

I don't have any idea
how to start writing
this essay!



Ways to Get Started:

1. List Objectives
2. Rephrase Questions
3. Outline Ideas
4. Brainstorming
5. Free Writing
6. Mind Maps



Option 1: List Objectives

Read through the assignment/prompt provided by your professor.

Highlight or underline the main things your professor is looking for.

On a separate piece of paper/note/document, list what you need to do.

EXAMPLE

- **Answer professor's questions**
- **Formulate my own argument**
- **Review an article from class to use**
- **Find two articles online to also include**
- **MLA Format citations and work cited**

Option 2: Rephrase Questions

Reread the question/assignment your professor gave you.

Try rewriting it as a statement using the same words. If there's information you need to add, and you don't know what to write, leave it blank and come back to it.

EXAMPLE

Assignment Question: If animals can suffer and feel pain like human beings, why is it ethical to kill and eat some animals like chickens but not other animals like pets? To push this further, is it ethical to eat animals but not human beings?

You Write: Even though animals can suffer and feel pain like human beings, people believe it is ethical to kill and eat animals like chickens, but not other animals like pets, because _____. While it is sometimes ethical to eat animals, it is never ethical to eat humans, because _____.

Option 3:

Outlines

Instead of getting stuck thinking of how to open your essay, think about what the professor wants you to include and where.

Make a general outline of what your paper will include.

EXAMPLE

Assignment Question: Is there more than one way to learn? Write about your own best learning experience and why it was so good.

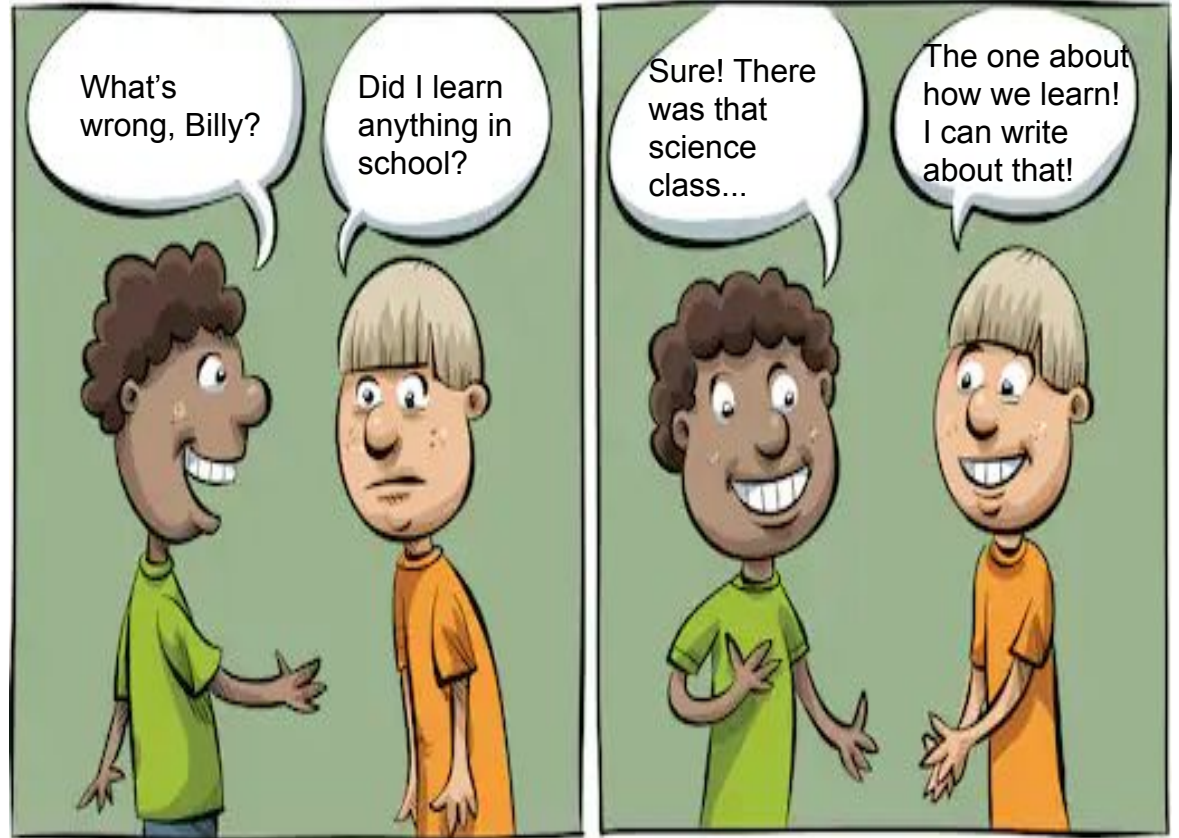
OUTLINE:

- I. What it means to learn.
- II. Ways I know I learn best.
- III. Best experience and why.
- IV. Contrast with worst experience.
- V. What I know now about why I had a good/bad time in school.

