

Fruitless First Draft Struggles By: Cris Freese | October 17, The following is a guest blog post by the winner of the 82nd Annual Writer's Digest Writing Competition, Dan J. Fiore.

Sometimes your first draft may become the final one due to it being rather satisfactory, but in most cases, it requires further work. A first draft is a way to elaborate on the main points of your essay stated in your outline, giving them a sample form. Steps for Writing a First Draft of an Essay Take a closer look at your assignment and the topic if it was given to you by your instructor. Revise your outline as well. This is needed for your clearer understanding of the tasks you must accomplish within the draft, and to make sure you meet the requirements of the assignment. Sketch out the introduction of your essay. Based on your outline, start transferring your ideas to paper. The main task here is to give them the initial form and set a general direction for their further development, and not to write a full paper. Chalk out the summarizing paragraph of your essay. It should not contain any new ideas, but briefly reintroduce those from the main body, and restate your thesis statement. Read through the draft to see if you have included the information you wanted to, but without making any further corrections, since this is a task for the second and final drafts. **Key Points to Consider** While an outline is needed to decide on what to write, the first draft is more about answering a question: When you start writing your thoughts down, it may happen that one idea or concept sparks new connections, memories, or associations. Making notes for yourself in the margins or even in the middle of the text is a useful practice. This can save you time and keep you focused on the essence of your essay without being distracted by secondary details. For example, such notes could look like this: Time away will allow you to have a fresh look at your draft when you decide to revise it. Indeed, if your first draft is lengthy—which is actually a rough sketch—imagine how long your paper will become if you expand on each idea chalked out and fill it with factual data. Do reread the draft several times and return to the requirements of your assignment and topic if you feel you are getting stalled. Do leave empty space in the text when writing. It may happen that you come across certain details that are necessary for your essay, but can be left out at the moment. To avoid being distracted by thoughts that are not connected with your focus, leave blank space in their place—you will be able to return to them later. Do set a time limit for yourself. A reasonable deadline will help you work more intensely and make everything in time, and at the same time you will avoid overworking and intellectual exhaustion. Do write the first draft as rapidly as you can. This point refers to the procedure of writing itself. When you stop to think over a certain phrase, you will most likely dig into details, analysis, and comparisons; you will start seeking for the best option for this particular phrase, thus forgetting about the rest of the draft. Usually it is enough to write down a couple of concise sentences to be able to return to a certain idea later without losing the discourse. Even if you have an outline written, a draft is still necessary; while an outline helps you to figure out what to write about, the first draft can help you understand how to write. The first draft helps you to shape out your thoughts, and thus is a crucial part of the essay writing process. Therefore, first you should deal with the whole draft, and only after that proofread and edit it. The main goal of the first draft is to sketch out your main ideas; you can fill it with details later. If you think you will forget about an important fact or remark, make brief notes in margins. Though it may seem you are wasting time working on a draft, you are working on the essay itself. You need to understand how your outline works in full written form.

Chapter 2 : The writing process: Writing a first draft

Two Steps to Write a First Draft. Perhaps you are the kind of person who likes to have a step-by-step list of things to follow. To help you, I have put together a list of steps for how to write a first draft.

