

Teaching Writing → Students and Creative Writing

Level: Elementary School

Have you ever been asked to write but found you were stuck; you simply couldn't think of anything to write about? Even authors get stuck sometimes. The trick is to know how to get "unstuck." Here are some strategies to try when you feel stuck.

Read each strategy for getting unstuck below. Chose one to try as you begin to write a new story.

- 1. Put your brain in gear.** Sometimes your brain needs a little time to get into writing mode and once it's there, writing becomes much easier. Set a timer for 15 minutes and just write. What you write doesn't matter: Write a list of what you want to do when you get home, write about the noises you hear, write whatever comes to mind. When that timer goes off, you just might find that you've discovered something really interesting to write about by getting your brain into writing mode.
- 2. Use a picture.** A picture can help transport you to another place or make you wonder or imagine. Look through art books, magazines, or your own photos. Choose a picture and look really closely at the details. Is there a story there? Where is it? Who is in it? What might they be doing? Where are they going? Use your ideas to write a story.
- 3. Use a story prompt.** Story prompts can help you get started on a story. They are usually just one sentence, a hook or a teaser for a story. Sometimes having the first line of the story is enough to get your imagination going. Use one of the examples below to start your story.

The smell wafting down the road was delicious, like spices and flowers all mixed together, and she just had to follow it and see what it was.

He wanted to run away, but it was like one of those dreams he sometimes had where his feet were glued to the ground. He just couldn't move.

If I had known how that day would end, I wouldn't have gone to Alex's house at all.

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