

Brainstorming Strategies

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Introduction

At times, brainstorming can be the most difficult and frustrating aspect of writing a paper. This part of the writing process, however, is essential to your paper's overall success.

Strategies

To make the beginning stages of your writing as successful as possible, use these strategies:

Getting Started

- Find a QUIET area, without distractions.
- Always try to pick something that interests YOU, this will make the writing process more enjoyable.
- RESEARCH your topic, even if it is not required for the assignment! This will give you more ideas and act as a basis for a strong outline.
- THINK before you WRITE, never rush into writing a paper.
- TALK it out – discussion is one of the best ways to get creativity flowing.

Freewriting

- All you need is a pen and paper for this activity. Allow your thoughts to flow and write whatever comes to mind for 15 minutes. Do not worry about the mechanics of your writing; this is simply an exercise to get your mind working. Even if what you are writing is not completely on topic, you may find some great buried ideas to spark your creativity.

Webbing

- To begin, write your main topic in the center of the paper.
- Around this topic, branch off and write ideas or concepts that relate to your central idea. Try to come up with as many as you can in one sitting. After you have completed this first phase, give yourself a break and come back to your web later on.
- When you come back, expand upon your concepts by writing similar or related key words/phrases underneath.
- Now, it is time to begin connecting these ideas to one another. Draw lines to show similarities between the words and phrases you have previously written.
- The web you create as a result of these connections will bring your attention to your train of thought, as well as possible guidelines for structuring your paper.

Questions

- When considering a certain topic, ask yourself these questions:
 - How does this relate to my assignment?
 - What is the relevance of my topic?
 - Where does this idea come from?
 - What are some similar ideas/phrases?
 - How would I write about this same topic in a different class?

Synonyms/Antonyms

- List a set of synonyms and antonyms to describe specific words relating to your topic. Then compare and contrast your lists to see how you can create arguments, form opinions, or suggest ideas using words from each list.