

Therapeutic Writing: Freewriting

Freewriting means writing for a timed period without stopping to think, punctuate or correct your writing in any way. The idea is to just keep writing whatever comes into your head, without stopping. If you stop and don't know what to write next, just write: "I don't know what to write" a few times and more thoughts will come.



Try this idea for freewriting: look around you until something catches your eye – something that interests you. Look at whatever it is for a few seconds. Now, start to write whatever comes into your head and keep writing for 5 minutes. The idea is not necessarily to write about the thing you were looking at, but just to write down your thoughts.

Remember: you are writing only for you, don't stop to think or correct anything, and spelling and punctuation don't matter. Don't worry if your thoughts come out jumbled and random. Just keep writing – you might be surprised by what comes out. Why not try freewriting every day?



More ideas for freewriting:

- Write everything that comes into your mind for 5 minutes starting without any sort of prompt.
- Choose a 'set' of words that go together and write for 2-3 minutes in response to each word. An example word set could be: wind, wave, sea, ship, shore. Freewriting from word sets can produce great inspiration for writing poems and song lyrics.
- Try freewriting in response to a random word or sentence you read in a book or newspaper.
- Turn on the radio and freewrite in response to the first song or news item you hear.
- Freewrite in response to a painting or photograph like the ones on this sheet.

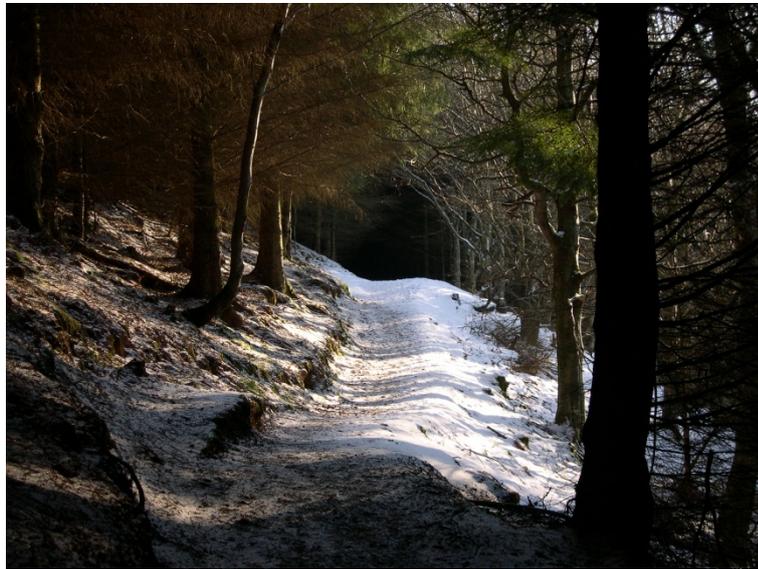


- Read a poem and then write in response to it.
- Or you might try freewriting a story, or freewriting about a memory (positive memory might be best) or your hopes for the future.

With freewriting I feel you are tapping into your sub-conscious so freewriting can bring out unexpected thoughts and memories, and sometimes some very imaginative stories. Freewriting can sometimes help you understand yourself and your problems.

I do not recommend freewriting about negative memories unless you have good support from someone you trust.

But freewriting about how you feel right now, which is a kind of Mindful Writing (see sheet on Mindful Writing) is often a good idea because it can help you to make sense of things and work out how you really feel.



Further Reading

1. Words for Wellbeing blog: <http://trioross.wordpress.com/>
2. Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/WordsForWellbeing?fref=ts>
3. Therapeutic Writing Writing for Wellbeing (handout)
4. Therapeutic Writing – Mindful Writing (handout)
5. Therapeutic Writing – Journals and Diaries (handout)
6. Email Carol at writing.year@cumbria.nhs.uk for copies of handouts and to enquire about ordering the Words for Wellbeing book (£9.50 including P&P)

***** You may photocopy this sheet provided you do not alter it in any way *****