**Pre-writing Strategies (Steps for Writing)**

The process of writing is no easy task. Whether the writing is for academic or professional ambitions, writers of all ages face the same challenges: coming up with ideas, creating content, addressing and adequately informing about the topic at hand. Writing should start with thinking about the topic and purpose of your writing. There are a few ways to overcome the problem.

**1. Free-writing:**

The first technique that helps to generate ideas is to "free-write". This technique is a way to free up the mind, to allow it to focus on ideas rather than on accuracy and organization.

Choose one of the ideas from your brainstorm or your mind-map and write for 5 to 10 minutes on that one idea. Don't stop writing. If you can't think of anything to write, just write "I can't think of anything else now. The goal is to keep writing, to keep the pen or pencil in contact with the paper (or keep your fingers on the keyboard). Don't stop to change or correct anything; just keep going. You might want to set a timer.

**2. Brainstorming:**

Having chosen a topic and subject, your next step in planning a text is to collect all your data and thoughts. There are several methods that can help you. One of them is to "brainstorm". This is “Think and Ink”. Think of this as a "storm in the brain". Focus on your audience and purpose and list ideas as they come to mind, whether general or specific.

Do not pay attention to the form your brainstorm takes. You might list words, phrases or sentences or a combination of these. Do not try to organize your thoughts as you brainstorm - that will come later. This is just a technique to help free up your mind so that ideas can flow

**3. Clustering or Mind-mapping :**

Once you have completed a brainstorm, you may want to form those ideas into a "mind map". This is a visual representation of your ideas. Look at your brainstorm and decide if you can group some of the ideas into several major categories and subcategories. Remember to eliminate ideas that are not vital to the report.

Draw a circle in the middle of the paper and write the purpose of your report in the circle. Draw lines out from the circle and label them with the major categories you have chosen. Then draw branches from those lines and include the subcategories. You can continue this process until you are including the actual details on the branches of the map.

A mind map can help you see your major categories and subdivisions before you make decisions about how to organize the paper. It is also a useful way for you to look at your ideas and decide, again, which ones are not vital to the report.