

# STORY SCHOOL



WRITER'S  
BLOCK  
AND HOW  
TO GET  
OVER IT

Presented by  creators

# WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE.

You're ready to write. You're sitting there, the setting is perfect, you've got your coffee in hand, and then... nothing. The cursor is blinking. The page is blank. Well, we're here to help.

This guide will help to arm you with the tools needed to overcome writer's block. Here at Wattpad, we are dedicated to helping creators at every phase of their writing journey. Let's uncover what's getting you stuck and how you can move beyond it to unlock the worlds, characters, plots, and storylines that you deeply desire to get on the page.

Let's get into it.





## 1. WHERE TO BEGIN

Consider what you find interesting—what stories you like, what genres, what settings and characters you find engaging. Then dig into what about those things are interesting to you. Creating a list of these things can help you decide what kind of story you want to write, what interests you and what will keep you excited and engaged as a writer.

What are three of your favorite stories?

- What genre are they?
- What kind of stories are they? (First love, heist, coming of age, etc.)
- What moments do you like most in these stories?
- What elements are common between the stories you've listed?

Do this again for characters, settings, conflicts or any element you're struggling with for your story.

Look at the lists you've generated - what of these would you like to focus on?

# LET'S GET UNSTUCK

## 2. YOUR TARGET READER

Next, consider who your target reader is: what do they find interesting?

Consider what kind of experience you want to create for them: Do you want to entertain? Enrage? Excite?

What elements will your target reader expect in your story based on genre or type of story:

- Do you want to lean into those expectations or subvert them?
- What best serves the reader experience you're trying to create?

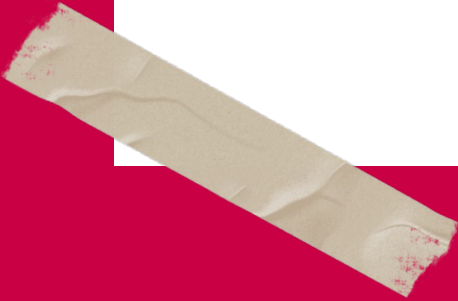


### 3. A SIMPLE OUTLINE

Once you've considered these options, try writing a simple outline.

- What is the state of the world at the beginning?
- What does our protagonist want?
- What changes in their world to start the story?
- What is the conflict—the thing preventing them from getting what they want?
- How do they overcome it?
- How does the story end?

Answer as many of these as you can— you don't need to know them all, but you should know what your character wants and what prevents them from getting it in order to write your story.



# COMMON ROADBLOCKS

## NOT KNOWING WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

1. To solve this, go back to why you are writing the story in the first place: What is the experience you want to create for your reader? Remember that core experience and ask yourself, what needs to happen next to get us there?
2. Consider the character's wants: What is driving them? What is stopping them? What do they need to overcome in order to do that? What additional things might they need in order to do this (skills, allies, tools, personal growth, etc.)?
3. Consult your outline or take a step back and create one. Write out the major plot beats that have occurred so far, write how you think it ends (if you know) and consider what needs to happen to get you from here to there.
4. Put yourself in your characters' shoes: If you were them, knowing what they know and faced with what they're facing, what might you do next? Make a list and pick the most interesting option (or the one that most aligns with the experience you're creating for your reader)

## ENCOUNTERING A PROBLEM WITH NO VISIBLE SOLUTION

This usually means you need to go back and change something earlier on.

1. Break the problem down into elements:
  - What is happening in the story right now?
  - Who is involved?
  - What do they want?
  - Why can't they have what they want?
2. Looking at these elements, you will likely find that you've written something that is blocking you from continuing the story (a common example being characters in a Romance breaking up to raise the stakes, only to get back together at the last moment... but the reason for the breakup is so unrealistic, it's hard to imagine them reconciling).
3. Once you've found THE REASON—solving the problem is impossible, go back through your story and trace the issue to its source - you may find that changing a detail way back then fixes things all the way through (or you may need to make changes throughout). Normally this would be done in editing, but when you're stuck, give it a think.



