

Beating the Blank Page

Struggling to get started on that writing assignment? Battling writer's block? Some of the steps below might help you beat the blank page!

1. **Take a break.** Have you ever heard someone say that their best ideas come to them while they're washing dishes or taking a shower? Sometimes focusing too long and too hard on a specific writing problem can prevent you from stepping back, seeing the bigger picture, and making connections. Take a short break, let your mind rest and wander, and come back with fresh eyes.



2. **Talk it out.** Step back from your paper and have a conversation about it with a friend, a family member, your professor, or a tutor. They can summarize what you're telling them and ask you follow up questions that can help you think about your writing from a different perspective.



3. **Write it out.** Freewriting is not just a good prewriting strategy—you can use freewriting at any time in the writing process to help you get your ideas out of your head and onto the page. Set a timer for 5 minutes, and start writing. Don't stop writing until the time is up, and don't worry about grammatical correctness or whether what you're writing is "good" or not. You might just jot something down that jump starts your writing!



4. **Jump ahead.** If that hook and introduction just isn't coming to you, skip ahead to a body paragraph. If one body paragraph isn't coming together, skip to another. Once you make more progress, you can come back.



5. **Change your writing tools.** Have you been writing on your computer? Try writing with pen and paper. Have you been penciling down your thoughts? Try typing on your laptop. Are you a more visual or kinesthetic learner? Write down your ideas on post-it notes or index cards and reorganize them around on a table. Chart out your ideas on a plain sheet of paper with arrows, question marks, and stars.



6. **It's not going to be perfect—and that's okay!** What you're writing a first, rough draft. It's okay if it's VERY rough. No one else has to see this draft. The rough draft is your first attempt at putting your thoughts together. You'll have another draft after this to make it look like this writing was effortless!

