

The Wonderful World of Writer's Block

By Jonathan SMITH

This week wouldn't be the first time I've found myself sitting at my computer, staring at the blank word processor screen trying to find a subject to write about. The thin black cursor just sits there blinking away, almost seeming to be mocking me, waiting for me to do something... anything! Yet nothing comes. At least nothing that seems to be worth saying. I have to admit it to myself - I am once again plagued by writer's block.

I'm sure everyone has heard of "the block". Whether they admit it or not, it affects almost everyone who writes anything at all, whether one is trying to write an academic paper, a work of fiction, or even an article for a student newspaper.

It is that feeling of being stuck, of knowing what you want to say but simply being unable to put it into any sort of words that you would want to pass in to a professor and

expect to be graded. It may be as simple as not having any ideas at all, or something like not being able to figure out what to say in the next paragraph.

It can easily lead to the sort of mood that can be extremely hazardous to one's creativity and concentration. It's worse when what your writing is not for your own amusement, but rather an important term paper or report that is required to pass that course you desperately want to complete.

So what can you do when faced with this debilitating problem (short of destroying your computer and swearing off writing forever)? Some say that writer's block isn't real, that it's all in your mind. It's said that you can write through it as though it were a jungle, which, with the proper machete, can easily be conquered. I've found this to be somewhat true. Then at least they're down rather than being clogged up in your mind.

A very simple way of solving the problem and getting past the block could be to simply write down whatever comes to mind, be it nothing more than a stream of consciousness(sp) thought or something specific like "Why in the hell can't I write anything!" This at the very least gets the gears turning and may help get you in the frame of mind that's needed.

Another solution could be to start writing with some other section. If beginnings aren't your thing, start at the middle or at whatever point the words start to flow. As we all know, nothing is written in stone and anything can be rewritten a dozen times over.

Writer's block is an individual thing. Some people may experience it a lot, while others aren't bothered by it very much at all. Regardless, everyone deals with it in their own way. So while this article may not offer any advice that hasn't been given before, it has at the very least allowed me to avoid writer's block for at least another week.

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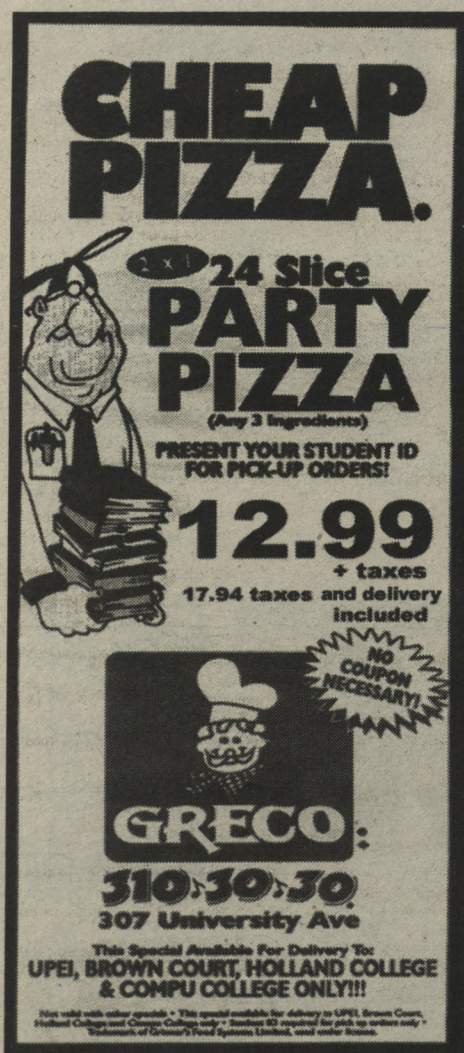
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