

GETTING STARTED: BRAINSTORMING STRATEGIES



Purposes of Brainstorming



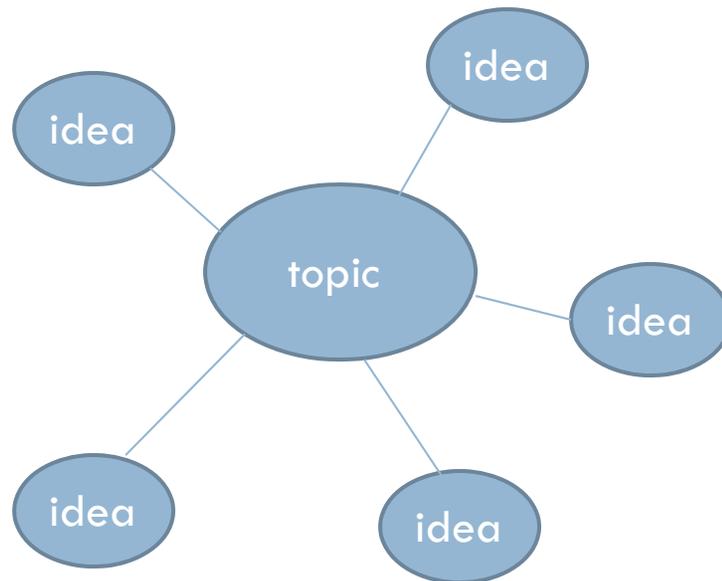
- Get ideas on the page
- Explore topics
- Find a topic that interests you
- Think through a topic
- Make a subject matter relevant to you
- Get the bad ideas out

Common Brainstorming Strategies

- Freewriting

- Columns

- Clustering



- Questioning (who, what, when, where, why and how)

- Listing

- Invisible writing (computer screen off)

Types of Writing Assignments

BROAD

- You pick a **subject** that fits the assignment guidelines
- **Purpose** is usually predetermined
- **Audience** is usually unfamiliar with the topic

PARTICULAR

- You pick a specific topic within the assigned **subject**
- **Purpose** is usually to inform or persuade
- **Audience** has background knowledge on subject

BRAINSTORMING FOR BROAD TOPICS

□ STRATEGY

Observation

- EX: Write a compare/contrast essay.



□ TRY IT:

- Think of a classroom you have this semester and describe it. Then, describe this classroom.
- How are the classrooms similar?
- How are they different?

BRAINSTORMING FOR BROAD TOPICS

1. Determine categories
2. Chart your findings to organize your information

	Location	Appearance	Technology
Your Classroom			

This Classroom

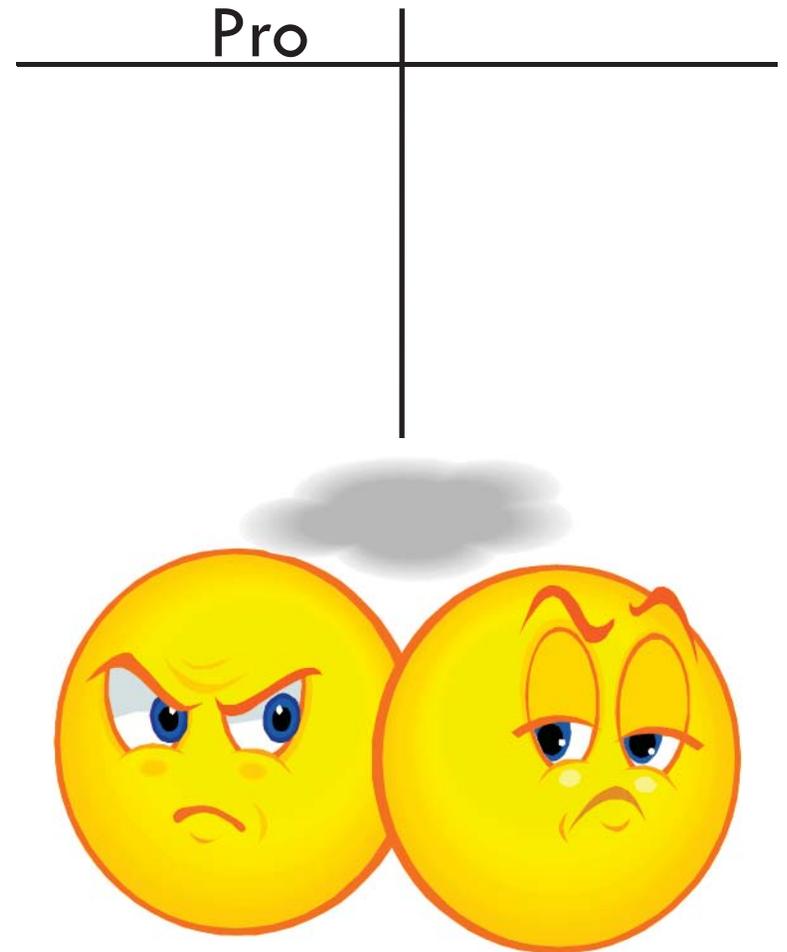
BRAINSTORMING FOR BROAD TOPICS

□ STRATEGY

Ask questions

□ EX: Write an argumentative research paper.

