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# Invention Strategies

## **Freewriting/Association:**

Start writing and keep writing. Keep your pen moving steadily across the paper. Try to connect the flow of your thoughts with the flow of the ink. When stuck, repeat something you have just written, or write, “I don’t know what to write” until your next idea comes. Trust yourself! New ideas will come!

## **Cubing:**

Look at your topic from six different points of view:

Describe it. What do you see, hear, feel, smell, taste?

Compare it. What is it like? What is it different from?

Apply it. What can you do with it? How can you use it?

Associate it. What connections between this and something else come to mind?

Analyze it. What parts does it have? How do they work (or not work) together?

Argue for it or against it (seriously or humorously).

## **The Journalist’s Questions:**

Who, Where, What, When, Why, and How?

## **Burke’s Dramatic Pentad:**

Action:	What happened or is happening? What will happen? What could happen?
Actor/Agent:	Who did it? Who is doing it? What did it? What is causing it? What kind of agent is it?
Scene:	Where did it happen? Where is it happening? Where will it happen? When did it happen? What is the background?
Means:	How did the agent do it? What means were used? How does it happen?
Purpose:	Why did or does it happen?

## Berke's Twenty Questions for the Writer:

Imaginative	How can X be described?	Description
	How did X happen?	Narration
	What kind of person is X?	Characterization
	What is my memory of X?	Reminiscence
	What is my personal response to X?	Response
Informative	What are the facts about X?	Information
	How can X be summarized?	Summary
Analytical	What does X mean?	Definition
	What is the essential function of X?	Functional Definition
	What are the component parts of X?	Simple Analysis
	How is X made or done?	Process Analysis
	How should X be made or done?	Directional Analysis
	What are the causes of X?	Causal Analysis
	What are the consequences of X?	Causal Analysis
	What are the types of X?	Classification
	How does X compare to Y?	Comparison
	What is the present status of X?	Comparison
Critical	How should X be interpreted?	Interpretation
	What is the value of X?	Critical Evaluation
	What case can be made for or against X?	Argumentation

n.b. You can also ask the **negative** form of each question!