



Brainstorming Techniques

Writing a thesis can be difficult sometimes. These are a few methods that might help a student think of a few things to say about a topic.

Mapping

- Write the topic at the top of a sheet of paper.
- Underneath, list any and all words or ideas that come to mind when thinking about the topic.
- Circle the items that pique interest and could possibly serve as points in the thesis statement.

Example: Topic: Graduation

Family and friends	Find a job
Diploma	Hard work
Excitement, joy	Tough classes, professors
Pride	Loan repayment

Free Writing

- Write the topic at the top of a sheet of paper.
- For 5 minutes, write anything that comes to mind.
- Be spontaneous and go off on tangents, even if it is unrelated to the topic.
- This can help one explore different perspectives concerning the topic.

Example:

Free Writing – What do I think about when somebody tells me to free write? I suppose it doesn't cost anything, if that's what they mean by "free." It's a free-thinking exercise that lets me write whatever I want to about any particular topic. This could be academic freedom at its greatest! But I'm still at a loss for ideas. I can sit and type and type and type and know that when I look back at what I've just written, I might be able to find a topic or perspective worth exploring. The Rocky Mountains are also worth exploring. Last time I went to the Rockies, my little brother was chased by a goat that didn't like rocks being thrown at him. . . .

Disclaimer: *The use of first person and informality is appropriate for free writing, however, when writing the actual paper, stay in third person and use formal language.*

Spiraling

- Complete a free writing exercise.
- Underline a phrase that interests author.
- Using this phrase as a topic sentence, free write for another 5 minutes.
- This will help one narrow the topic as well as the perspective.
- This exercise can be completed several times with different sentences.