

APSU Writing Center
Brainstorming Ideas

How to Brainstorm Ideas

Can't think of what to write about? You're not alone. Try brainstorming to discover topics that interest you, connect them to your assignment, and set yourself up to create a strong outline.

Research Your Topic

- Read your assignment sheet, class notes, and current news to find what's relevant.
- Ask what's currently being discussed and why it matters.
- Explore online databases for articles, case studies, or research papers.
- Look for gaps or unanswered questions in existing research.

Choose a Topic You Enjoy

- Pick a topic you enjoy because you will spend a lot of time writing about it.
- Make a list of your interests, such as cooking, film, music, technology, travel, sports, animation, farming, or comedy.
- Notice how everyday experiences, like signing in at a writing center, reveal how others think about technology.

Freewrite

- Freewrite about one of your interests for five minutes, then return to your assignment.
- Set a timer for ten minutes and write continuously about your topic.
- Include your thoughts, questions, and ideas from your notes or readings.
- Do not stop to edit; let the ideas flow.

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Mind Mapping

- Begin with a blank piece of paper.
- Write your main topic in the center and circle it.
- Branch out into smaller subtopics, examples, or questions connected to your main idea.

Treat Your Writing Like a Conversation

- Talk about your topic with a friend, classmate, or writing tutor.
- Answer their questions about why you are writing, why it matters, and why others should care.
- If you can convince a friend to care, you're on the right track.

Connect to Other Ideas

- Relate your assignment to your own life and experiences.
- Consider how it connects to past or current events and how it might affect the future.
- Ask whether it reminds you of other topics, stories, or fields of study.

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Brainstorming Ideas Outline

Idea or Concept:

Why Does This Idea Matter?

Solution or Response:

Conclusions:



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References

George Mason University Writing Center. (2016, June 7). *Brainstorming Techniques*.

<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/writing-resources/writing-as-process/brainstorming-techniques>

Virginia Commonwealth University. (2025). *How to Brainstorm Topics*. Writing Center.

<https://writing.vcu.edu/student-resources/brainstorming-topics/>