

Basic Freewriting Instructions

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You may use pen and paper or a computer for Free-writing. Many people (including myself) find pen and paper to be the best tools. The physical act of writing and of seeing the words appear on the page frees some region of the brain, at least for some people, and the writing seems, well, *freer*.

If you do use a computer, it can help to close your eyes while you type. That reduces the compulsion to correct everything. Turn your "auto-correct" functions off for your free-writing exercises. If you don't know to touch-type, then pen and paper is probably the way for you to go.

- **It's private!** You will never be expected to read this to anyone else.
 - Perhaps you want to have a "free-writing journal" or perhaps you want an encrypted folder on your computer. That way you can "save" all your free-writes.
 - But perhaps you want to write on loose leaf paper.... So you can rip the page up after you've done your free-writing.
 - The point is: This is *private, private, private*. Only you will see, only you will know. It's okay to be exactly what you are right now. Write out of that.
- **Set a timer.** (Optional, but it helps a lot!)
 - Experiment with time-frames that work for you.
 - For simple freewrites, or if it's something you think you just have nothing to say about, set the timer for 3 minutes.
 - For slightly more complex topics, or for something you really want to explore, set the timer for 7-10 minutes.
 - I recommend not doing a timed-writing for longer than 12-15 minutes, max. ○ You may wish to do several free-writes on a single topic. Write for your self-assigned time. Then, take a physical break: get up and walk around for a bit, get a cup of coffee, do the dishes, or just stand up and stretch. Then, do another timed free-write. Wash, Rinse, and Repeat.
- **Brain to pen to paper.** Bypass the editor! No filter!
 - No corrections! No erasures! Keep everything in there.
 - Don't strive to be 'good'-'smart'-'insightful'-whatever. Let your own mind get itself out onto paper.
- **No rules.** No grammatical rules. No spelling rules. No "shame" rules!
 - If you have difficulties with "the rules"—try this. Do a free-write where you *intentionally* break every rule. Then try doing a free-write where you don't worry about the rules at all.
 - If it helps, you can comfort yourself with the knowledge that you can rip up the paper, into tiny, tiny bits if you wish, as soon as you finish the free-write.

- Keep the pen moving. No need to go fast. Just keep the pen moving ... even if you have to write blah, blah, blah. Just keep the pen moving until the timer goes off.

Dr. Stephen Smith emphasizes that in addition to taking the task of preaching seriously, and taking the people seriously, authenticity requires that we must also take ourselves seriously. This does not, of course, mean that we become officious or "high and mighty." It means that we take all of ourselves seriously, warts and all, as they say. Sounds like a good freewriting exercise ...

Set your timer for 5 minutes. Write on the prompt below. When you wander off topic, just bring your mind back to this prompt and start again. Keep it going for the full five minutes.

When it comes to preaching, I worry that . . .

Now lay your pen down, take a good deep breath and move to the next prompt. Set your timer for another 5 minutes. Write on the following prompt. Again, when you wander off topic or run out of things to write, just bring your mind back to this prompt and start again ... and again. Keep it going for the full five minutes.

The best thing about my preaching is . . .