

Module 6: Writing a Research Paper

Topic 1 Content: Narrowing Your Topic

Introduction



Narrowing Your Topic

Freewriting

Clustering

Listing

There are numerous prewriting strategies that can help you narrow down your topic and focus your research. Different strategies may work better for you depending on your personality or even the assignment at hand, so try several of them to see which are the most comfortable and effective for you. In this interactivity, you will explore three prewriting strategies for narrowing down your topic: freewriting, clustering, and listing. Click a strategy on the left to learn more.



There are numerous prewriting strategies that can help you narrow down your topic and focus your research. Different strategies may work better for you depending on your personality or even the assignment at hand, so try several of them to see which are the most comfortable and effective for you. In this interactivity, you will explore three prewriting strategies for narrowing down your topic: freewriting, clustering, and listing. Click a strategy on the left to learn more.

Module 6: Writing a Research Paper

Topic 1 Content: Narrowing Your Topic

Freewriting

Narrowing Your Topic

Freewriting

Clustering

Listing

Freewriting involves setting a timer and writing nonstop for ten or fifteen minutes. You can write about anything that comes to mind or about anything that is already on your mind. The important part of this exercise is to keep writing. Even if you get stuck or are not sure what to write, keep your pen moving or your fingers typing anyway. Click the image below to view an example of freewriting.

Okay so I need to write for ten minutes about famous people. The first famous person I can think of is Barack Obama, but he's still alive and too recent to write about. I need someone who lived a long time ago, how about another president? What about Lincoln or Thomas Jefferson? What did Jefferson do? I know Lincoln freed the slaves during the Civil War, what was that called? The Proclamation of Emancipation I think? Oh what about civil rights! I could write about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He did so much to help the Civil Rights Movement. Who else was involved. I know, Rosa Parks, she was the one who refused to give up her bus seat, right? Was that enough of an impact on history? Can I find enough sources about her? I can definitely find plenty of sources about King. . . .

Freewriting involves setting a timer and writing nonstop for ten or fifteen minutes. You can write about anything that comes to mind or about anything that is already on your mind. The important part of this exercise is to keep writing. Even if you get stuck or are not sure what to write, keep your pen moving or your fingers typing anyway. Click the image below to view an example of freewriting.

Okay so I need to write for ten minutes about famous people. The first famous person I can think of is Barack Obama, but he's still alive and too recent to write about. I need someone who lived a long time ago, how about another president? What about Lincoln or Thomas Jefferson? What did Jefferson do? I know Lincoln freed the slaves during the Civil War, what was that called? The Proclamation of Emancipation I think? Oh what about civil rights! I could write about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He did so much to help the Civil Rights Movement. Who else was involved. I know, Rosa Parks, she was the one who refused to give up her bus seat, right? Was that enough of an impact on history? Can I find enough sources about her? I can definitely find plenty of sources about King. . . .

