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UNIVERSIDAD
CATÓLICA
DEL ECUADOR
SEDE AMBATO**
SERÉIS MIS TESTIGOS

**DEPARTAMENTO DE INVESTIGACION, POSGRADO
Y AUTOEVALUACION**

Tema:

**APPLICATION OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS
FOR ACADEMIC WRITING OUTLINE**

Tema de Investigación previa la obtención del Título en Diplomado Superior en
Metodologías Comunicativas del Idioma Inglés

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Yo, Cristina Elizabeth Salazar Paredes portadora de la cédula de ciudadanía No. 180369446-0 declaro que los resultados obtenidos en la investigación que presento como informe final, previo la obtención del título en Diplomado Superior en Metodologías Comunicativas del Idioma Inglés, son absolutamente originales, auténticos y personales.

En tal virtud, declaro que el contenido, las conclusiones y los efectos legales y académicos que se desprenden del trabajo propuesto de investigación y luego de la redacción de este documento son y serán de mi sola y exclusiva responsabilidad legal y académica.



Cristina Elizabeth Salazar Paredes

CI. 1803694460

RESUMEN

Este trabajo describe la importancia de la escritura con fines académicos como parte del currículo explicando detalladamente sus cinco pasos: pre-escritura, borradores, revisión, edición y publicación. Se explica también la importancia de cada uno de ellos para que los estudiantes tengan éxito al trabajar en tareas escritas.

Sin duda todos los pasos mencionados anteriormente son muy importantes sin embargo, este trabajo enfatiza en el primer paso de la escritura académica: la **pre-escritura** que subsecuentemente incluye los siguientes elementos:

- Planificación
- Investigación
- Esquematización
- Diagramación
- Storyboarding or clustering

Todos ellos se describen en detalle, no obstante se ha dado mayor énfasis a la **outlining** y a las técnicas que se usan para obtener Buenos resultados en este elemento.

También se explica cada técnica, se provén ejemplos, descripciones, e ilustraciones sobre los mapas mentales, y de **organizadores gráficos**.

Se explica la importancia de este trabajo en las conclusiones donde se describen los beneficios del uso de organizadores gráficos para la escritura académica.

Finalmente, en las **Recomendaciones**; se explica detalladamente el uso de los distintos organizadores gráficos y su uso para la esquematización; también se proveen ejemplos para una mejor comprensión.

En los anexos se han incluido cuadros e información importante en el desarrollo de este trabajo.

ABSTRACT

This work describes the importance of academic writing as part of the curriculum and explains in detail its five stages: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing or proofreading, and publishing; the importance of each one for students to succeed when working on written tasks is also explained.

No doubt, all of the stages mentioned before are very important however, this work emphasizes on the first writing stage: **prewriting** which subsequently includes the following elements:

- Planning
- Research
- Outlining
- Diagramming
- Storyboarding or clustering

All of them described in detail, however the most emphasis has been given to **outlining** and the techniques used to succeed at this element.

There is also an explanation of each technique, with examples provided and a very well described and illustrated section about mind-mapping, **graphic organizers** and clustering as well.

The importance of this work is explained in the conclusions where the benefits of using graphic organizers for academic writing are described.

Lastly, in the **Recommendations**; there is a complete explanation of the different kinds of organizers that can be used for outlining; examples are also provided for a clearer understanding.

In the annexes, some important charts and pieces of information were included so that any important part of this research was missed.

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INTRODUCTION

As English teachers, we know that writing is how our students keep track of the thoughts that are important to them, and also how we measure their progress in the English Language Development, since through a written composition it is possible to identify our students' strengths as well as their weaknesses.

In schools, writing serves not only to record, but to refine and synthesize thinking.

As school effectiveness researcher Doug Reeves discovered:

"The association between writing and performance in other academic disciplines is striking, and gets to the heart of the curriculum choices teachers must make."

Unfortunately , most of our students lack the knowledge of HOW TO organize a written composition so that most of us provide them with tools like the famous "Outline Guide" which sometimes is not enough for them, that is why I will present a creative form for helping our students achieve an effective writing without missing any detail or idea that comes to their minds while they get through the step of outlining their written works through the use of Mind Maps and Graphic Organizers at this step.

OBJECTIVES

General:

To provide teachers and students with creative ideas for succeeding and achieving writing effectiveness through the use of new techniques at the first writing stage – prewriting.

Specific:

To use graphic organizers and mind maps at the first writing stage in order to develop writing outlines without missing any important idea or detail.

METHODOLOGY

This work will be developed based on the **Descriptive Method** which includes the researching and collection of information to identify elements and characteristics of a specific topic as well as the description, registration, analysis and interpretation of the nature and composition of the processes.

Descriptive research works on factual realities and its fundamental characteristics is to get an acquired interpretation of the gathered information.

The researcher's task in this type of work has the following stages:

- Data collection
- Theoretical Analysis
- Data categorization and validation

Verification

Description and Interpretation.

By following the stages previously mentioned, the main job of the researcher is to collect and analyze the data to be studied getting to satisfactory conclusions of the presented theory.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. THE WRITING PROCESS

Writing process is both a key concept in the teaching of writing and an important research concept in the field of composition studies.

Research on the writing process (sometime called the composing process) focuses on how writers draft, revise, and edit texts. Composing process research was pioneered by scholars such as Janet Emig in *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* (1971), Sondra Perl in "The Composing Processes of Unskilled College Writers" (1979), and Linda Flower and John R. Hayes in "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing" (1981).

2. ESSAY PARTS

2.1. The Title

The title of the paper should suggest not only the topic of the paper but also the thrust of the argument, if possible. An essay of longer than three pages should probably have a title, or covering, page. This should include, at a minimum, the title of the paper, writers' name, the course name and number, teachers' name, and date of submission.

2.2. The Opening

A good paper should have an opening that is interesting to the reader. Is there something intriguing that students can use to grab readers' attention and focus it on the question to be considered.

After the opening, the paper should have a thesis statement which succinctly encapsulates the main argument of the essay (this may be a how or why answer, a policy recommendation, or an opinion).

