

Empty states

Empty states occur when the regular content of a view can't be shown. It might be a list which has no items, or a search which returned no results. Although these states aren't typical, they are important opportunities for good design to avoid user disappointment or confusion.

If content cannot be displayed because of a system failure, see [app errors](#).

Displaying empty states

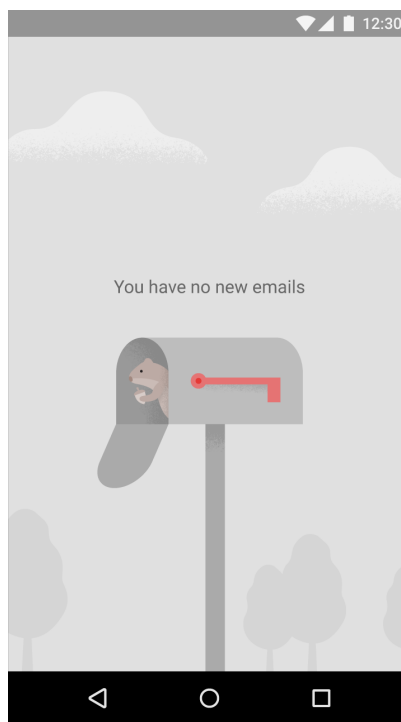
The most basic empty state displays a non-interactive image and a text tagline.

Use an image that:

- Is subtle and neutral with respect to the background
- Conveys the purpose and potential of the app in a lively way, such as your app's icon

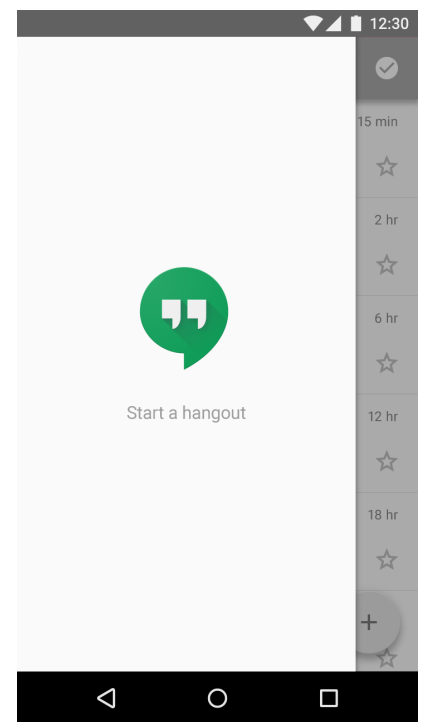
Include a tagline that:

- Has a positive tone
- Is consistent with your brand
- Conveys the purpose of the app without appearing to be actionable



Do.

The image is neutral and clearly part of the background. The tagline conveys the purpose of the app without coming across as a call to action.



Don't.

The image is bright and the tagline is worded like a call to action, which may encourage users to touch either thinking a hangout will start.

Avoiding completely empty states

There are several situations in which you can provide users with alternatives to truly empty states.

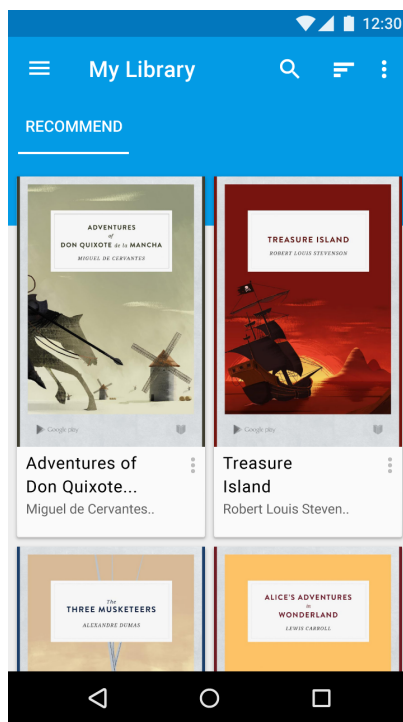


Starter content

The most compelling way for new users to learn and get excited about your app is by using it. Consider providing starter content that will allow users to explore your app right away.

