**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 make notes about interesting or faraway places where stories could take place.

- **Brainstorming characters** Quickly list characteristics you have observed in people. Then create characters for your story by clustering any of these characteristics. Add details describing how the characters look, think, and act.

- **Brainstorming plots** List ideas for the conflict or problem that your major characters must solve. Choose one conflict for your characters. Then explain how the conflict is resolved.

- **Talking and listening in pairs** Take turns telling your story ideas. Tell whom the story is about and what will happen. Listen to your partner’s questions and ideas.

- **Free-associating** Write the word that challenge, excitement, difficulty, or reward makes you think of. Then write the next word that comes to mind. Keep writing until a story idea begins to form.

- **Drawing** Draw a scene that shows one or more people doing something. Then write what happens next.

- **Looking at art** Look at paintings, drawings, and photographs. Tell the stories you see in them.

- **Listening to music** Play a favorite piece of music on an instrument or a CD player. Close your eyes and try to picture the scene the melody suggests. Then tell the story you have imagined.

- **Watching movies** Think about the movies you have seen at the cinema or on television. Think about how you could change their settings, characters, or plots to create your own story.

- **Scanning newspapers** Scan a newspaper to find interesting stories and photographs. Read the stories and captions. Fill in the missing pieces by creating your own story based on one newspaper story or photograph.

**Conflict ideas**
- A boy is accused of stealing money.
- Tom makes the team, but his friend Carlos does not.
- Jason can’t make friends at his new school.
- Marta discovers she has an identical twin.