# LACK OF MOTIVATION

These are difficult times all around. It can be very hard to get motivated to write, or you may have had a long day and not have the creative energy to write a full chapter. When your brain or heart just isn't in it, try making it more mechanical.

1. Give yourself a small, manageable goal for the day (150 words, 200 words, 500 words, etc.)
2. Book time in your calendar that is WRITING TIME. You do not need to write during WRITING TIME but it is time that you are committed to thinking about your story, trying to get some words down, or doing something that supports your writing (like watching Story School or attending a writing sprint). This takes the anxiety out of 'when will I write?' and shifts it to 'this is my 15 minutes dedicated to my story.' Remember — thinking through your story or learning new tools is writing time. It isn't just about how many words you can get down on paper.
3. Finally, start by writing a single scene—it can take place anywhere in your story, but remember that every novel is just a collection of scenes. If you're stuck, try getting a single scene down or capturing a single moment between two characters or the character and the world. Slowly but surely, your story will take shape.

# GETTING IN YOUR OWN HEAD

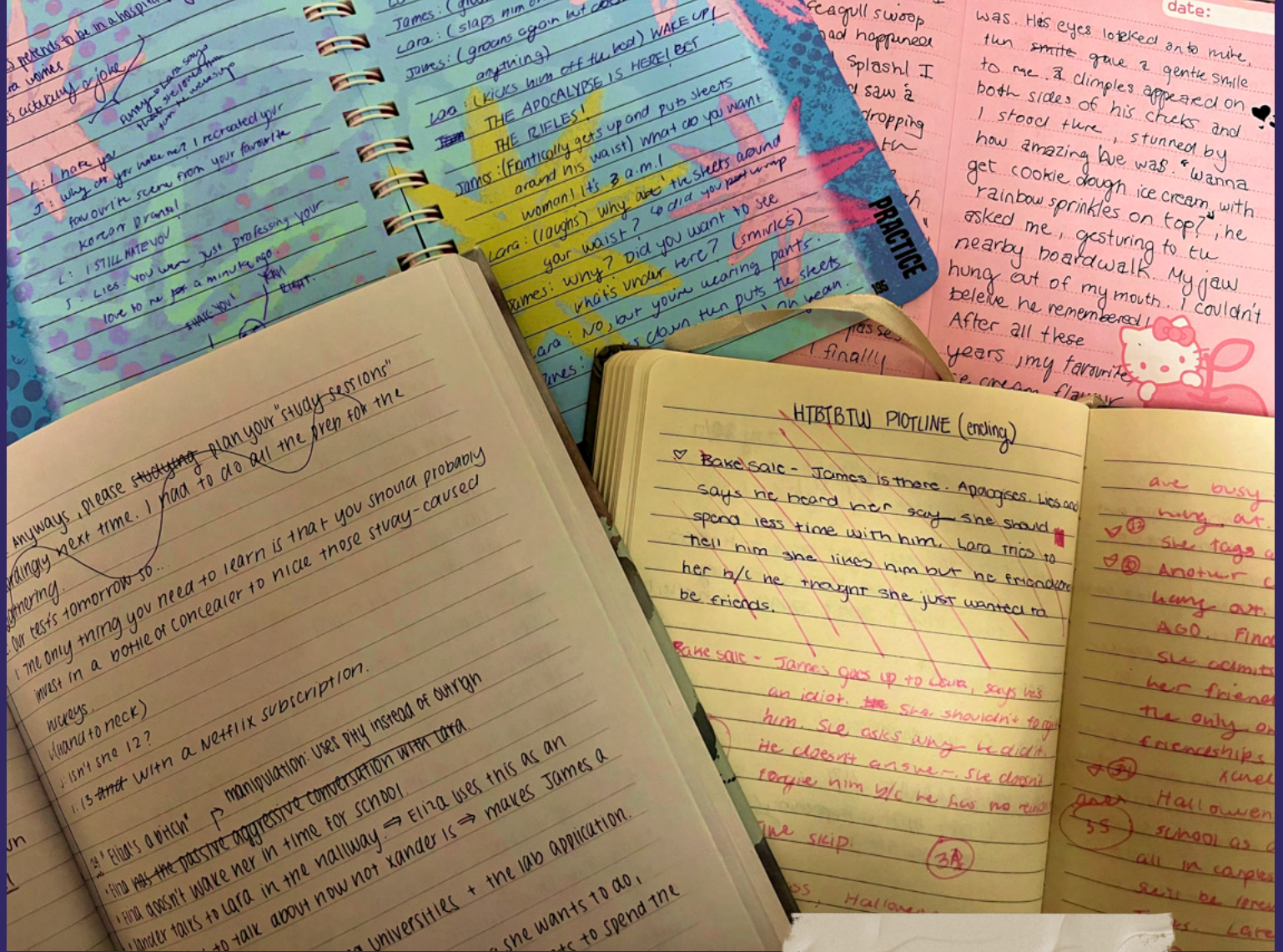
Sometimes we're so worried about whether what we're writing is 'good' that we don't write anything at all. Commit to writing whatever your brain can make at that moment and getting it down. Then, take a break and come back to it with fresh eyes and edit. Often getting it onto the page is messy and in the edit is where you can draw out your real intent. If you're posting as you go, give the chapter an edit before you hit post—you may find what you wrote (initially) is quite close to what you wanted.