Subscribe to our FREE email newsletter and download free character development worksheets! Dan shares his thoughts on the first draft writing process, common first draft problems and why your story should always take precedent over these problems. I mean, first drafts of anything. Even the first draft of this blog post. Typing out those first two words alone: Everything else can wait until the second draft. By all means, tell the story from a set point of view, but let it come naturally. Plus, your voice, whatever it ends up being, is as much about how you edit as how you write. Your first draft is about substance first and foremost. Learning to let go is hard. And not only did I finish an entire draft in less time than it took me to write all of those variations of page one, but it felt authentic when I went back through and read it. Of course, being that it was a first draft, it was absolutely terrible. But it was salvageable. Instead of letting this discourage you, flip it around and use it to your advantage. Name an author, any author. His or her first drafts suck, too. Keep reminding yourself of that. See where that scary road leads. It might lead to a better story. It might lead to fixing a problem you had earlier or will run into later in the story. Or it could be a dead end. But guess what, dead ends are okay. Dead ends make you a better writer. Just go back the way you came and find a new route. And save what you wrote in a new document. So take fear out of the equation. If you are sitting down to write, then that usually means you have some vague idea of the story you want to tell, which also means you probably have at least one scene in your head already. Sure, it might end up being the climax, or the very last scene, or a quiet character-driven moment, or it might end up getting cut from the story all together. Now, you may be a master weaver and have no trouble shifting gears throughout your first draft. Maybe jot down a quick note to remind yourself later of what kinds of information you want there. But just continue with the story. When in doubt, just continue with the story. The best thing to do is to take notes in the beginning on how you see the structure working in the end. Then forget about it. Write the first draft as simply as possible—start to finish. A story that makes sense. From there, you can take that story, chop it up into as many pieces as you want, and apply it to the structure you envisioned in the beginning. Your first draft is all about story. You might also like:

Chapter 3 : Why Writing Your First Draft Is Not As Scary As It Seems

A first draft is a rough sketch of your future piece of writing. Sometimes your first draft may become the final one due to it being rather satisfactory, but in most cases, it requires further work.

There must be more to writing a first draft, you say. What Writing is Not Thinking about writing, buying books on writing, talking about writing, listening to podcasts about writing, attending writing conferences, dreaming about writing, getting a tattoo about writing, watching movies about writing, talking to your cat about writing—none of those activities will write your book. Tweet this Yes, I know I have to sit down and write. That part is obvious, but how do I actually write the first draft? Can you help me? I am learning how to write first drafts right along with you. Just remember, the ONLY thing you absolutely must do in order to finish your first draft is. Figure out your story first. He understands what conventions the thriller has, and he makes sure he has all of them in his book. It makes it an incredibly strong, compelling structure upon which you can build complex characters, or subplots, twists, or beautiful writing. Write a logline for your book before you write the book. Before you start writing your book, write the main idea of your story in a few sentences and share it with friends. Having a clear idea of what you want to write will help you stay focused while you write your first draft. And having feedback from friends will save you from writing a story that is as interesting as a soggy piece of toast. Do not look at any reference books while you are writing. When you sit down to write, write. Instead, do what journalists do: Stop for nothing till you reach the objective. Shawn Coyne says rewriting or editing before you have completed the first draft will lead to despair. Editing sentences before the story is complete may make it harder to follow your train of thought with the story. Until you reach its final two words. I rewrote the first part of *A Farewell to Arms* at least fifty times. Or, avoiding writing his book. Writing a first draft is hard, and it is tempting to take the easy route and quit writing. This is why you need something that will hold you accountable to finish. Joe realized that he would not actually sit down and write his book unless he created deadlines and consequences to motivate himself. In order to help him meet his deadlines, he has surrounded himself with community that will hold him accountable. You can learn more about his struggle and the structure he designed to help him finish his rough draft here. This fall, Joe Bunting and The Write Practice team will lead a group of writers through the process of writing their first drafts from start to finish in days. They will provide the training, accountability, support, and community you need to persevere to the end. Would you like to join this community and and finish your book in the next days? You can learn more and sign up here. Write the Book Inside You Now we have the tools to write our first draft. May the books inside of you be written. No one else can tell your story. Here are three things you can do to move it along: Write down what your book or story is about. Or, write on your work in progress. Or, write about how you feel about your first draft, and let us encourage you not to give up. She would love to meet you at [pamelahodges](#).

Chapter 4 : Advice on Writing the First Draft of a Novel

If you write 1, words of your first draft a day, you'll produce 6, words a week and still be able to take Sunday off. If you write 6, words a week, you'll have a draft finished somewhere between four and 10 weeks, depending on the length of your book.

