

Group Writing

Stages of Group Writing

The following are suggestions for how to organize your group writing project in stages, from your first meeting to submission.

Stage 1: Get it Together: Prewriting and Brainstorming

Get together with your group members and discuss or brainstorm your ideas. Be sure to:

1. Read assignment instructions carefully
2. Agree on a thesis/central argument
3. Determine what the final product will look like (essay or report format)
4. Assign some starter tasks such as sections of research and notes

Stage 2: Group Planning

1. Plan out your next few meetings. Where are they going to be located, and when? Identify a first draft date and the final due date.
2. Identify who is responsible for which sections of writing.

Stage 3: Research and Data Collection

1. Divide sections/concepts/ideas among group members or have all members research all necessary information
2. Identify a meeting day where members teach each other about their research findings.

Stage 4: Writing Stage

1. Identify the main idea(s) that each group member is responsible for, then organize the information. Is there a general flow of ideas? If so, assign written sections to group members to be reviewed at the next meeting.
2. While individually writing sections, be sure to consider [Dropbox](#) or [Google Drive](#) as effective tools for online collaborative writing projects.

Stage 5: Editing and Revising

1. This stage may take more time than you realize, certainly if individuals were responsible for separate sections of the document.
2. Agree on a meeting where group members offer feedback to one another's writing.
3. Finally, putting it all together will require some further task distribution. Who can edit for grammar? Who is good at transitions? Ensuring that your final document has consistent sentence structure, correct grammar and flow is extremely important before submitting the final product.

Avoiding Pitfalls

Some tips to maintaining a healthy work atmosphere for group writing:

1. Don't be *that* group member

Respect everyone else's time. Show up (on time) with a good attitude, ready to work. Stay on topic; stay focused in your conversation(s).

2. Be proactive

Don't wait around for someone to take the lead. Help solve problems and offer feedback when you can.

3. Don't offer negative feedback only

During feedback sessions, offer both negative and positive critiques. Focusing only on the problems you have with others' thoughts or writing can make group members act defensively. Be constructive with your feedback. Offer suggestions each time your critique.

4. Plan ahead

This is even more important in group writing, as everyone is juggling multiple schedules, etc. Procrastination, when trying to maintain a group schedule, can bring everyone down with you. Don't be *that* group member.

Sample Group Writing Schedule (One Month)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	2 Meeting #1 Agree on a thesis/central argument. Assign starter tasks. Assign meeting dates.	3	4	5 Meeting #2 Check in (questions? Problems?) Assign who is responsible for which sections of writing.
8	9 Meeting #3 Check in: Each member provides a brief intro to their assigned section, teaches the group. Members offer feedback.	10	11	12 Meeting #4 Each member's research is now complete, teaches the group on their findings. Members offer feedback. Begin writing.
15	16	17 Meeting #4 Writing check in. First writing draft presented to group. Members offer feedback.	18	19
22 Meeting #5 Final Drafts presented. Is there flow to the paper? Are everyone's ideas represented? Central argument maintained?	23 Meeting #6 Editor's meeting. Members offer feedback to revisions.	24	25 Meeting #7 Let's make sure we have everything here.	26 DUE DATE