Brainstorming

Brainstorming can help you get started on your paper by expanding on preexisting ideas. There are various ways to brainstorm. However, each method may help some students more than others. Find what works for you. Below are some examples of brainstorming activities.

Mind Mapping:
- Identify possible topics for your paper. If more than one topic comes to mind, write them all down. When brainstorming, no idea is a bad idea.
- If you cannot come up with an idea, try writing a bullet-point list of all you know about the subject and see if you can pull ideas from that.
- Once you have a topic idea, start listing things you might use to support your claim. If you have more than one topic idea, this process can help you figure out which idea has stronger support.
- Repeat the process. List ideas, quotes, anything that you could use to support your ideas.

Reading:
- Reading through related material can spark new thoughts. Finding solid research through the library, or even a simple Google search to find ideas for your concept will help more than you might expect. Reading the ideas or insights of others from across the world will allow you to realize and develop your own thoughts. However, make sure to write down your thoughts as you move forward and keep track of any sources you may want to quote or paraphrase from.

Free Writing:
- Free writing is a great way to overcome the problem of knowing what you wish to say, but not knowing how to compose these ideas. When using this practice, write everything down that comes to mind, regardless of how you perceive its quality.
- Don't try to find the perfect words. This process is meant to be unrefined and open.
- Don't get hung up on writing your introduction and conclusion at this point.
- Don't think too hard about the process, just write! Once you have a good portion of text, start picking what phrases feel best. Getting your thoughts all out first can help to organize your options.

Using Gen AI:
- Generative AI, such as Chat GPT, can help spark ideas or categories for brainstorming. You could try taking key words from your topic and asking questions about these ideas or concepts. As you narrow in on a topic, you can ask more specific or in-depth questions. Based on the answers that you get from the AI tool, you may identify some topics, ideas, or areas you are interested in researching further.