



PAGE A WRITER

FOR EVERY WORD AT STAKE

Brainstorming Our Subject

Even when we have a general idea of our subject, we often face a multitude of possibilities for expressing it. Brainstorming helps us generate various ways to articulate and organize our thoughts, guiding us from a pool of ideas to the specific one we ultimately choose to explore. But how can we effectively brainstorm?

Freewriting: One technique is freewriting. While setting a timer (perhaps for 10-15 minutes) can add pressure, it can also be useful. The goal is to write continuously about our subject without concern for grammar or structure, allowing our thoughts to flow freely. This method can tap into our subconscious, uncovering hidden ideas and insights that might surprise us.

A. Freewriting Prompts by Gemini

1. Set a timer for 10 minutes and just write everything that comes to mind **about a place that holds significant memories** for you. Don't stop writing, even if you think you've run out of things to say.
2. Imagine you could have **a conversation with any object in your room**. What would it say, and what would you ask it? Freewrite your imagined dialogue for 15 minutes.
3. Think about **a problem you're currently facing**. Set a timer for 12 minutes and write continuously about all the possible solutions, no matter how silly they seem.
4. Describe **a sound you heard recently that made you feel a strong emotion**. Freewrite for 10 minutes, focusing on the details of the sound and your reaction.
5. **If you could instantly learn any new skill**, what would it be? Freewrite for 15 minutes about what you would do with that skill and how it would change your life.
6. Think about **a dream you've had recently**, even if it was strange or nonsensical. Freewrite for 10 minutes, trying to capture as many details as you can remember.
7. Choose a color and freewrite for 12 minutes **about everything you associate with that color** – feelings, objects, memories, etc.
8. Imagine **you woke up tomorrow with a superpower**. What would it be, and what would be the first thing you would do? Freewrite for 15 minutes.
9. Think about **a question you've always been curious about**. Freewrite for 10 minutes, exploring all the possible answers and your own thoughts on the subject.
10. Imagine you're writing a letter to your future self in five years. What advice, hopes, or predictions would you include? Freewrite this letter for 15 minutes.
11. What is **one small thing that consistently brings you joy**? Freewrite about this for 10 minutes, exploring why it resonates with you.
12. Describe **the view from your window right now**, even if it seems ordinary. Freewrite for 12 minutes, focusing on sensory details.

Mind Mapping: Another approach is mind mapping. Start by drawing a central concept within a thought bubble. From this central bubble, branch out to related subtopics. The resulting map visually reveals key points and connections within our subject. Mind mapping is particularly helpful for complex topics, as it can illustrate multiple layers of information and non-linear relationships, often broken down into visual cues that can feel like hyperlinks between thoughts.

B. Mind Mapping Prompts by Gemini

1. Start with the central **concept of "Happiness."** Branch out to explore different sources, interpretations, and expressions of happiness.
2. Begin with **"The Future of Technology."** Create branches for specific technologies (AI, VR, space travel, etc.) and their potential impacts.
3. Center your mind map on **"A Memorable Journey."** Explore the different stages, emotions, and key events of this journey.

4. Start with **"Environmental Sustainability."** Branch out to different areas like renewable energy, conservation, pollution, and individual actions.
 5. Focus on **"The Concept of Community."** Explore different types of communities, their benefits, challenges, and how they function.
 6. Begin with **"The Power of Storytelling."** Branch out to different genres, techniques, and the impact of stories on individuals and society.
 7. Center your mind map on **"Learning a New Skill."** Explore the different stages, resources, challenges, and rewards involved.
 8. Start with **"The Human Body."** Create branches for different systems (circulatory, nervous, skeletal, etc.) and their functions.
 9. Focus on **"The Meaning of Creativity."** Explore different forms of creativity, the creative process, and its importance.
 10. Begin with **"A Significant Historical Event."** Branch out to explore its causes, key figures, consequences, and different perspectives on it.
 11. Center your mind map on **"Planning a Project."** Explore the different stages, resources needed, potential obstacles, and desired outcomes.
 12. Start with **"The Senses."** Branch out to each of the five senses and explore related memories, descriptions, and associations.
4. Research **the science behind a natural phenomenon** (e.g., the aurora borealis, earthquakes). Identify reliable scientific articles or videos.
 5. Explore **the evolution of a specific technology**. Find sources that discuss its origins, development, and current state.
 6. Research **the history and impact of a specific law or piece of legislation**. Look for legal documents, historical analyses, and news reports.
 7. Investigate the different **theories surrounding a historical mystery** or unsolved event. Find books, documentaries, or articles presenting various perspectives.
 8. Research the **cultural traditions and beliefs of a specific indigenous group**. Identify anthropological studies, documentaries, or reputable websites.
 9. Explore the **benefits and drawbacks of a particular alternative energy source**. Find scientific reports, news articles, and industry analyses.
 10. Research the **psychological effects of social media**. Look for academic studies, articles by psychologists, or reputable online resources.
 11. Investigate **the architectural styles prevalent in a specific historical period** or geographical region. Find books with photographs, architectural analyses, or historical documents.
 12. Research the different **approaches to learning a second language**. Look for pedagogical studies, language learning blogs, or expert interviews.

