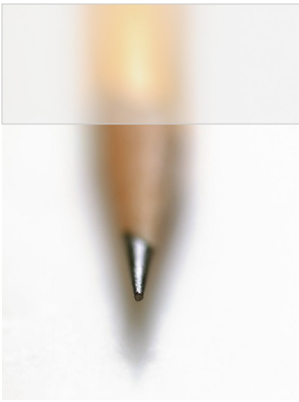


PRE-WRITING



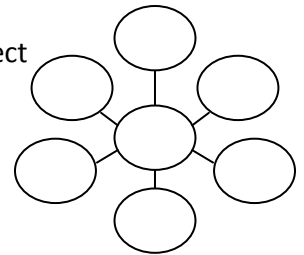
Ideas come from our engagement with the world through language. So, the first step to writing your paper should be to generate and organize ideas expressed in words. This stage is called “prewriting”, and even as it an initial step to jumpstarting your paper, you can always go back to it at any stage of the writing process.

GENERATING IDEAS

Most writers freeze when they face a blank page. That is why it’s easier to start writing when you’ve already gathered ideas in the form of notes. These notes are the raw materials of your paper. Here are a few idea-generating strategies:

Clustering (Webbing)

Starting with your chosen topic, write down words and phrases that are related to it. Connect these words with lines. Allow your new words to branch out into other words. Your cluster will help you think about topics and sub-topics to explore.



1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____
5.	_____
6.	_____
7.	_____
8.	_____
9.	_____
10.	_____

Listing

Imagine that you are in a grocery of ideas, and that you are making a list to help you recognize and remember the ingredients that will go into your paper. Quickly jot these ideas down as they come to you.

Drawing

Ideas can begin with images. Visualize your topic. Draw the pictures you see in your mind’s eye. You can also create a collage out of magazine clippings. These visuals can inspire you and help you turn your ideas into words.



Free Writing

Think about your topic, turn off your inner editor, and just write the sentences (or even just words and phrases) that stream into your head. When you are done, look at what you’ve written and circle or highlight those parts that you can develop for your paper.

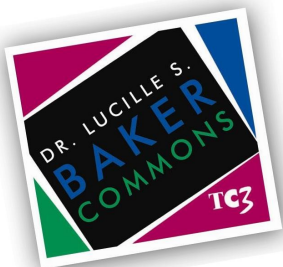
Questioning

One of the best ways to come up with ideas for your topic is to ask questions about it. You can even imagine that you are “interviewing” your topic. Make a list of questions, starting with basic questions (e.g. who, what, where, when) and progress to deeper, more complex inquiries. These questions will help you anticipate answers. They will also guide you in your research.



Writing & Research Center

We're here to help you succeed.



ORGANIZING IDEAS

Ideas are only as good as how well you present them, and presenting them well involves a mastery of organization. With strong order, sequence, and connection, you can turn your thoughts into one strong, coherent message for your reader.

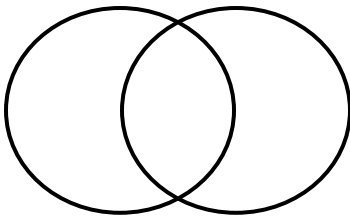
Outlining

Use a sentence or topic outline to create order out of your ideas. Remember to make your outline conform to the basic parts of an academic paper (i.e. Introduction, Body Paragraphs, and Conclusion).

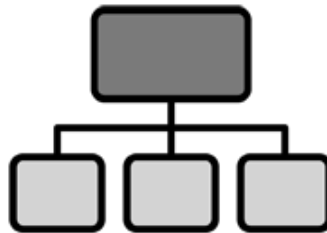
I. Introduction
II. Body Paragraph
A. 1.
2.
B. 1.
2.
C. 1.
2.
III. Body Paragraph
A. 1.
2.
B. 1.
2.
C. 1.
2.
IV. Body Paragraph
A. 1.
2.
B. 1.
2.
C. 1.
2.
V. Conclusion

Diagramming or Charting

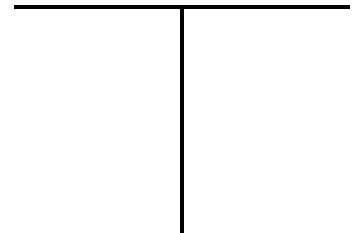
Diagrams can help you see and create logical relationships among your ideas. For example, if you are comparing and contrasting two items, a **Venn diagram** can help you come up with similarities and differences. If you are writing an argument paper, a **T chart** will help you conceptualize the pros and cons arguments. When you are working on clarifying how your ideas move from major topics to subtopics or examples, a **flow chart** will be essential. For a research paper, you can also utilize a **KWL chart** (outlining “what you know”, “what you want to know”, and “what you’ve learned”) so you can chart your progress. Choose the diagram that best suits your assignment.



Venn Diagram



Flow Chart



T Chart

What You Already Know	What You Want to Know	What You've Learned

KWL Chart