

## How to Start a Piece of Writing

**This list helps you if you're stuck and don't know how to get started on your writing.**

1. Give yourself time to think. Use long minutes of silence to play with ideas in your head.
2. Just scribble down your ideas and play around with how you might organize them. You might draw a picture or a diagram to give form to your thoughts.
3. Try sitting somewhere else instead of at your desk or in front of the computer. Go to the kitchen table, or go outside. Then try thinking again there.
4. Take a break and try to start writing again later, with a fresh mind.
5. Try to relax a little. You might be feeling tense about how to start your writing because there's a lot of pressure to do it well. Remind yourself that the worst thing that can happen is that you'll write something kind of bad and you'll have to try again later. It won't mean you're a bad writer. Nobody writes awesome stuff 100% of the time.
6. Try to break up your writing task into smaller, doable pieces. You might have trouble getting started because you feel overwhelmed by the size of the task. You could say to yourself, for example, "I'll just write the first five sentences, and then I'll go play outside for awhile. I'll write another five sentences later tonight."
7. Leave a blank space at the top of your page and just start writing the middle of your piece. You can go back and write the beginning later.
8. Here are some methods you might use to begin a piece of writing:
  - Start with an interesting little story, fact, quote, or definition.
  - Start by visually describing a scene. Or, start with a conversation.
  - Start by describing the **opposite** idea that you will focus on. or by describing how some people **misunderstand** your idea.
  - You can start with a question, but that can be babyish. Make sure your question is fascinating, unusual, or funny.
  - Start by just stating your topic or your main point immediately, or if you're writing a story, just begin the action or description anywhere. You can always go back later and think of a smoother way to start, or just leave it like that.
  - If you're writing a story, try starting with a flashback, a flash forward, a scene that shows your villain instead of your hero, a scene in the very middle of what will be the action or climax of your story, or a conversation among some people who are talking about your main character.
  - Look at examples of published pieces of writing similar to what you're creating. How do these accomplished authors begin? Try borrowing their strategies.