Importantly, after the thesis statement, the paper should then tell the reader how the author intends to demonstrate his or her argument or justify the opinion or recommendation asserted. This is important, and it is a step that many budding authors forget. This step prepares the reader for the structure of the essay to follow.

2.3. The Body

In the body of the paper, the author should make points in support of the thesis. It is important after each point to link back to the thesis and tell the reader why you have told her the foregoing. If the writer cannot figure out how a point relates to his/her thesis, he/she might need to re-think.

The writer should also try to provide the reader with transition sentences to connect the flow of ideas in the body of the essay. Transition sentences do not have to be included in the first draft you write, but they should be there in the final product.

Lastly, in a longer paper, the writer must consider section headings to keep his/her points analytically distinct. This is a great service to the reader.

Again, section headings help to discipline the writer, as they will only be able to talk about relevant information that fits under the heading you have given.

2.4. The Conclusion

Generally, no new information (in the sense of "data") should be presented in the conclusion. Rather, the conclusion should re-state the thesis and show the reader how it has been demonstrated by what came in the body of the paper. Sometimes, authors use the conclusion to consider "big issues" presented by the problem under consideration.

STAGES OF THE PROCESS

In 1972, Donald M. Murray published a brief manifesto on "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product," a phrase which became a rallying cry for many writing teachers. Ten years later, in 1982, Maxine Hairston argued that the teaching of had undergone a "paradigm shift" in moving from a focus on written products to writing processes.

Generally the writing process is seen as consisting of five stages:

- i. Prewriting
- ii. Drafting
- iii. Revising
- iv. Editing: proofreading
- v. Publishing

These stages can be described at increasing levels of complexity for both younger students and more advanced writers. The five stages, however, are seldom described as fixed steps in a straightforward process. Rather, they tend to be viewed as overlapping parts of a complex whole. Thus, for instance, a writer might find that, while editing a text, she needs to go back to draft more prose, or to revise earlier parts of what she has written.

2.5. Prewriting

Prewriting is the first stage of the writing process, typically followed by drafting, revision, editing and publishing.

Elements of prewriting may include planning, research, ***outlining***, ***diagramming***, or ***clustering***.

There are many different pre-writing techniques. Some of the most common are listed below:

- i. Brainstorming (jotting down one idea after another)
- ii. Freewriting (writing quickly about the general topic; the idea is to keep writing rather than focusing on correctness or sense). One method of freewriting that works well for the overly conscientious sort is to turn off your computer monitor so that you are unable to see your errors.
- iii. Using a journal (keeping a journal as a source of ideas"
- iv. Reading (without resorting to "theft," reading the ideas of others can often generate your own ideas)
- v. Outlining (listing and organizing your ideas; a technique that works best when some "pre-thinking" has already taken place
- vi. Using prompts (sets of questions that help you think about your topic from different angles)

2.5.1. Motivation and audience awareness

Prewriting usually begins with motivation and audience awareness:

- What is the student or writer trying to communicate?
- Why is it important to communicate it well and who is the audience for this communication?

Writers usually begin with a clear idea of audience, content and the importance of their communication; sometimes, one of these needs to be clarified for the

best communication. Student writers find motivation especially difficult because they are writing for a teacher or for a grade, instead of a real audience. Often teachers try to find a real audience for students by asking them to read to younger classes or to parents, by posting writing for others to read, by writing a blog, or by writing on real topics, such as a letter to the editor of a local newspaper.

Knowing the audience is a critical issue because the level of the audience helps to determine the types of information students need to include in their papers to get their points across to the reader. Students must keep in mind that they are not writing papers for an audience of one, the professor. Students' papers should be geared toward the interested and intelligent layperson (someone who is not a political scientist). Also, students do not have to assume that their readers have read any particular reading that was assigned to them. They must introduce readings to which they make reference such that the interested and intelligent layperson can follow along with their argument. In this vein, students have to be sure to put quotations in context for the readers.

2.5.2. Choosing a topic

One important task in prewriting is choosing a topic and then narrowing it to a length that can be covered in the space allowed. Oral storytelling is an effective way to search for a good topic for a personal narrative. Writers can quickly tell a story and judge from the listeners' reactions whether it will be an interesting topic to write about.

When freewriting, students write any and every idea that comes to mind. This could also be a written exploration of their current knowledge of a broad topic, with the idea that they are looking for a narrow topic to write about. Often freewriting is timed. The writer is instructed to keep writing until the time period ends, which encourages him/her to keep writing past the pre-conceived ideas and hopefully find a more interesting topic.

2.5.3. Gathering information

Several other methods of choosing a topic overlap with another broad concern of prewriting, that of researching or gathering information. Reading is effective in both choosing and narrowing a topic and in gathering information to include in the writing. As a writer reads other works, it expands ideas, opens possibilities and points toward options for topics and narrowing of topics. It also provides specific content for the eventual writing. One traditional method of tracking the content read is to create annotated note cards with one chunk of information per card. Writers also need to document music, photos, web sites, interviews, and any other source used to prevent plagiarism.

Besides reading what others have written, writers can also make original observations relating to a topic. This requires on-site visits, experimentation with something, or finding original or primary historical documents. Writers interact with the setting or materials and make observations about their experience. For strong writing, particular attention should be given to sensory details (what the writer hears, tastes, touches, smells and feels). While gathering material, often

writers pay particular attention to the vocabulary used in discussing the topic. This would include slang, specific terminology, translations of terms, and typical phrases used. The writer often looks up definitions, synonyms and finds ways that different people use the terminology. Lists, journals, teacher-student conference, drawing illustrations, using imagination, restating a problem in multiple ways, watching videos, inventorying interests – these are some of the other methods for gathering information.

2.5.4. Primary and secondary sources:

Primary sources include government documents, political party statements, and political leaders' speeches. Using primary source information (data that has not been pre-digested by another analyst) can really enrich students' papers and help them produce stronger work.