Recommendations:

- Use content that has broad appeal and demonstrates primary features.
- Give users the ability to delete and replace this content.
- If possible, provide content that's personalized for the user.



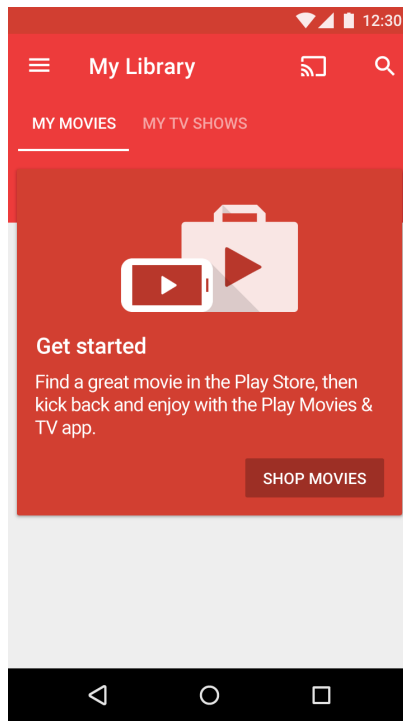
A book reading app might provide all users with a few free popular books to immediately start exploring the app.

Educational content

If the purpose of the screen isn't easily conveyed through an image and a tagline, consider showing educational content instead.

Recommendations:

- Help users understand what they'll be able to do on this screen once it has content.
- Make it possible to dismiss or skip this content.
- Keep it brief.

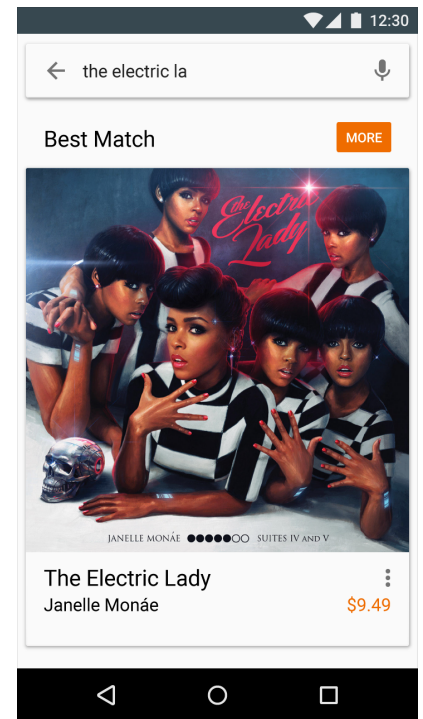
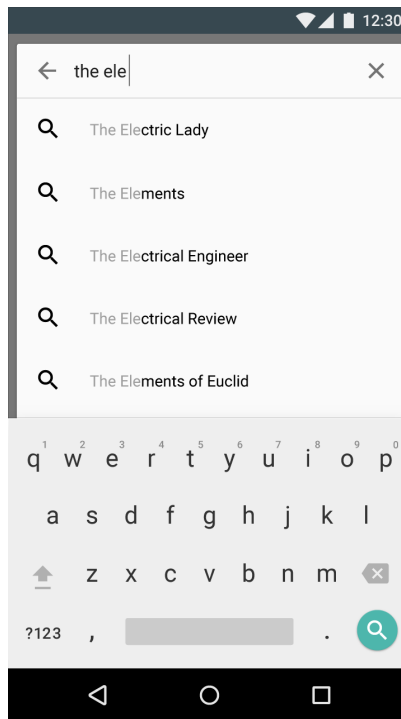


Before a user watches a video in the movies app, a dismissible card is shown to explain the features and benefits of the service.

Best match

If nothing exactly matches the user's query, are there any results for a query spelled slightly differently? If so, then show the results, as they may help a user find what they're after.

With this approach, clearly convey in a heading above the results that this content shouldn't be mistaken for a match to actual query results.



Offering “Best matches” is a great way to handle a misspelled query without explicitly placing blame on the user.