

What type of writer are you?

Writing is a very individual thing, but there are still characteristics that writing scholars have found in more than one person. Combining characteristics into a "type" is a common procedure in science. We use the classification of writers as a starting point for reflection, because each type of writer has their own strengths and weaknesses.

In considering this question, you are reflecting on your approach to writing and inclinations, in order to learn how to deal with them. It is important to be aware of why you might find some parts of the writing process easier or more difficult. The goal is to address your writing idiosyncrasies, identify and take advantage of writing strategies that work for you, as well as to tackle the various challenges that arise from using different strategies for different types of texts. In this way, it is possible to extend your writing capabilities.

Any type of writer can successfully (learn to) write!

We have adapted the "Berlin writing type test" from Arnold/Chirico/Liebscher. It consists of only four questions, which are based on the writing process. Select an answer for each question. You may wish to choose two answers, however please choose the most applicable.

You can take the test here...

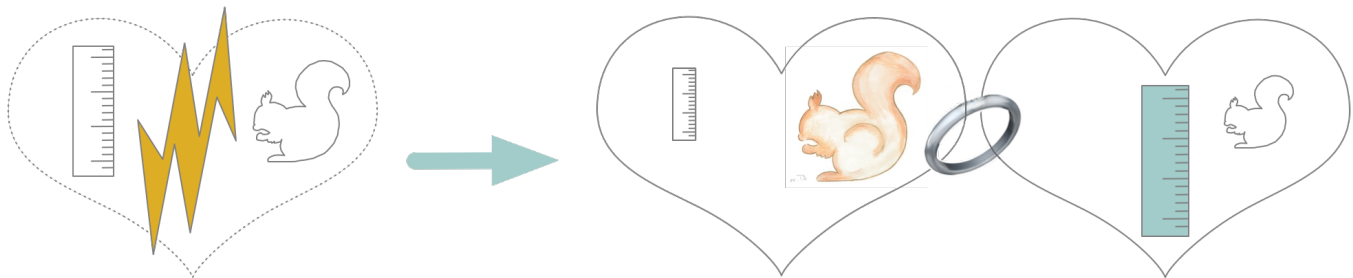
Note: Clicking on the link opens a new window or a second tab. You can therefore switch back and forth between the tabs at the end of the test to compare your result with the evaluations described here.

Evaluation

The writing type test shows you which type or types you are inclined to. 9 out of 10 people are mixed types, i.e. they combine the strengths of several writing types - and have to learn to deal with different challenges accordingly. Read the following descriptions of the writing types and consider how you can use the strengths of the types in a targeted manner.

Especially people who combine several writing types often feel "somehow torn apart".

Example: You are an architect AND a squirrel... In this case, the architect in you demands an outline and a plan for a structured approach. But the squirrel cannot do this and would rather jump back and forth. Then they both argue with each other, which you might perceive as a writing impediment.



You can overcome your writing inhibition yourself by making it clear why you want to do something but cannot. It might then make sense to follow one type of writing for a certain period of time, then make a conscious break and then play to the strengths of the other type of writing. In this way you will succeed (over time) in shaping your writing process in a phased and task-oriented manner.

Types of writer

Adventurer – the ‘free- writer’

- Writes freely without thinking about the structure of the text.
- Develops ideas or the structure of the text whilst writing.
- Uses the writing process to further think about the topic and develop new ideas.
- Slightly digresses from the core topic and sometimes loses orientation whilst writing.
- Constantly reconsiders and changes the text structure during the writing process.

Strengths	Challenges
... writes freely and easily without getting bored.	... wanders slightly off-topic and can lose orientation because of this.
... open to new ideas.	... needs a lot of time to edit the final version of the text.
... optimally produces implicit knowledge through writing freely.	... cannot always foresee the end.
...free thinking allows for continuous inspiration and self-motivation.	
... aware of own progress, which provides sense of security.	

Architect – the ‘planned writer’

- Constructs an outline before formulating text.
- Thoughtfully plans out all aspects of the text in detail.
- Often reluctant to start writing before fully developing ideas.
- Tends to not generate any new ideas once writing process begins.
- Does not write without a clear goal in mind.

Strengths	Challenges
... works well and has a good schedule.	... finds it difficult to move away from first approach or idea.
... maintains a solid comprehension of the common thread of the text.	... prioritises planning, which often means writing can be put on the back burner.
... can describe plan clearly to others.	... only has a result at a late stage in the process.
... can keep track of writing project.	
... can avoid the risk of digression by planning more quickly.	

Squirrel – the ‘patch-work writer’

- Writes and focuses on sections containing the most ideas and motivation.
- Writes different parts of the text at the same time and allows them to develop at a similar pace.
- Often interrupts the writing process to research further information.
- Likes to write small sections of different parts of the text first.
- Feels slightly exhausted when working too long on a given theme.

Strengths	Challenges
... flexible (i.e. starts working on different parts of a text when experiencing a writing block).	... likes to work on difficult steps first.
...divides a large writing project into several small and workable steps.	... cannot always foresee the end.
... avoids the type of crippling perfectionism that can often stunt the writing process.	... can lose sight of the overall project.
...allows for new ways of thinking (thereby avoiding writing blocks).	...tends to formulate content several times.

Decathlete – the ‘persistent writer’

- Constantly and extensively edits text to the point where the original text is hardly recognisable.
- Completely rewrites text once or twice – this is another variant of this type of writer.
- Often finds it difficult to choose between different versions of the same text.

Strengths	Challenges
... can write uninterrupted without encountering a sort of paralysing perfectionism.	... has to part ways with a lot of text (i.e. the various versions of a text that are ultimately not selected).
... writes a lot and provisionally.	... needs to dedicate a lot of time to writing.
... uses writing to think.	... can lose sight of the core purpose of the text by writing too many versions.
... develops thoughts further by reformulating themes observed in the text.	

SOURCES

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