**Brainstorming**

**What is brainstorming?**

**Brainstorming** is a way to gathering ideas about a topic. Think of a storm: thousands of drops of rain, all coming down together. Now, imagine thousands of ideas 'raining' down onto your paper! When you brainstorm, write down every idea that comes to you. Don't worry now about whether the ideas are good or silly, useful or not. You can decide that later. Right now, you are gathering as many ideas as you can. There are three types of brainstorming in this unit: **making a list, free-writing, and mapping.**

**Making a list**

Write single words, phrases, or sentences that are connected to your topic.

**Free-writing**

When you free-write, you write whatever comes into your head about your topic, without stopping. Most free-writing exercises are short; just five or ten minutes.

Free-writing helps you practice **fluency** (writing quickly and easily). When you free-write, you don't need to worry about **accuracy** (having correct grammar and spelling). Don't check you dictionary when you free-write. Don't stop if you make a mistake. Just keep writing!

**Mapping**

To make a map, use a whole sheet of paper, and write your topic in the middle, with a circle around it. Then, put the next idea in a circle above or below your topic, and connect the circles with lines. The lines show that the two ideas are related.

What's the best way to brainstorming?

There is no best method of brainstorming. Some writers like to use lists because they don't have to write complete sentences. Some writers like free-writing because they can write quickly and ideas come easily. Some writers prefer mapping because they can easily see the relationship between ideas. Try all three methods, and then choose the one that works best for you.

**Editing**

**How to edit?**

After you have gathered plenty of ideas, you will need to go back and edit them. This is the time to choose which ideas are the most **relevant** to (important or necessary for) your topic. Of course, you can still add new ideas if you think of something else while you are re-reading your list.

To edit free-writing, cross out sentences or parts of sentences that **aren't related**. You can add more ideas in the margin or add more sentences at the bottom. To edit a map, cross out circles that don't belong, and add new ones in case you get more ideas. You might also change the lines you have drawn.