

Instructor Guide for Starting Techniques

(SPARK >> Pulling It Together >> Writing Strategies)

NOTE: This resource is good for use when students have gathered some initial ideas but are unsure of how to begin writing about them. However, the techniques in the resource can be useful at any time in the writing process when students are uncertain about how to express ideas with which they are working. See also the “Brainstorming”, “Concept Mapping” and “Mind Mapping” resources for related ideas.

Skills Addressed

- generating ideas
- identifying relationships among ideas
- overcoming blocks in the writing process

Suggested Uses

- Independent student use:** Ask/suggest that students read resource on their own and decide for themselves when/if/how they will use resource
- Instructor-led Discussion:** Devote lecture/tutorial time to describing the resource, its purposes and uses, and/or incorporate description and use of resource into broader discussion focusing on building the skills the resource targets
- Small Group Discussion:** Use to stimulate informal class/tutorial discussion, and/or small group discussion

Feedback / Evaluation Options

- Personal reflection and/or self-assessment**
- Informally, in small group discussion:** Assign to students to complete for sharing and discussion in small groups
- Peer Evaluation:** Assign to students to complete independently, for more formal peer evaluation
- Instructor Evaluation:** Assign to students to complete independently, or as one stage of a larger assignment, and hand in for formal instructor evaluation
- Tracking Completion without Evaluating:** Assign to students to complete resource independently (on an ongoing basis, or at specific, appropriate times during the course), then hand in to instructor to track completion without assigning a specific grade to any individual completed resource

Potential Customization

Instructors can choose one section of the resource and modify the instructions to create an assignment or class discussion. Students could be asked to use the technique during a class session or to complete at home to be brought to a following class and used as a basis for discussion in small groups.