



Graduate Online Writing Studio

Tips to Break Writer's Block

Do you struggle to begin or complete a research paper? Many writers experience writer's block—staring at a blank page and ready to give up. These strategies should help you break through writer's block and finish your assignment.

Strategies to Get Started

1. **Free write:** Sometimes it can be hard beginning an assignment because we have an unrealistic need for our work for perfection. Accept imperfection and allow yourself to write words on a page that you can revise later. Adjust your expectations for the first draft.
2. **Break down large writing assignments into increments:** Remove the pressure to finish an essay in one attempt. On your calendar, mark your final deadline and plan out your essay in reverse, so you have smaller, more attainable goals.
3. **Write everyday:** Set aside a designated time for writing, so you can feel mentally and emotionally prepared to write. If you can, write at the same time every day. Even if you only have a little time throughout the day, take the opportunity to brainstorm or write a few thoughts down.
4. **Take a break and talk about your ideas:** If you struggle with how to begin your research paper, discuss the paper topic aloud with yourself, a friend, or your professor. When we speak, we naturally communicate the important points first to make ideas digestible for our audience. Note how you begin discussing your topic and the points you emphasized and use that as a starting point for how to structure your writing.
5. **Make an Outline:** If full sentences feel too daunting, consider organizing your ideas in bullet points first to give you more direction and confidence in your paper.
6. **Maintain Perspective:** Remember that your assignment is just one step in deepening your knowledge and furthering your education. Try not to feel like you need to master the subject on your own and be empowered to utilize resources like your professor's office hours and the writing studio for help.