The short answer is: Persistence, as they say, is key. In addition to the basic fact that you have to keep going, I do have a bit more to say on drafting. Every writer works differently, of course, so this is only my personal opinion and experience, but I found that I needed to just get everything down on the page and then essentially sort the editing part out afterwards. Some writers plot everything out I did another post about this here but I prefer to have the spark of an idea and maybe the bare bones of the storyline, and then I get very impatient to just start writing and see where it takes me. Once you have a decent chunk, you start to feel as though to turn back now would be a real waste of time, so the compulsion to actually finish your first draft becomes stronger and stronger as your word count goes up. The other thing I find helpful when writing first drafts is having a word count. For a while, I wrote words a day of my manuscript, and I would email daily versions of it to myself to make sure I had it saved. In the email subject line I wrote: Then every day I knew I was a tiny bit closer to my goal. NB this is before my book was published – if you have deadlines that are actually set by a publisher, do try not to miss those! The draft is there for you to get all those ideas out, and create your book, and then the editing process is for ironing out all the mistakes you made in the first draft, honing your dialogue down, and even moving whole scenes or chapters around I do that quite a lot. For example, in the manuscript I recently finished writing, there are some areas where I needed the help of a medical professional to answer queries. Make sure you do fill in those gaps, though! No agent or editor really wants a book filled with blank spaces. You can think about where your high point of conflict is going to be, and at which points you might start dropping red herrings. There is no magic formula for writing a first draft. I think you have to really, really want to finish a book and take it seriously. You have to be prepared to sometimes skip social events or spend the weekends on your laptop, but if you work at it, your word count will start to build up and you might even start to enjoy the process along the way a bit, anyway! It is possible to write a first draft around a full time job – I used to write after work in the evenings whilst babysitting too the baby was in bed and I checked on him a lot! So anything you can do to give yourself motivation like my little email prompts to myself is always to be encouraged. I hope this helps anyone wading their way through a first draft, and thank you for visiting my blog! You can read the finished product of my first ever draft here:

Chapter 5 : 5 Simple First Draft Secrets | WTD

Scheduling writing time is the secret weapon because if you get your butt in the chair, or stand and dictate, for consistent periods of time, you WILL finish a draft. I like writing in cafes ☺™, Get out your calendar and schedule time for writing, as you would for any other important commitment.

Every story is "at the beginning" the same opening of a door onto a completely unknown space. A conversation in the supermarket. Sometimes, simply, the indefinable yearning to write something, even if you have no grasp of what it might be, or where that yearning is coming from. From this seed, anything might grow—the realization of which can be daunting, and feel contrary to the way in which you perhaps plan and control your work, your life. But if you open yourself up to the unpredictability of what you might create, then it can also be liberating—and one of the most important skills that a writer learns is to embrace and use the potential of the unknown. You would be unlikely to start reading a book if you already knew every little thing about it, and the experiences of reading and writing are not so very far apart. They are entwined, in fact. It is important to remember that. Article continues after advertisement There are no rules. It is important to remember that, too. Every narrative is as individual as the person writing it. One of the quiet pleasures of writing fiction is that each project spawns its own storytelling rulebook—of language and style, of point of view, of character—which nobody but the author can impose. There are, nonetheless, certain elements of craft to discover and to practice—to reject, sometimes—but, firstly, to understand. The important thing, as an author, is to know what ritual, eccentric or not, works for you. Article continues after advertisement If this means that you do your best writing when you are naked in the bathtub is for you to discover. As is, crucially, the method by which you develop an idea into a finished piece of writing. Every writer has their own process. I have put down some of the main ways in which writers go about creating a piece of fiction. You will notice, however diverse they may at first appear, that there is a lot of crossover, and that most of them involve some kind of milling process. The relative weight I have given to the first method is because it contains many of the basic principles, and, possibly, because it is the way in which I work myself. I should add that I work in the same way for both novels and short stories. But it is not for me to prescribe the most effective process, and you will inevitably consider some of these methods barmy; others may strike a chord, or you might take tidbits from all of them. The only way for you to discover your own method is to experiment, and to write—and complete—as much as you can. And to remember, always, that there is no correct way to write but your own. The Refinery Method With a formative idea and a loose plan, embark on a linear first draft. Work from some semblance of a beginning—without stopping to doubt yourself, make improvements, or judge the writing—to an end. The only judgements you should make are instinctive creative ones: Is this character starting to feel more significant than I had envisaged? The storyline seems to have deviated from my plan. Is the point of view serving the story I want to tell? How does it feel if I change it for a chapter or two? Rough exploratory drafting is an antidote to the anxiety of the blank page. You are generating momentum, a rhythm to your thoughts and your accumulating scenes, even if the actual text you are producing is—or would be if this was going to be the finished manuscript—a hilarious piece of crap. Overwritten in most places, underwritten in others; a tense change halfway through; plot lines and characters abandoned, or appearing from nowhere. And this is the point at which to write it again. The second draft begins on a clean page. Very possibly in a different place to where the first draft began, because it is quite likely that you wrote a scene partway through the first draft that suggested itself to you later as an appropriate opening. The process of redrafting is not one of simply copying out the best bits from the first-draft material although it will sometimes involve doing that. It is a new piece of writing; one that you are commencing with a deep understanding, now, of your idea, style, characters, plot, and with at least some decent lines and scenes in the bank. Whatever way you go about it, the process does not end here. The redraft does not produce the finished piece of writing, so, still, you should not feel the pressure of it being a finished piece of writing. The final part of this method is the edit. If you have not yet thoroughly worked out your method, then this may all feel rather painstaking to you, but it is a question of care. The Jigsaw Method If you are stumped for the point at which to enter the narrative

