

Topic Development

WRITING SERVICES - UNCW - DEPAOLO HALL, 1ST FLOOR - 962-7857

Interests

It is important to be aware of your interests and preferences before you begin to develop a topic. What are your interests and hobbies? What have you enjoyed from class readings and discussions? Most importantly, what would you like to learn more about?

Assignment

Look over the assignment to know how to meet the requirements. Consider the type, length, due date, and other specifications. Knowing the specific requirements of the assignment helps avoid massive rewrites.

Audience

Knowledge of your audience determines how much background information is necessary. How will the audience influence style and tone? For most essays, you want to convince an audience to see the matter from your perspective. Develop ideas that will appeal to the widest variety of readers.

Think

Brainstorm, free write, make a list, or create a cluster map. Use whatever technique you are comfortable with in order to get information down on paper. At this point, do not worry about grammar, content, or structure, and do not eliminate any ideas. A seemingly unrelated idea may help you find an interesting topic.

Evaluate

Consider all the ideas you have gathered about your interests, your assignment, and your audience. What is the best development technique to use? Outline? Listing? First draft? Is your topic too broad? Is it too narrow?

Support

Now that you have evaluated the topic, look at the practicalities of writing about this topic. How do you support it? What signposts can you provide for the reader to help them better understand your ideas? For example, if you believe I-40 is the best route to Greensboro, use support statements like I-40 is quicker and provides more gas stations.

Direction

Now that you have a structure mapped out through an outline or first draft, finish your draft. Despite your preparation, be ready for the inevitable wrong turn or missed step. The writing process is rarely smooth and uninterrupted; however, good preparation and development can help you compose an essay in a satisfying and timely manner.

See the following for more information:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handout/general/gl_plan1.thml
<http://unc.edu/depts/weweb/handouts/readassign.html>

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