



MIND BLANK?

TIPS FOR WHEN YOU'RE STUCK ON AN ASSIGNMENT!

1. Identify the Problem

Read over the assignment prompt or directions. What is the goal of this assignment? What does the end product need to look like? Are you trying to prove a point with evidence, or do you need to show that you've understood a reading? Having a clear idea of what the assignment is asking will help outline parameters.

2. List of Topics

Take 5 minutes and write a list of topics you are interested in that fit into your assignment prompt. Do you have to talk about a class reading? A time period? Anything under the sun that can be supported with evidence? List some ideas to get the ball rolling. Don't worry, you're not locked in to any of them – just use the list to fire up your brain.

3. The Five Ws (and H)

Once you've decided on a topic, see if you can identify the "who, what, when, where, why, and how" of your project. If it's a compare/contrast essay, what are the different sides? If it's a persuasive essay, what sort of evidence will you need to make your point? Don't jump to research yet, but start thinking about the different parts you'll need to prove.

4. Research Skim

If you need to write something that incorporates research, take a look at what else is out there. Use terms from the prompt to sift through databases, or take a look on Google for a more general overview. As you skim, notice what questions or comments come up – do you disagree with a point being made? Do you want to know more about a topic that is brought up? – and write them down. These questions can be a great place to start thinking about a topic.

5. Freewrite

When in doubt, freewrite! Set a timer for 5-10 minutes and write down everything you know about the topic, everything that stands out to you from a class or a lecture. Writing everything you already know will help you see what information stood out to you, and where you have knowledge gaps that can be addressed.