

## WRITING CENTER

### Writer's Block

The most promising method of overcoming writer's block is to figure out the cause of blocking and then address it. If you find yourself in the midst of a writer's block, try one of these strategies:

#### Set realistic goals

Pushing yourself to do too much during a certain amount of time can often trigger writer's block. If you become overwhelmed with a task, it is hard to write at all. If you feel that goals are a necessity in your composing process, make sure that they are attainable. To set realistic goals, avoid comparing yourself to other, faster writers and determine a timetable that works for you.

#### Make notes

Writing down your thoughts about a subject before you begin composing is helpful in eliminating writer's block. Doing so not only gives you a chance to jot ideas down before you forget them but also provides a written plan that will aid you in developing the direction of your paragraphs. These preliminary notes should be written in a format that works best for you, whether it is a chart, box, drawing, web, or outline.

#### Take a break

Writer's block can sometimes be overcome through a simple break, whether it be a few hours or a few days. However, before beginning the break, it is important to establish a date and/or time when you will continue writing. During the break, you should not think about writing. Rather, engage yourself in something enjoyable. In returning to the writing with a fresh perspective, you may find that the writer's block has vanished.

#### Free-writing

If you believe that your writer's block may be caused by a dislike of the topic you are working on, put it aside and write something that you take pleasure in. Merely write whatever comes into your head, even if you must write that you cannot think of anything to write. Free-writing can consist of writing about your memories, describing what is around you, or working on a piece that you have previously set aside. After you have written something you take pleasure in, perhaps your mind will be clearer and you will find it easier to go back to the project that you are having trouble with.

#### WIRMI

When you find yourself stuck looking for a particular word or phrase, use the acronym WIRMI (What I Really Mean Is) and proceed saying your sentence the way you are thinking it. Then, continue writing the rest of the paper. When the paper is complete, go back and examine the section that you were having trouble with. Often,

once you have an idea of what you mean, it is easier to perfect the phrasing. If you are still experiencing problems, use a thesaurus or talk with a tutor or friend.

## Piecework

Many times, it is easier to start writing a paper from the middle. Begin with a section that you feel confident about discussing. To write the paper in this manner is perfectly fine. After you have acquired enough confidence, you can go back and smooth out the sections that you were having trouble with. After all, the reader will not be able to tell that the paper was written “out of order.”

## Talk the paper

This method requires a partner who is willing to take some time to listen to you talk about your topic and whose goal is to aid you in beginning your writing. The partner can be a friend, spouse, teacher, or tutor. This method is helpful because we generally feel more comfortable, initially, talking about a topic than writing about it. Considering this, we will feel more like we are telling someone about the subject of our paper, rather than satisfying the terms of an assignment.

## Relax

Entering a state of relaxation is an effective method of overcoming writer's block. Allowing yourself to become stressed out about the blocking only makes it worse. No writer is immune to the curse of writer's block, so keep in mind that you are not alone. The important factor in dealing with writer's block is the manner in which you handle it. Remember, you should control the block; it should not control you.

## Work with a tutor

Sometimes, it helps to get another point of view. In addition to asking you probing and thought-provoking questions about your topic, tutors can answer your questions about brainstorming, organizing, formatting, developing a thesis and much more. If you would like to see a tutor, feel free to make an appointment or visit the Writing Center as a walk-in.

This handout was compiled using several Internet websites that discuss Writer's Block.