

Lesson 1

Step 1 - Brainstorm



Brainstorming is simply gathering your ideas on one topic. When you brainstorm, you write your ideas in a web format. While people may brainstorm using a variety of methods, here you will use the web format. With all writing assignments, this prewriting skill of brainstorming gives you the time and space to gather quality ideas *before* you begin to write your composition. *Always brainstorm!*

Example

On the next page, you'll see an example of a brainstorm web using the "Brainstorm & Outline Template." Remember: TS = Topic Sentence, MP = Main Point, and SD = Supporting Detail.

As you observe the brainstorm template, you will notice how the bubbles are connected to create “chunks” of ideas.

A **chunk** includes one main point (MP) followed by two supporting details (SD).

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Lesson 2 - Outline Checklist

- Did I carefully decide the order of each paragraph, chunk, and detail?
- Did I transfer the words from the brainstorm without adding anything?
- Did I use the standard outline format?
- Do I have keywords only on every line of the outline template?

If you can check "yes" to each of these questions, move ahead to the next step.

Lesson 5

Strong Nouns



Let's start with nouns. A **noun** is a person, place, thing, or idea. You will know if a word is a noun if you can make it plural (add "s" to make it more than one) or if it makes sense when you put the word "the" or "a" before it. A proper noun is a bit different. It is a specific name of a person, place, thing, or idea, and it always begins with a capital letter.

Example

Circle all the nouns. Remember: if you can add "s" to make it plural or if it makes sense when you put the word "the" or "a" before it, it's a noun.

horse boy blue swim snake eat tall bike sky

See how easy it is to identify a noun? As you learn to use nouns, ask yourself these questions: *Is this noun specific enough? Will my reader be able to "see a picture" of this noun in their mind?*

What do you see when you picture a "dog?"
Do you have an accurate picture?



Now picture a "poodle."
Which noun is better?



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 **Example**

1. Begin a sentence with a prepositional phrase, which tells when, where, or how often (in, on, before, above, under, with, etc.).

On the way down the hill, the old wagon creaked loudly.

2. Begin a sentence with a clausal starter (when, where, while, as, since, if, although, because, etc.).

While rolling down the hill, the old wagon creaked loudly.

3. Begin a sentence with an “ing” / “ed” word (gerunds, or participles)

Rolling down the hill, the old wagon creaked loudly.

4. Begin a sentence with an “ly” word (adverbs).

Irritatingly, the old wagon creaked loudly as it rolled down the hill.

(See Appendix for a more comprehensive list of prepositions and clausal starters.)

Lesson 12

Grammar Guidelines



Now, for the final layer of editing: correct grammar. Throughout this lesson guide, as you have learned many stylistic elements, you have also learned grammar terms and skills at the same time. For now, we are sticking to basic grammar skills. Mastering these basic grammar skills will build your confidence as a writer. This is not comprehensive grammar instruction, but reminders of grammar rules that you will want to apply in your writing.



Example

Let's go over a few of the grammar rules. Use a grammar handbook to learn more about any of these rules that you may not understand. We've included some suggestions for grammar handbooks in the Appendix. In particular, we love *Solving Common Writing Problems*.

Capitalize:

- the beginning of each sentence
- proper nouns
- titles

We saw **Ms. Johnson** at the **Wellsville City Library**.