

# Brainstorming

## Prewriting

Prewriting is exactly what it sounds like: writing that occurs before you actually write your paper. This is your chance to jot down some ideas about what you want to talk about in your paper. There doesn't have to be any particular order at this point in time, but getting the initial ideas down on paper can help you to identify patterns or a sequence to write in.

Prewriting can be done in several different ways: brainstorming, freewriting, or clustering.

## Brainstorming

Brainstorming means writing down your ideas as they come to you. They can connect to each other or not, but write them down anyway. The purpose is to identify patterns so that similar ideas can be grouped into paragraphs. For example, if you were writing about *Hamilton: An American Musical* and were supposed to analyze the musical as a whole, you might start writing out some ideas.

### ***Examples***

- Rap/Hip-hop influence – how does the music impact the storyline?
- Historical Accuracy – does the musical portray historical events accurately?
- Costume Design – how do the costumes help convey the story?
- Choreography – how do the dancers help to keep the musical interesting?
- Casting – what do the casting choices add to the quality of the play?

When you are actually writing the paper, you may not use all of these ideas, but it is helpful to have too many ideas rather than too few.

## Freewriting

Perhaps it is more helpful to you to go ahead and write down full thoughts and sentences, rather than just little ideas as you did in brainstorming. If you already have a good idea of what you want to talk about, start writing down everything that you want to include under that point. Freewriting works best if you write quickly, don't worry about grammar and spelling, and don't stop until you run out of ideas.

### ***Example***

Lin-Manuel Miranda could be a modern day Shakespeare, using the "people's voice" through rap. He is giving minorities opportunities to have significant parts in musicals and also adapting their style to the stage. The rapid word play also helps convey a significant amount of information in the same amount of time as a regular musical. Each character has both their weaknesses and strengths displayed throughout the play, giving an even-handed approach.

Again, not all of these ideas may be used in the final paper and some of these ideas may break out into paragraphs of their own, but it is helpful to write out the ideas as they come to you and then organize them later, once you have the initial subject material down.

# Clustering

If you are more of a visual person, it may be helpful for you to cluster your ideas into a diagram. Start with drawing a large circle for your main idea, then branch out into smaller circles for the sub-topics you want to talk about, and then add other circles underneath with additional ideas you want to include in the sub-topics. All of the circles should lead back to your main idea.

## ***Example***

