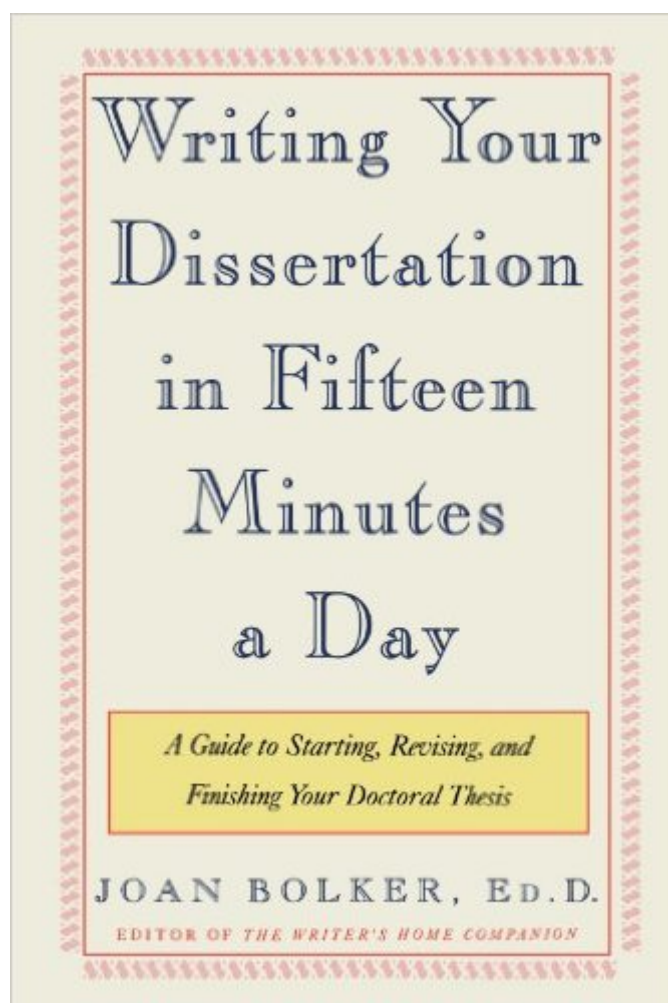


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# Writing Your Dissertation In Fifteen Minutes A Day: A Guide To Starting, Revising, And Finishing Your Doctoral Thesis



## Synopsis

Expert writing advice from the editor of the Boston Globe best-seller, *The Writer's Home Companion*. Dissertation writers need strong, practical advice, as well as someone to assure them that their struggles aren't unique. Joan Bolker, midwife to more than one hundred dissertations and co-founder of the Harvard Writing Center, offers invaluable suggestions for the graduate-student writer. Using positive reinforcement, she begins by reminding thesis writers that being able to devote themselves to a project that truly interests them can be a pleasurable adventure. She encourages them to pay close attention to their writing method in order to discover their individual work strategies that promote productivity; to stop feeling fearful that they may disappoint their advisors or family members; and to tailor their theses to their own writing style and personality needs. Using field-tested strategies she assists the student through the entire thesis-writing process, offering advice on choosing a topic and an advisor, on disciplining one's self to work at least fifteen minutes each day; setting short-term deadlines, on revising and defing the thesis, and on life and publication after the dissertation. Bolker makes writing the dissertation an enjoyable challenge.

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## Customer Reviews

This book was extremely helpful. I bought this book about 9 months ago when I had only 2 chapters of my doctoral dissertation done. Now I am done with my dissertation (500 pages!) and about to graduate with a Ph.D. in anthropology. The tips and suggestions in this book were fantastic, and the

tone of the book is very positive, unlike other dissertation-writing books I've read. Whenever I didn't feel like writing, I would go to Joan Bolker's book, and usually within a few minutes of reading, I would find something that would inspire me to write again. I would recommend this book to anyone trying to complete a writing project of any kind.

The subtitle for this book is probably the more telling about the contents. This book is more of a guide to the whole process of writing the dissertation rather than the physical act of writing. Bolker discusses the writing as well as choosing a topic, choosing an advisor for your dissertation, and choosing a committee for your dissertation defense. Covered in the book are some of the psychological barriers that can hinder your finishing the dissertation, and some pitfalls to avoid (such as political battles with your advisor). The primary thought is to develop the habit of writing. Some of the ideas may sound familiar to you, but they are no less true. Bolker states that you must develop the habit of writing everyday if you are going to build up the stamina and fortitude to completing the task. She does suggest a support group to assist in this. The biggest draw for this book, for me, was that Bolker is an authority. She started two dissertations, one of which she did not finish. She has also worked with many students in writing their dissertations, and she knows from experience what works and what doesn't (she points out a problem that can arise from writing solely on the computer). I would recommend this book to anyone beginning the journey to finishing a dissertation. Do not take this information lightly.

It is a required textbook for a dissertation/thesis writing class at my university. Students have to read the whole book before the class begin. Although English is my second language, I found this book is easy to understand and fun to read. No jargon or classy words are used. The writer is a clinical psychologist whose specialty in helping blocked writers. She writes with humor and kindness. She nicely applies her experience in helping her students in this book. Her suggestions are very practical and helpful. It helps me cope with psychological problems that I believe many dissertation writers have faced. When I read this book, it always tells me that "hey, you are not alone". It really gives me a sense of supporting group. The book gives many tactics in "how to be" persistent and resilient in working/writing toward the graduation day which is the ultimate goal for every student. It also provides many helpful tips in "how to live" your life (or survive) during this critical period of getting the degree. It is not a book that tell you what to include in each chapter or how to pick suitable methods in your research. If you look for that kind of book, I would recommend "Surviving Your Dissertation, 2ed" instead. These two books are very worth to read together. FYI: There are some

other writing books that might be useful for you.1) Writing for social scientists (Howard Becker)2) Writing papers in the biological sciences (Victoria McMillan)3) Scientific papers and presentations (Martha Davis)\*\*\*Chapter 9 of this book says, "The Best Dissertation is a Done Dissertation". It is absolutely true.\*\*\*

When I first saw the book a strong urge came over me to get it. My inner critic said, what for? You're not a Phd candidate. Sure, you're writing a paper for a masters program but it isn't the same as a dissertation. Don't waste your money. The argument was sound but the book's call was much stronger. I purchased it. It was the best investment that I had made. Whether you are a Phd candidate trying to get your dissertation done or a wannabe intimidated by the thought of having to write one, this book must be on your required reading list! If you have successfully completed high school, college and graduate school (masters level) then you have already written your fair share of papers. You have the technical and disciplined skills to write. Well then, what is the problem in doing a dissertation? Bolker teaches one about learning how to develop a process of writing that is best for you. Once done she moves you from the process to the basic mechanics of getting the dissertation done. It is never too late in getting a head start on learning how to finish your doctoral thesis even before you are accepted into a Phd program. Start Now! The book is a tremendous stimulator.

As a Ph.D. student, I had been searching for this kind of book to guide me in the most daunting portion of the doctoral program--the completion of a doctoral dissertation. Bolker's sensible approach helps assuage the pain and the fear of the unknown. The title itself gives you the real key to writing a great dissertation: finish one or two pages a day, and in six months to a year you can have a 365-page thesis completed. Do yourself a favor: while taking your dissertation-proposal class, read this book and share it with your fellow candidates.

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