

The Writing Process

PRE-WRITING

1. Choose a topic

Know your Purpose

Expository: explain or inform
Persuasive: convince
Narrative: tell a story

Know Your Audience

Age
Role in the Community

2. **Brainstorm** (and later evaluate each item that is contributed).
3. **Research** (Take notes; organize your findings.)
4. **Interview** (Prepare questions; record responses.)
5. **Summarize** (Get the main ideas; say them in your own words.)

WRITING

6. **Write your First Draft**
(Make an outline first.)

REVISING

7. **Evaluate** (preferably with someone's help) and **Revise** (and re-revise!)
8. **Proofread** (for spelling, grammar and punctuation)
9. **Produce your Final Version**

PRE-WRITING Skill 1. Setting A Purpose/ Knowing your Reader



Information:

Setting the purpose is absolutely the most important thing to do, before you even start to think about what you are going to write.

The purpose of writing could fall into one of three main categories:

- 1) **expository** (to explain, describe, inform or advise the reader),
- 2) **persuasive** (to try to convince the reader, or to argue a point of view), or
- 3) **narrative** (either factual, like a newspaper report, or fictional, like a story).

When you have decided which of those three purposes is appropriate for your writing, the next important step is to **identify your reader**. If you want to give directions to your local Tim Horton's, your language and content would be very different if you're writing for a young child than if you're giving directions to a high school student from out of town. Your writing style will be different again if you're trying to persuade an adult to accept your point of view about an issue in society.

When you're writing, **always remember who is going to read your work, and write as if you're speaking to that person.**



Practice

We're not going to ask you to develop a complete piece of writing yet, but we are going to give you an example of a possible writing assignment, and ask you to **state the purpose of the assignment, and identify the prospective reader.**

Last year, the Student Council held a Garage Sale on a Saturday afternoon in late April. They made a lot of money, and they want to run the event again. However, some things went wrong last year: there was too much traffic, noise, and garbage, and no food was available for the people who came. The Student Council has appointed you to write a letter to the school's Parent School Council, explaining why things went wrong last year, advising them about how the profits were spent, informing them as to how you plan to overcome these problems to improve this year's Garage Sale, and persuading them to give permission for a Garage Sale this year.

Identify the purposes of the letter under one or more of the categories listed above:

Identify the reader for whom the letter is intended, and tell some of the characteristics of the reader that you must be aware of as you write:





Information:

Brainstorming allows you to look at a topic from many angles and expand your range of thought about a topic before you begin to organize or structure your plan.

You can brainstorm all by yourself, but **it's also useful (and fun!) to brainstorm with a group** for the purpose of solving a specific problem. If you're ever on a committee – at school, or later when you are working -- or even if you're trying to solve a problem as a family, brainstorming is a very useful tool.

- 1 When you brainstorm (alone or in a group), you **think up everything you can possibly imagine about the topic** you have chosen, and immediately write down all the ideas.

There is no such thing as a stupid idea. Everything that everybody suggests is accepted. This step in the writing process helps you recall to mind everything that you (or everybody in the group you are working with) knows about the topic you are going to write about. Sometimes it's amazing what comes out of people's memory banks because of a "trigger idea" – either the topic itself, or an idea proposed by someone else.

- 2 After you've made a chart or list of everything that has been proposed, then you start to **evaluate all the contributions.** If you're working alone, you might look over the list and rate the ideas with **one, two or three stars.**

If there's a group, ask everybody to say what they think are the three best ideas, and put a **check mark** beside an item every time someone mentions it. If some items don't have many check marks, you might ask the person who contributed each idea to explain why they thought it would be useful, and see if anybody wants to add check marks to those ideas.

- 3 Now that you have a list of "best ideas," you can begin to **organize them into a plan** for your piece of writing. One excellent method for shaping your ideas into a structure is to use a graphic organizer like the ones offered on the next pages 148-149.

If you want to see other patterns for graphic organizers, go to

[www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers.](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers)



PRE-WRITING Skill 2. Brainstorming



But – before or after brainstorming – you will employ some other strategies to develop ideas for your assignment. Skills of researching and interviewing, for example, are presented in headings after this one.

First, though, we will give you an opportunity to practice brainstorming.



Practice #1:

Use separate pieces of paper or even large chart paper to do this brainstorming exercise:

Working alone or in a group, brainstorm what you need to know for a piece of writing that will **explain every step in the life of a coffee bean**, from the time it starts to grow on a coffee farm (you choose where the farm is) until you have the first sip of a cup of coffee that you brewed in your own kitchen.