Secondary sources include journal articles, newspaper pieces, and books. Books and journal articles should form the bulk of sources for students' research for a paper in Political Science. For some very current topics, newspaper articles and government websites may be their strongest sources. Writers must be sure to be critical consumers of all the sources on which they rely. Just because something is on the web or in a book does not make it "the truth." Finally, students must not be allowed to find drive the content of their papers. Just because they find something while doing their research does not mean it should be included in the final paper. Let them use only what they need to make their argument (to demonstrate their thesis).

2.5.5. Discussing information

After reading and observing, often writers need to discuss material. They might brainstorm with a group or topics or how to narrow a topic. Or, they might discuss events, ideas, and interpretations with just one other person. Oral storytelling might enter again, as the writer turns it into a narrative, or just tries out ways of using the new terminology. Sometimes writers draw or use information as basis for artwork as a way to understand the material better.

2.5.6. Narrowing the topic

Narrowing a topic is an important step of prewriting. For example, a personal narrative of five pages could be narrowed to an incident that occurred in a thirty minute time period. This restricted time period means the writer must slow down and tell the event moment by moment with many details. By contrast, a five page essay about an three day trip would only skim the surface of the experience. The writer must consider again the goals of communication – content, audience, importance of information – but add to this a consideration of the format for the writing. He or she should consider how much space is allowed for the communication and what can be effectively communicated within that space

2.5.7. Organizing content

At this point, the writer needs to consider the organization of content. **Outlining** in a hierarchical structure is one of the typical strategies, and usually includes

three or more levels in the hierarchy. Typical outlines are organized by chronology, spatial relationships, or by subtopics. Other outlines might include sequences along a continuum: big to little, old to new, etc. Clustering, a technique of creating a visual web that represents associations among ideas, is another help in creating structure, because it reveals relationships. Storyboarding is a method of drawing rough sketches to plan a picture book, a movie script, a graphic novel or other fiction.

2.6. Writing Outline

Outlining: An outline is a list of the main features of a given topic, often used as a rough draft or summary of the content of a document. A hierarchical outline is a list arranged to show hierarchical relationships. Writers use outlines to establish plot sequence, character development and dramatic flow of a story, sometimes in conjunction with free writing.

3.2.1. Alphanumerically labeled hierarchical outlines

An alphanumeric outline uses Roman numerals, capitalized letters, Arabic numerals, and lowercase letters, in that order. Each numeral or letter is followed by a period, and each item is capitalized, as in the following sample:

Thesis statement: E-mail and internet monitoring, as currently practiced, is an invasion of employees' rights in the workplace.

I. The situation: Over 80% of today's companies monitor their employees.

A. To prevent fraudulent activities, theft, and other workplace related violations.

B. To more efficiently monitor employee productivity.

C. To prevent any legal liabilities due to harassing or offensive communications.

II. What are employees' privacy rights when it comes to EM/S (Electronic Monitoring and Surveillance) in the workplace?

A. American employees have basically no legal protection from mean and snooping bosses.

1. There are no federal or State laws protecting employees.

2. Employees may assert privacy protection for their own personal effects.

B. Most managers believe that there is no right to privacy in the workplace.

1. Workplace communications should be about work; anything else is a misuse of company equipment and company time

2. Employers have a right to prevent misuse by monitoring employee communications

3.2.2. Decimal labeled hierarchical outlines

The decimal outline format has the advantage of showing how every item at every level relates to the whole, as shown in the following sample outline:

Thesis statement: ---

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Brief history of Liz Claiborne

1.2 Corporate environment

2.0 Career opportunities

2.1 Operations management

2.1.1 Traffic

2.1.2 International trade and corporate customs

2.1.3 Distribution

4. DRAFTING

Drafting is the preliminary stage of a written work in which the author begins to develop a more cohesive product. A draft also describes the product the writer creates in the initial stages of the writing process.

In the drafting stage, the author:

- develops a more cohesive text
- organize thoughts
- explain examples/ideas
- uncover transitions
- discover a central argument/point
- elaborate on key ideas

In a book that became popular in the 1950's, *The Elements of Style*, famed authors Strunk and White describe the first draft as being a less edited version of the final draft. In their book, Strunk and White say:

“the first principal of composition is to foresee or determine the shape of what is to come and pursue that shape.”

This shape is the draft that eventually becomes the finished work.

More recently, Peter Elbow, in his book *Writing Without Teachers*, presents a very different view of the drafting stage in the writing process.

He describes his stance on the writing process, saying

“Writing is a way to end up thinking something you couldn't have started out thinking.”

According to Elbow, the best way to accomplish this is a series of drafts which come together to produce an emerging "center of gravity" that then translates into the main focus on the work. This process should be a holistic process, not a linear process. Elbow's reasoning behind this concept of multiple drafts follows the idea that, "if he learns to maximize the interaction among his own ideas or points of view, he can produce new ones that didn't seem available to him.[3]"

Whether being used as the creation of a less-edited final product or as a tool during the prewriting stage, drafting is a necessary stage for the writer in the writing process. Having created a draft, the author is then able to move onto the revision.

5. REVISING

Revision is the stage in the writing process where the author reviews, alters, and amends her or his message, according to what has been written in the draft. Revision follows drafting and precedes editing. Drafting and revising often form a loop as a work moves back and forth between the two stages. It is not uncommon for professional writers to go through many drafts and revisions before successfully creating an essay that is ready for the next stage: editing.

In their seminal book, *The Elements of Style*, William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White acknowledge the need for revision in the writing process:

"Few writers are so expert that they can produce what they are after on the first try. Quite often you will discover, on examining the completed

6. EDITING: PROOFREADING

Editing is the stage in the writing process where the writer makes changes in the text to correct errors (spelling, grammar, or mechanics) and fine-tune his or her style. Having revised the draft for content, the writer's task is now to make changes that will improve the actual communication with the reader. Depending on the genre, the writer may choose to adhere to the conventions of Standard English. These conventions are still being developed and the rulings on controversial issues may vary depending on the source.

Proofreading consists of reviewing any text, either hard copy on paper or electronic copy on a computer, and checking for typos and formatting errors. This may be done either against an original document or "blind" (without checking against any other source). Many modern proofreaders are also required to take on some light copy-editing duties, such as checking for grammar and consistency issues.