Research: Research is also a powerful brainstorming tool. Begin by exploring library catalogs and selecting relevant articles, books, or videos to study. Paying close attention to the details of our sources is crucial. Exposure to diverse premises, perspectives, and arguments engages our minds in a dialogue, fostering a more well-rounded understanding of our subject.

C. Research Prompts by Gemini

1. Explore the history and **cultural significance of a specific food**. What are some interesting articles or books you could consult?
2. Research the different **perspectives on a current social issue**. Identify at least three different viewpoints presented in news articles or academic sources.
3. Investigate **the life and works of a particular artist or musician**. Find relevant biographies, critical analyses, or interviews.

Discussion: Engaging in discussions with knowledgeable individuals is invaluable during the drafting process. This can take place online, face-to-face, or by joining forums and chat communities. Exchanging ideas and hearing different viewpoints challenges our assumptions. This brainstorming of insights encourages us to commit to a specific stance only after carefully considering all available ideas. Furthermore, we can identify gaps in our own knowledge or understanding by hearing others' perspectives on the same subject.

D. Discussion Prompts by Gemini

1. Discuss the **ethical implications of artificial intelligence** with someone knowledgeable in the field or interested in the topic. What are their main concerns and hopes?
2. Engage in a conversation about **the impact of social media on mental health** with a friend or

family member. What are their personal experiences or observations?

3. Discuss **the challenges and opportunities of remote work** with someone who has experience with it. What are their insights?
4. Talk to someone with a different **political viewpoint about a current policy**. Try to understand their reasoning and identify any common ground.
5. Discuss **the importance of art and creativity in society with an artist** or someone who appreciates the arts. What are their perspectives?
6. Engage in a conversation about **the future of education** with a teacher or student. What changes do they foresee or hope for?
7. Discuss **the pros and cons of globalization** with someone who has lived or worked in different countries. What are their firsthand experiences?
8. Talk to someone who has **overcome a significant challenge**. What did they learn from the experience, and what advice would they offer?

9. Discuss the **role of media in shaping public opinion** with someone who works in journalism or media studies. What are their insights?
10. Engage in a conversation about **the importance of preserving cultural heritage** with someone involved in historical preservation or cultural organizations. Why is it important?
11. Discuss **the benefits and drawbacks of living in a city versus a rural area** with someone who has experienced both. What are their key takeaways?
12. Talk to someone who has traveled extensively about their **most impactful travel experiences** and what they learned from them.

Any of the brainstorming methods described above can yield a wealth of ideas and inspire our writing projects. Remember, our initial goal is to explore all accessible angles and perspectives before crafting engaging content. Generating a substantial number of ideas before organizing them logically will give our writing a more creative and dynamic momentum

SELFMAP CHECKLIST¹

1. Identify the general prompt you are responding to.
2. Specify your focus springing forth from this general prompt.
3. Enumerate possible tractions under the specific focus
4. Limit your memory timeline, be specific.
5. Decide your form [although this can change or get modified]
6. Identify your target readers.
7. Indicate how you're going to yield the information.

| GENERAL PROMPT | FOCUS | TIME FRAME | GENRE | AUDIENCE | MODE |
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¹ SELFMAP CHECKLIST

EXAMPLE:

| GENERAL PROMPT | FOCUS | TIME FRAME | GENRE | AUDIENCE | MODE |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| B-3 Memorable Journey | Career path | | Non-fiction | | |
| Tract A | As Book Editor | 1987-2010 | Memoir | Young Adult Professionals | My Files / Ghost Pages |
| Tract B | As Teacher | 2008-2024 | Personal Essay | Young Adult Professionals | My Files / Journal Entries |
| Tract C | As Web Content Manager | 2006-2025 | Blog | | With AI |
| Tract D | As Freelance Translator | 2000-2010 | Web Content | Translation Clients | With AI |