

# Journal: Keep track of what you're doing

Here are a couple of samples:

Feb 20, 2026:

I spent three hours in the basement of the library today. If "liminal spaces" had a headquarters, this would be it. I've realized that my initial topic—*how architecture affects learning*—was way too broad. My professor, Dr. X, told me I was trying to write a decade-long dissertation in twelve weeks. Fair point.

I'm pivoting to focus specifically on artificial vs. natural lighting in the campus libraries.

- The Big Question: Does the "cozy" incandescent lighting in the old West Wing actually help students focus better than the "interrogation-style" fluorescents in the Science Lab?
- The Struggle: Most of the existing literature is about office productivity, not 2:00 AM cram sessions.
- **Next**: I need to find a way to survey students without being "that weird person" staring at people while they study.

**Note to self**: Check if the university facilities department has blueprints or lighting specs. Also, stop buying \$7 lattes; this research is getting expensive.

Mar 4, 2026

The "Mid-Semester Slump" is real, and it is currently affecting my data. I've been tracking occupancy levels and self-reported "focus scores" in three different zones.

Data collected today:

- **Zone A (Natural Light)**: 90% capacity. Students look productive but also like they're posing for a "Dark Academia" photoshoot.
- **Zone B (Fluorescent/Basement)**: 40% capacity. Everyone looks like they've seen a ghost or hasn't slept since the Obama administration.

**The Pivot (Again)**: I found a 2022 study (details below) that suggests *blue light* actually increases alertness but wrecks sleep cycles. Now I'm wondering if the "bad" lighting is actually better for short-term retention even if it feels miserable. My data is starting to contradict my hypothesis that "comfy = better."

- **Roadblock:** I tried to interview a senior about their study habits, and they just pointed at their third Red Bull and shook their head.
- **Immediate Task:** Re-read the chapter on "Correlational vs. Causal Relationships" because I'm definitely confusing the two.

What to include in the journal?

1. What work did you do (summary only)
2. Include any resources used (did you look up a new reference, for example).
3. Finish with a "to-do" list- In the journal above, the writer included "roadblocks", and "next task". This will help you when you pick up the paper again.