



Success Center Tips for Essay Preparation

PREWRITING:

Invention Strategies

You may want to try the following invention methods for generating ideas that will lead to a thesis statement and supporting details for the paper:

Freewriting—writing non-stop in complete sentences without editing spelling or grammar

Brainstorming—jotting down key words and phrases as they enter the writer’s mind

Looping—circling the central idea of successive freewrites in which one freewrite forms the basis for the next writing loop until the writer finds a clear stance on the topic

Clustering—writing and circling the topic in the center of the paper and repeating the process to develop a visual diagram of subtopics

Questioning—applying journalist questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

Outlining—classifies and divides information to show the main points and supporting ideas and organizes them according to Roman numerals, and lettered or numbered subpoints.

DRAFTING:

Preparing an Essay

- The **introduction** should engage the reader and compel him or her to continue reading. The writer could add an exciting story, a surprising statistic, an important announcement, or quote a conversation.
- The **thesis statement** (main idea) should let the audience know what the paper is about (see thesis handout).
- The thesis statement should be supported by **ample details and/or convincing research** in the body of the paper.
- The paper should contain **well-developed ideas** to support your points. The paper should also have significant opposing points presented and answered logically.
- The paper should have a **logical organization** that presents information to readers in a way that will make sense to them.
- **Every paragraph should be focused on a single topic** and should be relevant to the paper as a whole.

- The paper should **flow** by using transition words and phrases, e.g., “however,” “therefore,” “in addition,” or “for example.”
- The **voice and tone** of the paper should be appropriate and consistent throughout and should not use colloquial or informal language.
- The paper should contain a clear, well-developed **conclusion**. Previous sentences should not be repeated word-for-word, but summarized and synthesized. You may also want to conclude with a call to action or an assessment of future implications.
- Keep the essay’s **purpose** in mind as you write, and be sure to check that the entire essay is relevant and on topic throughout.