

# OVERCOMING WRITER'S BLOCK

## WHAT IS WRITER'S BLOCK?

Writer's block refers to the inability to express ideas while engaging in the writing process.

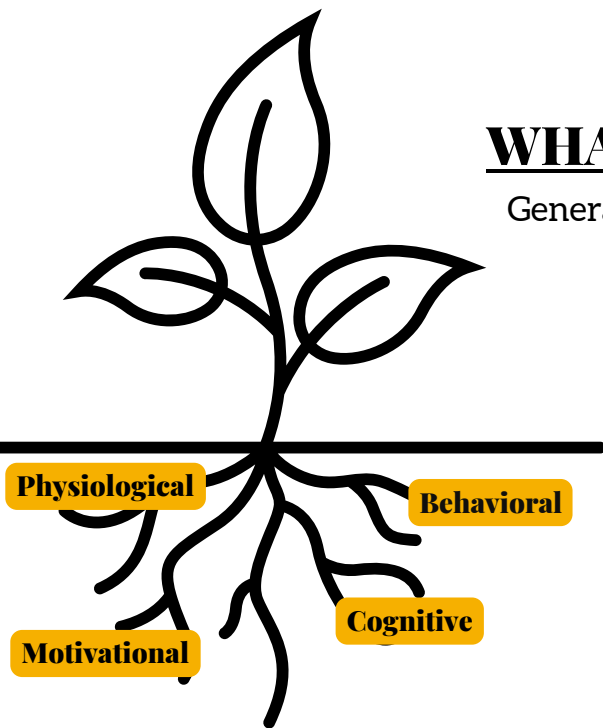
Writer's block can occur at any point in the writing process, this includes:

- Idea Generation
- Planning/Outlining
- Articulation/Expression

## WHAT CAUSES WRITER'S BLOCK?

Generally, writer's block stems from four main "roots":

1. **Physiological** - intense states of emotion (i.e., stress, burnout, fatigue, etc.) as well as states of physical discomfort (i.e., hunger, exhaustion, etc.)
2. **Motivational** - fear of criticism, judgement, or evaluation; a loss of enjoyment for the act of writing
3. **Cognitive** - feeling lost or unable to understand the assignment, becoming overwhelmed by the pressures of perfectionism
4. **Behavioral** - procrastinating, becoming too busy with other tasks to focus on your assignment, changing your routine

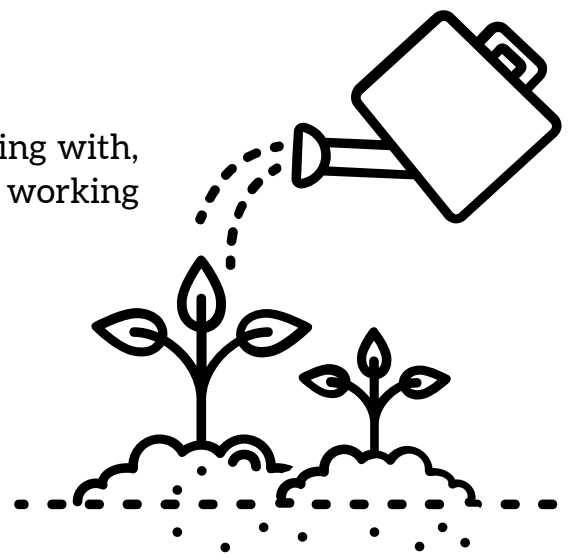


## Reflect

Which root do you think you are struggling with currently? Which one do you think you struggle with most often?

# TREATING THE ROOT

Once you have diagnosed which root you are struggling with, try out some of the targeted strategies below to begin working past your writer's block.



## Physiological

- Take a short break
- Take a power nap
- Eat a snack and drink some water
- Make yourself a cup of tea or coffee
- Exercise or complete a mindfulness activity

## Cognitive

- Reach out to the professor or TA for clarification on the assignment and their expectations
- Discuss the project and your ideas aloud with a friend or peer
- Make an appointment with the Writing Center
- Organize your ideas into an outline - use notecards, a thinking map, or a template such as the PEEL Paragraph
- Focus on completing an entire first draft before going back through the essay to revise at the sentence level
- When you feel yourself becoming critical of your writing, redirect your thinking towards an element of your writing that you feel good about

## Motivational

- Skip to a section of the project that you feel more interested in or more confident writing about
- If possible, shift the focus of your assignment to a topic that better aligns with your personal interests

## Behavioral

- Designate a specific period of time to work on your assignment
- Locate an area where you can focus on your assignment (i.e., go to the library, create an inviting work space at your desk or kitchen table, etc.)
- Put your phone and/or laptop into airplane while you write to limit distractions
- Try time management techniques such as the Pomodoro Method to encourage periods of dedicated productivity while allowing yourself time for breaks

## Reflect

Which of these strategies have helped you to overcome writer's block in the past? What new strategies might you try in the future?