



Outlining and Brainstorming Guide


By Jasmine Epps and Malia Galindo

What is Your Thesis?

- Chicago Style suggests that you start with a thesis to determine the scope of your paper and research.
- You might start with a broad topic and, depending on the research, you may need to make it more specific.



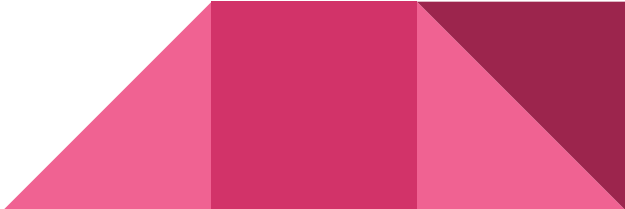
How to Start Your Research

- **Read the Prompt.** The assignment typically has a question that needs to be answered in your work. Skim and read the required and recommended reading from your syllabus that can be a starting point for your assignment.
 - When you are searching for a topic, **pay attention to the topic that excites, angers, saddens, or shocks you.** It is much easier to brainstorm a topic you are passionate about than one you are uninterested in.
 - In brainstorming a topic, **think about the things you already have information on or already know about, but want to know more.** Also, think about the thing you know a little about, but are eager to have more knowledge on.
 - If you're unsure about what topic you would like to write about, consider conducting preliminary research.
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Brainstorming

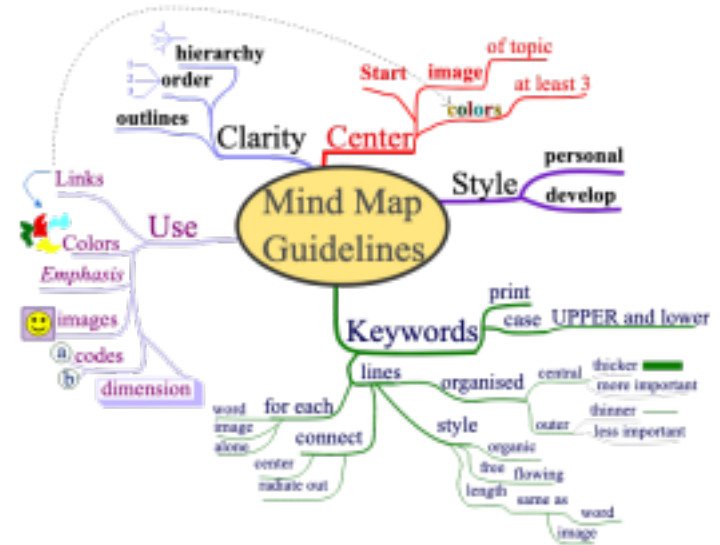


Brainstorming- Free Writing 🌀

- Depending on the assignment, spend 10-15 minutes writing to spark inspiration!
 - Set a timer for 10-15 minutes and focus on your topic and thesis formation.
 - This doesn't need to be grammatically correct at all! You could list, bullet point, paragraph, or just jump from topic to topic.
 - If you can't write for 10 minutes, make a list of questions you have or information you would like to explore.
 - We wanna get those creative juices flowing!
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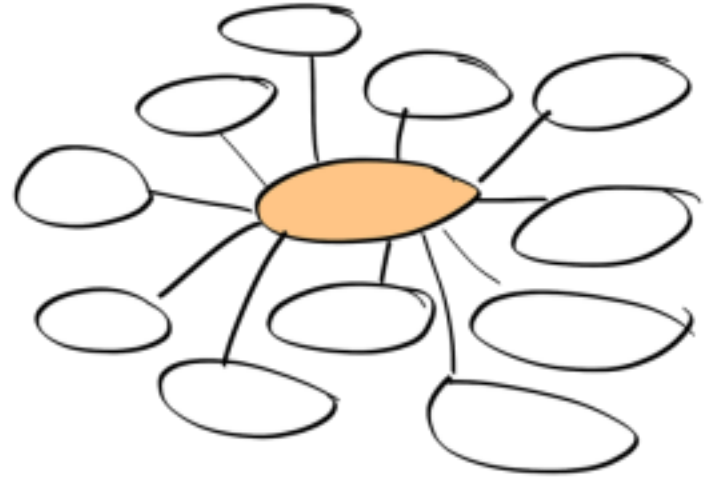
Brainstorming- Mind Map

- Mind mapping is a method of generating ideas on the basis of “and then” where you are mapping out tangents from a topic.
- Take a concept or idea and write it in the center of your page.
- Write concepts or ideas around that until you find something that interests you.
- When you exhaust the options for that topic, elaborate on one of the subtopics.



