

*tips + tricks  
for when you're stuck  
writing your paper*

# BRAINSTORMING TECHNIQUES



## CHECK YOUR PROMPT

Your prompt can have a lot of good information in it that can help give you an idea of where to start your paper. Looking at your prompt also helps make sure that you are meeting any requirements for your paper. More information can be found on the Writing Center resources page and on our blog.



## SPILL YOUR KNOWLEDGE

If you already have a topic in mind for your paper, start writing out everything you know on your topic or anything related that pops into your head. Spending 10 minutes writing out everything you know can help give you an idea on how to organize your paper or show new connections you hadn't thought of before.

*You could also talk it out by audio recording or using speech to text on your phone or laptop!*



## ASK YOURSELF QUESTIONS

This is similar to Spilling Your Knowledge but in a more guided way. Some examples of questions you could answer are below.

What are my main ideas? ~ What is the main focus? ~ What questions do I have? ~ Why is this important? ~ Why and how is it relevant? ~ Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?



## MIND MAP IT OUT

Draw a mind map is a tactile way of sorting your thoughts on a subject. Start by writing your topic in the center of a piece of paper and draw branches out with different ideas related to that topic. Continue writing out different ideas and connecting them together until you can't think of anything else or a set time is up.



## HAVE WRITER'S BLOCK?

Try taking a short break, such as getting a snack or stepping outside for some fresh air instead of going on your phone. Both of those things can help get your brain primed to start thinking about your paper again which can help you focus and beat that writer's block.



## BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Writing takes time so don't be hard on yourself when it takes time to figure out what you want to say and don't put yourself down when it doesn't sound perfect the first time, you're still processing and thinking it through.

