

MSFEA CREATES: BRAINSTORMING TECHNIQUES

OBJECTIVE OF THE HANDOUT

This handout will help you:

1. Identify the purpose of brainstorming.
2. Describe different brainstorming techniques.
3. Apply brainstorming when you need to start a new writing project.

TECHNICAL EXPLANATION OF BRAINSTORMING

What is Brainstorming?

Brainstorming is a technique used to generate ideas at the beginning of a project. It can take place individually or within a group. The purpose of brainstorming is “writing to think”, writing as a way to note down what you know, remember, or unconsciously think about for your topic.

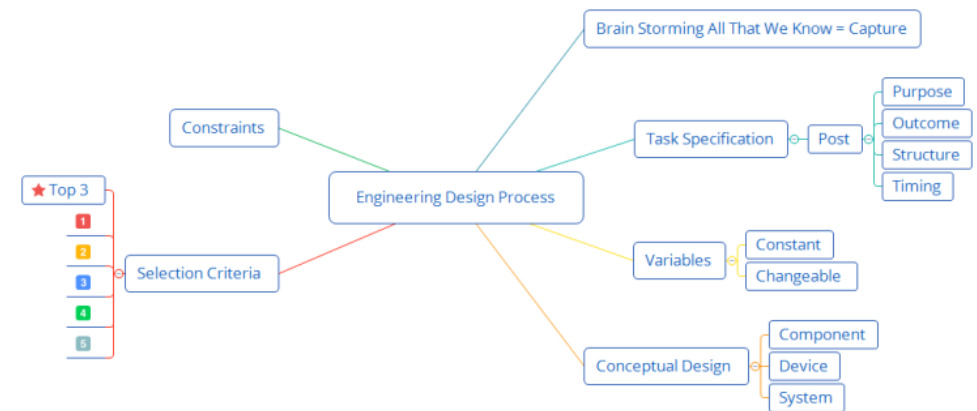
Prior to brainstorming about a certain project, it is important to consider the project’s **purpose** (why are you writing this piece? to persuade, inform, describe, or explain?), **audience** (who is going to be my main audience? experts, non-experts, academics, others?), and **format** (what are the expectations regarding my piece?).

What are some Brainstorming Techniques?

- **Freewriting:** Writing without stopping on your topic for a set number of minutes.
- **Questioning:** Asking as many questions about your topic as possible.
- **Listing:** Including all the ideas you have about your topic.
- **Clustering or mind mapping:** Using boxes, lines, circles, etc. to show relationships between ideas.

EXAMPLES OF BRAINSTORMING: CLUSTERING

Look at this example of a mind map in engineering. Notice how the subject is placed at the center and other ideas and details surround it. There is no right or wrong way of clustering; you can keep adding ideas as they emerge.



TAKEAWAYS

- ❑ The purpose of freewriting is to separate the writer from the editor in you and remove the mental blocks that might hinder your writing.
- ❑ When you freewrite, do not focus on spelling, punctuation, or correcting mistakes. If you get stuck while freewriting, you can write “I don’t know what to say” and keep writing. Do not allow any inhibitions to get in the way of your writing.
- ❑ Mind maps are a creative way for you to organize and cluster your ideas in early phases of writing.