

## Brainstorming

As with brainstorming to narrow the topic, in brainstorming to generate supporting ideas, you allow as many ideas as possible to pop into your head. One idea leads to another, and you write down anything that comes to mind related to the topic. Brainstorming is like priming a pump; once the ideas start coming, they come faster and faster. Again, brainstorming to generate ideas can be done individually or in a group.

### INDIVIDUAL BRAINSTORMING

One person can generate supporting ideas on a narrowed topic by focusing on the topic and writing down all the ideas that come to mind. Don't worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar at this point. Most people get ideas about their topic by visualizing the topic or picturing it in their minds. Try to be aware of all the senses—sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Imagine what the person, place, or thing looks like. Imagine you are in the scene. Imagine you are walking through it or experiencing it.

“Here’s an example of my brainstorming ideas on the topic of the disadvantages of my car. I tried to picture my car and the experience of driving it, and I wrote down everything that came to mind. The more I focused on my car, the more ideas I came up with.”

### Peer Example

Beth

**Topic:** Disadvantages of my unreliable car

ugly  
unreliable  
always breaking down  
stuck in the rain or on the way home  
safety  
towing  
mechanic  
what’s wrong with it?  
how much will it cost?  
embarrassing my kids  
I wish I could afford a new car.

### GROUP BRAINSTORMING

Two or more people can help each other generate ideas by brainstorming together. The group focuses on each individual’s narrowed topic and tentative main idea statement, and everyone contributes as many ideas as possible. One person’s ideas might stimulate other ideas, and before you know it, the group has generated enough ideas to get the writer started. The group then focuses on another writer’s tentative main idea statement next, and so on. We suggest you take notes as the group helps you brainstorm ideas. When it comes to generating ideas, two heads are definitely better than one.