



## Generating Ideas

Often, the hardest part of writing is coming up with ideas to write about. The following questions and suggestions are designed to help you get started and avoid the dreaded blank page.

### Environment:

- Find a place to write that inspires your creative process. Everyone is different, so experiment and find out what works best for you.
- If you're with a friend, talk through your ideas before you even begin writing. What do you feel most comfortable explaining about a topic? Which topics flow the most easily as you talk? You'll be surprised by how much you already know. Your friend can give you points to clarify or even counterarguments that you can refute in your work.
- Change your environment if you find yourself stuck after an hour or so. This will help clear your head and provide a quick break.

### Getting started:

- Break your assignment into small, manageable sections. This will make the project less daunting and keep your work structured.
- Start wherever you feel most confident. Introductions can be intimidating until you have a better idea of what your finished product looks like, so you might want to start with one of your body paragraphs instead. You can always come back to things later.
- If formal writing seems too daunting at first, use informal writing to get ideas down. This can include freewriting, using a graphic organizer, or jotting down some notes in a journal. You may have more ideas than you thought.

### Drafting:

- Begin your draft with a single goal, idea, or question in mind to keep yourself on target, especially if you had many disconnected ideas to begin with. Write it at the top of your page to help you stay focused.
- Push yourself into forming a strong argument by asking yourself "So what?" about your thesis. What are the implications of your ideas?
- Ignore spelling, grammar, and punctuation until a later draft. Let your ideas flow on the first draft and deal with style later. If you edit during the early writing stages, you may lose your train of thought, so wait to read over your work until you feel the ideas start to slow down.
- Once you have a draft, don't be afraid to make changes and move things around. Read what you have and decide if it is organized well and makes sense.
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When generating ideas, **always trust yourself**. Your mind will amaze you if you give it the time and space to do so.

