

Writing Center

Tidewater Community
College
Phone: 757-822-7170
Fax: 757-427-0327
<http://www.tcc.edu/writing>
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Development: Generating Ideas for Writing

You can use these techniques separately or in combination to select and narrow topics, to generate ideas on topics, to expand support for a topic, and to organize information.

To ensure unity, coherence, and full development of topics, you should write and edit an outline after you have finished generating ideas (see the Writing Center handout on Outlining). Then draft your essay according to the Writing Center handout titled Essay Writing Guidelines.

Journalistic Questioning

Answer the 5 Ws and 1 H: Who, what, when, where, why, how?

Brainstorming

Make lists of words and phrases that come to mind about the topic or idea. Do not stop to look up spelling at this stage.

Rough (also called Scratch or Informal) Outlining

Similar to brainstorming, this technique identifies major and subordinate points by indentation or numbering or a combination of the two.

Reasons to quit smoking
Expense
Limits
 Some restaurants don't allow
 Some entire buildings forbid
 All buildings at TCC
 All buildings at Municipal Center
 Some friends won't let me smoke in their houses
Health

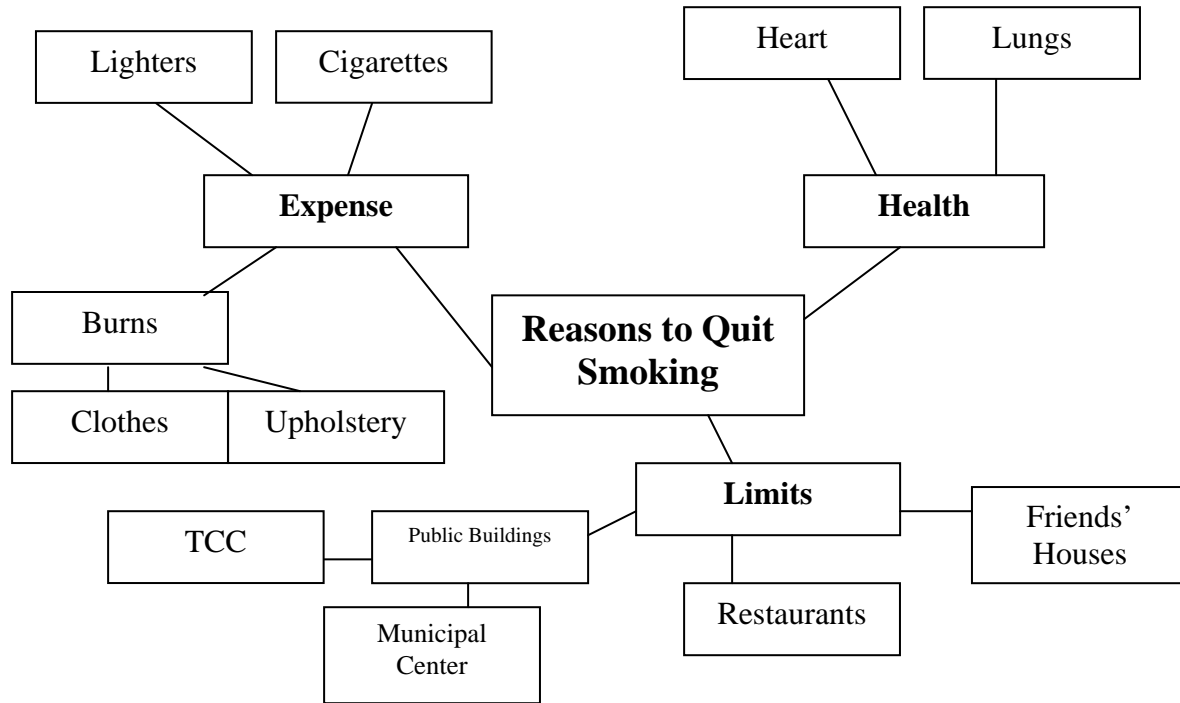
Tree Diagramming

Similar to outlining, this pattern uses a branched drawing to identify major and subordinate points.

<u>Expense</u>	<u>Limits</u>	<u>Health</u>
<u>Cigarettes</u> <u>Lighters</u> <u>Burns</u>	<u>Restaurants</u> <u>Friend's Houses</u>	<u>Heart</u> <u>Lungs</u>
<u>Upholstery</u> <u>Clothes</u>	<u>Public Buildings</u>	
	<u>TCC</u> <u>Municipal Center</u>	

Clustering

Use this technique to take advantage of right and left brain interaction for creativity and logic.



Freewriting

Most useful for experienced writing, this strategy works well for people who are willing and able to edit their own work critically. Writing about your topic in full sentences and paragraph form, including everything that comes to mind without stopping to make judgments or correction. Some people like to time their freewriting; others write until they feel finished.