



## Start writing essays

### *Writer's block*

#### **Helena Kennedy:**

I suddenly find that I just *have* to paint my toenails. I suddenly find that I just, you know, *have* to make certain phone calls before I get down to it, and, I'm afraid I used those avoidance techniques, even when I was studying, I always found that there were things that were so pressing they had to be done before I did anything else! And I think you really have to take hold of yourself and say, No!

#### **Jane Van Hool:**

Even well-practised writers like Helena Kennedy suffer from writer's block. Here are a few of their suggestions for curing it.

#### **Jane Dorner , freelance writer.**

Perfectionism is a myth. You're never going to achieve perfection. So you might as well be a little bit under it, you might as well bash down that first paragraph and then make yourself go on to the second one and not feel that it has to be wonderful all the way through.

#### **Jane Van Hool:**

Martin Amis, author and critic.

#### **Martin Amis:**

Well, my father used to find going to post a letter just, or having a shave, some sort of mechanical task. You know, often you're not, you shouldn't struggle, you should just wait. You know, take a day off or just read. If you're struggling, and some days you feel you couldn't write out a, you know, an instruction on a tube of vitamin C, the words just aren't there, then replenish the words and sit and read for a couple of hours.

#### **Jane Van Hool: Helena Kennedy.**

##### **Helena Kennedy:**

What I do is I go to the meat of the argument, knowing that that will not be the beginning, and I find my beginning later. So don't, don't allow yourself to just sit there, go into the argument and get the argument on the page, and then, sometimes that will help you to find the best start.

#### **Jane Van Hool: John Pilger.**

##### **John Pilger:**

If you can't write any more, close it down, get up, do something physical. Or go and read something completely different, watch television, walk - the physical often helps.

#### **Jane Van Hool: Brian Walden.**

##### **Brian Walden:**

Rest up, go for a walk, have a pint, think about, chat to somebody. Think about something that has nothing to do with the assignment at all, and then come back to it.

#### **Matthew Kelly:**

Time management's very important. If you really think that you've got a block, work out what time you've got, and stop. And say, Right, I'm not getting any further with this, then let's leave it. Do something else. Go and do the dishes, get rid of clutter, it's kind of cathartic. Get rid of a tangible blockage to remove an intangible one.