it may be helpful to forego, for now, an adherence to writing it in a linear way, from beginning to end. The more you write, the better you will understand the project at large. And you may, eventually, understand that the finished narrative will not be linear. It might, for example, be episodic. So, by writing a big scene that eventually ends up at the core of the narrative, you will be growing your understanding of the fictional world and the characters who inhabit it—and this, in turn, is likely to spawn other ideas, other scenes, character through-lines, plot events. Once you free yourself from the constraint of putting it down in the right order, you may well find that before very long you have gathered enough fragments that you are beginning to get a perception of the whole.

The Nugget in the Dump Method This is another variation on the first, and a further relinquishing of control. You cannot know for sure, before you have amassed any words, whether this thing you are writing is worthwhile. Which is why it is so tempting to plan it into an impressive shape, to convince yourself that it is. Your first draft is an exploration. During that exploration you might unearth a completely unexpected idea, character, sentence that causes you to think: So the first draft of one book might be what instigates the first draft of a different book. Maybe the idea of discarding a whole draft sounds demoralizing—and so it might be, for a while—but is it as demoralizing as knowing that you have spent years writing something that is not as good, as impassioned, as the idea that you left behind?

The Spurt Method Some writers sit at a desk for hours and work without pause until their designated time to punch the clock. I am one of these. Others, like Nick Hornby, write in spurts. A few sentences at a time, then a short break to get up and stretch their limbs before returning to it, refreshed. Plenty of writers set themselves word targets, and you might find it helpful to have a number to aim for each day. Anthony Trollope made himself write words every 15 minutes, timing himself with a stopwatch. The reader is not bothered about how long it took you.

The Sessional Method In order to create momentum, you might find it helpful to vary what you do, session by session. So, you might spend one session drafting a scene, and the next session rewriting that scene. Furthermore—and this is a useful thing to bear in mind, whatever your method—you might grease the wheels of your stopping-and-starting routine by drawing a close to your writing session at a point where you know what is going to come next on the page. As Hemingway put it: The juice will come. Or, if you are Hemingway, stand.

