Prewriting Ideas

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

► Clustering Think of a person or thing you would like to describe. Write the name of this person or thing in the middle of a piece of paper and circle it. Then write and circle the first word or phrase the person or thing makes you think of. Connect the circle to the name. Continue thinking of words and phrases, writing them down and circling them until you have a cluster of many descriptive details.

► Brainstorming objects Work alone or in a small group. Quickly list objects you know a lot about. Then list words that describe each object.

► Brainstorming places Quickly list places you know well or have read a lot about. Then list words that describe each place.

► Brainstorming people Quickly list people you know well. Then write words that describe each person.

► Brainstorming feelings Quickly list strong feelings you have had. Then briefly describe each feeling. Think of things each feeling can be compared to. For example, happiness can feel like fireworks.

► Listing sensory memories Make a list of memorable things that you have seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or touched. Describe each experience and how it made you feel.

► Taking notes Research a person, place, or object. Write notes on how he, she, or it looks, acts, sounds, feels, and smells.

► Looking at art Choose a painting, photograph, or drawing with many details. Describe what you see in the picture.

► Listening to music Close your eyes and listen to a piece of music you like. Then describe images the music creates in your mind and the memories and feelings it stirs.