

NO-BLANK PAGE STARTER KIT

20 Opening Lines + 10 Planning Questions
So the page is never truly "empty" again.

How to Use This Kit

Before every timed task:

1. Pick ONE opening line from the list and copy it at the top of your page.
2. Answer 3–5 planning questions in the margin with short notes (not full sentences).
3. Start writing from your chosen opening and follow your notes.

The goal is not to be "original" in the first 10 seconds.

The goal is to start moving the pen.

Part A – 20 Opening Lines

You can label them "N" (Narrative), "P" (Persuasive) or "Both".

1–10: Narrative-Friendly Openers

1. **N:** The moment I heard my name, everything else in the room went quiet.
2. **N:** It started like every other Monday, right up until the fire alarm began to scream.
3. **N:** If I had known what would happen after that message, I never would have opened it.
4. **N:** The envelope was small and harmless-looking, but my hands were shaking anyway.
5. **N:** By the time I reached the gate, I had exactly three minutes left to decide.
6. **N:** Everyone else was laughing; I was the only one who could see something was wrong.
7. **N:** The first sign that today would be different was the empty seat at the front of the classroom.
8. **N:** I used to think big decisions came with dramatic music. In real life, they arrive in silence.
9. **N:** The rule was simple: never go into the school after dark. That night, I broke it.

10. **N:** Most people remember the day they got in. I remember the day I didn't.

11–20: Persuasive / Hybrid Openers

11. **P/Both:** On paper, the rule makes sense. In real life, it creates more problems than it solves.

12. **P/Both:** We like to say that school prepares us for the future, but we rarely ask: what kind of future?

13. **P/Both:** At first, banning phones at school sounds strict. Look closer, and it might be the kindest rule we make.

14. **P/Both:** If homework actually helped every child learn, there would be no argument. The reality is more complicated.

15. **P/Both:** Imagine walking into a classroom where nobody is scared to get one answer wrong.

16. **P/Both:** We tell students to 'do their best', but we keep designing systems that reward them only for being the best.

17. **P/Both:** Some rules protect us; others simply make adults feel safer. The challenge is telling the difference.

18. **P/Both:** We don't have to choose between high standards and happiness at school – unless we design it that way.

19. **P/Both:** Behind every school policy there is a quiet question that rarely gets asked: "How will this actually feel for the students?"

20. **P/Both:** If we are serious about preparing young people for the real world, we need to start by listening to them inside the classroom.

Tip for kids:

- For narratives, treat these as the first thought of your character.

- For persuasives, treat them as the first line of your argument and follow with a clear statement of your position.

Part B – 10 Planning Questions

Have the child answer 3–5 of these in quick bullet points in the margin before they start writing.

Questions for Narratives (use 1–5)

1. Who is this really about?

(Me, a friend, a fictional character? Age? One key trait?)

2. What is the main problem or decision?

(Choose ONE: move schools, tell the truth, speak up, stay quiet, accept/reject something.)

3. What is the most important moment in this story?

(The exact second something changes – what is happening?)

4. What does the character WANT, and what do they FEAR?

(e.g. Want: to get into a school. Fear: leaving friends / failing / disappointing parents.)

5. How is the character different at the end?

(Braver? More honest? More realistic? What did they realise?)

Questions for Persuasive Pieces (use 6–10)

6. What is my clear position in one sentence?

("Homework in primary school should be limited, not banned or unlimited.")

7. What are my top TWO reasons?

(e.g. Reason 1: mental health; Reason 2: quality of learning.)

8. What is one specific example or mini-story I can use?

(Classroom situation, student you know, trial week, hypothetical scenario.)

9. What is the 'bigger picture' idea behind my argument?

(Fairness, balance, wellbeing, preparing for the future, community impact.)

10. What sentence do I want the reader to remember at the end?

(A "mic drop" line or clear message – you can draft this before you write the middle.)

How to Turn This into a Simple Routine

For every timed writing task:

- 1. Pick an opening line and copy it.** (10–20 seconds)
- 2. Answer 3–5 planning questions with short notes.** (2–3 minutes)
- 3. Write the piece following your notes.** (25–40 minutes)
- 4. Quick edit using your normal checklist.** (5 minutes)

If they follow that every time, the page is never truly blank – there is always:

- **a first sentence waiting**, and
- **a few ideas already sitting in the margin.**

Final Note

This kit eliminates the two biggest time-wasters in timed writing:

- 1. Staring at a blank page** trying to think of a 'perfect' first sentence
- 2. Writing without a plan** and getting lost halfway through

With 20 opening lines and 10 planning questions, your child always has a clear starting point. The page is never empty. The pen keeps moving. And over time, the habit becomes automatic.

That's how the No-Blank Page Starter Kit delivers on its promise: by giving students the exact words and questions they need to start strong and write with confidence.