

Invention

- This is where you determine your subject
- More importantly, this is where you determine what you do (or don't) know about your subject
- Questions, exercises, then questions

Invention

- Why am I writing this? (purpose)
- Who is my main audience? (audience)
- How am I going to communicate clearly to that audience? (focus)

Brainstorming

- Variation on word association games
- Write your topic at the top of a page
- Underneath, write as many words or phrases as you can think of about the topic
- Only give yourself 1-3 minutes
- Don't worry about "misfires" or weird words
- When done, review the list
- Look for connections, common elements
- These can become paragraph points

Clustering

- Variation on brainstorming – more visual
- Write subject in middle of page and circle it
- Brainstorm and write words on paper
- Circle and draw line back to main topic
- EACH circled word, not just main topic, can generate new responses
- Don't go more than 15 minutes or so
- Each "cluster" of responses can become a paragraph point

Reporter's Questions

- The 6 questions reporters use
- Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How
- Ask them as many times, in as many combinations as possible about your topic
- Write down the answers
- Often works best to have someone else ask the questions
- Great technique to bring back details you had "forgotten" in a narrative

Invention

- After you've done invention techniques
- Ask yourself about purpose/focus/audience again
 - Your answers should be more complete

Purpose

- Why are you telling us this information?
- Do you want us to
 - laugh
 - cry
 - get angry
 - feel sorry
- You have to know before the audience can
- No one purpose is inherently better than another, unless audience or meaning calls for something particular

Audience

- Who are you trying to reach?
- Different audiences affect
 - vocabulary
 - background
 - details
 - tone
 - overall content
- Other audiences *MAY* read, but that's out of your control
- Your essay should indicate a non-general audience in some way

Meaning (Focus)

- What are you really trying to say?
- What do you want the reader to know about your topic after reading your essay?
- Works with purpose, but deals with specific content, not just tone and mood
- Choose the specific details that emphasize the point you are trying to communicate
- Directly related to the thesis, but goes beyond just thesis statement

Invention

- Come back to these techniques if you need new information later
- *YOU* need to practice/experiment and find which techniques work for *YOU*
- Different techniques work for different writing situations
- The point is to begin thinking about what you know and what you want to say