

Countering AI and Recovering the Joy of Self-Discovery with Focused Freewriting

What Is Freewriting?

The most effective way to improve your writing is to do freewriting exercises regularly. At least three times a week. They are sometimes called “automatic writing,” “babbling,” or “jabbering” exercises. The idea is simply to write for ten minutes (later on, perhaps fifteen or twenty). 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. If you can’t think of a word or a spelling, just use a squiggle or else write, “I can’t think of it.” Just put down something. The easiest thing is just to put down whatever is in your mind. If you get stuck it’s fine to write, “I can’t think of what to say, I can’t think of what to say” as many times as you want; or repeat the last words you wrote over and over again; or anything else. The only requirement is that you *never* stop (Peter Elbow, *Writing Without Teachers*, p. 3).

Workshop Schedule

1. Introduction (Look at the quote above and the article for students)
2. Choosing a focus (a. whatever comes to mind, b. choose from the 50 one-word topics, or c. something that arose from the last session you attended)
3. Freewriting a blob (7 minutes)
4. Whole group share-out (Individual volunteers)
5. Point of expansion: More writing (5 minutes)
6. Partner share: Find a point of division
7. Genre speculation: Who is this for? What might it become?
8. Whole group discussion: Classroom implementation
9. Closing remarks

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