

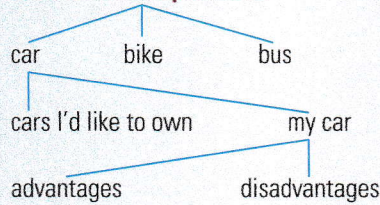
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Peer Example

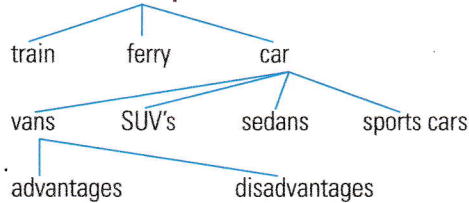
Beth

“My instructor gave us a general topic—modes of transportation—and asked us to narrow it before we went any further. I started by thinking of different modes of transportation, but with two kids, I never ride a bike or take the bus, so I quickly focused on cars. From there I daydreamed briefly about the kind of car I’d like to own (dream on), and then turned my attention to the car I’m stuck with, an ancient Plymouth station wagon. It wasn’t hard to decide I’d have plenty to say if I focused on the specific topic of the disadvantages of my car.”

Modes of transportation



Modes of transportation



Different people will narrow the same topic in different ways. The important thing is to arrive at a specific topic you are interested in or have knowledge about and that you can develop in the assignment you are given.

Brainstorming

Another way to narrow a general topic is to work individually or in a group to **brainstorm** a more specific topic. Working alone, you can narrow a topic by thinking of the aspects of the topic or of specific examples and writing down all the ideas that come to mind. Similarly, two or more people can help narrow a topic together. Each individual contributes his or her ideas, which in turn stimulate other ideas. In the world of work, groups often brainstorm creative solutions to problems.

Peer Example

Beth's Individual Brainstorming Session

Beth

“Modes of transportation, let’s see. What do I know about transportation? I haven’t taken the bus in years because I’ve had a car since I got out of high school. My car is a pain right now because it’s such a junker—it’s always breaking down and I can’t depend on it. I guess I could write about the disadvantages of my mode of transportation, my car.”