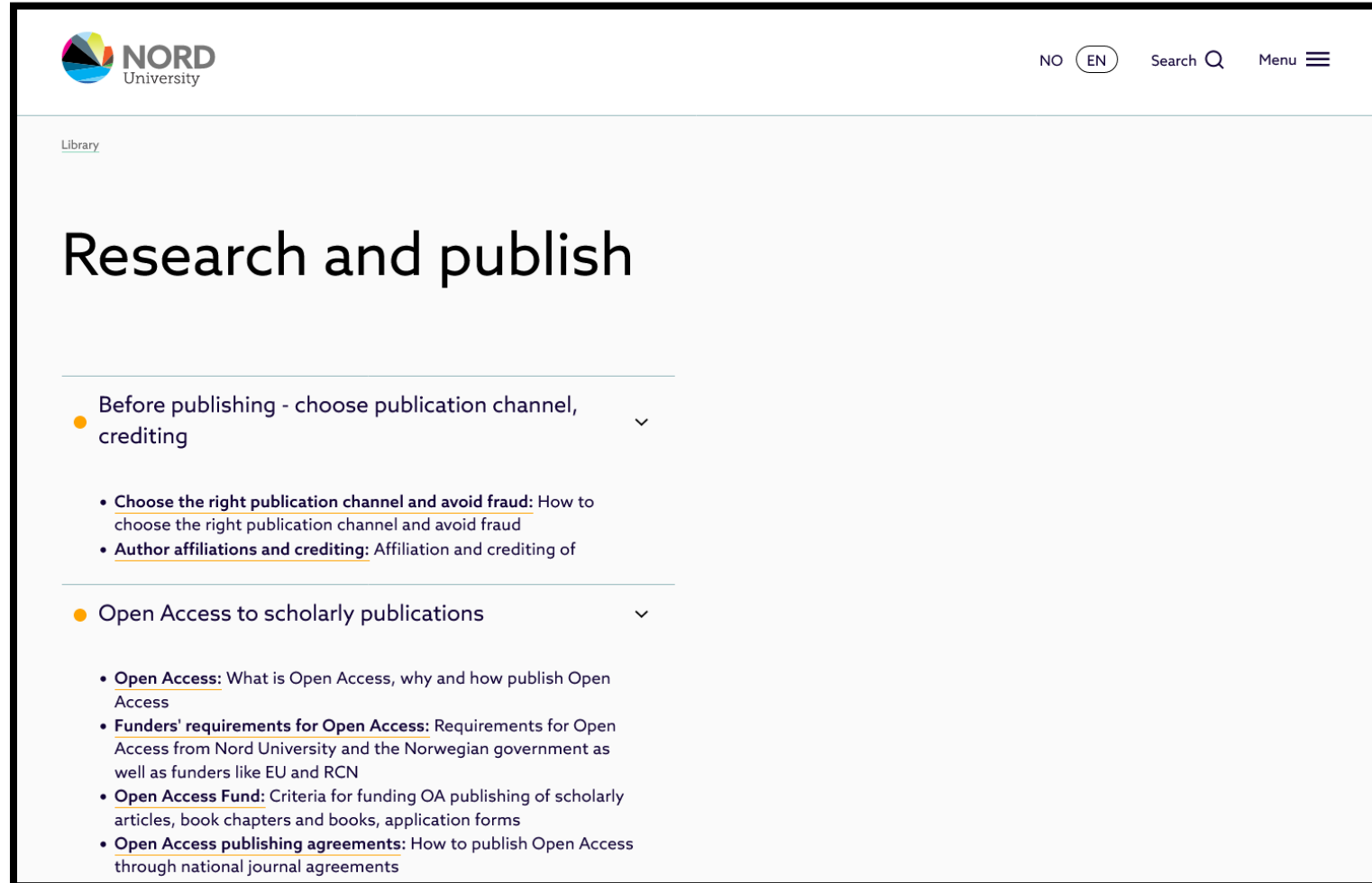
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Resources at Nord university

- www.nord.no/en/library/research-and-publish
- Information about open access, predatory publishing, and more!



The screenshot shows the Nord University Library website. At the top left is the Nord University logo. At the top right are language options (NO and EN), a search icon, and a menu icon. Below the header, the word 'Library' is written in a small font. The main heading is 'Research and publish'. There are two main sections, each with a dropdown arrow:

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 - **Choose the right publication channel and avoid fraud:** How to choose the right publication channel and avoid fraud
 - **Author affiliations and crediting:** Affiliation and crediting of
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