

The Writing Center @ EOU

Pre-writing/Invention

Strategies

Brainstorming

- Write your topic at the top of a piece of paper.
- Begin writing everything that comes to mind about your topic from words and phrases to full sentences.
- Consider talking out the process with a peer or group of peers.
- Emphasize filling your paper with as many ideas as possible.
- After writing as much as possible, look for trends in ideas and related ideas to combine into groups.

Mapping/Clustering

- Write a question or a main idea in the center of a piece of paper.
- Surround your central idea with as many words or thoughts as possible.
- Circle words as you write them and draw lines connecting thoughts to each other and to your central idea.
- By the end of the exercise, your map should be linked into a web of ideas.

Journalistic Questions

- Ask yourself the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” of your topic.
- Use the answers of these questions as a springboard for expanding your ideas.

Freewriting

- Start with a blank sheet of paper and begin writing.
- For 5-15 minutes write everything you have to say without taking a break.
- When the time is up, review what you have written.
- Look for related ideas and thoughts that follow a logical progression to group together.

Remember...

Not everyone formulates ideas the same way. Certain strategies that work well for one person may not work for another. Try a variety of different strategies to find what works best for you. Keep in mind, the purpose of invention and prewriting is to help get your ideas from in your head onto your paper. If you're struggling, don't force it as that often leads to writer's block. As with other stages of the writing process, it never hurts to take a break, clear your mind, and then return to your writing 30 minutes or even a day later.

References: *A Writer's Reference*, Skyline College, Writing Studio Duke University, Swarthmore College

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Campus Writing Tutors: <http://eou.mywconline.com>

Online Writing Tutors: <https://www.etutoring.org/login.cfm?institutionid=382&returnPage=>