

Got Writer's Block?

Still haven't figured out a topic for your Common App essay? Perhaps you've settled on a topic, but you can't bring yourself to sit in front of the computer. Or maybe those annoying supplemental essays are what's giving you trouble.

Our take? Writer's block is not the problem; not writing is the problem. That said, we've listed a few tried and true tips for helping you start – and finish – your college application essays ASAP so you aren't scrambling in the days before the November 1st Early Decision and Early Action deadline:

- **Time yourself:** On day 1 (today!), set a timer for 30 minutes, and then start writing. Do the same on Day 2 and 3. This will help you get into the habit of writing daily, and you'll have a first draft done in no time. If you are on a roll when the timer goes off, keep writing!
- **Take a break:** If you hit a wall, do something to clear your head and relax, like taking a walk, listening to music, or grabbing a snack, then head back to the computer.
- **Set mini-deadlines:** Make a list of all of the essays you need to write, and then create a schedule spelling out when you will tackle each essay. You have no idea how many students create unnecessary stress for themselves – and their entire family – because they write their essays over Halloween weekend.
- **Reward yourself:** When you achieve one of your goals, give yourself a pat on the back and a trip to Starbucks, or watch an episode of your favorite show before tackling the next essay.
- **Change the scenery:** Still convinced you have writer's block? Try eliminating distractions (put the phone in another room) or better yet, head to a quiet place like the library.
- **Don't waste time:** One of the biggest mistakes students make is procrastinating, then leaving no time for revisions. Students also don't spend enough time on the all-important supplemental essays.

A final thought: The novelist Jodi Picoult once said, "Writer's block is for people who have the luxury of time." So start writing!