

Banish Writer's Block Forever with Idea Generators



By Li Vasquez-Noone

It's an awful feeling when you sit down at the keyboard to write, and ... nothing happens.

Writer's block!

When it strikes, your work comes to a screeching halt. And if you're staring down a deadline, you need a way to get unblocked ... *fast*.

Here's the thing: usually, it just takes an idea — any idea — to get going again. And you can get one quickly with an idea generator.

An idea generator is a tool designed to give you a prompt or an idea to get you writing. You may have already used one. They've long been popular in creative writing circles as a way to get ideas flowing. And now you can use them for any type of copy you're working on.

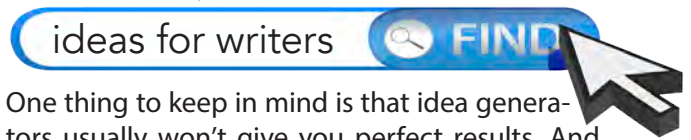
Idea generators come in different formats, from simple writing prompts to complex online apps. They all have one goal in common: to jump-start your creativity. The next time you're stuck for an idea on what to write about, give these a try:

- Type three nouns into **Hubspot's Blog Topic Generator**, and it will return five headlines based on your topics. Though your results likely won't be perfect, you'll have something to start with. As an example, I tried it out with "writer's block," "idea," and "productivity." The best of the five headlines I got was "15 Best Blogs to Follow About Productivity." The worst was "What Will Idea Be Like in 100 Years." Awful, yes, but I could change "idea" to

“productivity” and get a decent topic. <http://www.hubspot.com/blog-topic-generator>

- **Writing Exercises** is a site filled with creative writing prompts and exercises. Its multiple online generators give you random plots, subjects, first lines, characters, and much more. This is a great source for free-writing prompts, or just a fun place to brainstorm stories. <http://writingexercises.co.uk/index.php>
- **The Cosmo Headline Technique** is a simple exercise from Copyblogger. As the name implies, it’s based on the eye-catching headlines from *Cosmo* magazine. Though really, any publication will work. Here’s how you do it: take a headline from the cover page of the publication and plug your own topic into it. I tried it with an old *Runner’s World* magazine. The original headline, “4 Easy Exercises to Injury-Proof Your Body,” became “4 Easy Productivity Tips to Speed Up Your Writing.” Not bad for two minutes of effort. <http://www.copyblogger.com/cosmo-headlines/>

- For those times when you’re not sure where to begin, pull up your favorite **Internet search engine**. Seeing what others have already written about a topic can spark your own ideas. I used this technique to come up with my topic for this article. I started with a search for “ideas for writers.” One of the first results was an article on tips for writers to generate ideas. From there I remembered reading about online idea generator apps, and I had my topic.



One thing to keep in mind is that idea generators usually won’t give you perfect results. And that’s fine, since writer’s block often comes from not knowing where to start. Once you get that first spark of an idea, it’s usually all you need to start the words flowing.

The next time you find yourself struggling with writer’s block, try an idea generator to jump-start your creativity. The next thing you know, you’ll be writing again. ■



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