

**Freewriting** is an exercise of writing without stopping or editing for a fixed amount of time.

The term freewriting in this context comes from a scholar named Peter Elbow. He said that writers should just continuously write for 10-20 minutes to generate ideas and clear up their thoughts. In his own words, he wrote:

Don't stop for anything. Go quickly without rushing. Never stop to look back, to cross something out, to wonder how to spell something, to wonder what word or thought to use, or to think about what you are doing...Editing, in itself, is not the problem. Editing is usually necessary if we want to end up with something satisfactory. The problem is that editing goes on at the same time as producing... ([Writing Without Teachers](#))

The main idea of freewriting is to find a helpful way of dealing with the chaotic thought processes inhibiting clear thinking while trying to transcribe our thoughts. Elbow argued that, "In your natural way of producing words there is a sound, a texture, a rhythm--a voice--which is the main source of power in your writing." How cool is that? That same natural way of producing words should be a part of your writing process somehow.

## How to do it\*

1. Open a blank document (digital or paper)
2. Set a timer
3. Think of the essay you're working towards
4. Start writing\*
5. Don't stop; Don't look back; Don't fix
6. When the timer sounds, stop if you want

**\*Note:** Freewriting does seem to be more effective in the language the writer is more fluently speaking. If that is the case, feel free to make use of this exercise in whatever language or style that is most suitable. The idea is to get your thoughts onto the page without meddling too much. Give it a try. As a result, you might come up with an idea that you wouldn't have otherwise found.