- ▣ Topic must have two sides
- ▣ Must be able to find evidence for both sides



BRAINSTORMING FOR BROAD TOPICS



- TRY IT:
- What topics do you want to know more about?
- Where can you find information on these topics?
- Topics that interest me
- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?
- How?

BRAINSTORMING FOR BROAD TOPICS

□ STRATEGY

Go to an event
(concert, museum, play,
presentation)

□ EX: Write a descriptive
narrative essay.

□ Use senses to create an
image for your reader.

□ TRY IT:

□ Describe this workshop
or a performance
you've seen recently.

□ Sights

□ Sounds

□ Smells

□ Taste

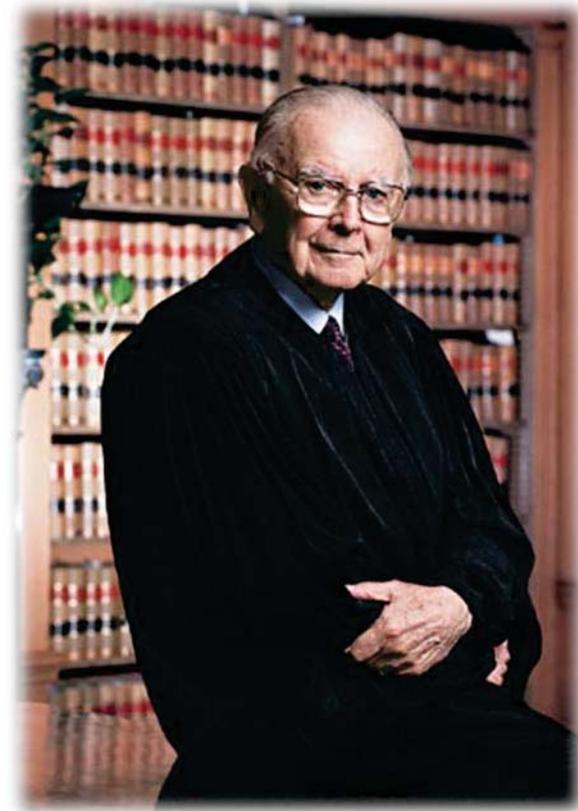
□ Feel

BRAINSTORMING FOR PARTICULAR TOPICS

- STRATEGY

Read biographies about people who have made a difference –

- EX: Explore a branch of the US Government. Why is it important to the governance of our Country? Check-out and read the biographies *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* or *A Justice For All: William A. Brennan, Jr. and the Decisions That Transformed America*.



Justice William A. Brennan

BRAINSTORMING FOR PARTICULAR TOPICS

- TRY IT:
- By the time he retired in July 1990, Brennan had ruled in 1,360 opinions, surpassing all but one justice in the court's history. His vital cases included *New York Times v. Sullivan*, which established the actual malice standard of which press reports could be considered to be defamation and libel (allowing free reporting of civil rights campaigns in the southern U.S.), and *Furman v. Georgia*, which ruled application of the death penalty required consistency (resulting in the suspension of the death penalty from 1973 to 1976).
- Emphasis would be:



BRAINSTORMING FOR PARTICULAR TOPICS

□ Strategy

Read a poem about
your subject

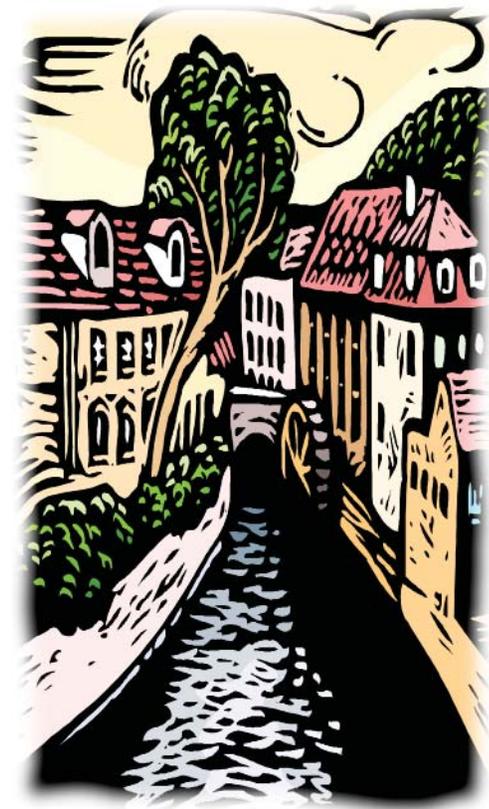
EX: Write a paper
describing life in a
Southern mill village.
Check out Eureka Mill.



