

Using Questions to Get Started

Suggested Topics (or use your own):

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| <input type="checkbox"/> A difficult class/subject you are taking | <input type="checkbox"/> Being self-reliant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your best friend | <input type="checkbox"/> How you feel about writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with a serious problem | <input type="checkbox"/> How other people see you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Favorite place | <input type="checkbox"/> A terrifying experience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your Mom/Dad/Favorite Person/Hero | <input type="checkbox"/> An upcoming change |

First: Pick a topic from the above list or use one you already have.

Second: Once you have decided on a topic you like, ask the following questions about your selected topic. *If you don't have the answers for all of them, don't worry.* Some questions are more productive with one type of topic, and some with others.

1. What do I know about the topic, or what issues are involved in the topic?
2. What causes are involved in the topic, or what is the history?
3. What results does it produce?
4. Can I compare or contrast it with something else?
5. How can I describe it?
6. What stories can I tell about it?
7. How do I feel about it?
8. What have I heard others say about it?

Third: Write down your answers to each question.

Fourth: Exchange your papers with a partner and share ideas. Please *write down* and *discuss* any new ideas you both come up with.

Fifth: Figure out your point of view, what you want to say about your topic. Then organize your ideas into categories based on that.

Note to teacher: *For students who are auditory learners, arrange a peer conversation wherein the other student asks the questions and takes notes. Recording the session is good because it allows the auditory learner to review the session and learn to pull out relevant ideas. However, if no recording device is available, simply asking someone to take notes for the auditory learner will work fine.*