

HOW TO FIX WRITER'S BLOCK

Feeling stuck? Staring at a blank Google doc? Not sure what to write your essay about? Have a topic but not sure how to start? Here are a few easy ways to cure writer's block:

Make a list. Write down whatever details, anecdotes, jokes or phrases you might want to include in your essay.

- A grocery-style list will let you see everything on paper.
- Write notes, annotate the list, and connect related thoughts together.
- It doesn't have to be orderly or organized, and you don't have to use every item on the list in your final draft. Pick your favorites.

Write an essay outline. Some people prefer to write stream-of-consciousness and edit later; others would rather solve the essay structure first. Both are great ways to write. If you prefer an outline, check out the [essay structure cheat sheet](#). Write notes under each step before you start your draft.

How would you tell a story to a friend? If you're feeling stuck with your [writing style](#), think about how you would explain your essay topic to a friend or family member. Talking through essay ideas with someone else, or even recording yourself talking, can help you figure out how you naturally tell stories.

Try a few different topics. If you have a few different essay ideas and can't decide which one to pick, try writing two different lists or outlines. You can even start two different drafts. It will become clear throughout [the brainstorming process](#) which topic feels stronger/more natural to you.

- If you have a few strong ideas, think about how you might use those ideas in your different application essays. The prompts might ask you to answer different questions, but the basics of the Common App and supplemental essays ask you to 1.) connect a story about you to 2.) a lesson you've learned or part of your identity.

Use something you've already written as inspiration. What's your favorite essay you've ever written? Can you adapt it to fit a Common App or supplemental prompt? Make sure to include a cohesive story and an "I am learning" statement.

Read good essays. Reading example essays can give you a window into what word choice, voice and structure make for the best stories. Check out different topics and writing styles. There's not just one way to write a great essay.

- [The New York Times' narrative essay contest winners](#)
- [Johns Hopkins' college essays that worked](#)
- [College Essay Guy's outstanding college essay examples](#)
- [Linked lists of college essays from various colleges](#)