

Prewriting Ideas

Use these prewriting ideas to help you find topics to write about. These ideas can also help you focus, explore, or narrow your topic.

- ▶ **Reading** Read stories in books and magazines. Note story ideas that occur to you. Choose and develop one idea.
- ▶ **Brainstorming settings** Work alone, with a partner, or with a small group. Quickly write notes about exotic, eerie, or unusual places where stories could take place.
- ▶ **Brainstorming characters** Quickly list interesting characteristics of people you have observed. Then add details, including how they look, think, and act.
- ▶ **Brainstorming plots** Quickly list ideas for story conflicts. Then think how main characters, with the help of supporting characters, could solve them.
- ▶ **Talking and listening in pairs** Work with a partner. Tell each other your story ideas. Tell who your stories will be about and what will happen. Ask each other questions and give suggestions.
- ▶ **Free-associating** Create a word chain, letting each new word inspire the next. Keep writing words until a story idea begins to form.
- ▶ **Drawing** Draw a scene that shows one or more people doing something. Write down what happens.
- ▶ **Looking at art** Look at paintings, drawings, photographs, or other forms of art. Tell what stories you see in them.
- ▶ **Listening to music** Listen to music on CDs or on the radio. Close your eyes and conjure up a scene the music suggests. Then tell a story about the scene you have imagined.
- ▶ **Watching movies** Think about the movies you have seen at the cinema or on television. Use them as springboards for new story ideas.
- ▶ **Looking at news photos** Scan a newspaper to find interesting photographs. Read the accompanying stories and captions. Think of related ideas for fictional stories.

