The Writing Process

Advice from

Julianne Dalcanton

The Writing Process is Hard
Why can't I write?

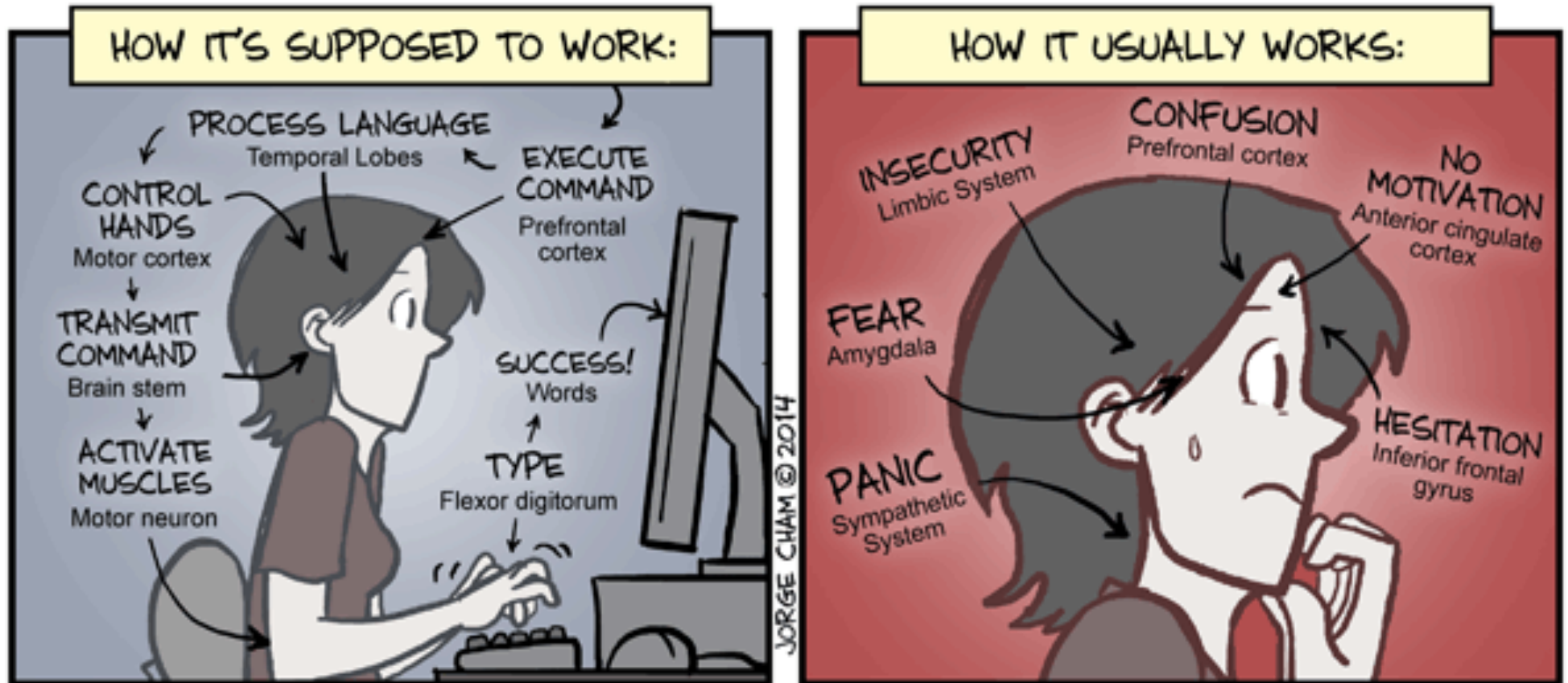http://www.phdcomics.com/comics.php?f=1733

Why Can't I write?

- You're not good at it yet. No one likes to do things they suck at. → NEED TO PRACTICE

- You don't know what to say.

- You don't know how to say what you want to say.

- You *thought* you knew how to say what you want to say, but it's not actually working.

- You are not prioritizing time to write.

- Emotions

http://www.phdcomics.com/comics.php?f=1733

Prioritizing Time to Write

- ~ 200 words per paragraph,
- 1000 words = 5 paragraphs

How long will it take to generate a first draft ?

At a rate of 5 paragraphs per week (1 paragraph per day)

#Pages	#Words	#Paragraphs	#weeks for 1st draft
~5	5,000	25	~ 1 months
~10	10,000	50	~2-3 months
~15	15,000	75	~3-4 months

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FACT: If writing is hard for you, you will always avoid it, and it will never get done, and you will always feel bad.

Schedule it so it happens

At what time of day & at what location are you:

Most effective at writing? Least likely to be interrupted? Least likely to freak out*?

*Julianne wrote her thesis from 7pm-2am, after drinking a glass of wine, because she was too wound up otherwise

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Schedule it so it happens.

Schedule no more than a 1 hour chunk, and don't aim to write more than ~200 words*.

*If you do write more, great! Ride that train! But don't set a goal that sets you up to feel bad.

When you stop writing…

…*always* have a plan for what you want to write in the next session*.