Proofread for:

- Spelling
- Subject/verb agreement
- Verb tense consistency
- Point of view consistency
- Mechanical errors

work, that there are serious flaws in the arrangement of the material, calling for transpositions... do not be afraid to experiment with your text.”

Successful revision involves:

- **Identification of thesis.** The purpose of the essay should be re-considered based on what has been written in the draft. If this purpose differs from the original thesis, the author must decide from which thesis to continue writing.
- **Consideration of structure.** The author should identify the strengths of the draft, then re-consider the order of those strengths, adjusting their placement as necessary so the work can build with auxesis to a crescendo.
- **Uncovering weakness in argument or presentation.** Once the strengths of the draft have been identified and placed in the strongest order, the author can re-examine the work for weaknesses in argument or presentation. Faulty logic, missing transitions, and unsupported or poorly supported assertions are common weaknesses. Identifying these weaknesses during revision will inform the next draft.
- **Successful revision is not improving grammar or diction.** Those will be the focus of later editing.

distribution of individual articles and academic journals without charge to readers and libraries.

8. MIND MAPPING

- **Mind Map:** A mind map is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea. Mind maps are used to generate, visualize, structure, and classify ideas, and as an aid in study, organization, problem solving, decision making, and writing.
- **Elements of a Mind Map:** The elements of a given mind map are arranged intuitively according to the importance of the concepts, and are classified into groupings, branches, or areas, with the goal of representing semantic or other connections between portions of information. Mind maps may also aid recall of existing memories.
- **Mind Mapping Function:** To represent ideas in a radial, graphical, non-linear manner, by encouraging a brainstorming approach to planning and organizational tasks. Though the branches of a mind map represent hierarchical tree structures, their radial arrangement disrupts the prioritizing of concepts typically associated with hierarchies presented with more linear visual cues. This orientation towards brainstorming encourages users to enumerate and connect concepts without a tendency to begin within a particular conceptual framework, as shown in the following example:

7.1. Academic publishing

Academic publishers are typically either book or periodical publishers that have specialized in academic subjects. Some, like university presses, are owned by scholarly institutions. Others are commercial businesses that focus on academic subjects.

The development of the printing press represented a revolution for communicating the latest hypotheses and research results to the academic community and supplemented what a scholar could do personally. But this improvement in the efficiency of communication created a challenge for libraries, which have had to accommodate the weight and volume of literature.

One of the key functions that academic publishers provide is to manage the process of peer review. Their role is to facilitate the impartial assessment of research and this vital role is not one that has yet been usurped, even with the advent of social networking and online document sharing.

Today, publishing academic journals and textbooks is a large part of an international industry. Critics claim that standardised accounting and profit-oriented policies have displaced the publishing ideal of providing access to all. In contrast to the commercial model, there is non-profit publishing, where the publishing organization is either organized specifically for the purpose of publishing, such as a university press, or is one of the functions of an organization such as a medical charity, founded to achieve specific practical goals. An alternative approach to the corporate model is open access, the online

- **S-CIRCLE.** A claim or fact that should be attributed in a footnote.

7. PUBLISHING

Publishing is the process of production and dissemination of literature or information – the activity of making information available for public view. In some cases authors may be their own publishers, meaning: originators and developers of content also provide media to deliver and display the content.

Traditionally, the term refers to the distribution of printed works such as books (the "book trade") and newspapers. With the advent of digital information systems and the Internet, the scope of publishing has expanded to include electronic resources, such as the electronic versions of books and periodicals, as well as micropublishing, websites, blogs, video games and the like.

Publishing includes: the stages of the development, acquisition, copyediting, graphic design, production – printing (and its electronic equivalents), and marketing and distribution of newspapers, magazines, books, literary works, musical works, software and other works dealing with information, including the electronic media.

Publication is also important as a legal concept:

- As the process of giving formal notice to the world of a significant intention, for example, to marry or enter bankruptcy;
- As the essential precondition of being able to claim defamation; that is, the alleged libel must have been published, and
- For copyright purposes, where there is a difference in the protection of published and unpublished works.

- **WR #.** Write out numbers under 10 unless to do so would be awkward. Starting a sentence with a number means you have to write it out.
- **LONG Q.** Quotations of longer than forty words should be set apart from the normal text by being single-spaced and double-indented. Double indentation means one indentation to the left and one to the right (In Word, use format, paragraph). If you follow this format, quotation marks are unnecessary.
- **Q in Q.** Quotation marks inside a quotation work as follows. "Start of quotation 'Q in Q' rest of quotation."
- **RUN ON and INCOMP.** Two variants of the same issue: ungrammatical sentences. Run-on sentences (RUN ON) have too many subjects and verbs without proper use of conjunctions. Incomplete sentences (INCOMP) are missing either a subject or a verb; often these are fragments beginning with "which" or "because" and should actually be part of the preceding sentence.
- **WC.** If you find WC on your returned paper, something is wrong with the word(s) you have chosen. Perhaps the meaning is not as you intended or you have not used the right language for the field.
- **COMMA APP.** Use a comma or commas to set off an appositive, a noun or phrase that re-names a noun. Dr. Tan, a professor at the local university, will be attending the gathering.

- **ACRONYM.** Define acronyms the first time you use them. University of North Carolina, Wilmington (UNCW). Define even obvious acronyms (UN, IMF).
- **PARA.** Paragraphs that run on too long suggest poor organization. Make sure your paragraphs are tight and focused on a specific point.
- **M-D.** The "em-dash" (--) has become increasingly common as a way of setting apart subordinate clauses and phrases. Use it correctly. It is made up of two hyphens/dashes, not one.
- **POSS.** Watch out for possessives. Use the "of the" test. If you could put "of the" between two words, you probably need an apostrophe. The students' answers (the answers of the students).
- **HYPHEN.** When making adjectives out of a series of words, use hyphens (less-than-stellar performance, high-flying candidate).
- **CLQ.** Avoid being overly colloquial when writing (I just felt, f*%# this assignment).
- **CANNOT.** Cannot is one word!
- **ADDRESS.** Set off persons being addressed with commas (Please, Sir, may I have another?).
- **ITAL.** Italicize foreign words and phrases.

