

## Invention

"Writing is easy. All you do is stare at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead."--Gene Fowler (1890 - 1960)

Do you already have a paper due or is one looming in the future? Don't know where to start? Here are some ideas for gathering thoughts after you have done the necessary reading and/or research.

- Step I  
Brainstorm for ideas  
Take ten minutes and write down every thought that you have on the subject. Just let the ideas flow. Some of them might be off-the-wall, but often even these will lead you in a direction that you might not have expected. Don't censor your thoughts at this stage; just generate ideas.
- Step 2  
Now, look at your writing and determine the "golden thread." What main idea kept surfacing? What do most of these random thoughts have in common?  
Develop this main idea into a working thesis statement. Remember your thesis statement should come early in your paper. A thesis statement gives the central idea of the paper-what this paper going to "prove"; what is your opinion on this subject.
- Step 3  
Now that you have a pretty good idea of what you want to accomplish in this paper, look back over your brainstorming ideas, set aside all the unrelated ones, and make a list of all those that are relevant. You now have the beginning of an outline for your paper.
- Step 4  
Carefully look over your outline draft. Do ideas need to be rearranged? Do you need to fill in some holes? Revise your outline