# THESIS WRITING 101: TOP TIPS TO EDIT LIKE A PRO

### 1. Plan ahead

The scenario: the deadline of your paper is looming but you're not sure what your angle is, so you start tapping keys, throwing in quotes, and hope for the best. Sound familiar? While this approach might fly in first year, it's a sure way to end up with a hot mess of a thesis. So before you start writing, get crystal clear about your argument, including your conclusion. Set a clear, structured outline and write in sections to ensure a cohesive paper (and a far easier writing experience).

### 2. Back yourself

Don't be the person who loses their entire dissertation while writing the conclusion. Send it to the cloud, USB it, write it in Google Docs, carve it in stone – you follow?

### 3. Set your style

Editors create style sheets to record special terms used by authors, in order to ensure consistency throughout the text. Why not do the same? Keep track of how you've decided to treat technical words, acronyms, and other stylistic elements to deliver a polished paper.

### 4. Have a breather

When you've finally finished writing (HOORAY) put aside your work for a few days before you tackle the edit. Why? Reviewing your work with a fresh mind will allow you to more easily recognise parts that need attention.

### 5. Keep it simple

Academic writing should be formal, yes, but using big words for the sake of it doesn't make you look smart. Using plain, simple language is the most effective way to make a point.

### 6. Important stuff first

Place the most important info first: in other words, cut to chase, then backfill with supporting content. You'll also need to check that your writing is cohesive at every level: every sentence, paragraph, and the document as a whole.

### 7. Be brief

Try to stick to one idea per sentence. It makes your reader's job easier if you give them a pause to digest each idea. Avoid giant sentences – they're not impressive and they'll only frustrate your reader. And if you can say something with three words, don't use ten.

### 8. Print, recite it, fix - resave it

You'd be surprised how many mistakes and issues with flow that you pick up when you read your work out loud. Bonus points if you read from a printed sheet – which will magically reveal things that you glossed over on screen.

### 9. Reference like a BOSS

Yes: recording references is a total punish. But it'll be more painful if you delay the task til later. Print your referencing guide, keep on top of your bibliography from the start, and save yourself a lot of tedium down the track.

### 10. Phone a friend

Ask someone savvy to read your work. Specifically, flick them a highlighter and get them to flag any bits they find confusing or waffly. You'll particularly want to know about anything they had to read more than once to comprehend: re-write those parts! Hint: if your reader is lost you might need to start by simplifying your language and/or shortening your sentences.

# AND FINALLY...

### ✳ Hire a professional!

Because what would a free resource be without a cheeky plug? But seriously, an editor will pick up issues with your writing that you won't, no matter how many times you read your work. Contact me for more info or to request a quote. p

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