

# Perfectionist Writers

## Thesis Camp, UVic

**Perfectionism:** a disposition to regard anything short of perfection as unacceptable; *especially:* the setting of **unrealistically demanding goals** accompanied by a disposition to regard **failure to achieve them as unacceptable and a sign of personal worthlessness.** -Merriam Webster

Seeking some form of perfection in your writing isn't necessarily a bad thing, but at its worst, perfectionism can result in negative outcomes such as procrastination, paralysis, anxiety, and depression.

*Task 1: What is your experience with perfectionism? Does it affect your work in any way? How?*

### Some tips for getting started when perfectionism is getting in the way of putting pen to paper:

1. Construct a dedicated writing spot where all you do is write (but you *can* write elsewhere)
2. Commit to a regular habit of writing, and start small, increasing to two to three hours per day
3. Focus on one thing at a time; avoid "multitasking"
4. Break large tasks into small steps and use time boxes (e.g., Pomodoro 25 minutes)
5. Write the first draft without looking too closely at style, grammar, or punctuation
6. Carry a notebook to jot ideas and reflections
7. Meet frequently with your supervisor; connect with peers; reward yourself for progress

### My ideal writing environment:

Location	
Time of day	
Duration of stay	
Noise level/type of noise	
Other	



**Some tips for deciding whether being “perfect” is worth aiming for:**

- Spelling and citations are non-negotiable. These really DO need to be perfect in a final copy.
- Depending on your discipline, aspects of writing such as grammatical accuracy and academic tone may vary in terms of what is considered “perfect” and “good enough.” Make sure you’re aware of the standards within your own discipline.
- Does your supervisor recommend or require that you hire an editor?
- What is the purpose of this piece of work? Will imperfections prevent it from achieving its purpose? What kinds of imperfections aren’t acceptable? How will you know when it’s good enough?

**How will you set limits for yourself?**

1. When in the writing process will editing will take place?
2. How often will editing occur?
3. How much time will be spent each time?
4. Who else will give feedback, and when?

**What does “pretty darned good” look like to you in terms of outputs and outcomes? What does “perfect” look like? Is it achievable? Is it worth it?**

	<b>PRETTY DARNED GOOD</b>	<b>PERFECT</b>
<b>e.g. Spelling</b>	Under five typos, capitalization errors, or misspelled words per 20 pages	Zero typos, capitalization errors, or misspelled words
<b>Supervisor’s Reaction</b>	Some constructive feedback, a few errors noted, one more revision recommended, with a little help from the CAC for catching punctuation issues and revising introduction for clarity and coherence	Tears of joy, speechlessness, defense waived
<b>Clarity</b>		
<b>Other</b>		