- **E/AFFECT.** Effect is a noun. Affect is a verb (exception: to effect change).
- **TENSE.** Verb tenses should be consistent within paragraphs. Do not jump from present to past and back again.
- **VARY.** Vary sentence structure and word choice. Do not use all subject-verb-direct object sentences. Sometimes begin sentences with prepositional phrases or adverbs of time to change things. Try to avoid using the same word repeatedly. The thesaurus is your friend! <http://www.m-w.com> has a free online thesaurus.
- **END PREP.** Try not to end a sentence with a preposition (to, with, from, at, etc.)
- **COMMA.** As you read your paper aloud (and you should!), notice where your voice pauses. That is a candidate location for a comma. Commas are often helpful after introductory phrases using prepositions (After taking office, she), infinitives (To improve the class, I), and gerunds (Using the computer for the first time, Dave).
- **ABA.** Watch sweeping generalizations. Can you support what you are asserting? ABA stands for argument by assertion. ABA means that you are putting something forward without demonstrating it in a logical, persuasive fashion to your reader.

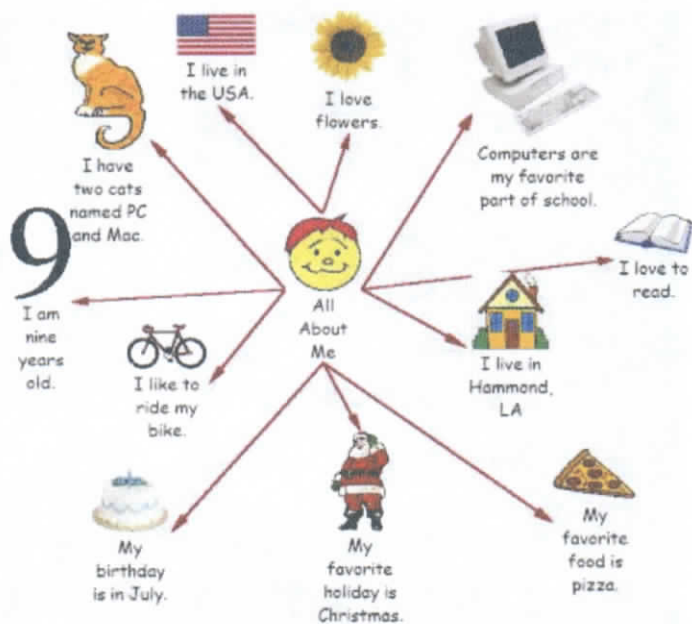
- Word choice
- Word usage (there, their or they're)

6.1. Common Problems in Essay Writing

The following problems are described in order to succeed at the proofreading stage.

Each problem below begins with an abbreviation. These abbreviations should refer you back to the writing well handout and to the problem indicated.

- **S-V.** Subject-verb agreement. Subjects and verbs must agree in number. Make sure you use a plural verb form with a plural subject and a singular verb form with a singular subject. (They do, and she does.)
- **PRO.** Pronouns must agree in number with the noun to which they are referring. Check! When referring to a country, government, or a political party, the proper pronoun is "it," not "they." This applies even to the United States (which was often referred to as "they" before the Civil War). British usage on pronouns varies slightly. Please follow US practice.
- **LIST.** Lists should be made up of parallel parts of speech: answering, doodling, and crying (all "-ing" verb forms); pen, pencil, crayon (all nouns).
- **X CONT.** Try not to use contractions in formal writing. Its=belonging to it (not "it's," which means it is).



9. MAPS VS. GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

The mind map can be contrasted with the similar idea of graphic Organizers.

The former is based on radial hierarchies and tree structures denoting relationships with a central governing concept, whereas concept maps are based on connections between concepts in more diverse patterns.

10. CLUSTERING

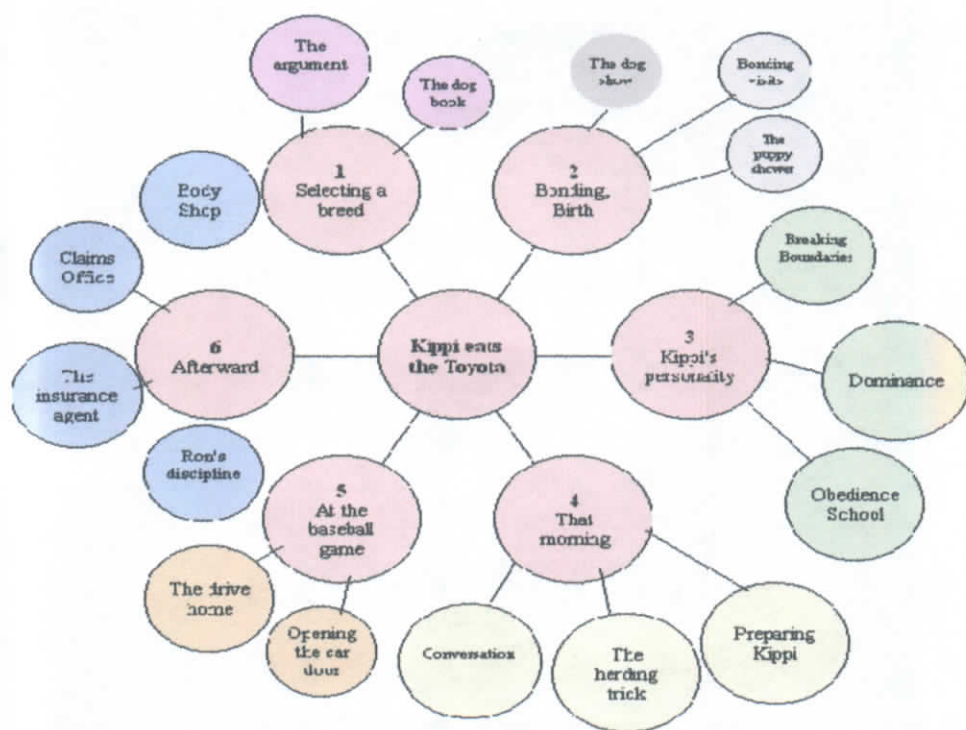
The cluster diagram below is presented as an example of one type of pre-writing.

