

A Simplified list of Remedies for Writer's Block

Idea Generation

Clustering: Write down 20 or so nouns and verbs as they come into your head. Choose any of the nouns as your subject and start circling related events. Try to draw connections that seem interesting between the words you wrote down. Write down each set of relationships as you come up with them. Don't pick out the good from the bad, just write it all down. When you are done, evaluate the list and determine if anything is worth keeping. Sometimes, a portion of an idea may start you on a new journey

List Generation: If you are looking for a general theme or focal point try to simply generate lists. A list of the five most important things in life might help you create a theme for your writing. A list of the five most interesting people might help you come up with characters.

A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words: Grab some inspiring art from the web. While you're browsing be sure to bookmark portfolio sites of artists you really like. Choose one or two of their pieces and try to develop a story around what you see. Don't read what the artist's wrote; just generate your own story by picking out details in a character's face or the environment. Ask yourself questions like, why does he seem angry or why is the riverbed dry.

Shoplift: "Shop" a few of your favorite stories. Think about what you most liked and what you most disliked about them. Write these points down. Step away from the list and do something completely different. Return to the list and look at it subjectively as an independent story. What does the story lack? Fill in the blanks and use the result as the basis for your work.

Coin a Phrase: There is often story underneath cliché's, idioms and commonly used expressions. You may find that coming up with a set of events that prove "when it rains it pours" will actually yield something interesting.

Frame of Mind

Psychologists have studied the effect of environment on mental tasks. Simply put, place yourself in the same environment every time you have to write and your ideas will flow more freely. Our brains react to the environment. So if you sit in front of the TV in the same room your supposed to write in, your brain won't do a good job of switching tasks. Find a room, sit at a desk, go to a coffee shop, but find a consistent place to write. Other writers even suggest getting yourself a "writer's cap" to get you in the write frame of mind.