



WRITER'S STUDIO RESOURCES: PREWRITING



What is Prewriting?

- Prewriting is a collection of techniques used to generate and develop ideas for a writing project before sitting down to write the piece itself.
- Use prewriting strategies to organize, clarify, and prepare your ideas before you start writing.
- Employ informal writing and thinking exercises to focus your ideas.

Why is Prewriting useful?

- Prewriting helps writers to focus and plan out their ideas.
- Planning makes the writing process easier and faster by giving you a clear starting point and direction for your writing.
- Better planning leads to a better first draft and makes revision easier as well!

Prewriting Basics

Getting Started

Having trouble writing a paper? Don't know where to start or what to write about? That's where prewriting comes in. By using informal writing exercises and focused thinking, prewriting can help you come up with a topic and a plan for your writing assignment.

Prewriting Strategies

Try out these prewriting techniques to help jumpstart your writing!

Brainstorming

- Make a list of ideas, thoughts, and notes about your topic
- Group similar ideas together to create categories
- Use the categories to form paragraphs

Freewriting

- Spend 5-10 minutes writing about your topic
- Write whatever comes to mind-just don't stop!
- Extended, focused writing often leads to interesting ideas

Webbing

- Write your topic or a key word in the center of the page
- Connect ideas that relate to or branch off of this topic with lines
- Figure out how your ideas connect and relate to each other!

Question & Answer

- Create a list of questions you have about your topic
- What do you want to know or need to know?
- Use these questions to guide your research

5 W's

- Get a firm understanding of your topic by answering the 5 W's: Who? What? When? Where? Why?



Prewriting Exercises and Examples

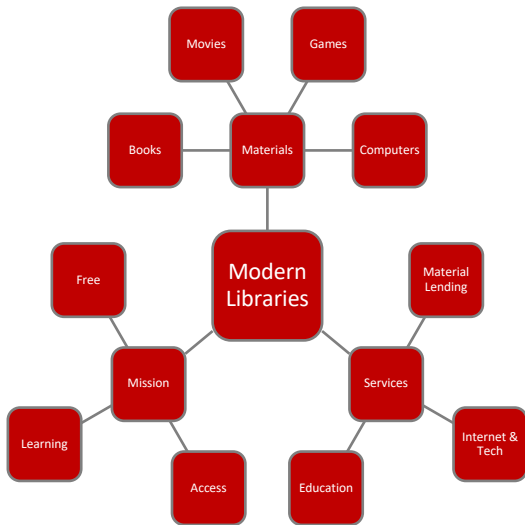


Did you know?
You can combine prewriting techniques to develop your ideas more fully before you start writing!

Brainstorming & Freewriting Exercise

1. Use **Brainstorming** to come up with a list of ideas, topics, and possible evidence (consult your notes if you're struggling for ideas).
2. Sort the items in your list into categories of similar or related ideas (you can use these categories to create an outline, too! *See our handout on **Outlining** for more info.*)
3. Take 5-10 minutes to **Freewrite** about each of your categories. This will help to flesh out your ideas and show you where you have too much or not enough information for each paragraph.

Webbing Example



5 W's Example

WHO?	
Who is involved?	The Founding Fathers
WHAT?	
What happened?	Signed the Declaration of Independence
WHEN?	
When did it happen?	July 2nd, 1776
WHERE?	
Where did it happen?	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
WHY?	
Why did it happen?	To become independent from the British Empire

Question & Answer Exercise

The Topic

- What is your topic?
- What do you find interesting about your topic? Confusing?
- What do you want/need to know about your topic?
- What do you want to say about your topic?

The Paper

- What are your main points?
- What evidence do you have?
- Why is this important? (So what?)

The Audience

- Who is your audience? (Academics? Students? The general public?)
- Based on your audience, what should be your tone/approach?
- What do you want the reader to know about your topic? (The takeaway?)