Pre-writing (writing and thinking about a paper before writing it) creates learning. Every time students skip the pre-writing process, they miss an opportunity to create a richer paper. Even people who state that they dashed off

a paper in a few minutes often have been thinking about the paper for some time.

One **pre-writing technique** that is especially helpful for visual learners is called clustering. In a cluster diagram the central events or components of an essay are presented visually; more detailed events branch off the main events to provide a visual overview of the entire narrative or report.

Although in this example the main events are numbered chronologically, it isn't necessary to do so and may, in fact, hamper the writer's ability to re-order these events to "fit" the thesis or to present the material more dramatically as shown below:



The Kippi Cluster

10.1. How to Use Clustering to Start Writing

One of the best techniques for breaking through inertia, stimulating ideas, and finding a direction for a piece of writing is "clustering."

Clustering is a powerful tool because it taps into the right brain, which drives creativity. Humans' right brain is where fresh ideas and original insights are generated. The left brain, in contrast, is more logical and orderly. Both are essential to good writing, but if the left brain of the writer is too dominant when he/she starts a piece, it inhibits the free flow of thought.

Clustering muffles the left brain for a time so the right brain can play freely.

10.2. How to do it:

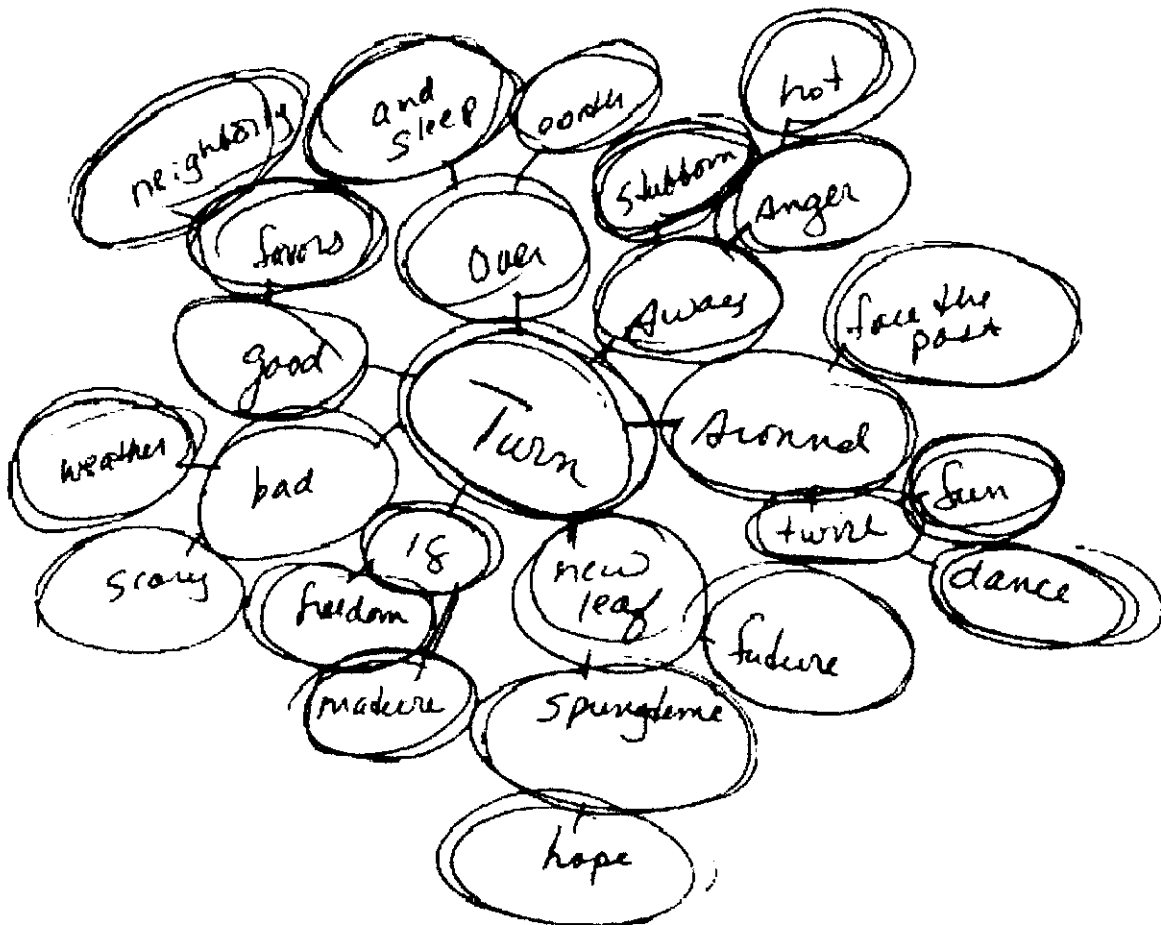
Write a nucleus word or phrase on a clean piece of paper. It is common for students to choose a word that they consider, loosely, to be their topic. For example, if writing about a Mother's Day essay, "mother" would be a good nucleus word. If writing an annual report for a client I might choose "service" or "business" or even a phrase like "improving our image." The nucleus word's purpose is to trigger associations. Emotionally charged words like "love," "loss," or "envy" are extremely effective, as are prepositions: "around," "beyond," "over," and so forth.

Circle the nucleus and let connections flow, writing down each new word or phrase that comes to mind, circling it, and connecting it with a line. to the, word that sparked it. Attach to the nucleus each word that seems like an entirely new direction. But don't get hung up on which words connect to what. The idea is to

let thoughts run quickly without editing, censoring, or worrying about proper sequence.

Cluster for three minutes or so— students will probably fill the page. At some point they will feel a mental shift that suggests what they want to write about.

Writers should write their pieces without worrying about perfection, get it all onto paper, and later, go back to polish using the logical left brain.



CONCLUSIONS

Academic writing as part of nowadays education must be considered as an individual's style of creative expression of ideas therefore especial attention on the process must be given.

