

Freewriting A Way Around Writer's Block

'**Freewriting**' is any tutor's favourite techniques for helping writers who cannot get started. Freewriting resembles the warm-up you might do before exercising. There is no 'correct' way to do this, so try a variation of these steps:

- Begin with a blank computer screen and a watch (or the clock on the computer). You might use a pad instead - freewriting involves generating words, not correcting them or getting just the right word.
- Set a time for yourself. Try one, five, or ten minutes. Longer times may not be that productive since freewriting is a "warm up" for more focused writing.
- Begin to type or write about anything that comes into your head. Don't stop until the time is up.
- Then review what you have written. Are there words you like? Ideas that might work for the next project you are doing?

'**Focused Freewriting**' follows the same process but begins with a topic:

- Put a topic of your choice, or even the topic of your next piece of writing – a Write Place column perhaps? - at the top of a blank page.
- Set a time limit and begin freewriting. This time, write down things that seem to be related to the topic. Do not worry about the order of your ideas or grammatical correctness. Don't worry if the ideas seem to be going off the subject. Such digressions can be useful.
- When time is up, look over what you have written. Pull out ideas and phrases you can use later.
- Now practice putting the freewriting into outline form. If you were to use the writing to begin a piece of writing, which points would you make first? Second?
- You should end up with a rough draft that you can, if you choose, craft into a finished piece through revising and editing. (Remember: The only true writer is a re-writer. Farrukh Dhondy.)