Whip Up a Storm of Writing Ideas

Have you ever stared at a blank white page and not known how to begin writing? You probably needed to brainstorm in order to get going. Brainstorming is a way of coming up with lots of ideas before you put pen to paper. It makes writing — a paragraph, an essay, a memo, a report for work — much easier.

Suppose you had to write an essay on the effects of TV on children. Here’s how to do it, in four steps:

1. Write the topic at the top of a blank page.
2. List every idea about the topic that comes to mind, in whatever order the ideas occur to you, and no matter how silly an idea may seem.
3. Group similar ideas together.
4. Get rid of any idea that doesn’t fit into one of your groups.

Reread the brainstormed notes and then rewrite them below, grouping the brainstormed list under the headings “helpful” and “harmful.” By putting brainstormed ideas that “go together” in the same group, you’re organizing your thoughts so you can write them up clearly.

Here’s a sample on the notepad of brainstormed ideas for an essay:

TV helpful:

________________________
________________________
________________________
________________________
________________________

TV harmful:

________________________
________________________
________________________
________________________
________________________

Which brainstormed note doesn’t fit either group?

Now you’re ready to write an outline for a GED-type essay on the effects of TV on children!
Your Turn:

**TOPIC: IF I HAD MAGIC POWERS TO CHANGE MY WORLD, I WOULD...**

List every idea you can think of to fit the topic. (HINT: brainstorm ideas for yourself, for your neighborhood, and for the entire planet, and write them below.)

________________________________             ______________________________
________________________________             ______________________________
________________________________             ______________________________
________________________________             ______________________________
________________________________             ______________________________

Reread your brainstormed notes and group the ideas that “go together.” Then write a short heading for each group (see HINT above):

**group heading #1:** _____________________
1._____________________________________
2._____________________________________
3._____________________________________
4._____________________________________

**group heading #2:** _____________________
1._____________________________________
2._____________________________________
3._____________________________________
4._____________________________________

**group heading #3:** _____________________
1._____________________________________
2._____________________________________
3._____________________________________
4._____________________________________

Finally, cross out any idea you’ve brainstormed that doesn’t fit into one of your groups.

If you were asked to write an article or essay on **If I Had Magic Powers to Change My World, I Would...**, you would no longer be chewing the end of your pencil wondering how to begin. You’ve brainstormed lots of ideas. Your group headings can be turned into the first sentence of your paragraph. The ideas listed under each heading can provide the supporting detail for the paragraphs. You’re all set to begin writing an outline and then an essay!

Turn your brainstorm into an outline, and your outline into a GED essay.