

Writing can be hard sometimes, sitting down and putting words onto a page when you have nothing to say can be the hardest thing, here's some advice for people who have trouble getting their ideas out.

Dear Writer,

I have to write something but I don't know how to start. I keep staring at the blank page and waiting for an idea to come to me. What should I do?

Dear Stuck,

Just start writing something. It doesn't really matter if it is good at first. I think a big problem with writing is thinking that the first thing you write has to be good. It doesn't. You can always change it later. If you don't know how to start, just write down what you are thinking. You could even write, "I don't know how to start this," and then keep going. Eventually you might think of something better. I've done this before when I had to write something and just started putting random thoughts down. It wasn't good, but after a while I had something I could actually work with. The worst thing you can do is sit there doing nothing because you're waiting for the perfect sentence. Just get something down.

Dear Advice Column,

I have started my paper about five times and deleted it every time. I feel like everything I write sounds stupid. How do I stop doing this?

Dear Perfectionist,

Stop trying to make it perfect the first time. Your first draft is probably going to be bad. That's okay. I do this too sometimes. I'll write a sentence and immediately think, "That sounds stupid," and delete it. Then I'll write another sentence and delete that one too. After doing that for a while, I realize I've barely written anything. Instead, just let yourself write badly. Don't worry about grammar or if every sentence sounds amazing. You can go back and fix it. It is a lot easier to edit something than to edit a blank page. You might even write something that you don't use at all, but it could help you figure out what you actually want to say. So just keep going even if it feels bad.

Dear Writer,

I have ideas but I get distracted really easily. I start writing and then I think about my phone, what I'm going to eat for dinner, or even what other people are going to think about my writing. How do I focus?

Dear Distracted,

You have to basically tell yourself that none of that matters yet. When you're writing your first draft, you don't have to worry about what anyone else thinks. Put your phone away if you can, close other tabs, I find that when I'm in a similar predicament, I tend to start with a pencil and paper instead. Just sit down and write for a little while. It doesn't have to be for hours. Even 15 or 20 minutes is better than spending an hour thinking about writing without actually writing.

Putting ideas on a page is already hard, don't let the lack of ideas limit your possibilities, get rid of all distractions, have a little fun, and just write! No one expects it to be perfect, and writing anything even if it's bad or unfinished, is better than writing nothing at all.