Knowing that writing is a complex and individualized task which can be described through a series of recursive stages that include: **prewriting**, writing, editing and revision, teachers must identify the difficulties students are having with each of them and provide appropriate instruction and support, mainly at the **prewriting** stage.

At this stage, where the main ideas should to come up to the writers' minds, it is extremely necessary to give learners useful **outlining** techniques which include diagramming, clustering, mind-mapping and the use of **graphic organizers** which allow them organize and visualize their final works.

No one can deny the importance that must be centered on sentence structure, spelling, correct punctuation, and on rules, however when students are asked to write to assigned topics for an audience other than the teacher, the quality of the writing tends to be much more likely to be judged on the basis of the correctness of its content and mechanics than on style or creative expression of ideas. This problem can definitely be avoided by letting students set their ideas before starting.

Among other techniques, the use of graphic organizers is known as one of the most useful tools for students to apply after having researched, gathered data,

organized and prepared the material, since the writer will feel more confident for starting their written compositions.

Some of the most noticeable advantages of using graphic organizers are listed below:

- An integrated, visual approach to writing outline.
- Organized and categorized information.
- Useful for those students having difficulty in working with traditional outlining
- Boxes and line connectors map out the essay content in step-by-step progression.
- Integrate all important ideas.
- Help students gather and organize details for writing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

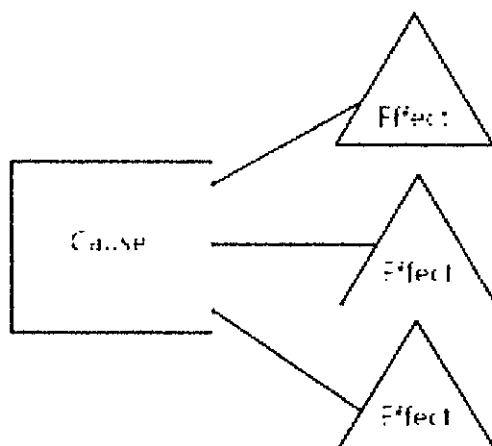
Good writing should be understood as the ability to represent oneself well on paper so that written tasks must be designed to help students improve their writing. It is also important to remind students that in order to improve their writing, they need to be critical readers first, so that activities such as reading newspapers, magazines, and books should also be included in the instruction.

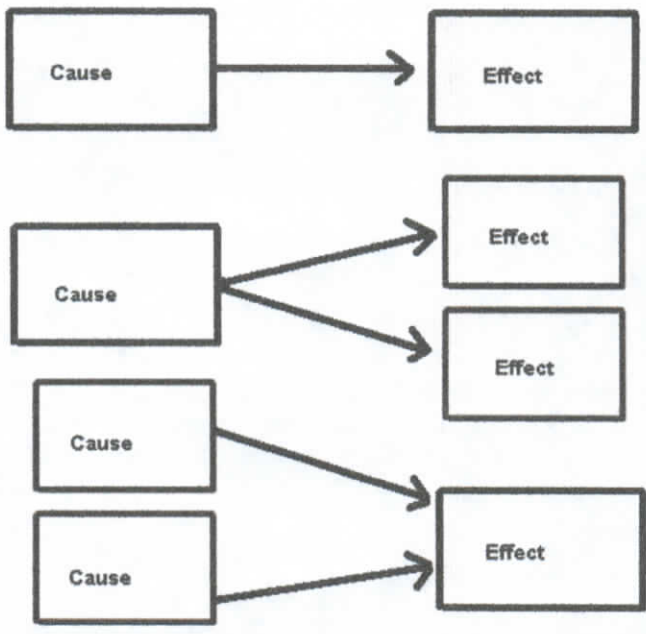
The time spent in class activities, should also include the presentation of techniques to help students write in a better way without missing any detail that comes to their minds through the use of graphic organizers.

No doubt, through the application of this technique, students may gain a lot of confidence when working on a written task therefore a variety of graphic organizers as the following can be applied:

CAUSE – EFFECT ORGANIZER

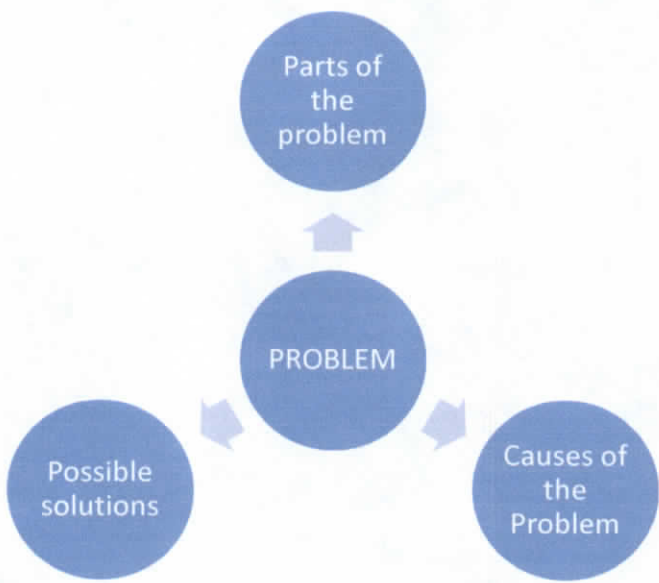
Used to collect and organize details for cause-effect essays.

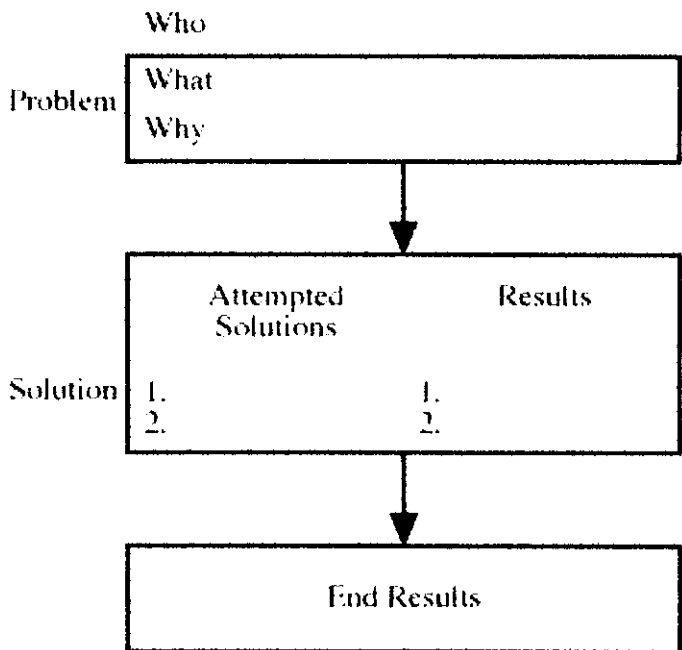




PROBLEM- SOLUTION WEB

Used to map out problem – solution essays.