The Perfectionist Method At the opposite end of the spectrum from the process of generating momentum through drafting is the process of refining each individual page, over and over, before you move on to the next page. In this way, every existing page is in its final state as the narrative continues, and the end of the work really does mean the end of the work. It is a practice of constant revision, rather than redrafting. Anthony Burgess worked in this way, in part because he believed that over time the intention and technique of a writer is liable to change, with the result that the unity of the work will be affected.

The Incubation Method Although I have been advocating getting pen to paper as early as possible, there are writers who let an idea remain in their heads for a long time. They will ruminate at length, letting the subconscious stay constantly engaged with the subject so that characters, plot and atmosphere form without any forced deliberation. All the while, it will be important to keep a notebook, to write down any scraps that occur to you—until, eventually, you have what is in effect a first draft in the imagination. It will be amorphous, but the putting together of all your notes maybe even writing them down on record cards that you can then lay out on a table will create a vague shape for you to use when you do sit down to write. It has a resemblance, this method, to the act of reading: The trick, I suppose, is knowing when to stop dreaming and get down to it.

Chapter 6 : Writing a First Draft “ The Word on College Reading and Writing

The first draft you write should not also be the last draft you write. Instead of aiming for polish in the first draft, many writers aim to develop the paper into something that can be polished later on.

No wonder we sometimes resist writing and finishing our first drafts! Please avoid making these common mistakes. Remember that every writer experiences blocks. The solution to creating fantastic first drafts is much simpler. Literary forms and writing exercises jump-start our writing because they provide us with helpful limits. Have I described seven different colors without naming them? Here are first draft secrets that will make things easy for you I confess: Swiss cheese intrigues me. Try the following exercise with a sense of openness and adventure. This is an example of a focus on content. This is another example of a content focus. Step 2 “ Limit Your Time. Decide to spend a specific and limited amount of time writing your Swiss cheese draft. To keep you focused, you may want to set a timer as you begin. Bookending is amazingly effective! Step 3 “ Mark the Holes as You Go. You may do this already. Step 4 “ Notice and Redirect. Have a seat right over here, and hey “ would you watch the clock for me? Your finished Swiss cheese draft may be cured and ready to revise as early as two days after creation. It may need longer to settle. How do you manage your mind when you write?

Chapter 7 : How to Write a First Draft: A Novel Approach | Now Novel

Write your first draft as rapidly as you can.. In writing the first draft of your essay, try to get as many ideas down on paper as quickly as you can. Don't worry about spelling or punctuation at all at this stage, just ideas.

How to write a first draft: A novel approach In learning how to write a first draft, having an effective method is everything. Writing terrible first drafts is more than inevitable: Here are several reasons why you should not attempt to write a perfect first draft: Even when they speak in interviews, they might seem to always have the best-formed phrase ready. Write each draft with a different aim in mind, focusing in on different elements of your novel: The first draft of a book is where you create the skeleton for your final novel and get to know your characters. The result is seldom a publishable work, even for experienced writers. From the third draft onwards you can focus more on polishing the text, revising and cutting scenes where necessary while also paying greater attention to details of language use such as grammar and punctuation. Learn how to write a first draft minus the crippling perfectionism It is a common trait for writers to be perfectionists about their work. Procrastination often goes hand in hand with perfectionism: It is wise to always remember the writing advice of the prolific writer Jodi Picoult: Focusing on small-scale elements can result in a weak larger structure If you write a first draft by focusing on the smallest details of description and scene-setting, you might find that this microscopic focus leaves a clumsy larger shape for your novel. One of the advantages of intentionally writing a loose, less controlled first draft is that you can put in place basic scaffolding that makes later improvements easier. To use a metaphor: Here are several small-scale elements you should reserve for later drafts: Details of language use: Unsure whether this compound noun should be hyphenated? Does a conversation feel stilted? Could a heated debate or argument be turned up hotter? Reading dialogue out loud will help you hear better whether your use of it is natural or not, but you can leave this for later drafts. First and last sentences: If you think of a headline in a newspaper, these are written after the stories they accompany are complete. Having the scope of your first draft in mind will help you craft these key elements in such a way that they either set up the action to come brilliantly or create smooth segues to subsequent scenes. Why writing terrible first drafts is wise: Of course, sharing parts of your novel in progress with other writers or trusted readers is helpful as it will motivate you and provide valuable feedback. Even though you might be sharing small sections of your work as you go for support and guidance, resist the temptation to shop your first draft around to literary agencies or publishers. Finishing the first draft of a book is worth celebrating. Giving yourself license to write a bad first draft avoids unproductive comparisons We look at examples of published fiction by our favourite writers and our own efforts seem paltry in comparison. However, very few writers actually produce strong first drafts. Hemingway rewrote the last page of *A Farewell to Arms* 37 times. Sometimes it can help to think of the first pass as a pre-first draft. It will begin to seem almost like a necessity. How can you carry on when you know those pages need to be rewritten? At this stage, you simply need to focus on moving forward rather than looking back. The problem with going back is that it is all too easy to find yourself doing so in an endless, obsessive loop, forever fixing problems and never really moving ahead with the story. In that case, all that work and rewriting will be wasted. You might feel that the end is nowhere in sight. Meanwhile, no matter what the book is about, it suddenly begins to seem like the dullest and most derivative novel anyone has ever written. The important thing to remember about writing a first draft is that without one, terrible or not, you have nothing to work with. No one need ever see that terrible first draft. Become a productive writer:

