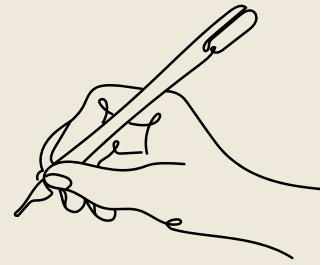


Shut Up & Write Week



By the **PLT section** at University of Twente, reach out to e.nathues@utwente.nl for more information.

Welcome

Welcome to "Shut Up & Write" week, a dedicated time for academics to concentrate on their writing projects. This initiative aims to create a supportive and focused environment for productive writing sessions. Follow the guidelines below to make the most out of this week.



Setting the Scene, on the Long Run

- Set your "Shut Up & Write" weeks at the beginning of the year—for the entire year. That way, people can block these moments in their agendas early on. One session every quarter generally works well.
- For the respective weeks, find a writing space that suits your preferences – whether it's a quiet, solitary room or a shared space with fellow participants. For shared spaces, make sure to make the bookings well in advance to avoid room shortage issues.

Setting the Scene, Short Run Preparations

- Check if your writing space is equipped with a good coffee machine to keep you fueled and focused. If not, make sure to organize one! The same goes for tea and other refreshments. Also, nuts, chocolates, fruits, and other treats are essential to keep up the spirits.
- Set an out-of-office reply for the entire week, indicating your commitment to focused writing time. You can find a sample email to use below.
- Print out posters about the "Shut Up & Write" week and hang them on your door or in common areas.



Hi!

Thank you for contacting me. I am very sorry, but you will not get an answer immediately, and this is why:

I am participating in the Shut Up & Write week of the [XXX] department at [XXX], which means that, as a group, we are focusing on three things: writing, writing, and writing. And not on writing emails but on writing beautiful papers to inform others about the great research we have done. And to make that happen, we collectively have locked ourselves into our rooms without email

I will get back to you next week.

Kind regards,

[XXX]



Week Kick-Off & Define Your Goals

- At the start of the week, clearly outline your writing goals. Be specific about the tasks you want to accomplish. It might also help to check in and check out everyday with the objectives you have and the progress you are making. Break down larger projects into smaller, manageable tasks to maintain focus.
- Combining goal-setting with a group breakfast on Monday is also a really nice way to collectively kick off your "Shut Up & Write" week. Over breakfast, you can discuss your individual goals – that way, you learn more about the exciting things your colleagues are busy with, and you can help each other to stay committed over the course of the week. You could also consider pairing up with a colleague (your accountability buddy) for regular check-ins.



Important Ground Rules

- Embrace imperfection: Understand that the goal is progress, not perfection. Be kind to yourself.
- Don't be afraid to write freely and edit later. The key is to get your ideas down on paper.
- Reading is writing, too!
- Turn off all sorts of distractions! Email software programs, especially, should not be opened! Indeed, avoid checking and responding to emails during writing sessions. Ideally, refrain from looking at emails altogether!
- Minimize meetings to prioritize uninterrupted writing time. If meetings are unavoidable, keep them brief and focused.



Pomodoro Technique

- Utilizing the Pomodoro Technique (25 minutes of focused work followed by a 5-minute break) can really boost your productivity and help you maintain concentration. It is particularly nice to do Pomodoro sprints together with others in the room – that way, you all collectively work in the same rhythm, which creates a great feeling of doing things together, even if you're writing on different papers.
- Of course, feel free to adjust the intervals based on your preferences, but ensure to take real breaks. That does not involve checking your emails or phones! Instead, grab a coffee & cookie, talk to your colleagues, or use the break for small stretch & movement exercises (this will surely also create some laughter!).
- You do need a timekeeper who stops small-talk that extends the breaks and keeps the group going. An app can be of great help to this timekeeper.
- Use longer breaks and lunch breaks for a walk outside to rejuvenate and gain fresh perspectives. You can also consider a 'play' session during one of your lunch or longer break sessions. Be creative, get the good spirits flowing.



Celebrate your achievements

- Conclude the week with a get-together on Friday to celebrate your collective achievements. Share your successes, challenges, and insights with the group over snacks and drinks!



"Shut Up & Write" weeks are a wonderful opportunity to prioritize your writing projects in a focused and supportive environment—and to do so together. Even if you're all writing on different papers, doing it together will create a great team and community feeling. You can enjoy the joys and help each other through the pains of writing together!



Happy Writing!

