

# Why is Procrastination Good and Bad for You and Your Writing Process?

By Alexa Prickett

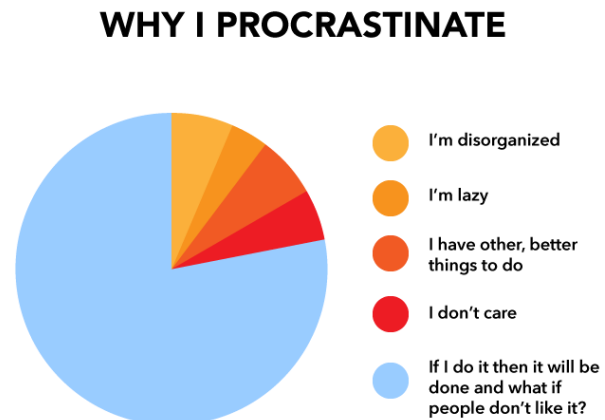
*Understand why you might procrastinate and how it could be helpful or detrimental to you. Also learn some helpful tips!*



Why do you procrastinate? We all do it and it is completely normal! Students all over the world struggle with procrastination and push off the work they must do. Students tend to procrastinate for many different reasons. Some of these reasons include lack of motivation, lack of understanding, trouble concentrating, low energy levels, fear of failure, and many more. We all know that procrastination can be bad for you, but it can also be good for you, especially for your writing process. Procrastinating is something that every student does. I do it, you do it, and I am sure that you can ask any student on any high school or college campus, and they will say the same thing. So, when I was researching, I asked three students at the University of Denver about their work styles and how procrastination can be a good and a bad thing for them, especially in their writing process.

Procrastination can be terrible for students because it can affect your grades, schoolwork, and your health, physical and mental. Studies have shown that students who do their work at the last minute get lower grades. Nolan Feeney from *Time* states, “Of the 777 students involved, 86.1 percent waited until the last 24 hours to turn in work, earning an average score of 64.04... But the average score for the most part continued to drop by the hour, and those who turned in the assignment at the last minute had the lowest average grade of around 59, or around a C+.” If

students continue to procrastinate and get low grades, it can create a bad cycle and lead to low self-confidence and extra stress. Procrastination can be bad for your writing process because it can make you fall behind, have extra work, create more stress, and more.



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Writing papers and essays is hard and writers are more prone to procrastination compared to other people because writing is emotionally and technically difficult. Students always have easy work that they procrastinate because they know it is easy and can do it quickly, but they procrastinate on writing because it's hard and takes a lot of work. Writing is cognitively demanding because you have to write about a certain topic that you need to research on but you also need to be creative. Also, if you are a perfectionist like me, it can be hard to be creative because you want to find the right answer, but writing doesn't always have a right answer. Procrastination makes you fall behind, which leads you to have more work to do later which creates more stress and anxiety. Student B said, "Procrastination is bad for my writing process because when I procrastinate, I hurry to finish my work but then I don't end up having enough time to edit my work and make it perfect." Falling behind can start a snowball effect and if your workload gets larger and larger, and this creates more stress, anxiety, and pressure because you have more work to do without enough hours in the day. Being a student is hard enough and you don't need any more stress and anxiety than what you already have on your plate.



## *Tips to Help You Stop Procrastinating!*

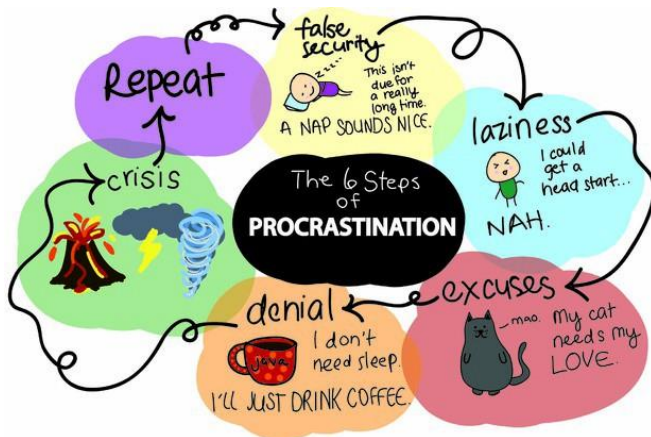
*1. Eliminate Distractions!*

*2. Set Goals!*

*3. Set Deadlines!*

*4. Hold Yourself Accountable!*

*5. Remember to Take a Break and Reward Yourself!*



You always hear about procrastination being bad but don't forget that it can sometimes be good for you too. After procrastinating, you have less time to do your work so sometimes procrastinating can make you more efficient and help you

