



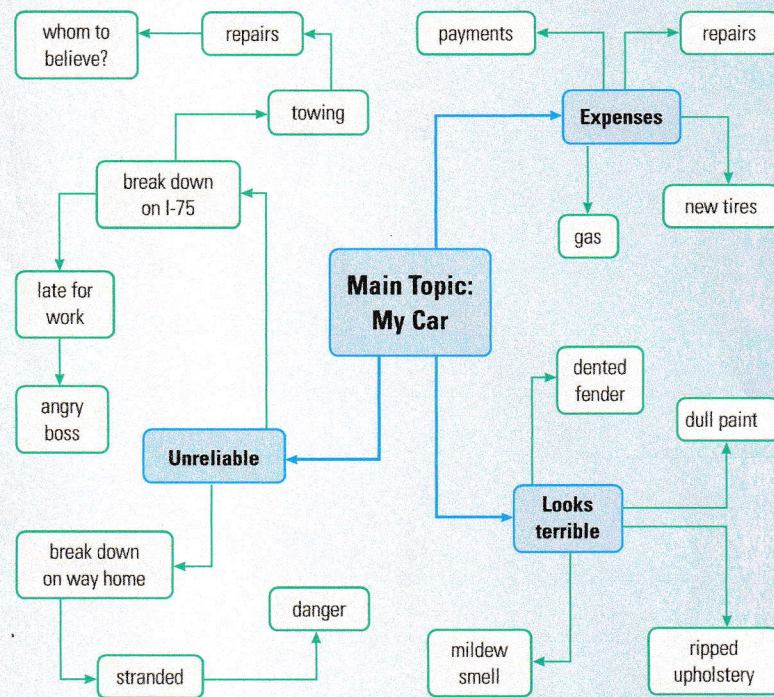
Clustering

Clustering is a visual representation of ideas. Because you cluster related ideas together, clustering begins the process of grouping or organizing your ideas. Many writers begin by freewriting or listing and then cluster those ideas into related groups that generate further ideas. When you cluster, you write down words or images you associate with your topic. These words may be parts of your topic. Then cluster related ideas together by drawing lines between them.

Peer Example

Beth

“I seemed to have three major complaints about my car: how unreliable it is, how expensive it is, and how terrible it looks. Once I came up with those three areas, I was able to generate specific details or problems I’d had in each of those areas.”



Dividing

Dividing generates ideas by breaking the topic into its component parts. Use the journalistic questions of **who**, **what**, **where**, **when**, **why**, and **how** in order to divide a topic.

Ask yourself, “What are the parts of my topic?” One technique is to imagine yourself in your topic—at school, on the job, playing a sport—and move through the event or the experience chronologically. What happens first, second, third? What issues do you have to face at each moment of the task or situation? Dividing a topic is useful in generating supporting ideas for your main idea.