

Overcoming Writer's Block

All writers experience some form of writer's block at some point.

Here are some questions to clarify what your block might be...

- What type of writing is this? Have you ever written anything like this before?
- When do you get stuck? Prewriting? During writing? Revising?
- What do you do when you get stuck?
- Do you follow a pattern of writing or steps for writing? What conditions help?
- Have you been stuck before? If so, what did you do to get unstuck? How did you feel?
- What do you already have? What do you know you can do?

Here are some situations you may encounter and possible ways to overcome them.

Attitudes about Writing

(“I hate writing.” “I can’t do this.” “I always get bad grades.” “The teacher doesn’t like me.” “When am I going to use this?” “Why does this matter?”)

- Remember, there is always some reason for writing.
- If you experience anxiety about writing, try to reframe negative attitudes into positive ones. Replace “I only have two weeks to write this thing” with “I can spend the next few days polishing”
- Try to think of the paper as a series of small assignments that may seem less overwhelming. (Ex: First Assignment: develop a thesis statement. Next Assignment: write an introduction, etc.)
- Think of writing as something you enjoy and look forward to. Try to like your topic and/or believe in what you are writing. Shape your thesis statement or analysis around a topic/idea that you really believe in.
- Reward yourself for getting work done.

Strategies for Writing

(Not knowing different methods for approaching writing assignments)

- Talk to someone about what you are writing. Sometimes simply having a conversation is the best way to flush out an idea.
- You may be able to articulate what you want to say, but find it difficult to write. In this case, try asking a friend/family member/roommate to take notes as you explain what you want to write. If no one is available, you can speak to a Writing Center Consultant or speak into a tape-recorder and then write down what you said.
- If you have a new type of assignment that you have never written before, try a new approach to prewriting or getting started. Some methods of planning work better than others for specific purposes.