After you have built a list of all the information that you need about this topic,

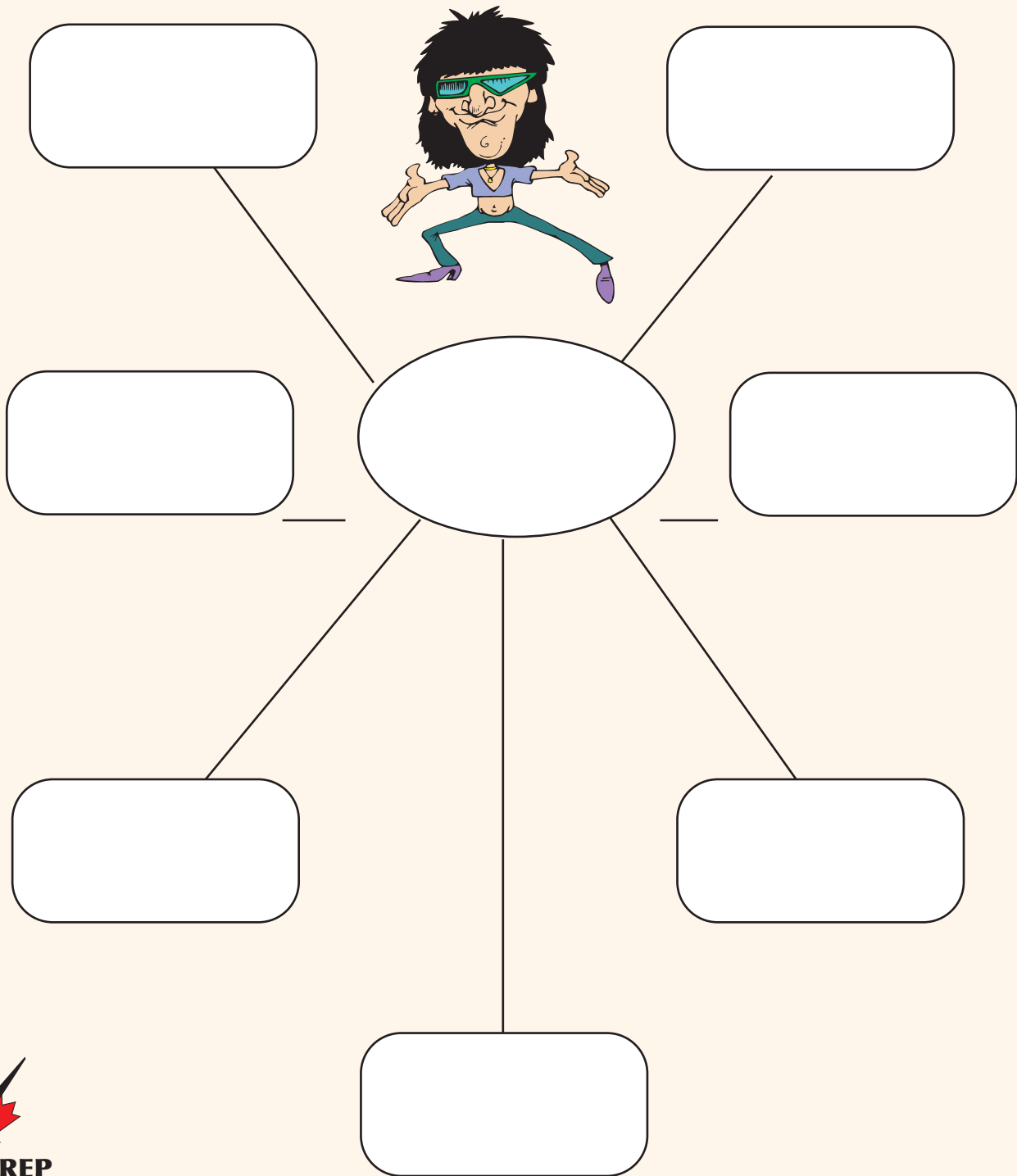
evaluate the contributions (using either the three-star method, or the “top three” group method described on the previous page), and then begin to

organize the ideas using one of the graphic organizers offered on the next two pages.



The “Star” organizer lets you organize your points under seven different headings. Of course, you can design organizers for yourself, with whatever number of headings you need.

“Star” Organizer



The “Spider” organizer is set up so that you can put the main topic in the spider’s body (the centre), and four headings along the legs of the spider. Under each heading, you could put the most important points closest to the spider’s body.

“Spider” Organizer

