

## **How to Brainstorm Ideas**

### **APSU Writing Center Handout**

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.

### **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.

### **Connecting 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.

## 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/>