



Brainstorming Techniques

Having a hard time coming up with a thesis for your paper? These are a few methods that might help you think of a few things to say about your topic.

Mapping

- ? Write the topic at the top of a sheet of paper.
- ? Underneath the topic, list any and all words or ideas that come to mind.
- ? Circle the items that pique your interest and could possibly serve as points in your 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 6 to 8 minutes, write anything that comes to mind.
- ? Be spontaneous and go off on tangents, even if it is unrelated to your topic.
- ? This can help you 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. . . .

Spiraling

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