

Prewriting

When beginning an essay, many writers find it helpful to conduct one or more types of prewriting to put ideas on paper and figure out a way to organize these ideas logically and to the best advantage of the purpose of the paper.

Several ways to conduct prewriting are:

1. **Ask questions:** Ask your professor, ask other students, ask your neighbor: Just find ways to discuss your topic and ideas.
2. **Free write:** Write down everything you are thinking about. Use full sentences or simple, incomplete ideas. Just get your ideas written down! In the process of writing, you may figure out exactly what it is you want to focus on in your essay and may write down ideas that will be helpful when you organize and layout your essay.
3. **Brainstorm**
 - a. [Idea map](#)
 - b. [Venn Diagram](#)
 - c. [Outline](#)
4. **Collaborate:** Discuss your ideas with others to gain new or different perspectives from these discussions can be very helpful when you need to provide evidence or defend a point you are making within the body of your essay.
 - a. **Talk about your project with:**
 - i. With classmates
 - ii. With your professor
 - iii. With Writing Center consultant
5. Conduct **preliminary research** to find a specific topic or the focus of your paper: Doing basic searches on your topic will help you find what you are really interested in and will also give you access to additional knowledge about the topic that may come in handy later! Remember that any information used from any outside source *must* be cited within your paper.

See page 38 in *The Penguin Handbook* for additional information.