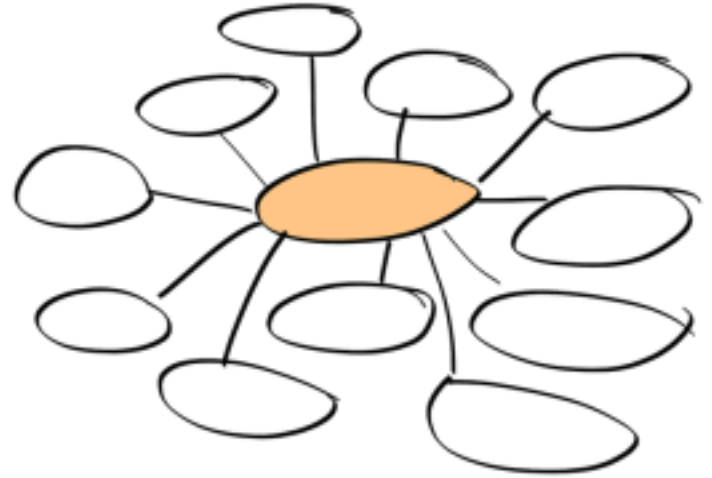
Brainstorming- Webbing

- Start with a blank piece of paper. In the middle, write your subject or topic.
- Draw lines extending from your subject with any kind of information connected to your topic at the end of those lines.
- Draw 10 more lines extending out from your subject. It may become difficult but keep going! This may help you find interesting and unique ideas.



Brainstorming- Webbing cont.

Examine all of the information in your web of ideas. **Note** the ideas that have **interesting** connections that may become good **points** for your paper. You'll have a lot of ideas that you don't need- that's okay! The point of the exercise is to get all your ideas on paper and the **connections** between them so you can see them more clearly.



Timeline



Timeline- How to Stay On Track

- Brainstorming for larger projects includes planning. Writing out dates and times to complete parts of your project can help with productivity prior to your due date.
 - Receive the assignment.
 - Write an abstract or summary and outline of the project question and response.
 - Mark dates to work on a project in specific ways. (i.e. April 8th: Write Introduction including Thesis.)
 - Also add dates and times for editing and proofreading.



Outlines



Outlines- Alphanumeric

- This is a basic outline that is used for traditional essays and breaks up your topic and known information into easy to read sections.
- You start with your main topic, and then break in into subsections, indenting and labeling as you go along.
- Each subsection or sub-topic will be labeled differently depending on how detailed you are. See sample>>>

Alphanumeric Outline

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

I. CHOOSE DESIRED COLLEGES

- A. Visit and evaluate college campuses
- B. Visit and evaluate college websites
 - 1. Look for interesting classes
 - 2. Note important statistics

II. PREPARE APPLICATION

- A. Write personal statement
 - 1. Choose interesting topic
 - a. Describe an influential person in your life
 - (1) Favorite high school teacher
 - (2) Grandparent
 - b. Describe a challenging life event
 - 2. Include important personal details
 - a. Volunteer work
 - b. Participation in varsity sports
- B. Revise personal statement

III. COMPILE RÉSUMÉ

- A. List relevant coursework
- B. List work experience
- C. List volunteer experience
 - 1. Tutor at foreign language summer camp
 - 2. Counselor for suicide prevention hotline

Outlines- Full Sentence



The Full Sentence outline format is essentially the same as the Alphanumeric outline. The main difference is that full sentences are required at each level of the outline. This outline is used most often when preparing a traditional essay.

Outlines- Decimal

Decimal Outline

1.0 Choose Desired College

1.1 Visit and evaluate college campuses

1.2 Visit and evaluate college websites

1.2.1 Look for interesting classes

1.2.2 Note important statistics

The decimal outline is similar in format to the alphanumeric outline. The added benefit is a system of decimal notation that clearly shows how every level of the outline relates to the larger whole.

See sample <<<



Resources 🙏 100

For more information about brainstorming tips and outlining, visit the Writing Center in person or online via Zoom. Schedule an appointment with our tutors by visiting:

<http://claremont.mywconline.com/>

Works Cited- Remember to Cite!

“Purdue Owl-Chicago Writing Process”, last modified April 8, 2019,
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/the_writing_process/index.html

“Crafting a Research Paper”, last modified April 8, 2019,
<http://crossroadscopenhagen.com/crafting-a-research-paper-outline-in-the-chicago-format/>

“Types of Outlines”, last modified April 8, 2019,
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