Lesson 8: You Will Learn about the Prewriting Process

Purpose of Lesson 8: You will learn about the prewriting process.
Skills: Critical thinking, reading comprehension, self-reflection, vocabulary, and writing.

Words to Learn:

**brainstorm** - writing a quick list of everything you can think about the topic: *Ana and Olivia have fun as they practice how to brainstorm for their essay.*

**cluster drawing** - a chart using circles to help organize your thoughts and ideas: *Cluster drawings are useful tools when you write.*

**grouping** - organizing information, putting similar information together in a list or cluster drawing. We are putting similar ideas together in a list or cluster: *Grouping is important and helps the writer to make a useful list or cluster.*

**topic** - what you are going to write about: *You can discover an essay topic from your journal or get help finding one from your teacher.*

**w/h questions** - question words such as who, what, where, when, why and how: *When you are preparing to write an essay, a good way to gather information is to ask w/h questions.*

1. I am giving the class a chart that will explain how to **prewrite**. It’s a good idea to keep this chart handy because you will need to refer back to it.

2. Thanks for the chart. I’ll take all the help I can get. I’m ready! Writing is important. My goal is to learn how to do it well.
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The ABC’s of Prewriting

Part A. Select your topic and decide on the reason for writing your essay

- How to get started: How can you choose a topic to write about?
  - Write down several ideas you would like to write about.
  - Think about why you want to write about these topics.
  - Think about who will read your work and what you want to tell them.
  - You can be assigned a topic by a teacher.

Part B. Research: Get information and develop your topic

- There are several ways to get information. You can use all of them or choose the ones that work best for you.
  - Brain storm.
  - Interview your friends and family.
  - Research by using the library and/or Internet.

Part C. Organize your ideas and information

- Decide your main idea: Review the information you gathered and ask yourself, “What is it mostly about?” This question will help you discover the main idea of your essay.

- Grouping
  - Make lists of similar information.
  - Make a cluster drawing.
  - Review the information in each list/cluster drawing and ask yourself, “What is this list/cluster drawing mostly about?” This will help you find the main idea of that group.
  - Use the main idea of each list/cluster drawing to help you title/name that group.
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Continued after Lesson 8 Quiz 1

Now that we have gone over The ABC’s of Prewriting, let’s practice. Look at part A.

OK, Part A says pick a topic. I enjoyed writing in my journal about my new dog. I think I would like to use that for the topic of my essay.

How does this sound?

Part A – Pick a topic to state my reasons for writing about this.

I would like to write about my new dog. My purpose is to tell a story about her.

Good. The journal is a great place to get ideas for an essay topic. Let’s review your journal and get ready for Part B of The ABC’s of Prewriting, which is gathering information.
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Part B – I have to get information and develop the topic. I don’t need the Internet or to do research at the library for this essay. I’ll ask the w/h questions.

- Who? I saw the dog.
- What? She followed me home. I decided to help her. I named her Lucy.
- Where? In my neighborhood.
- When? February.
- Why? I felt sorry for her. She was lovable.
- How? I brought Lucy home to feed her. Later, I took her to the veterinarian.

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It sounds great. I like what you did with the w/h questions.

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Thanks. I like using them. It’s an easy way to gather facts. I must say my journal helped, too. It gave me a lot of ideas.

Later... Dora and Ms. Shine have a conference.

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I’m glad that you found the w/h questions work well for you. Another good tool is brainstorming. I’d like to see you use it, too.

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I don’t know how to brainstorm.
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Let’s try it. We’ll use the same topic.

How do I get started?

Get a pen and some paper and write down anything that comes into your mind about the dog. Don’t think about spelling or writing in sentences. Just make a quick list of whatever you think. It is a good job to spend only a few minutes on this quick list.

Okay, here it is: small, cute, old, female, dirty, hungry, hurt, needs a home, friendly, brown, cold, lost, scared, expensive, responsibility, floppy ears, Lucy. There, I’m done, and it was easy. I just wrote down everything I thought about.

That’s the way to do it. That’s an impressive list.

I am beginning to get it.
- Pick a topic
- State my purpose
- Gather and develop my information
I just followed the chart. Is that correct?
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You are correct! The chart is helpful, as you can see.

19
Now, what do I do with my **w/h questions** and my brainstorming list?

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Review your list, and remove anything you think might not go with the topic. Sometimes you might think of something else to add.

21

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**Brainstorm List**
small, cute, old, female, dirty, hungry, hurt, needs a home, friendly, brown, cold, lost, scared, expensive, responsibility, floppy ears, Lucy.

23
I want to keep all of it. This is Lucy!

You are doing well. Before I take you on to **Part C of The ABC’s of Prewriting**, I want the rest of the class to practice Part A and Part B of the writing process. They can refer to your work as an example.
Part B of The ABC’s of Prewriting – I have to get information and develop the topic. I don’t need the internet or to do research at the library for this essay. I’ll ask the w/h questions.

- **Who?** I saw the dog.
- **What?** She followed me home. I decided to help her. I named her Lucy.
- **Where?** In my neighborhood.
- **When?** February.
- **Why?** I felt sorry for her. She was lovable.
- **How?** I brought Lucy home to feed her. Later, I took her to the veterinarian.