

Metro Writing Center



INVENTION: BRAINSTORMING TOPICS

For many of us, the most difficult part of composing is knowing what to write. Here are some strategies for coming up with a topic.

Brainstorming

- 1) Write down numbers 1 through 20 on the left side of a notebook page.
- 2) Now, list 20 topics you want to write about. What interests you? What's going on in the news? In your life?

Authority Lists

This invention tool helps us identify our own expertise, that is, what we know well and could write about with authority. You might make a list of:

- skills you have that not everyone has
- hobbies you have that not everyone has
- special roles you've played (Big Brother/Big Sister, camp counselor, manager, aunt/uncle, etc.)
- things you've taught to others
- things you know that not everyone knows
- things you've visited or witnessed that not everyone has
- people you know that others might like to know about

Inquiry Lists

You can also list things that you don't know much about, but would like to. These are topics that might lead you to some interesting research:

- Skills you don't have but wish you did
- Hobbies you wish you knew more about it
- Special roles others play that you're interested in
- Things others teach that you'd want to learn
- Things others have visited that you'd like to as well
- People you don't know but wish you did

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Lee, Amy and Chris W. Gallagher. *Engaging Writing*. White Planes NY: Longman Press, Forthcoming.