Module 6: Writing a Research Paper

Topic 1 Content: Narrowing Your Topic

Clustering

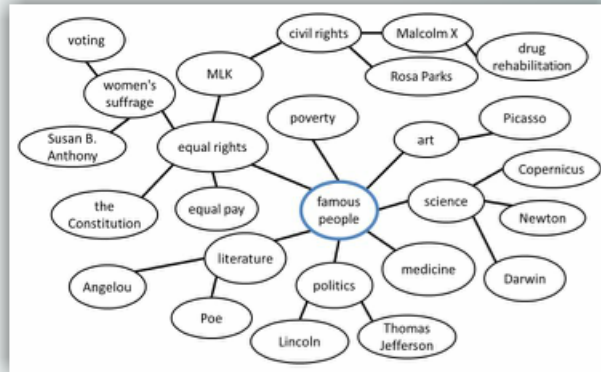
Narrowing Your Topic

Freewriting

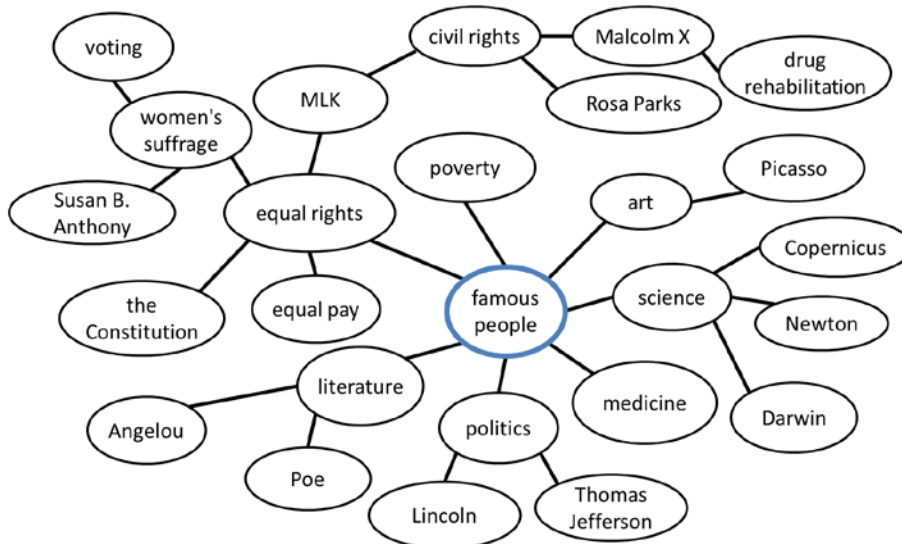
Clustering

Listing

Clustering, also called mind mapping or webbing, allows you to view relationships between related ideas in a visual manner. Start by writing a general topic in the center of your paper and circle it. Then, write down other related ideas around the circle. As you write these ideas, circle them and draw lines connecting each item to related ideas. Click the image below to view an example of clustering.



Clustering, also called mind mapping or webbing, allows you to view relationships between related ideas in a visual manner. Start by writing a general topic in the center of your paper and circle it. Then, write down other related ideas around the circle. As you write these ideas, circle them and draw lines connecting each item to related ideas. Click the image below to view an example of clustering.



Module 6: Writing a Research Paper

Topic 1 Content: Narrowing Your Topic

Listing

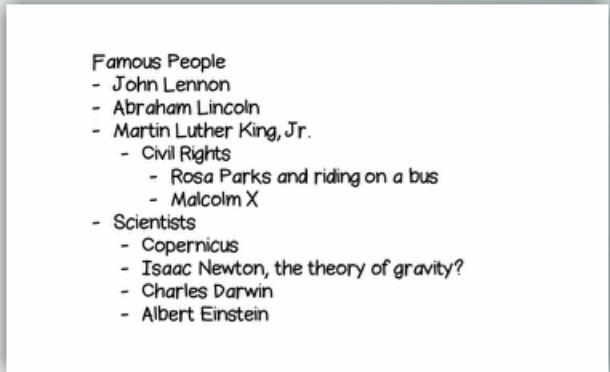
Narrowing Your Topic

Freewriting

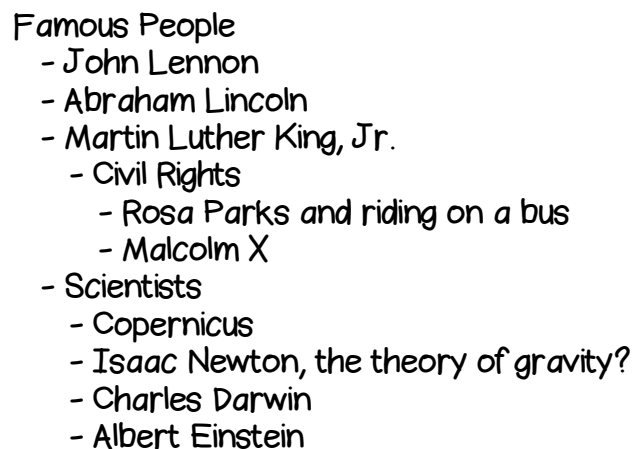
Listing is a technique in which you create a list by freely jotting down ideas as they come to mind. Start with a keyword or idea related to your writing assignment, and then start listing words or phrases. Click the image below to view an example of listing.

Clustering

Listing

- 
- Famous People
 - John Lennon
 - Abraham Lincoln
 - Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - Civil Rights
 - Rosa Parks and riding on a bus
 - Malcolm X
 - Scientists
 - Copernicus
 - Isaac Newton, the theory of gravity?
 - Charles Darwin
 - Albert Einstein

Listing is a technique in which you create a list by freely jotting down ideas as they come to mind. Start with a keyword or idea related to your writing assignment, and then start listing words or phrases. Click the image below to view an example of listing.

- 
- Famous People
 - John Lennon
 - Abraham Lincoln
 - Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - Civil Rights
 - Rosa Parks and riding on a bus
 - Malcolm X
 - Scientists
 - Copernicus
 - Isaac Newton, the theory of gravity?
 - Charles Darwin
 - Albert Einstein