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Peer Example
Determining the Writing Context/Formulating a Main Idea Example

Beth

" I am directing my paper to other students like myself, parents who are struggling to make ends meet while they go to school and who don't have the money to buy a new car. My tone will be serious, and I have tried to state my main idea as clearly and simply as I could. "

Purpose: To persuade
Audience: Students like myself
Tone: Serious
Tentative main idea: My car has lots of disadvantages.

Writing Practice 3

For the topic you narrowed in Writing Practice 2, decide on your purpose, audience, and tone, and then formulate a tentative main idea.

Purpose: _____

Audience: _____

Tone: _____

Tentative main idea: _____

_____

Generating Supporting Ideas

Generating supporting ideas is an important stage in the writing process because it helps you think of enough ideas or specific details to develop your topic. If you've never consciously tried to write down ideas before you begin writing the assignment itself, this stage in the process may seem a bit artificial at first, but the more you practice generating supporting ideas with one of the techniques we show you, the more natural and useful it will seem. All of the techniques we demonstrate help you to focus on your topic in different ways—and focusing on your topic is the key, because once you start thinking about your topic, you will start getting ideas. Don't worry about whether or not those ideas will be useful in the long run; just jot them down as they pop into your head. At this stage in the writing process, your job is to come up with as many ideas and images as possible. You can evaluate them later.

We suggest that you begin by trying each of the techniques described here. You may find that some work better for you than others, or that some feel more natural than others. As a general rule, if you try one technique and don't come up with enough ideas, try another. Some techniques work with one topic, and other techniques are more successful with a different topic.