get more work done. I feel like this is true for me because if I am on a time crunch, I tend to laser focus into my work and get everything done in a timely manner. Procrastination can also be good

because once you are working, you will focus more on what is most important at that moment and you won't distract yourself with other things that aren't as important. Student A said, "Procrastination for me actually works for my writing process because it forces me to focus and hone in on my points so that my writing is clear and concise without unnecessary information." Procrastinating and giving yourself less time to write can allow you to get everything you need down on paper without having to weed through the extra unnecessary fluff.

When you are writing something, procrastination can especially be helpful when you are stuck or in a writer's block. The longer you try to work, the more you will stare at your computer screen and not write anything down and the more time you waste. Procrastinating and taking a break from the writing process is helpful because it can allow you to get into a new headspace and find something to write about. If you are writing a creative piece, it helps you get inspired by the things around you. Staring at your screen or piece of paper doesn't help in making new ideas. You have to create the ideas somewhere else and then put pen to paper. In Donald Murray's article titled, "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product," Murray states, "There must be time for the writing process to take place and time for it to end. The writer must work within the stimulating tension of unpressured time to think and dream and stare out windows, and pressured time-the deadline- to which the writer must deliver" (Murray 6). Giving yourself the time to do something different and letting your eyes see something new can help inspire you and help you make new ideas. For example, when I am stuck on a writing assignment, I like to stop working and either go outside and take a walk or sit under a tree because it allows my brain to take a break and restart before getting back to work. It allows me to have a fresh start and think about new ideas.

One aspect of procrastination that can be good and bad, depending on how you look at it, is binge writing. Binge writing is when you write an entire writing project in one sitting. Binge writing can be good because you are less likely to lose



your train of thought and it helps you be fully immersed in your research and your writing.

Student B said, “Procrastination is good for my writing process because when I am working on something, I like to get it all done in one sitting. If I stop and take a break, I’ll lose my train of thought. Procrastinating ends up working out for me because I’ll only leave myself a little bit of time to finish everything but completing everything in one sitting works well for me.” Binge writing can be bad because as Lynn Dickinson states, “Exclusively binge writing makes it hard to grow as a writer. Tight timelines, or sporadic practice tends to keep writers locked into their current level of writing quality. Once a binge is finished, the work is often submitted without the ideal degree of editing, or is never fully revisited again, because the next ‘binge’ time is focused upon a new project. So, writers who exclusively binge may struggle to improve in their craft.” Binge writing can be a bad procrastination habit because you are less likely to go back to your work and edit it which leads to you being less likely to grow and improve as a writer.

After talking with students at the University of Denver about their procrastination habits, I proceeded to get answers from my interviewees except for one. I talked with Student C one multiple occasions and when I tried to get an answer from them, they procrastinated and delayed their response to me, so I was not able to include it in this piece. Student C is a perfect example of how students procrastinate and how it can be bad for yourself and for others. Procrastinating by not giving an answer might feel good in the meantime because it wasn’t a necessary piece of

work, and it hopefully allowed this student to work on other things that were necessary, but it was unfortunate because they left me with nothing when I needed help on a simple task.

I want to remind you that procrastination is not always a bad thing. Everyone around you might make it sound like you are a terrible student if you procrastinate but it is not true. Yes, procrastination can be good for you, and it can be bad for you. It can make you stressed and possibly make your writing worse, but it can also help you find new ideas to write about and make you more efficient when you are working. No matter if you procrastinate or not, put your best effort into your work and you're writing, and you will receive the results you want to see.

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