Dissertation Writing Strategies
Strategies for Overcoming Writer’s Block

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A. Online Resources

“Beating the Isolation Blues.” *The Graduate.* Graduate Division, University of California, Berkeley. Reprint from Volume V, Number 1, spring 1989.  
http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/publications/thegraduate/Reprints/writing.pdf

Chinneck, John W. “How to Organize Your Thesis.” Department of Systems and Computer Engineering, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.  
http://www.sce.carleton.ca/faculty/chinneck/thesis.html


“Preparing and Writing a Dissertation.” Unit for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (UELT), University of Kent at Canterbury.  
http://www.ukc.ac.uk/uelt/learning/on-line/dissertation1.html

“Reviews of Literature.” The University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center.  
http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/ReviewofLiterature.html


“Tackling a Thesis.” University Writing Center at the University of Central Florida.  

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“Writing Your Dissertation.” The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.  

Useful resources available at APSANET (The American Political Science Association Online):


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**B. Print Resources**


**II. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF STYLE MANUALS**


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DISSEMINATION WRITING: STRATEGIES AND PITFALLS
Fall Meeting of the Dissertation-Year and President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Programs
University of California Office of the President
Friday, October 1, 2004

Sabrina Soracco (scandl@socrates.berkeley.edu)
Academic Services, Graduate Division, University of California, Berkeley

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Instructions for Final Manuscripts and Permissions
http://www.ucpress.edu/press/authors/index.html

Permissions & Copyright
http://www.une.edu/~unclng/public-d.htm
http://fairuse.stanford.edu/

Select Publishing Resources in Print


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THESIS</th>
<th>Cosmetic cover-up</th>
<th>Limited remodeling</th>
<th>Complete overhaul</th>
<th>BOOK</th>
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<td>Narrowly focused</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Broadly focused</td>
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<td>Minimal context</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Substantial context</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impersonal, passive tone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal, direct tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannered, discursive style; jargon</td>
<td>delete jargon</td>
<td>tighten language</td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal, easy style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracting reader</td>
<td>attract reader in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immaterial</td>
<td>introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tells story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible superstructure</td>
<td>delete blatant transitions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organization: subtle to invisible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive repetition</td>
<td>delete summaries</td>
<td>delete obvious repetition</td>
<td>delete borderline repetition</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhaustive literature review</td>
<td>delete least-relevant literature</td>
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Explicit, detailed methodology

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<th>summarize methodology</th>
<th>include methodology in appendix</th>
<th>include methodology in preface</th>
<th>Methodology not included</th>
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<td>reduce number of headings</td>
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<tr>
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<td>reduce number of quotations</td>
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<td>Multiple plot summaries</td>
<td>reduce number of plot summaries</td>
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Figure 1. The thesis-book continuum
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Checklist For Revising Dissertations For Book Publication  
(from the University of Texas Press website)

1. **Eliminate the review of literature.** A book manuscript is not for your dissertation readers; it's for your colleagues, who have done their homework and will do you the courtesy of assuming that you have also.

2. **Outlining.** You have probably divided each chapter into sections and each section into subsections. This shows that you know how to outline or write a brief, but for most books the outline should disappear into the fluidity of a context. The book should flow; it should not hop from stone to stone.

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6. **Too much?** When beginning writers don't know quite how to make their points—when they are teaching themselves the techniques of writing as they compose their material—they are apt to fumble a great deal, and the result is wordage by the yard. They don't know when to stop or how to move on. Re-examine your dissertation critically—others will. Ruthlessly cut out the flab. Don't depend upon the editor to do this. A flabby manuscript may never survive to get into the editor's hands. Read questionable passages aloud. If they sound stilted or obscure, they probably are.

7. **Too little?** A thorough, definitive study or a superficial treatment? Has the treatment been stretched beyond the scope which the topic warrants?

8. **Up to date?** "If accepted for publication, I plan to update." Better do it now, before the material is submitted. The reviewer has no way of gauging the effectiveness of work yet to be done.

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