

## **Fear of Writing**

Most of us have had to deal with the special challenge of “writer’s block” at some point in our lives. Here are four strategies for overcoming this barrier.

### **Change your perceptions about yourself and the task**

- Expect complexity and obstacles; writing rarely progresses logically and smoothly.
- Distance yourself from your words; don’t aim for perfection; don’t feel you have to follow stylistic rules in the draft.
- Print draft on the top of each page to remind yourself that you can change anything.
- Color code your drafts (e.g., green paper for your earliest draft; hot pink for your penultimate draft)

### **Change your activity**

- Brainstorm your ideas out loud, either to yourself, to a tape recorder, or to a colleague/friend; oral language is more spontaneous and involves less “ownership” to inhibit you.
- Take a break and give some time for your subconscious to allow your thoughts to develop.
- When fine-tuning your final draft, read aloud. Often your ear will catch awkwardness, stylistic irregularity, and inaccuracies that your eyes will not.

### **Change your writing task**

- Consider the writing project as a series of independent manageable parts; write any section that seems approachable.
- Write your main topics first, in the form of headings, subheadings and even bullet points; you can fill in the details later.
- Work on formatting, bibliography or graphics to provide a sense of accomplishment before returning to the text.

Keep in mind that effective writing, whether hindered by writer’s block or not, always requires more time than anticipated. Budget accordingly!

MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21L.020J Globalization: the Good, the Bad, and the In-Between  
Fall 2016

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.