Pre-Writing Strategies

# Brainstorming

Brainstorming involves capturing all of the thoughts, ideas, and fragments in your head and writing them down on paper. Often, brainstorming looks more like a list while free writing may look more like a paragraph. With either strategy, your goal is to get as many ideas down on paper as you can.

# Questions Approach

As you may know, journalists have six important questions they need to answer about any story they report: who, what, when, where, why, and how. By answering these questions, you can be certain that you have provided the most important information about an event, issue, or problem to their readers.

# Webbing

With this technique, you start with a circle in the middle that contains your main idea and then you draw lines to smaller circles that contain sub-ideas or issues related to the main idea.

# Free Writing

Free writing involves jotting down on paper all of the ideas you have on a particular topic before you even begin to read about it or do research. You are not worried about syntax or grammar. Instead, you are interested in “dumping” all of the information you have on paper. You should write everything that comes into your head even if it doesn’t necessarily make sense yet.

# Outlining

An outline is a broken down numbering system to divide your ideas into sections. You may use roman numerals, bulleting, a lettering or a numbering system. It can be an informal scratch outline that lays out for you the main ideas you will be covering and the details that support those ideas.