*And write it down in bold-face/color in the document. Future You will thank you.
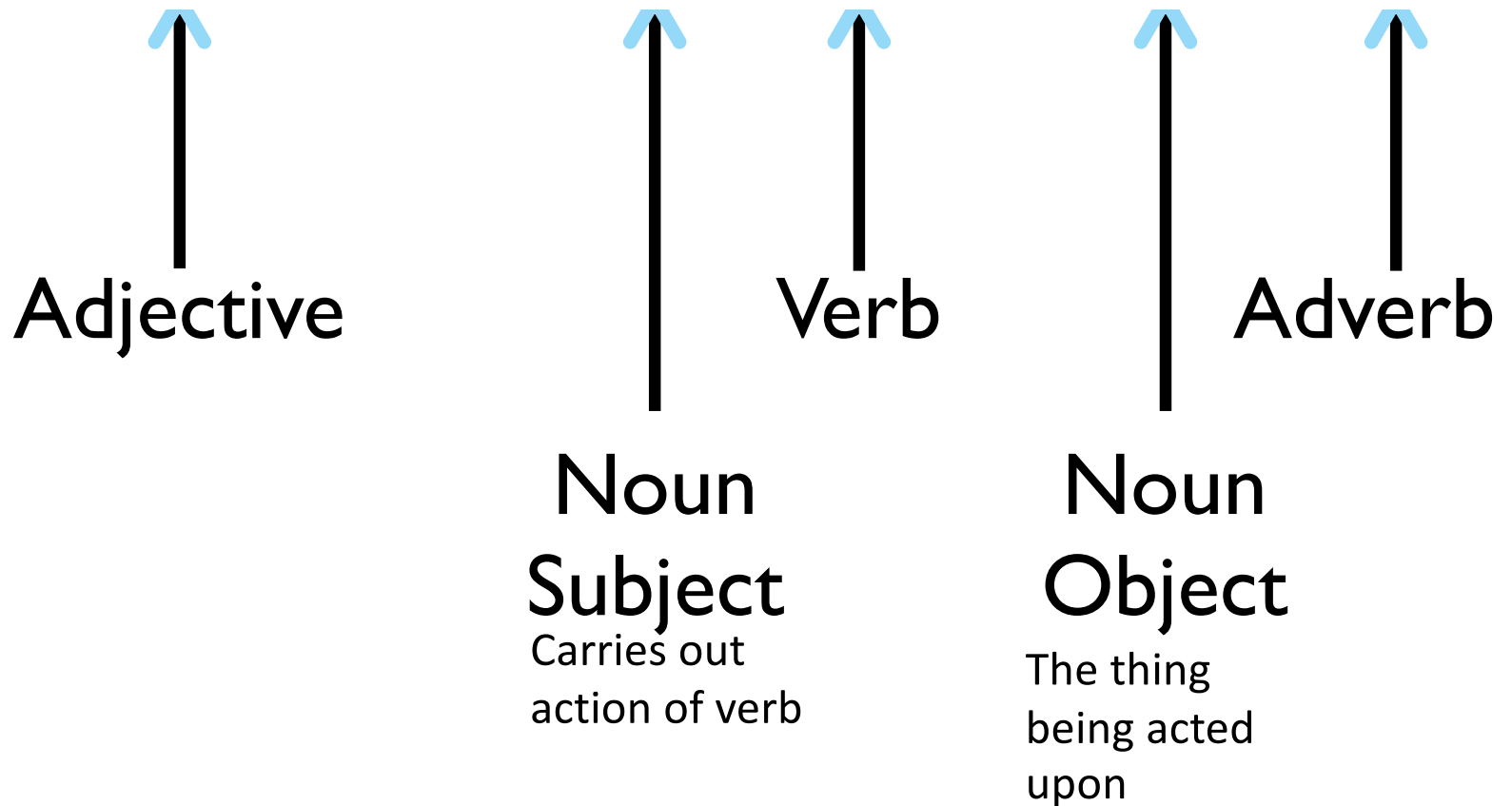
What is the First Draft?

- Not a complete draft
- Not a polished draft
- Not a perfect draft

- Get your thoughts down
- Do not stop to plot or calculate. Use "##TBD##" and move on

"The first draft of anything is shit"
  – Ernest Hemingway

The importance of precision

Any time a text is ambiguous, you slow down the reader.

Their parameterized model fits the data well

Adjective

Verb

Adverb

Noun Subject
Carries out action of verb

Noun Object
The thing being acted upon

Their is an adjective. *The* is a definite article.

"Subject verb object"

- Simple sentence structure is preferred in english scientific writing.

- SUBJECT AND VERB SHOULD BE CLOSE TOGETHER (CRITICAL RULE ONE !!)

Don't do:

"Their parameterized **model**, using seven bells and whistles, each accompanied by their own chimes, **fit** the newly reduced, but still kind of noisy, **data** well."

Clause

A group of words
that include a
subject and a verb

"*I went to the store*, and I left the dog behind."

Independent clause: could stand on its own

Clause

A group of words
that include a
subject and a verb

"I went to the store, *and I left the dog behind.*"

Dependent or subordinate clause:
would make no sense on its own

Commas

- Use punctuation to signal phrases and dependent clauses
- Comma immediately indicates that an idea is *different than or secondary to* the main point of the sentence
- Use commas to separate independent clauses when they are joined by any of these conjunctions: *and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet*

Commas

Use commas after introductory…

Clauses: Especially if they begin with *after, although, as, because, if, since, when, while…*

Phrases: Words that come before the main clause
Yes, However, Although, Well, Indeed,..
In addition, Additionally, In contrast…

Commas

Use commas in the middle to isolate words, phrases, and clauses that are not essential to the meaning.

Parenthetical statements