

## Writer's Block Breakers

Always be able to write something down on paper or a device.

Go to libraries and bookstores in person or online to read book and magazine titles for song title and first line ideas.

Look at something from the perspective of someone you see on the street or someone from your memory.

Attend plays, movies, and events listening for good lines.

If you're writing country music, read out-of-town papers from small towns in Texas, Montana, etc. <http://www.smalltownpapers.com>

Eavesdrop on conversations at all-night diners, C & W bars, park benches, check-out lines, etc. to pick up conversations, idioms, or ideas.

Listen to instrumentals and write words to them.

Revisit your old songs and try to make them more interesting.

Beat out a rhythm on your desk and try to write to it.

Pick up an unfamiliar instrument and try to come up with a melody.

When stuck, write anything: grocery lists, letters to the editor, love letters, a thank you to someone important from your past (or a historical figure), a fan letter.

Pick a new place to write: restaurants, parks, mountains, beach, in the car, bus station, etc.

Find a new co-writer.

Change the times you write.

Meditate. Close your eyes, sit up straight, and concentrate on your breathing. Only when you are quiet can you hear your own true voice.

Word Cluster. Place a key word in the center of the page and create a "spider web" of words common to the central word and each other word.

Take your song for a walk to shift gears. Ask the song why you're stuck.

What is the quality of the writer's block you're experiencing?

Concentrate on an object. What does it remind you of? Look for specific details.

Look at old ideas from a new viewpoint. It's easy to see fashion in a clothing store and history in a museum. Mix and match concepts.

Visualize success. Envision rewards for your efforts: contracts, airplay by your favorite performers, Grammys.

EVERY DAY write three pages in the morning about the first thing that comes you're your head before the "editor" kicks in (Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way*).

Remember that we all have dry spells and that there is a difference between a dry spell and burnout. Write because you love to or you would not be doing it.

Great ideas are as rare as cactus flowers. Don't go for the perfect song. The key is to retain control. Write because you have to; not for the money, to win contests, but to create. Your best songs will come from practice and knowledge about the craft.

When you find yourself on the "Planet Dry," write anything.

It's OK to go into a holding pattern for a while. Take a break and take the pressure off yourself.

"Every good idea and all creative works are the offspring of the imagination. ... The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable." Carl Jung, *Psychological Types; or, the Psychology of Individuation*. 1923.

When you are in the early stages of creativity, never censor yourself.

"Never strive to be great. Strive to be true." Dame Edith Evans [Source unknown]

There is a story about an artist who took his work to Michelangelo for evaluation. Michelangelo looked at the work and said, "They're beautiful, but where is the madness?" [Source unknown]