INVENTION TECHNIQUES...

to help you PREPARE FOR WRITING: use these techniques before any step in the writing process (invention, first draft, revision, etc.) to clear your mind and prepare for writing

✓ Freewriting: the key is to write continuously – DON’T stop writing, DON’T pay attention to conventions (format, language, grammar, punctuation, etc.), DON’T worry about getting off-topic!!; start with no topic; just write whatever comes into your head for five continuous minutes; this will help you clear your mind and prepare for writing

to help you FIND A TOPIC: use these techniques during invention (before writing the first draft) to settle on an appropriate topic

✓ Freewriting: the key is to write continuously – DON’T stop writing, DON’T pay attention to conventions (format, language, grammar, punctuation, etc.), DON’T worry about getting off-topic!!; start by writing a general question/idea (for example, “potential topics for my Linguistics 101 essay”) at the top of the page; write continuously about that question/idea for 15 minutes; after 15 minutes, go back and read what you wrote, underlining or circling potential topics
✓ Discussion: discuss your interests/potential topics with a friend, classmate, tutor, etc.; this might help you learn new perspectives or think of new ones of your own
✓ Reading: read published sources about your interests/potential topics; this might help you learn new perspectives or think of new ones of your own; be careful of plagiarism (don’t represent others’ ideas as your own)

to help you NARROW A TOPIC (“find an angle”): use these techniques during invention (before writing the first draft) to help you focus/narrow your ideas about your chosen topic

✓ Wh- questions: ask yourself questions (who, what, when, where, why, how) about your chosen topic; one of those answers might be a good “angle” to discuss in an essay
✓ Looping: write your topic at the top of the page; freewrite about that topic for 5 minutes; after 5 minutes, reread what you wrote and summarize it into one sentence (this is the end of the first loop); now freewrite for 5 minutes about your summarized sentence; after 5 minutes, reread what you wrote and summarize it into one sentence (this is the end of your second loop); complete one more loop; after completing the third loop, your summary sentence should be a narrow topic
✓ Cubing: ask yourself questions (see page 30) about your chosen topic – spend 3-5 minutes freewriting in answer to each question; one of those answers might be a good “angle” to discuss in your essay

to help you FIND MORE IDEAS ABOUT A TOPIC: use these techniques at any point in the writing process (during invention, while writing the first draft, while revising, etc.) to help you think of new/more ideas about your chosen topic

✓ Freewriting: the key is to write continuously – DON’T stop writing, DON’T pay attention to conventions (format, language, grammar, punctuation, etc.), DON’T worry about getting off-topic!!; start by writing your chosen topic at the top of the page; write continuously about that topic for 15 minutes; after 15 minutes, go back and read what you wrote, underlining or circling new ideas that you can include in your essay
Discussion: discuss your chosen topic with a friend, classmate, tutor, etc. to find more ideas; this might help you learn new perspectives or think of new ones of your own

Reading: read published sources about your chosen topic; this might help you learn new perspectives or think of new ones of your own; be careful of plagiarism (don’t represent others’ ideas as your own)

Wh- questions: ask yourself questions (who, what, when, where, why, how) about your chosen topic; these answers might offer new ideas that you can include in your essay

Cubing: ask yourself questions (see page 30) about your chosen topic – spend 3-5 minutes freewriting in answer to each question; these answers might offer new ideas that you can include in your essay

Listing: write your chosen topic at the top of the page; quickly list anything that comes to mind that is related to that topic; use phrases, not sentences; these phrases might offer new ideas that you can include in your essay

Clusters/Branches: write your chosen topic in the middle of your paper; write down ideas that are related/associated to your topic and connect those ideas to your topic with lines or arrows; afterwards, group your ideas into categories; these groups might offer new ideas that you can include in your essay

To help you organize your ideas: use these techniques at any point in the writing process (during invention, between invention and writing the first draft, after writing the first draft, while revising, etc.) to help you organize your ideas or check your organization

Outlining: write your chosen topic at the top of the page; divide your supporting ideas into subtopics/subheadings which represent the ideas you want to cover in your essay