

7" or 18 cm

- Always remember what Stephen King said: "Finish things."
- Sure, the internet is great, but it's not going to write your draft for you.
- Be consistent + write every day.
- Track your progress with a word count tracker or "don't break the chain" calendar so you can easily visualize your writing progress.
- Have at least a vague idea of where your story's going. It's hard to write the next scene when you have no idea what should happen next. Think about your story before you start writing or basically any time you're free to think about whatever you want. Work stuff out in your head. That will help get you excited and ready to sit down + write.

How to Write a First Draft that Sucks

As you sit down to write, tell yourself:

"This is a first draft. It's allowed to suck. Most of it will suck, but there will be nuggets of genius. It's an experiment, and I want know the results until I've ~~even~~ completed it. I will finish it. Then I'll decide if it's good or bad. Then I will edit. Then I will rewrite. Then I will share it with others. Not before. Now it's just me and the words. They don't have to make sense to anyone else - not this story, this chapter, this scene, or this sentence. I just have to write."

Ten Steps to Writing a First Draft

How to Write a First Draft without crippling Perfectionism

Tips →

2/20/16

1) Go analogue. Grab your favorite pen and paper or pick up a fountain pen and go nuts. The great things about writing a first draft analogue:

- You can't delete anything
- You can't edit anything
- You can't open your browser and check your favorite sites
- No distractions, no software settings to adjust, no typos to make. Just you and the words.
- Don't have to worry about battery life or losing your file. Spill some coffee? No worries!

2) If you can't go analogue or find that your internet-connected devices are still distracting you, use an internet-blocking app or turn it off

at the source - unplug your modem \Rightarrow
and/or router.

3) Combine your notes and your narrative into one seamless document. Separating out your narrative elevates it to high and puts your perfectionism in control. If it's all one big mess, getting the narrative "just right" completely goes out the window and you're free to write whatever the hell you want - which is the whole idea. A first draft is basically a mind dump, a rough concept that must be brought into existence before it can be refined.

4) Don't look back. Think the last scene you wrote sucked? Think you should change the beginning? Too bad. They are physically etched on paper, so there's nothing you can do about it. Don't look back.

don't reread and of the story, and for the love of cheese in an arosde can, don't try to change anything until you've finished the first draft! Just keep charging forward. If you think you might forget about something you know you'll need to change later, write a note ^{explain this} in line with the body of your story and move on. Don't come back to it till you've finished the first draft.

5) Don't worry about consistency or ~~keeping the story all in one place~~. The story you had in your head or in your outline will change as you write it. That's a good thing! Emergent discoveries as you write are one of the best parts of the process. Adapt them immediately and keep writing as if ~~the~~ you'd written the story to incorporate this new element from the beginning. Whatever changes you

need to make to fully incorporate the new element can be done later. If you think of something cool or want to change something halfway through, roll with it! You can fix continuity issues later.

6) Don't worry about grammar, formatting, punctuation, accuracy, spelling, underwriting, overwriting, description, finding the ~~the~~ perfect names for things, etc. That just slows you down. If you can't think of the right word or need to fact check something later, use a or some special word or character you can easily find and change later. If it's holding you up, slip in a placeholder and move on.

7) Don't worry about keeping the story all in one place. Write in multiple notebooks, on scraps of paper, in text files at work, in Google docs, on your arm, whatever notes on your phone, in the car

As long as you know where it is, you can piece it together later. Take a picture with your phone if that helps. Life is hectic for most people, and trying to write a beautiful and organized first draft is counter-productive and often stifling to creativity. ^{write as fast as you can} 8) Brain

vomit the first draft as fast as possible however you can. Get it out of your head. That's the first and most important step to writing anything. Mine the story out of your brain first, then refine it later.

9) Don't show your first draft to anyone. It's a secret diary between your eyes and your brain. It's allowed to suck - it's supposed to suck - and no one else needs to know about it. Initial Creativity belongs to the voice inside your head alone. It's loud enough without having

to consider the voices and opinions of anyone else. There is a time and place to get feedback—while writing a first draft is not one of those times.

10) Give yourself a break. Allow yourself to experiment and do whatever the hell you want. Find a writing and planning process that works for you and use it, but don't hold yourself to it. Allow yourself to be creative, make mistakes, try new things, learn new things, and stumble upon ^{the} creative genius inside you. Not everything you write ^{in the 1st draft} will ~~be~~ work for the story. Know that going in and write it anyway. Keep telling yourself that you must keep writing. The first drafts exist to suck, and that you must finish the first draft before you'll even know how to craft the story into something ~~so~~ brilliant. It's a

starting point for something that will eventually become a finished product.

Finishing a first draft does not mean you've finished the story. It means you've created a foundation upon which to create a finished story.

It's the first step and the most important step, but that doesn't mean it has to look anything like what you want the finished story to look like. Don't try to paint the walls while you're ~~the~~ still building the framework.

That's not even possible, which is why no one does it. So why should you think writing is any different? It's not. Work from the ground up. Your first draft is a construction site. Of course it's going to be a mess until it's finished! Embrace this and ~~of~~ develop a realistic expectation for yourself. ^{Then} just write!