

Group Work Guide

There are many ways to structure your group work! Here are some possibilities:

- **Synchronous writing:** the entire team meets synchronously (in person or online) to write document together; roles are assigned for typing/giving input
 - Great for: efficiently sharing ideas/information; brainstorming & debate; drafting plans, outlines & task schedules; discussion design & format
 - Challenges: finding a meeting time that works for everyone; inefficient drafting of content, equalizing input; interactions online may be less effective
- **Divided Writing:** each team member is assigned a particular section of the document
 - Great for: completing work on a time crunch
 - Challenges: Minimal collaboration; content likely to contain gaps/inconsistencies/repetition; style can suffer from inconsistent tone, word choice, and writing quality
- **Layered:** each person is assigned one or more specific roles (eg. planner, copy editor, designer); each person works on the document in turn, adding their expertise. The document slowly accumulates in layers as each member revises and improves upon what is already there
 - Great for: Helps ensure a high-quality project because everyone has multiple opportunities to contribute, critique, and revise; Maximizes contributions of all members; Particularly effective for drafting and revising
 - Challenges: Different team members' roles may require unequal effort; Requires thoughtful planning up front: some team members may feel anxious spending so much time planning

Tips for Success:

- **Effective Communication:** This is the most foundational element for group success
 - Make yourself available, good communication can't happen if you aren't communicating
 - Make sure everyone has a chance to contribute and is being heard
 - Misunderstandings in communication often lead to interpersonal conflict: take a deep breath and refocus on the work
 - Talk to your Professor to make sure you understand the assignment fully
 - Check-in with your group regularly to make sure everyone is on track
 - Give and accept feedback non-defensively
 - Agree upon roles and responsibilities
- **Revision/Peer Review:**
 - Revising your work makes it stronger
 - Gives you a chance to talk about the work which strengthens your understanding of the material
 - Offers a chance to check in and make sure everything is consistent (particularly helpful if you're using Divided Writing approach)
 - Opportunity to give and receive positive feedback!

Looking for a group tutoring session with an Undergraduate Writing Center tutor? Contact our director, Sheila Boland Chira, with your availability: sbolandc@uvm.edu.