Remember:

Writing something is better than writing nothing. If you're worried that you won't write the perfect thing, you might not write anything, so commit to imperfection and then give it a pass before posting.







Loridee De Villa, Wattpad Creator  
 Author of *How To Be The Best Third Wheel*,  
 published by Wattpad WEBTOON Book Group.



# NOT KNOWING HOW TO END THE STORY

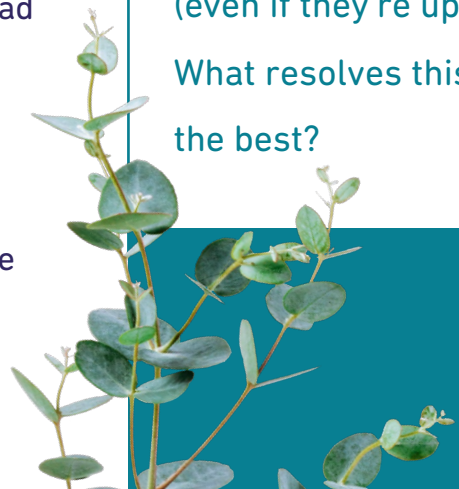
Go back to the experience you're creating for your reader: What ending helps get us that experience? If it's a traditional Romance, we need to get to happily ever after, or happy for now. If it's a revenge story, we need to know if the main character does or does not get revenge (and whether the revenge was worth it in the end). What does your audience need to complete their experience?

Ask the basic question: how can this conflict resolve? Usually it's one of three ways:

- Positive: Main character gets what they want (or discovers something better) and ends the story better than they started
- Negative: Main character fails to get what they want (or realizes that what they wanted the wrong thing) and ends the story worse than they started
- Neutral: The main character's wants are overshadowed by something else or are revealed to be impossible to achieve. Though their status may not have changed, the world or the character must have been affected in some way (or why did we read it?)

Consider your conflict, consider the character's wants, consider the reader experience, and then pick from the above list.

Try a couple of endings on for size: if you aren't sure, write more rather than less. Try the happy ending or the tragic ending and see what it does to the story arc and experience you're trying to create for your reader. Will it leave them dissatisfied or satisfied (even if they're upset)? What resolves this story the best?





# THE BIG THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT WRITER'S BLOCK

It is easy to think of writer's block as a singular thing or condition. It is not. Writer's Block can refer to anything that is preventing you from continuing to write your story. Don't be intimidated by it—seek to understand it: What specifically is stopping you in the moment? It will change from time-to-time, from story-to-story, but what doesn't change is that you have the power to consider your own process, consider your story, and find a solution.

Now get out there and start writing!

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