

A fact/idea list is a simple way of to develop ideas for your essay. Use this handout if you're having trouble getting started or if you're worried you do not have enough original ideas to meet the word count/page requirement.

## Fact-Idea List – Example

All successful writers – regardless of their skill level or previous accomplishment – need to spend time discovering ideas. This stage is often called “invention,” and a common method is to create a fact/idea list. The fact/idea list allows you to generate a lot of ideas quickly. It also helps you to distinguish between **evidence** (the concrete facts) and **analysis** (your questions, ideas, and response to those facts).

To write a fact/idea list, list your topic at the top of the page. Then write as many facts as you can about this topic. After you have listed some facts, try asking some questions about those facts or listing some ideas that they generate. Initially, you will probably generate more facts than ideas. But if you are patient and spend some time on this (20 – 30 minutes), you'll start to see patterns. You will probably not use all of the facts/ideas you generate, though you may see new ways to connect different trains of thought.

**Prompt:** In what way(s) does the form of your aesthetic phenomenon fail to contribute to some key, constructive function?

**Topic:** Skinny jeans

This example shows how you might develop a fact-idea list after settling on a topic but before drafting an argument. However, you can also create a fact-idea list after you've settled on a thesis or even after you've written a rough draft. This exercise is a good way to take stock of your ideas and material at any stage in the writing process.

(see reverse for fact/idea list)

fact	Idea
Skinny jeans have an ultra-slim fit and are tapered all the way to the ankles.	Skinny jeans draw attention to the body.
There are skinny jeans for men, women, children – even babies.	If skinny jeans are meant to celebrate the wearer’s figure, then why are they made for children and infants?
Skinny jeans can be so tight that it’s difficult for people to bend their knees while wearing them.	Jeans are supposed to be the ultimate “comfort wear,” but skinny jeans seem more about fashion/body display.
In Australia, a woman spent four days in the hospital after skinny jeans damaged the nerves and muscles in her calves. Doctors had to cut the jeans off her body.	These jeans can become so constricting that they’re dangerous.
<b>It’s hard for</b> heavier men and women to find <b>skinny</b> jeans that fit <b>comfortably</b> .	The fashion industry markets to a specific body type.
In various boutiques (American Eagle, Lucky, etc.), nearly all of the jeans come in the skinny or super skinny fit. The “classic” or relaxed fit is hard to find.	Skinny jeans have reduced variety in denim styles.

<p>Skinny jeans are cheaper to manufacture because they use less cotton than looser fits.</p>	<p>Sometimes, economics drive fashion.</p>
<p>Skinny jeans have been credited with popularizing other fashion trends, such as ballet flats and jackets with defined shoulders.</p>	<p>Fashions can reinforce or build on one another, shading into "lifestyle trends."</p>