

TIPS FOR MANEUVERING WRITER'S BLOCK

Writer's block can generally be described as a pause or "hesitation" in one's writing flow. This pause can take place in any stage of writing, but what causes it is often specific to the individual writer themselves. Writer's block impacts everyone uniquely, and it often changes in its presentation from project to project. Writer's block is a common issue, so ignoring it is almost forcing yourself to skip over an important step while writing.

Tips and Tricks:

With this in mind, instead of trying to "get over" your writer's block you can instead try to work alongside it. Here are a few suggestions for how to maneuver yourself out of this "rut" and move forward with your work.

Taking a break: Sometimes stepping away is the best thing you can do. Whether this is five minutes or the next day, a bit of distance often puts your writing in a new perspective. Here are some things you can do during a break:

- **Standing, stretching, and moving your body:** Most writers sit while they work, and staying still for too long not only stagnates your muscles, but your mind. Stepping away and moving your body is a great way to get your brain neurons firing again, pulling yourself out of the rut. This movement can be as short and small as trying to touch your toes, or as long as taking a walk.
- **Read/watch a show/listen to a podcast:** Absorbing pieces of media unrelated to your work will often give your brain the boost it needs to keep going. While it may feel counter productive at first, writing is hard work— it takes a lot of effort. Allowing yourself to partake in something you enjoy for half an hour refreshes your mind, giving you new space to generate the energy you need for pushing forward.
- **Eat/drink something:** Refueling your body gives your mind the energy it needs to keep working! Another tool which could be considered "stepping back", getting yourself a meal or a treat provides your brain a sense of novelty as well as a resource of energy to help break up the block. You could continue working as you eat/drink, or could take a few minutes away! Whatever feels right for you at that moment.

Brainstorming: On the opposite end of "stepping away" is continuing to write despite the feeling. A good way to do this is timing yourself, giving a set amount of time to see if the block goes away, and if not reshifting to another tool. Normally recommended on a blank piece of paper, brainstorming is a great way of visually seeing ideas and connecting them to others. And remember, the [WCC](#) is happy to help you brainstorm and work with you to get your ideas down on the page!

- **Info Dumping:** If you're feeling stuck, sometimes taking a moment to throw all you know/want to talk about on a page is refreshing and helps you see what directions you can go next.
- **Freewriting:** Another way of doing this is by putting down whatever comes to mind, no matter if it is good or bad. It can be online, or on a physical piece of paper. The key is to keep writing until the writing flow has been restored—only concerning yourself with editing or connecting it back to your work later.

Researching a related idea: Shifting focus can help unstick your mind. Feeling stuck in repetitive thoughts and concepts is not strange when working on a project, so getting online and researching your topic/a similar topic (or stopping by the [Research Desk](#) to get help from the librarians!) is helpful for staying “on task” while stretching your thoughts.

Jumping into a new section: One way to restore the flow of writing is to approach various sections of your work in a non-linear way. If you are struggling with the introduction, move onto a body paragraph you feel interested or confident in. Struggling with a body paragraph? Move onto another one, or the conclusion/introduction. This can also be a helpful tool while in the editing stage! In re-shifting your focus, you allow a more free-flowing workspace to grow and for your block to work itself out through the process.

Returning to past sections to revise/re-read: Another way of re-shifting is to look at sections you have already created for your project. Sometimes returning to completed work gives you the inspiration or re-aligning needed to continue on. Engaging with this completed content can help generate something new while also staying productive!

Change location/writing method: A change of pace is occasionally just what is needed to pull yourself out of a writing slump. In getting up and moving to a new location, or even just changing the medium of how you write, you change what your brain is expecting and therefore dislodges it from whatever train track of thought it was stuck on.

Talk with others: When you're stuck, a second opinion never hurts! See if you can meet with a [WCC consultant](#), or even a friend, to talk about your work and get another set of eyes on your writing. Oftentimes others see things we might miss after working on a project for so long, and provide new ideas for you to bounce off of in your next stage of writing. This input is extraordinarily helpful in moments where you feel like you do not know where to go!

Conclusion:

While writer's block can halt your progress in a particular piece, do not take this pause to heart. It does not make you a bad writer— oftentimes, it signals the complete opposite! Take a deep breath when you start to feel the block's creeping approach to your writing, and know that you will be able to work alongside this. Try out some of the tips suggested, or even try and come up with something that works especially for you!

Other Resources:

[WCC Writers Block Virtual Workshop](#)

[The Truth About Writers Block Essay](#)

[How Perfectionism Gets in the Way of Good essay Writing](#)