

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