

Introduction

This work test is designed to help figure out whether writing/research at 80k is likely to be a great fit for you. The tasks approximate several parts of the role and so should give you a good sense of what the work is like, and also give us a sense of how well suited you might be to it.

The three tasks all relate to improving an 80,000 Hours article (which is provided below). They are to: (A) make a plan to enrich the article by looking into relevant research questions, (B) revise it to improve the writing, and (C) write an introduction & conclusion for it. The article aims to help our audience pursue careers that tackle the world's most pressing problems.

Please complete the work test in a **maximum of 3 hours (it is fine to use less time)**, starting from when you read the more detailed task description on page 3 of this document. This is to ensure the work test doesn't take too much of anybody's time and the results are comparable between candidates. Please keep track of the time you spend using a timer. We'll ask you to report how long you spent in the submission form.

You can use any knowledge you already have plus any tools that you would have access to during a normal work day (e.g. Grammarly, Google, and AI tools), but please don't ask another person for help.

Making your document & submitting your test

We'd like to do a 'blind' assessment of the work test. Please follow the instructions below to complete the test:

1. When you are ready to start, make a copy of this document (click "File" -> "Make a copy").
2. Add your Candidate ID (which you should have received in the email that invited you to do this work test) to the beginning of the file name of the Google Doc.
3. Change the sharing settings of your copy of the document to allow anyone with the link to have 'Editor' access (click "File" -> "Share" -> "Share with others").
4. Write your Candidate ID at the top of the test section below.
5. When you're finished, copy the link to the Google Doc and paste it into the Google Form you received a link to in the email that invited you to do this work test.

We look forward to getting a better sense of how you work and think!

Scroll to page 3 below to start the work test.

Work task

Please start your timer now.

Task description

This whole task is focused on improving the short 80,000 Hours article [How to balance impact with doing what you love](#). For the purposes of this task, improving means:

1. Increasing the extent to which it lives up to our *house style* — the prose style we aim to achieve:

House style: easy to follow, plainspoken, evidence-based where possible, honest, cogent, succinct, and stylistically engaging (e.g. using concrete examples, humour, and/or punchy language).

2. Making it more likely to be **useful** for helping our target audience successfully pursue high impact careers:

Target audience: people aged ~18-30 who are unusually analytical, ambitious, and altruistic, and already interested in doing more good with their careers. They are *not* necessarily familiar with or involved in effective altruism, or any related communities or ideas.

(A) Research planning to enrich the article

Plan to expand the article via research.

There is a copy of the article [below](#) – read that first. Then:

- Decide on a list of 3 questions you think it'd be particularly useful to investigate in order to improve the article, imagining that you'll have only up to ~25 hours to use total.¹
 - a. Explain why you chose those questions – how would (realistically reachable) answers enrich the article for our target audience? How might you integrate your findings into the text?
 - b. Give an indication of how you'd try to figure out the answers to each of your 3 questions in the 25 hours.
 - i. Methods can include looking for insights in academic or non-academic written works or other media, interviewing people, conducting surveys, analyses, literature reviews, or any other method.
 - ii. **These don't need to be detailed plans.** We're looking for a sentence or two to show how you'd go about this.

¹ The point of specifying '25 hours' is not to get you to think about precise time estimates, but rather to emphasise that these should be fairly shallow dives into tractable questions, rather than original, academia-style research that can take weeks, months, or years.

- Write your questions, your explanations, and how you'd look into them below the copy of the article, [here](#).
- Feel free to also add any comments/context that you feel will be helpful. For example, if you think one of the questions is way more important than the others, or if you're not sure it's tractable to get a useful answer to one of the questions but think it's worth a shot because it'd be particularly helpful if so, etc.

What we're looking for:

- Research directions that would improve the article's usefulness for the audience and would be good / reasonable ideas to look into & write about, as well as promising thoughts on how to do so.

(B) Revising the article

Give suggestions to the author, aiming to help them improve the structure, reasoning, and prose style.

Make your suggestions directly in the copy of the article [below](#).

Turn on 'suggesting' mode. (Under the 'Share' button in the top right hand corner, you'll see a pencil icon — click that and choose 'suggesting' from the drop-down menu.)

Then suggest whatever revisions to the article you think would most improve the prose style and reasoning.