Chapter 8 : First Draft Writing Process: Fruitless First Draft Struggles

Having just completed the first draft of my second novel, I can attest to the fact that writing a first draft is still a lot better than oral surgery, but a good measure worse than folding laundry or even cleaning the bathrooms (which, full disclosure, my husband does).

Which often leads to the most terrifying thing writers face: All first drafts have plot holes, places where character motivation goes missing, dull scenes, clunky transgressions and unearned epiphanies. But sheesh, the thought of a potential F. Scott Fitzgerald scaling teeth is kind of sad. Anytime they can do less instead of more, they will, a minimalist philosophy they follow religiously. Plus, since staring at that blank page can be exceedingly stressful, the relief of letting it all pour out not only feels good, it feels right. Well, you must not be a real writer after all. That is, a draft that begins to capture “in rudimentary, unpolished form” the story itself. So rather than flying blind, here are nine tips that can help you create that sort of shitty first draft, as opposed to a bunch of pages with words randomly romping across them. Concentrate on what the language is meant to convey: I recently spoke with a writer who was celebrating having finished the first draft of his novel. He told me proudly that it came in at a little over , words, and that he loved every single one of them. Know what your point is before you begin to write. All stories make a point, and everything in a story “in one way or another” builds toward it. Might your point change as you write? But even knowing what your point might be allows you to focus in on a story that makes it, rather than romping aimlessly. A story making a point moves, a story that romps tends to run in place. Is it harder to write this way? Know the overarching problem your protagonist will face. Know your ending first. How will you know what turns to take? How will you know what needs to happen next? Without a target to aim for, chances are high your story will idle in neutral. Know how your protagonist sees the world. If the overarching problem is what gives your story context, what gives it meaning is how your protagonist navigates that problem. In other words, how does your protagonist react to what happens? One of the most stubborn brain myths is that our brain is like a camera, recording an exact, objective account of everything we see. Rather, we record events in bits and pieces, subjectively, depending on what matters most to us. Your reader will be getting to know your protagonist on the first page, but you need to know her inside and out long before you commit her to paper. Here is the essence of a story: Everything in the story impacts this quest. Once you zero in on it, it becomes a live sensor that beeps madly when the connection is broken. Why is my protagonist reacting the way she does? Why does the reader need to know this? Watch as your day unfolds. Figure it out first, and it will be your true north. Know your basic theme. This is much easier than it sounds. What world will your story unfold in? And are you sure all your characters got the memo? In fact, this is the one and only thing that can cut down on time spent rewriting. Yes, some writers can sit down and nail a story blindfolded. They have that innate skill, and tend to be successful out of the starting gate. But we can develop it by mastering story and committing it to muscle memory “that muscle being the brain. It just makes us less likely to be up weighing the pros and cons of dental school at two a. Her video tutorial, *Writing Fundamentals: The Craft of Story*, can be found at Lynda. *The Common Thread of Our Humanity*.

