1. **Don’t try to start the paper in the perfect way.** You don’t need to have perfect grammar for your first draft. Just start writing, and go back and revise later.

2. **Don’t wait until you feel “inspired.”** Inspiration may never come, and then you’ve wasted time. You can’t revise a blank page.

3. **Free-write.** If you are struggling to think of an argument, you may need to get your brain thinking on the subject. Your first sentence doesn’t have to be anything academic; you could start by thinking back to your own experience.
   - Let’s say you’re writing about standardized testing. You could start like this: “I remember sitting in a stuffy classroom on an uncomfortable chair. It gave me a headache and was stressful. I was very uncomfortable the whole time.” Maybe this will give you an idea: One argument against standardized testing might be that “standardized testing is uncomfortable and stressful for students.” Then you have an idea and can run with it.

4. **Try starting with the body of the paper, not the introduction.** Your argument may change as you write, which could make your introduction irrelevant. Write the main argument, then try to prove it. Fill in the background later.

5. **Try having a conversation.** Do you have a hard time writing, but you like talking? Talk with a friend about your topic, or even just think aloud into a voice recorder and transcribe your thoughts later. WSTS or GWC are also great spaces to have a conversation.

6. **Don’t stop writing when you get stuck.** Maybe you don’t know how to word something in your fourth paragraph, but you know what you want to talk about. Make a note to come back to that section later, then move on to the next section. When you draft, you want to get into a flow, and the best way to do that is to not set the pen down or take your eyes off the computer screen.

7. **Take away all distractions.** Put away your cell phone and close internet tabs that are unrelated to your writing. Remove clutter around your workspace if it causes you to stop writing. If the internet is too distracting, printing out your sources and writing by hand might reduce distractions. Is your music distracting? Either turn it off or switch to something instrumental to keep the lyrics from interfering with your thoughts.
8. **Consider time of day and physical setting.** Is it the time of day when you are most productive? Are you in the right setting? Is the library too noisy? Are you sitting in an uncomfortable chair? Are you at home and struggling to avoid watching TV or taking a nap? If you’re in the wrong place, move somewhere else!

9. **Establish a routine.** Maybe today you are not interested in writing, but force yourself to do it anyways. Tomorrow, sit down to write again at the same hour for the same amount of time, and repeat this everyday. This is especially important if you are working on a lengthy process like a novel, thesis, or dissertation. Discipline is key to pushing through even on difficult days.

10. **Get support.** Find someone to keep you accountable, preferably someone else who is trying to write as well. Collaboration and peer review will help spark new ideas and could be that inspiration you’ve been looking for. Maybe even make it a competition to see who can get the most work done. Working with someone else makes the process of writing a little less lonely. “Creativity thrives in community” (Glyer).

11. **Think about why you are having writer’s block.** Are you afraid of failing or writing a bad paper? Are you stuck thinking about a different stressful situation? Are you hungry or tired? Addressing those other issues first may help to clear your head and help you start.

12. **If you are afraid of failure, know that even the most famous authors struggled with writing, and many were afraid of failure too.** Writing is a difficult, lengthy, and often painful process, but it is one that you must engage with. Realize that you don’t have to write something amazing on the first try. You can (and should) write more than one draft, and no one has to even see the first draft. Writing is a process—not a product; focus on moving forward, not the end result.

13. **Know that there is no such thing as a good writer.** You are a good writer if you come to the table and write. Every writer has a unique voice, so when you express your ideas on paper you are accomplished. What makes some writing seem more professional than others can largely be attributed to practice and lots and lots of drafting. J.R.R. Tolkien revised parts of The Lord of the Rings as many as 18 times. “He wrote, then figured it out, then wrote it over again. You don’t have to get it right on the first try” (Glyer).

14. **Celebrate your past successes and potential to succeed once again.** You’ve probably written a paper before, and you survived! You can do it today, and you’ll probably have to do it again in the future. Remember these successes in the future when you’re struggling with something else. This can be a way to overcome roadblocks of any kind.

Works Consulted:
Michigan State University Writing Center (http://writing.msu.edu/); UNC-Chapel Hill Writing Center (http://writingcenter.unc.edu/); Diana Glyer’s Seminar on Creativity (Azusa Pacific University 2014)