

WRITING WITH A SCRATCHPAD: A 5-MINUTE TUTORIAL

SCRATCHPAD: THE “WHY?”

Cutting down is a BIG part of editing.

Parsimony is key to good writing.

But cutting down can be painful when we have invested time, energy, and passion into our writing.

The scratchpad helps alleviate this “pain point.”

The idea is to move your writing, not delete it.

SCRATCHPAD: THE “HOW?”

Like bracketing, this is a very simple strategy.

For any essay you write, you can create a corresponding “Scratchpad” document.

Simply create it the start, then freely copy-paste writing between the main document and the scratchpad.

You may want to create separate scratchpads for different themes or topics.

SCRATCHPAD: THE “WHEN?”

You may want to use your scratchpad in the following scenarios:

- When you want to cut words but feel stressed about “wasted” time and effort;
- When you think a passage might fit better in a different part of your essay, or in a different essay;
- When you want to rewrite a passage (but want to keep the original for reference).

SCRATCHPAD EXERCISE

- In this exercise, you will selectively move passages of text from an essay to a 'scratchpad' to form an essay that is more concise and focused, but still coherent.
- You may move text back and forth between the essay and the scratchpad at will.
- Make sure to save your results at the end.