

**Generating and Narrowing Writing Topics**

**Purpose:**

- Help students to generate potential writing topics
- Guide students in exploring subtopics and narrowing their focus.
- Guide students toward an appropriate scope for the given paper length

**Standards:**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1a Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2a Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions.

**Strategies:**

1. Loop Writing Exercise
2. 4-2-1 Freewrite

### Loop Writing

Loop writing is a fast-paced method to help students narrow down a broad topic and focus on the aspects of the topic that interest them the most. Ideally, students will dig down to a subtopic appropriate in scope for the assigned paper.

Steps:

1. Have the students freewrite for a set time or length (a whole page, a half page, five minutes) about their broad topic without stopping. Explain to them that they are not worrying about grammar, mechanics, or even quality of thought, and that this writing is just for them. Anything goes, but they should start off writing about their topics. Explain that you will be following the steps as well.
2. Ask the students to read through their freewrites and to underline the one sentence, statement, or thought that strikes them and seems most interesting. Have them pick something that seems intriguing and worth exploring.
3. Have the students write down their chosen statement at the top of a second sheet, then fill that second page (or write for five minutes, etc). Tell them to dig into the underlined idea, explore it, and let themselves go wherever their writing leads.
4. *If time permits, and things are going well:* have them pick out the best statement or thought from this second freewrite, put it on the top of your third sheet, and fill up a third page.
5. Finally, the students should underline the statement or thought that they find most interesting in their final freewrite.

## November Writing Strategies

### 4-2-1 Topic generation and Freewrite

1. Have students individually identify four ideas regarding a topic of interest.
2. Students then meet in pairs to discuss their ideas and assist each other in refining each other's ideas into two central ideas within their respective topics.
3. The pairs combine to create groups of four who share their ideas and come to a consensus for each individual's topic to become their refined point for writing.
4. Students individually free write for five minutes on that one refined point explaining what they know about the idea (if students become stuck they write about why they are stuck).
5. Students return to their groups of 4 and listen to each other's written responses.

# 4 – 2 – 1 Free Write Organizer

**Individually: Four Ideas on my topic**

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**Pairs: Two  
Central Ideas**

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**Groups of Four:  
The Refined topic**

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**Free Write**

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