

If the Weather Outside is Frightful

Try accessing writing tutoring in the comfort of your home by clicking on: www.swic.edu/owl. The OWL or On-line Writing Lab receives your papers and within 48 school-time hours will return your papers with comments and suggestions on your work.



Be wise...Use the OWL



When to Get Help with a Writing Assignment

Both on-line and traditional “face-to-face” tutors are available to assist you at any point of the writing process. Few people sit down and write a paper from start to finish. Writing is truly a process of brainstorming writing ideas, creating an outline, researching the topic, citing the work, writing content, revising, re-writing, etc. At any point of this process, our tutors can assist you.

Every student has a M.E.S.T.- What’s Yours?

Your MEST is your Minimum Estimated Study Time per week. So how do you figure it out? Simple! Take the number of credit hours you are enrolled in and multiply by 2 - 3. So if you are enrolled in 12 credit hours, you can expect to work on your academics 24-36 hours a week. This includes study time, homework, research, writing, reading, review... College is very



demanding and for many students, one of the most difficult transitions is organizing and managing the time demands of college. If you would like help with Time Management, consider attending one of the free workshops on this topic in the Success Center.

Tips for Note-taking and Listening

Instructors often expect that students come to college with good listening and note-taking skills; however, high schools may not have demanded them and therefore, the skills may not have been developed. If you don’t have the skills, don’t worry. Practice taking notes from the news or radio broadcasts and in class using this Top 10 list.



Top 10 ways to become an effective note-taker:

10. Leave lots of space between ideas to be able to add your own thoughts, study questions or additional comments that the instructor may add later.
9. Anticipate lecture material by pre-reading the chapter.
8. Come to class with at least one question to ask about the lecture material.
7. Avoid reading or talking to the other students during the lecture.
6. Pay particular attention the last few minutes when a summary may be given or conclusions drawn.
5. Actively listen to the lecture by looking for points of emphasis that the instructor makes including his/her verbal language, body language, and the notes on the board.
4. Ensure you’ve gotten the main points and ask the instructor to elaborate with examples if not.
3. Show interest in the material being presented.
2. Spend 10 minutes a day for each class and review the day’s notes.



And the number one method...drum roll...

1. Attend every class and be ready at the beginning of the period with paper and pen!



Think Spring

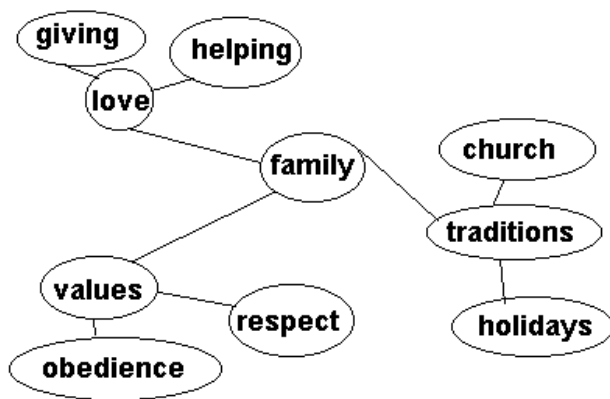


Tips from a Tutor

By Melanie Boston, English tutor, Penn State Altoona

Ever have trouble getting started on a paper? Do you get tense and find it difficult to choose a topic or focus your ideas? You're not alone. Even the best writers do not just sit down and start filling a blank page with perfect, complete sentences. Here are some of the "tricks of the trade" many writers use to gather ideas before they actually write their papers.

- *Brainstorm around a word.* When you are tossing around ideas for a topic, take a single word and write it down. Then list every word or phrase you associate with that word. For example, if you start with the word "family," your list might include the words parents, brothers, sisters, love, traditions, values, fights, etc. You might discover you have many ideas on one topic; then you can choose which ideas to think about in more detail and write about.
- *Make a "Cluster Map."* Write your possible topic in the middle of the paper and put a circle around it. Now, think of at least three points related to the word; write each of those points down and draw a circle around each. Branch out from each of the circles, writing down more related words in circles. Here is an example:



This technique is similar to brainstorming, but it also helps you to group your ideas. You can use it to help you organize the paragraphs of your paper.

- *Do Question/Answer, like a reporter.* Make a list of all the questions that come into your mind when you think about your topic. For example, for the topic "family," some of the questions might be, "How do we define family? What are some examples of different types of families?"

How have families changed from past to present? What are some common problems within families? What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of a small family/big family?" Just write all the questions you think of; later, you can choose the ones that seem most interesting or relevant, and start to think about your answers.

- *Talk with a friend, classmate, or tutor.* Another person might be able to ask you guiding questions that will make you really think about your topic.

Remember: It's important to think and plan before writing. When you're trying to get started, it's best not to worry about writing with perfect grammar, punctuation, or even complete sentences. These things will come later. In the "getting started" stage, you can relax, be creative, and just go where your ideas take you.

Adapted from "Tutoring Times" Penn State Altoona, Vol. 1, No. 2

1, 2, 3's of Math Tutoring

In the Success Center, tutors often hear, "I hate math!" But math for many students has been made as easy as 1, 2, 3...



1. *Early* in the semester, begin tutoring.
2. Create a weekly schedule where you've *scheduled* in tutoring, just as other classes are. (It is better to receive tutoring as soon after the math class as possible to reinforce the concepts.)
3. *Frequent* tutoring visits 3-5 times a week are the most effective

Dear Gabby

Dear Gabby,

I came to the Success Center for help with my algebra class last semester, but sometimes it was so crowded, I just got frustrated and left. Can't you get more tutors and space? Signed, Frustrated

Dear Frustrated,

It is true that at times the tutors can get very busy; however, there are other times including 8-9:30 a.m. and 2-5 p.m. when fewer students are requesting help and there is more space and tutors available. Try one of these times and we will continue to brainstorm ideas to maximize our resources.