Chapter 9 : Writing a first draft – Phoebe Morgan

First draft writing: 7 tips for simpler, easier drafting Of all the stages of writing a novel, first draft writing is often most challenging. Because your novel is still a blank canvas, structuring your writing process can be tricky.

You already have at least one focusing idea. What do you want to say about it? What connections can you make with it? If you have a working thesis, what points might you make that support that thesis? Write your topic or thesis down and then jot down what points you might make that will flesh out that topic or support that thesis. This might include a range of things, such as conducting an interview, creating and administering a survey, or locating articles on the Internet and in library databases. Research is a great early step because learning what information is available from credible sources about your topic can sometimes lead to shifting your thesis. Research is also useful because learning what information is available about your topic can help you flesh out what you might want to say about it.

Essay Structure You might already be familiar with the five-paragraph essay structure, in which you spend the first paragraph introducing your topic, culminating in a thesis that has three distinct parts. That introduction paragraph is followed by three body paragraphs, each one of those going into some detail about one of the parts of the thesis. Finally, the conclusion paragraph summarizes the main ideas discussed in the essay and states the thesis or a slightly re-worded version of the thesis again. This structure is commonly taught in high schools, and it has some pros and some cons.

Pros It helps get your thoughts organized. It is a good introduction to a simple way of structuring an essay that lets students focus on content rather than wrestling with a more complex structure. It familiarizes students with the general shape and components of many essays – a broader introductory conversation giving readers context for this discussion, followed by a more detailed supporting discussion in the body of the essay, and ending with a sense of wrapping up the discussion and refocusing on the main idea. It is an effective structure for in-class essays or timed written exams.

Cons It can be formulaic – essays structured this way sound a lot alike. Quite often, a paragraph is simply not enough space to have a conversation on paper that is thorough enough to support a stance presented in your thesis. That is a trickier question! Instead, this text offers you some guidelines and best practices. Maybe you have two in great depth, or maybe four that explore that one element from the most salient angles. Depending on the length of your paper, you may even have more than that. These are some common places you may find your thesis landing in your paper, but a thesis truly can be anywhere in a text.

Writing Beginnings Beginnings have a few jobs. These will depend somewhat on the purpose of the writing, but here are some of the things the first couple of paragraphs do for your text: They establish the tone and primary audience of your text – is it casual? Geared toward a professional audience already versed in the topic? They introduce your audience to your topic. They give you an opportunity to provide context around that topic – what current conversations are happening around it? Why is it important? They let you show your audience what piece of that bigger topic you are going to be working with in this text and how you will be working with it. They might introduce a narrative, if appropriate, or a related story that provides an example of the topic being discussed. Take a look at the thesis about Katniss once more. There are a number of discussions that you could have about this film, and almost as many that you could have about this film and its intersections with the concept of danger such as corruption in government, the hazards of power, risks of love or other personal attachments, etc.

Writing Middles Middles tend to have a clearer job – they provide the meat of the discussion! Here are some ways that might happen: If you state a thesis early in the paper, the middle of the paper will likely provide support for that thesis. The middle might explore multiple sides of an issue. It might be worth exploring both versions of this specific danger to give the most complete, balanced discussion to support your thesis.

Writing Endings Endings, like beginnings, tend to have more than one job. Here are some things they often need to do for a text to feel complete: Instead, try pointing us back to the main idea in a new way. Tie up loose ends. If you opened the text with the beginning of a story to demonstrate how the topic applies to average daily life, the end of your text is a good time to share the end of that story with readers. Keep the focus clear – this is your last chance to leave an impression on the reader. What do you want them to leave this text thinking about? What action do you want them to take?