

Overcoming Writer's Block

Below are some tips and ideas for overcoming writer's block:

- Is more research needed? If you feel that you do not have enough information to form a relevant and coherent response to the question, you may need to return to the research stage and do some more reading.
- If you're stuck on a particular section of your essay or assignment, it can sometimes be helpful to move on to work on another section and then return to it at a later stage.
- Take a break from writing your draft and do something else that's productive: such as editing or checking that your references are formatted correctly.
- Create a timetable for the writing task with small writing targets so you get a motivating sense of achievement as these are accomplished.
- Write by hand for a while if staring at the computer screen has become demoralising (but return to keyboard use as soon as the block has passed, as this speeds-up the writing process).
- Find a new writing location if necessary.
- Change your approach to writing. Rather than writing continuously and coherently, try listing key points instead. Then order these and flesh out with connecting words and phrases, sign-posting, relevant references and quotations and any additional information.
- Try to write in short bursts to get back into the habit of writing if procrastination is the problem. Francesco Cirillo's Pomodoro Technique, a productivity booster, might help:
 1. Select a task to be accomplished (a paragraph, for example).
 2. Set the Pomodoro to 25 minutes (the Pomodoro is the timer).
 3. Work on the task until the timer rings.
 4. Then put a check on your sheet of paper.
 5. Take a short break (around five minutes).
 6. Every four Pomodoros take a longer break.

For further information on this technique, visit:
www.pomodoratechnique.com/download/pdf/Pomodoro-Cheat-Sheet.pdf.

