Freewriting entails writing for a set period of time or to cover a specific page length, for instance one page. Jot down any thoughts that come to mind, even if they seem unrelated, disorganized, or incomplete. Most importantly, keep writing. Do not interrupt the flow of your ideas to edit, to spell check, or to read over your thoughts.

**Sample**
The following is an example of freewriting:

The snow whirls outside my window. Flakes like mini spider webs. Fragile. Falling fast and in circles. I haven't been skiing this season yet. Where are my skis? Can't imagine skiing on an olympic trail. I remember my first ski race. I came in second place. My maniac brother got first in his race. I think he almost wiped out more than once. Other than that, I remember eating oatmeal everyday for breakfast on ski vacations with the fam. Then I wouldn't eat oatmeal for practically another year. Where am I going with this idea? Why am I writing about oatmeal? Back to the snow. Lots of memories associated with snow. Maybe I could write a story or a descriptive paragraph about snow memories. Sledding and ice skating out back at the old house. And mom would always make hot chocolate after. Snowball fights in college—north quad versus south quad. Sledding on cafeteria trays. Snow in Indiana in May! I'll never forget that. Snow is peaceful yet causes so many problems (driving). I seem to write on snow days. Maybe because I'm stranded inside and forced to stop my everyday chaotic life. Snow days as a child and snow days now. Both seem like a retreat…a mini vacation.

**Practice**
Use the space below and on the back of this page for your own freewriting. Respond to the following prompt: “I remember….” Write for five minutes without stopping.
Focused Freewriting

Like freewriting, focused freewriting involves writing for a certain length of time or a particular page length, for instance one page. Jot down any thoughts that come to mind about a subject or topic, even those that seem irrelevant. Do not stop writing to review your ideas or to make any changes to your writing.

Practice
Use the space below for focused freewriting. For this activity, assume that you have been assigned to write a paragraph about a place that has special meaning for you. Spend five minutes writing on this specific topic.
Like freewriting, brainstorming enables the writer to engage in the flow of ideas. Brainstorming, however, takes the form of a list of words and phrases. According to Lee Brandon, author of *Paragraphs and Essays: A Worktext with Readings*, the two methods of brainstorming are the following:

2. Gathering a list of ideas related to a topic

**Sample**
The following is an example of brainstorming for an argumentative essay that opposes the recent trend of reality television.

- redefines entertainment (but not for the better)
- supposedly “real” shows seem scripted—*Survivor, The Bachelor*
  - living in a tent on a desert island
  - group dynamics remind me of junior high—gossip
  - melodrama
- seems like fiction—dating 15 people at a time while living in Paris represents reality?
- participants’ fantasies with being famous
- 15 minutes of fame
- American culture fascinated with the idea of celebrity—Why?
- get rich quick
- fantasy about living someone else’s life and being someone you’re not—*Wife Swap*
  - degrading to women

**Practice**
Think back to the focused freewriting activity on a place that has special meaning for you. Answer the questions below to help generate more ideas about this topic.

**Who** do you associate with this place?

**What** is this place?

**Where** is the place located?
When have you spent time in this place?

Why is this place so significant to you?

How?
Pre-Writing Strategies: Getting Started on a Paragraph or Essay

Clustering

Clustering is a pre-writing technique that uses a visual map to shape ideas and to explore how those ideas relate to each other.

Sample
Below is an example of clustering. The main topic is violence on television.

![Clustering Diagram]

Practice
Use the clustering technique to generate ideas on a social issue that is important to you. Create your own visual map on the back of this page.

Reference sources: