

University of Tikrit

College of Education for Humanities

Department of English



Brainstorming

Academic Writing

First year

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2025-2026

1) Introduction

Brainstorming is an essential thinking and learning technique used to generate ideas freely and creatively. It encourages students to think without limitations and express their thoughts openly before organizing them. In academic writing and learning, brainstorming helps students discover ideas, develop topics, and prepare for effective writing and discussion.

2) What is Brainstorming?

Brainstorming is a creative group or individual technique for generating a large quantity of ideas to solve a problem or explore a topic, emphasizing free-thinking, diverse perspectives, and deferring judgment to encourage unconventional solutions. Participants spontaneously share thoughts, building on each other's ideas, with the goal of exploring many possibilities before later refining and evaluating them for practical application. In this lecture, we will explore the concept of brainstorming, its importance, and how it can be applied effectively in academic learning and writing.

3) Importance of Brainstorming

Brainstorming allows people to think more freely, without fear of judgment. Brainstorming encourages open and ongoing collaboration to solve problems and generate innovative ideas. Brainstorming helps teams generate a large number of ideas quickly, which can be refined and merged to create the ideal solution. So, it helps students generate a wide range of ideas, encourages creativity and critical thinking, reduces fear of making mistakes. Improves confidence in expressing opinions. Makes academic writing easier and more organized. Brainstorming may seem to lack constraints, but everyone must observe eight house rules and have someone acting as facilitator.

1. Set a time limit – Depending on the problem's complexity, 15–60 minutes is normal.
2. Begin with a target problem/brief – Members should approach this sharply defined question, plan or goal and stay on topic.
3. Refrain from judgment/criticism – No-one should be negative (including via body language) about any idea.
4. Encourage weird and wacky ideas – Further to the ban on killer phrases like “too expensive”, keep the floodgates open so everyone feels free to blurt out ideas (provided they're on topic).
5. Aim for quantity – Remember, “quantity breeds quality”. The sifting-and-sorting process comes later.
6. Build on others' ideas – It's a process of association where members expand on others' notions and reach new insights, allowing these ideas to trigger their own. Say “and”—rather than discourage with “but”—to get ideas closer to the problem.
7. Stay visual – Diagrams and Post-Its help bring ideas to life and help others see things in different ways.
8. Allow one conversation at a time – To arrive at concrete results, it's essential to keep on track this way and show respect for everyone's ideas.

To capture everyone's ideas in a brainstorming session, someone must play "scribe" and mark every idea on the board. Alternatively, write down your own ideas as they come, and share these with the group. Often, design problems demand mixed tactics: brainstorming and its sibling approaches – brain dumping (for individuals), and brainwriting and brain walking (for group-and-individual mixes).

4)Types of Brainstorming

1)individual brainstorming: students think and write ideas on their own. This type is useful for (Writing paragraphs, Preparing essays, Exams and assignments)

2)Group brainstorming: students work together and share ideas in group. This type helps (Exchange different viewpoints, improve communication skills, Build teamwork)

3)Listing: writing a list of words or ideas related to the topic, we have two ways of a list:

A) How to make a list:

1)Use a separate, whole sheet of paper.

2_) Write your topic at the top.

3)Write down as many ideas as you can about your topic.

4)Write single word or short phrases, but do not writ long sentences

5)Write down every idea that comes to you, and don't worry about whether the idea s good or bad.

B) Editing your list: after you brainstorming, you need to go back and see which ideas you can use:

1)Underline or highlight the good ideas.

2)Cross our ideas that are not related to your topic or that you don't want to use.

4)Mind Mapping (clustering)

Placing the topic in the center and drawing branches for related ideas.

a) Use a separate, whole sheet of paper.

b) Write your topic in the middle and draw a circle around it

c)Write an idea about the topic nearby and circle it

d)Draw a line to connect the circles, this shows that the idea and the topic are related.

e) Add more ideas and circle the ideas.

f) Draw lines to connect any circles with related ideas.

g) Write down as many ideas as you can. Don't worry about whether they are good or bad.

h) After you finish, cross out any ideas you don't won't to use

5) Free Writing:

writing continuously for a short time without stopping or correcting mistakes.

6) Popular Brainstorming Techniques

- **Brainwriting (6-3-5):** Participants write down ideas anonymously on sticky notes or papers, which are then passed around to build upon, avoiding groupthink.
- **SCAMPER:** An acronym for Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to another use, Eliminate, and Reverse, used to reframe existing products or ideas.
- **Reverse Brainstorming:** Instead of asking how to solve a problem, the team focuses on how to cause it or make it worse, which helps identify hidden risks and unconventional solutions.
- **Mind Mapping:** Visual diagrams that start with a central idea and branch out into related, interconnected topics.
- **Starbursting:** A method focused on generating questions rather than answers—Who, What, Why, Where, When, and How—to fully explore a topic.
- **Rapid Ideation:** A timed session, such as "Crazy 8s," where team members quickly write down as many ideas as possible, focusing on quantity over quality.
- **Round Robin:** Every team member contributes one idea, with the process continuing in a circle until no new ideas are generated, ensuring everyone speaks.

7) Specialized Techniques

- **Role storming:** Participants adopt different personas or roles (e.g., "What would Steve Jobs do?") to brainstorm, reducing fear of criticism.
- **Whys Analysis:** A problem-solving technique of asking "Why?" five times to drill down to the root cause of an issue.
- **Six Thinking Hats:** Developed by Edward de Bono, this involves looking at a problem from six distinct perspectives (logical, emotional, critical, creative, positive, and control).
- **Stepladder Technique:** New members are introduced to the brainstorming group one by one, sharing their ideas before hearing the existing group's discussion, preventing the influence of dominant voices.

8) Approaches to Brainstorming

- **Group Brainstorming:** Encourages collaboration and diverse perspectives.
- **Individual Brainstorming (Brain-netting):** Individuals generate ideas alone, which often produces a wider range of ideas without fear of judgment.
- **Digital/Remote Brainstorming:** Utilizes digital tools like virtual whiteboards, chat, or shared documents for hybrid or remote teams.

9) Brainstorming in Academic Writing

Brainstorming helps students to

- 1) Find a clear topic sentence
- 2) Develop supporting ideas
- 3) Organize paragraphs logically
- 4) Prepare outlines for essays and research papers

In conclusion, brainstorming is a simple but powerful technique that helps students think creatively and organize their ideas effectively. By using brainstorming before writing, students can improve their academic writing skills and produce clearer and more structured texts