- You can make your suggestions for changes to the text in-line and/or use comments ('Insert' > 'Comment' / cmd-option-m / ctrl-alt-m).
- You can add and subtract entire paragraphs, rewrite things, change individual words, change the title, add links, etc.
- If you have a suggestion you think is promising but you're not sure it'd be an improvement (e.g. it would require looking something up), or it's not obvious how it would be an improvement and requires a bit of explanation, that's fine — just explain in a comment.
- There is no target word count, but more succinct is better.
- The more concrete and actionable your suggestions are, the better (e.g. using suggestion mode to suggest a rewrite of a sentence in text is more useful than a comment noting that the sentence should be re-written).

What we're looking for:

- Concrete suggestions that would genuinely improve the prose style (consistent with our [house style](#)), structure, or reasoning.

(C) Writing an introduction & conclusion

Draft a short introduction and conclusion to the article.

The purpose of the introduction is to make people in our target audience want to read the rest of the article (without being false or sensationalistic). You may want to use a "hook" (e.g. a story, mystery, or statistic) to draw the reader's attention.

The purpose of a conclusion is to leave the reader with a sense of what they might do next / feel inspired to take action, or to make the points in the article more memorable so they stick with the reader. (The purpose is *not* necessarily to 'sum things up'.)

You can take a look at examples in other 80,000 Hours articles if you'd like:

- [Problem profile: Positively shaping artificial intelligence](#)
- [Career guide article: Can one person make a difference?](#)

The introduction and conclusions should each be ~40–150 words. You should put them where it says "[your introduction here]" & "[your conclusion here]" at the start and end of the article copy [below](#).

What we're looking for:

- Text that would serve the purposes of an introduction / conclusion for the piece well for our [target audience](#)
- High quality writing consistent with our [house style](#)

Your work below:

How to balance impact with doing what you love

By Benjamin Todd · Published September 2021

[Your introduction here]

We think there's less tension between the two than is often supposed. Finding work you excel at and that helps others [is fulfilling](#), and many of our readers say they've become happier in the process. Moreover, you'll have a greater impact if you do what you love and what fits with your personal life, because you'll have a greater chance of excelling in the long term. So enjoying your work and having an impact are often mutually supportive goals. This said, sometimes conflicts do arise. For instance, the higher-impact path may involve working harder than would be ideal for your happiness, or it can involve taking the risk of trying out several paths that don't go anywhere. How to handle these conflicts is a difficult issue.

We may live in a uniquely important time in history, with the opportunity to influence the development of new technologies that could impact the long-term future and reduce existential risks. We also have many other opportunities to help others a great deal with comparatively little cost to ourselves. This motivates some of our readers to make impartially doing good the main focus of their careers. Some philosophers, [such as Peter Singer](#), have argued that we have a moral obligation to do so.

However, most of our readers see 'making a difference' in [the way we've outlined](#) as one among several important career goals, which may include other moral aims, supporting a family, or furthering other personal projects.

Whatever your views on this topic, we think it's important to take seriously the risk of burning out if one engages in too much self-sacrifice. Even if your only career goal were to make a difference, you should probably be aiming to contribute sustainably over your entire 40-year career. This means it's important to cultivate self-compassion and take a path in which you'll be motivated for the long term.

What's more, one of the biggest ways to have more impact is to inspire others to contribute, and this is much easier when you're enjoying your life and career because you do what you love.

One technique that can be helpful is setting a target for how much energy you want to invest in personal vs. altruistic goals. For instance, our co-founder Ben sees making a difference as the top goal for his career and forgoes 10% of his income. However, with the remaining 90% of his income, and most of his remaining non-work time, he does whatever makes him most personally happy. It's not obvious this is the best tradeoff, but having an explicit decision means he doesn't have to waste attention and emotional energy reassessing this choice every day, and can focus on the big picture.

[Your conclusion here]

Research questions to improve the article, why you chose them, and how you might go about investigating them

1. Question:
 - a. Why you chose this:
 - b. Indication of how you'd look into it:
2. Question:
 - a. Why you chose this:
 - b. Indication of how you'd look into it:
3. Question:
 - a. Why you chose this:
 - b. Indication of how you'd look into it:

Any free text context/comments (optional):

How long did you spend on this work test?

[Write in here when done.]