Option 4: Brainstorming

Having trouble figuring out what to write about?

Talk it out with a friend, family member, or tutor, they may be able to offer insight you would not have thought of!



Option 5: Free Writing

Work that writing muscle out by writing out everything that comes to mind!

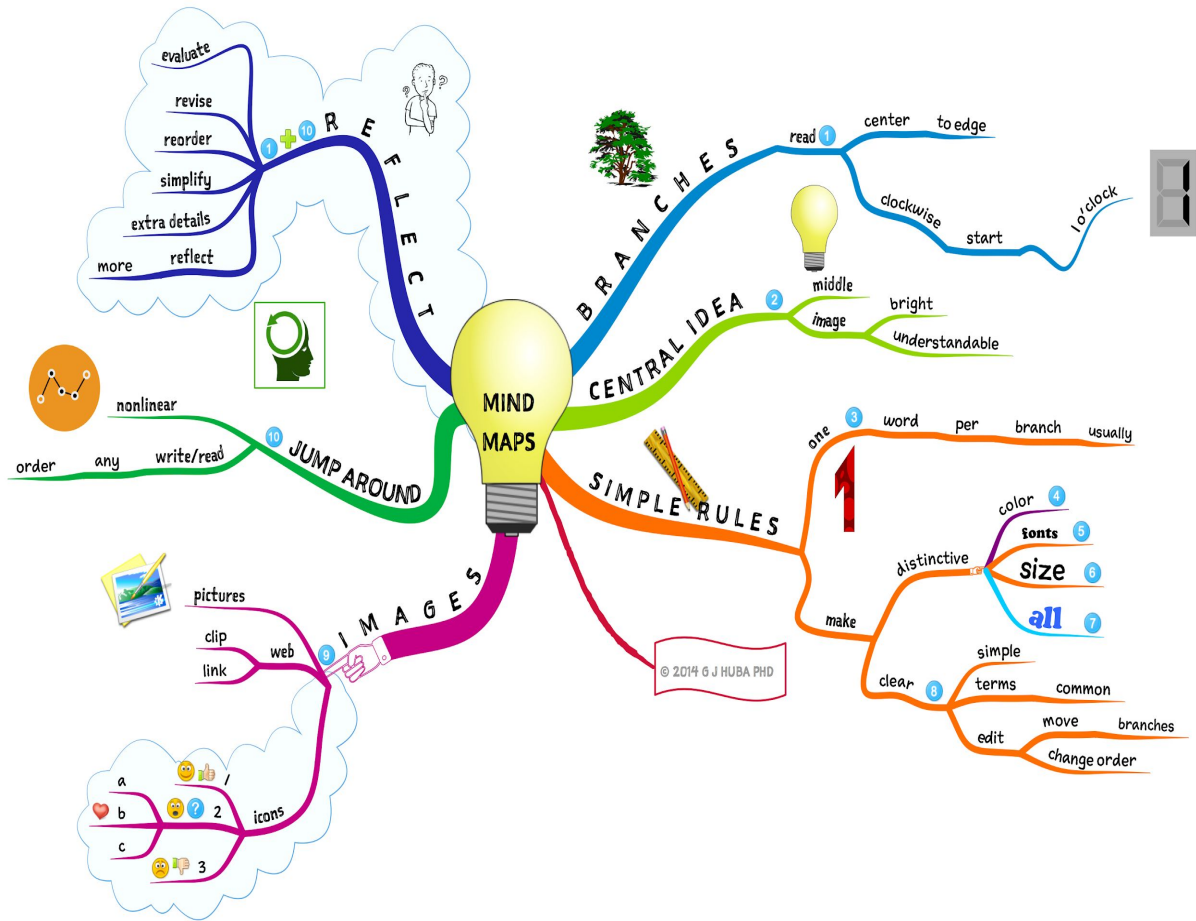
Don't worry about making sense, just get ideas on the page!

(Highly recommend pen & paper rather than computer screens for this one.)



Option 6: Mind-mapping

- Put main idea in middle of the page
- Draw branches from the central picture (idea) toward the outside of the page
- Label branches with major ideas
- For each branch, draw sub-branches for variations on major idea
- Sub-branches can have sub-branches
- Each sub-branch should be more specific than the branch or sub-branch on which it is located



Source: <https://hubaisms.com/2014/01/25/demonstration-of-text-vs-mindmaps-in-instruction/>