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[LUNSFORD onscreen] LUNSFORD: I'm a good example of somebody that has a hard time getting started, so the first thing that I tell students is to make a commitment.

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[TITLE] Writer's Block

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["Andrea A. Lunsford, Stanford University" onscreen] Lunsford: You have to commit yourself to doing this task, and you're not going to put up with any more procrastination. You're not going to wash the dishes or your hair. You are going to sit down and start on this project, and I do think that's the hardest part of it. Once you've made that commitment, that you're going to begin, you can actually begin. But I also tell students to look closely into their own processes and try to find out what helps them the most.

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["Alex Rankin, English Major" onscreen] RANKIN: Usually when I get writer's block I just take a breath of fresh air, go outside, try to reclear my thoughts, not necessarily even think about that topic or subject. And when I come back a lot of the times it comes to me just because I was thinking about something else. And when I actually look at the paper and say, "Oh, okay! I got it."

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["Jenny McClaren, Journalism Major and student editor of The Orion newspaper" onscreen] MCCLAREN: I try and sleep on it sometimes if I have time to, just not think about it, go for a run, listen to music.

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[DIEGO onscreen] DIEGO: I usually listen to music. Music is a really motivator for anything. It puts me in a different state.

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["Eder Diego, Communication Design Major" onscreen"] Diego: It's a feeling that I get, and sometimes feelings really help bring something out, like an idea. I won't be thinking about what I wrote before, what I was writing before, and suddenly, boom, like, it comes back, and I'm like, "Oh, okay!"

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["Mark Herrera, Sustainability Major" onscreen] HERRERA: I try and step away from the issue and I go do something. Take a walk, take a run. And then I come back and hopefully by that time my mind has cleared.

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[Shots of SEELE] It helps so much to be able to talk to other students

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["Kristy Seele, Nursing Major" onscreen] Seele: and just discuss, whether it's a pathophysiology or what you're writing in your log about, or your paper about.

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["Ismah Jawed, Biology Major" onscreen] JAWED: Like right now I'm writing essays for medical school applications, and I really get stuck on those. They ask about past experiences and I try and think of one and even just, like, asking my brother or someone else, this is what I'm stuck on, and without them even giving me any feedback, just me saying out loud, like, "Oh, this is what I was thinking of," then I start forming the idea better in my head.

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[Lunsford onscreen] Lunsford: Many of my students say that they get started on a project by calling home and talking to a sibling or a parent about the project, and then going from there.

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["Eric Taslim, English Major" onscreen] TASLIM: Believe it or not, I ask my siblings because they know a lot about me, and it usually helps.

02:29

[Shots of writing center] Lunsford: Many students who are stuck and really need to get started and know they need to get started will come to the writing center and simply say, "Here I am. I'm stuck. I don't have an idea yet, but I have a

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[Lunsford onscreen] Lunsford: broad topic. Help me!" And we will sit for 45 minutes and try to pull out -- let that student pull out of him or herself what it is they want to work on. Another way to get unstuck in terms of a student writing, if you're working on a project that just has you really bogged down, take a break and play some games. It might be word games, it might be free association. It might be a verbal, some kind of verbal game. Or I often say to students, why don't you go out and play frisbee for a while? Just do something playful. And it will often break that block.