**Writer’s Block**

When people experience “writer’s block,” they feel an inability to write; however, they are capable of writing. Writer’s block comes from a fear or anxiety of some aspect of writing. Once the fear causing the problem is identified, there are several strategies writers can use to become “unblocked.”

### 6 Causes of Writer’s Block and Strategies to Beat Them

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<th>Causes</th>
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| Unrealistic expectations of yourself (“perfectionist”) | • Recognize that even the most experienced writers have bad first drafts. (As Ernest Hemingway said, “The first draft of anything is shit.”)  
• Don’t try to do everything at once. (Don’t edit while you draft.)  
• Engage in the writing process: Prewrite, draft, revise, draft, revise, draft…. |
| You feel like you have nothing to say | • Brainstorm and pre-write (use CLAS’s “Prewriting Techniques” handout).  
• Talk to someone—a friend, tutor, or TA—about the topic.  
• Do some research and make a list of things you find interesting. |
| An unfamiliar form of writing       | • Think of something you’re good at, the first time you did it, and how you improved. Try to apply those same strategies and mindset.  
• Look at examples. Replicate the conventions (but not the content).  
• Refer to the assignment sheet often and discuss concerns with your grader. |
| Fear of criticism                   | • Ask someone you feel comfortable with (like a CLAS tutor!) for feedback before turning it in.  
• Give yourself time to respond to feedback so you can write another draft.  
• Recognize and give yourself credit for things you’ve done well. |
| Concerned about time                | • Break the task into steps and set yourself a timeline for accomplishing them.  
• Set aside writing time in your schedule/calendar (use CLAS’s Weekly Schedule). |
| You don’t understand the assignment | • Analyze the assignment in detail (use CLAS’s “Assignment Analysis” handout).  
• Ask questions of your professor, TA, or classmates.  
• Look at examples. |
| If these don’t work, try…           | • changing where you write (library, home, coffee shop),  
• changing how you write (pen, pencil, computer), or  
• writing anything at all (journal, poem, short story) just to get the writing juices flowing. |