

# Overcoming Writer's Block

## Get it while it's hot!

- Capture the flavors, aromas, and textures of the moment.
- Don't be a Pig! Trying to cram it all in at one sitting will make you sick. Chew each piece slowly.
- Share the bounty. Don't take more than you can eat. Invite others to partake.
- Take a doggy bag. Freeze it. Save some for later.

## Time

- 250/7/365
- Same Bat-time, same Bat-channel.

## Place

- Fortress of Solitude
- Bubble baths and rubber ducks
- On the commute
- Scope out external offices like: Disney, Borders, Costco, Wendy's, the Food Court at the mall, the Beach, the Library, etc.

## Ambience

- Get in comfortable clothes
- Set the temperature just right
- Turn on background music if appropriate for you
- Have a drink or snack nearby for long writing jags
- Bring the proper equipment (i.e. computer, pen and paper, or digital recorder)
- Invest in a chair that is good for your back and helps to eliminate brain damage

## Expose yourself!

- Sign up for a karate class.
- Try speed dating.
- Volunteer in a soup kitchen.
- Become a teacher's aide.
- Babysit for a neighbor.
- Take part-time jobs in a variety of fields.

## Expose yourself – continued

- Eat something new. (Would you like Cow tongue?)
- If you workout at night, change your workout to the morning.
- Go home a different way.
- Eat breakfast for dinner. Eat dessert for lunch.
- Watch a foreign movie.
- Avoid TV and the newspaper for a week.

## Learn something new.

- Read a book from a different genre.
- Learn to speak a new language.
- Take a trip to somewhere you have never been.

## Capture the "aha!" moment

- 3 x 5 index cards
- Legal pad
- Digital voice recorder
- Voice mail or recorder on your cell phone
- Answering machine at home

## Mix it up!

- Whatever you write does not need to have any order during the creation phase.
- Write the conclusion, summary, or finale first.
- Imagine twenty different cliffhanger situations and then only use half of them.
- Write your protagonist as female, then male, then as some domesticated animal.
- Write scenes as they pop into your head.

## \*\*\* ideas\*\*\*

- Set off unrelated ideas with asterisks. Later use the "Find" command to locate them in the document, and then cut and paste them into another "Idea File."

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## Flesh out your characters

- Draw from family members, friends, even characters from TV shows to get a “real feel” for characters in your book.
- Do a “character sketch” or biography.
- Cut out pictures from a magazine that closely resemble the character you are writing about and post them around your computer.

## Kill the Editor!

- Editing, evaluation, and judgment have no place in the initial creative process.
- Turn off your monitor. The one in your head and, the one on your desk.
- (In normal conversation, you don't go back and correct grammar, change wording, and repeat sentences until they are just right – or you would have no friends! So why beat yourself up when you are supposed to be having fun?)

## Tell it to a friend

- Sometimes just talking out a story or article idea helps to get your juices flowing. One drawback to talking about a story idea too much is you begin to lose the emotion and excitement of it after too many recitals.
- Just make sure to record your chat, so you remember all the important points you brought up.

## SCAMPER

**S**-what can you **substitute**?

**C**-what can you **combine**?

**A**-what can you **adapt**?

**M**-what can you **magnify, miniaturize, or multiply**?

**P**-what can you **put to other uses**?

**E**-**what else, who else, where else** (applied to every letter)

**R**-what can you **rearrange or reverse**?

## 5-Sensing the Story / Article

- How would you express your setting, character, or action in a scene using only the sense of: smell; taste; sight; touch; or, hearing?
- Now, how can you use all 5 senses at once in a scene?

## How would someone else write?

- **Walter Cronkite**
- **Wonder Woman**
- **Curly of “The Three Stooges”**
- **Jerry Seinfeld**
- **Batman**
- **Darth Vader / Bill O’Reilly**
- **Paris Hilton / Britney Spears**
- **Superman / Clark Kent**
- **Oprah Winfrey**
- **Spiderman / Peter Parker**
- **Xena Warrior Princess**

## Writing Prompts

- The “best” thing about this is...
- Worst
- Scariest
- Painful
- Exciting
- Embarrassing
- Funniest
- Profitable
- Weirdest
- Sexiest
- Disgusting
- Gross
- Fantastic
- Bizarre
- Unbelievable

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## Use the “-est” technique

Pick your favorite adjectives to describe characters or elements in an article and add “-est.”

- biggest,
- loudest,
- smallest,
- tallest,
- darkest,
- geekiest,
- smelliest...

## Write every day – 250 / 7 / 365

- Personal journal
- Letters to a friend
- Web log (blog)
- Expert column
- Response to other blogs / columns / lists
- Rant, rave, let off steam
- Fantasize / dream on paper?

## Writer's block or procrastination?

- You have to ask yourself, “Is what I am doing now goal achieving or simply tension relieving?”
- Read emails only 3 times a day; morning, noon, and evening.
- Clear your desk of everything except that which you need to write.
- Turn off the phone, lock the doors, and chain yourself to the chair until you have completed at least 250 words.

## Time Management – Vacation Dilation Technique

- Somehow, with a vacation coming up, you can finish, delegate, or put in stasis all projects at home or in your business so you can take a week or two off for vacation, an important tool for success, as rest is a requirement physically and mentally after extended periods of effort.

- What if you used the vacation dilation technique weekly to give yourself one full day of writing a week?

## Multiple Projects

- Working on more than one writing project at a time can keep you from burning out on one particular piece.
- When you hit a brick wall with one piece, start fresh on another.
- Warning: Limit the number of writing projects or you will soon find you are not completing any.

## Review: Causes of “Writer's Block”

- Biting off more than you can chew.
- Fighting Intuition – “Use the Force Luke!” – write what is begging to get out.
- Editing.
- Talking away your ideas and emotion.
- Making excuses / procrastination.
- Writing linear instead of organic.

## Creative writing is:

- Capturing ideas and inspiration.
- Researching and immersing yourself in the subject.
- Mining others for information and manipulating, changing, molding it to fit your imagination / presentation.
- Savoring the flavor of words.
- Getting it on paper every day (250 / 7 / 365).
- Percolating ideas in your head, what others may call daydreaming, is in reality, like the alchemists of old, transmuting base thoughts into literary gold.



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