Author Ron Rash

BRAINSTORMING FOR PARTICULAR TOPICS

- Try it:
- Mill houses lined both sides of every road like boxcars on a track. They were so close a man could spit off of his own front porch, hit four houses if he had the wind. Sometimes at night if I was feeling low, I'd stuff my ears with cotton. Then I'd stare up at that picture like it was a window, and I was back home listening to the farm. But what was done was done. Before too long the weave room jarred the hearing from my ears, and I got used to living with a crowd. Before too long I took the picture of the barn down.
- Would wish to discover information about:
- _____



BRAINSTORMING FOR PARTICULAR TOPICS

□ Strategy

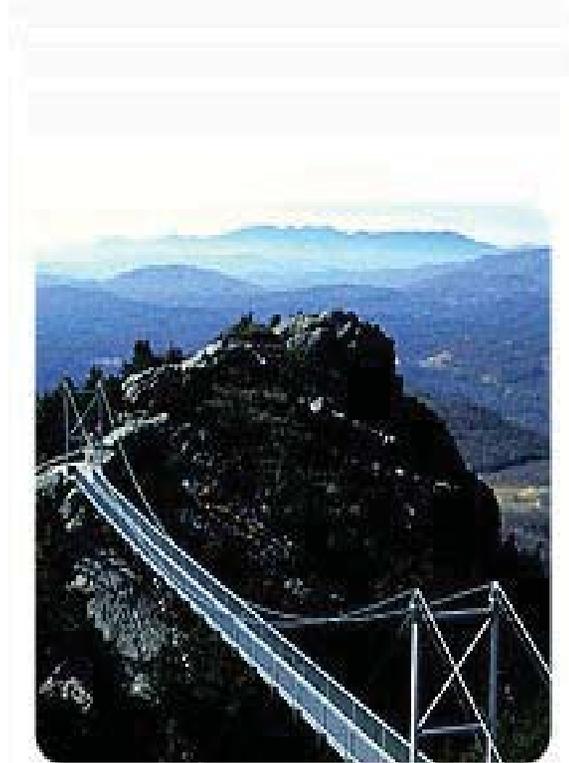
Read a general interest article

EX: Describe a management theory conceptualized in the last ten years. – Find “Human Potential Untangled”



BRAINSTORMING FOR PARTICULAR TOPICS

- Try It:
- Neither too lockstep nor too loose, such an approach might be called the “value model” of development because its goal is to get the best value each person has to offer. It combines methodical key steps people can follow to advance in their careers, with learning organization concepts that respect individual differences. One of the first steps in developing each person’s full potential is knowing why people don’t perform and what to do about it.
- How might the theory be described:



BRAINSTORMING FOR PARTICULAR TOPICS

- Strategy

 - Watch a documentary

Ex: Choose an international food which immigrated to a specific region within the US and detail the history and composition of the dish.

- Find International Food Festival 2008



BRAINSTORMING FOR PARTICULAR TOPICS

- Try It:
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkwclqDa7s4>
- What food and/or region piqued your interest?
What did you initially learn?

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BRAINSTORMING FOR PARTICULAR TOPICS

□ Strategy

Find a famous quote

EX: Write an opinion paper regarding the proposed governmental health care act.



BRAINSTORMING FOR PARTICULAR TOPICS

- Try It
- “There have been some **medical** schools in which somewhere along the assembly line, a faculty member has informed the students, not so much by what he said but by what he did, that there is an intimate relation between curing and caring.” Ashley Montagu
- Possible opinions:



BRAINSTORMING FOR PARTICULAR TOPICS

□ Strategy

Muse over a famous image

EX: Write an expository essay regarding the significance of a major Revolutionary War Battle.



BRAINSTORMING FOR PARTICULAR TOPICS

- Try It:
- George Washington Crossing the Delaware
- What stands out in your mind about the painting, making the Battle of Trenton one you will enjoy writing about?