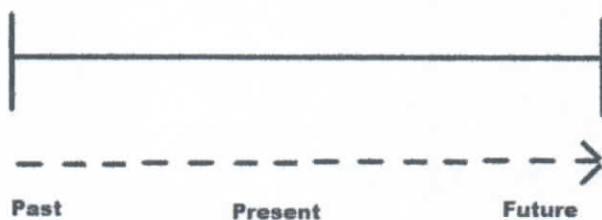
TIME-LINE

Used for personal narratives to list actions or events in the order they occurred.

Subject: _____

(Chronological Order)

1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____
5.	_____



EVALUATION COLLECTION GRID

Used to collect supporting details for essays of evaluation.

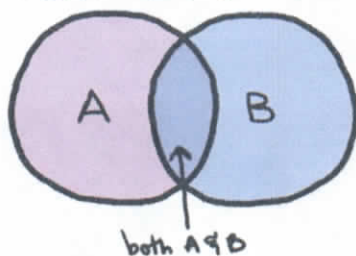
Subject: _____

Points to evaluate	Supporting Details
1. _____	
2. _____	
3. _____	
4. _____	

VENN DIAGRAM

Used to collect details to compare and contrast two topics.

VENN DIAGRAM!



5 W's CHART

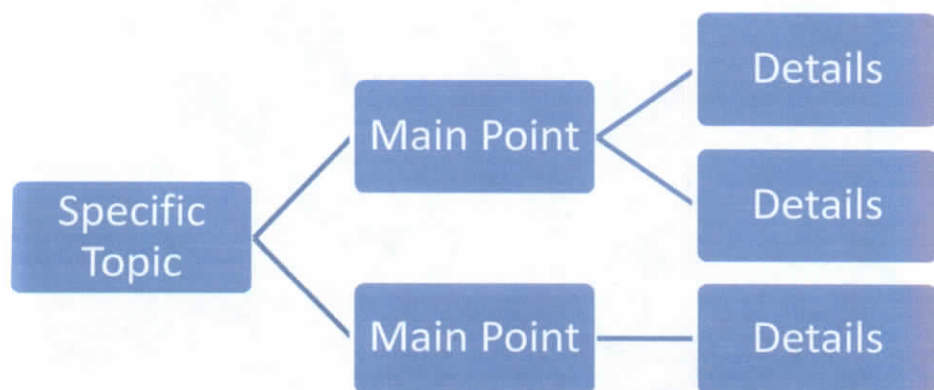
Used to collect the *who?*, *what?*, *when?*, *where?*, and *why?* details for personal narratives and news stories.

Subject: _____

Who	
When	
Where	
What	
Why	

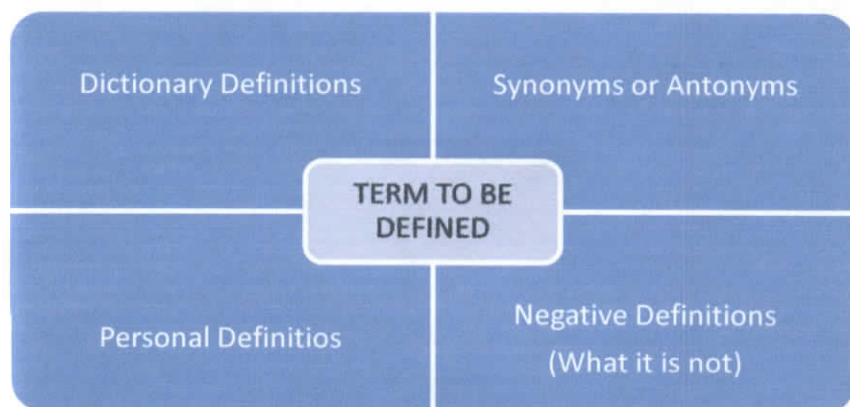
LINE DIAGRAM

Used to collect and organize details for academic essays.



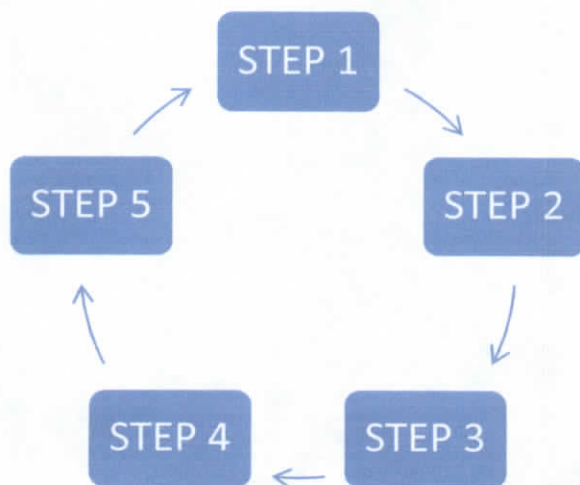
DEFINITION DIAGRAM

Used to gather information for extended definition essays.



PROCESS (CYCLE) DIAGRAM

Used to collect details for science-related writing, such as how a process or cycle works.



SENSORY CHART

Used to collect details for descriptive essays and observation reports.

Subject: _____

Sights	Sounds	Smells	Tastes	Textures

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ANNEXES:

Understanding the Writing Process

When you look at a book, you do not see the process the writer used to make it. What you see in print might not be much like the first plan for the book. The author might have rewritten many times.

The writing process is often divided into five stages. Most writers go back and forth through these stages. There is no one correct way to write.



