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# Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a way to generate topics for a research paper. There are several ways to brainstorm, and the process can be done successfully either alone or in a group. Consider using one of these methods to help generate a suitable topic for your research paper.

## Group Brainstorming

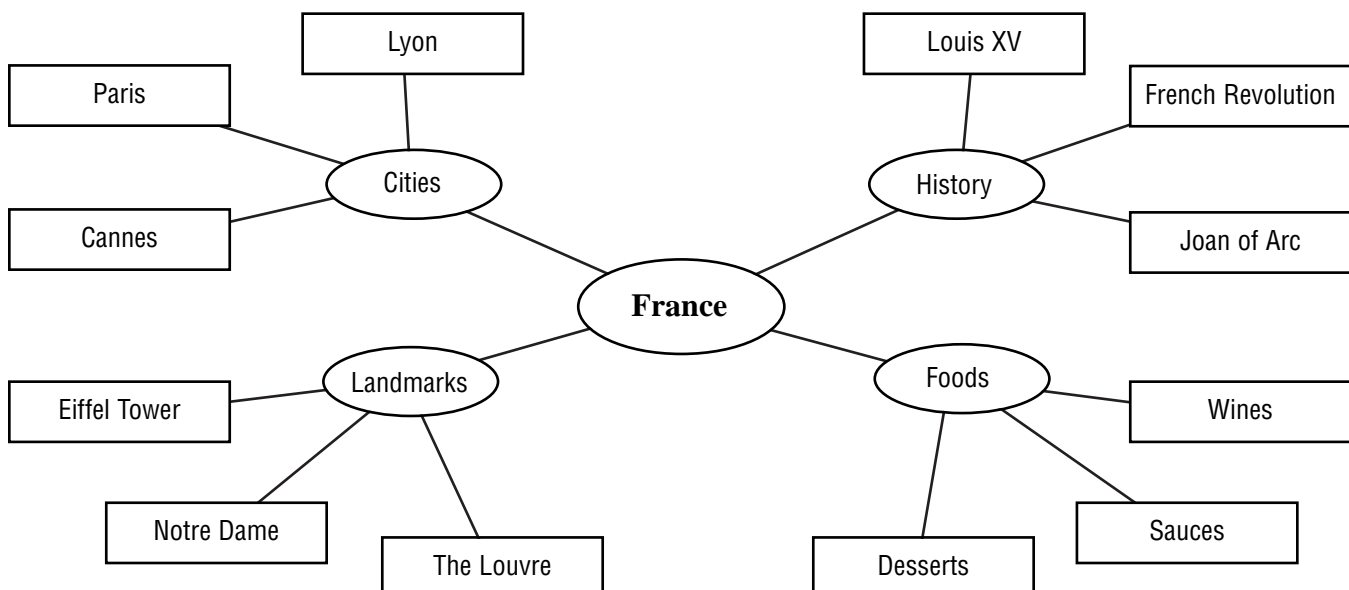
In this method of brainstorming, one member of the group acts as recorder, while each member says aloud any idea that comes to mind. As each person contributes an idea, the recorder writes the idea down without comment or discussion. After an agreed-upon length of time, the members of the group consider and discuss each of the options, finally narrowing the options down to a few upon which the members vote.

## Lists

Lists are particularly useful when planning a comparison/contrast research paper. To make a list, columns are set up with headings, such as “alike” and “different.” Everything a person can think of in which two or more things are alike is listed under “alike,” and everything a person can think of in which they are different is listed under “different.” Then one can compare and contrast using the entries in each list.

## Clustering

Clustering is a way to narrow a general topic to a manageable size. For example, a student might want to write about France, but that topic is much too general for a 600- or 1,000-word report. The student can cluster possible subtopics around the general topic “France.” After writing the general topic in the middle of the paper, write related subtopics around it. Then identify even more specific topics that relate to each subtopic. This picture will help you determine which topic has more appeal and, thus, help narrow down the possible areas for research.





# Search Engines

The following are search engines you may find useful while doing research for your paper.

**Alta Vista**—<http://altavista.digital.com>

**Infoseek**—<http://www.infoseek.com>

**Lycos**—<http://www.lycos.com>

**Galaxy**—<http://www.einet.net>

**Yahoo!**—<http://www.yahoo.com>

**Excite**—<http://www.excite.com>

**GeoCities**—<http://www.geocities.com>

**Hotbot**—<http://www.hotbot.com>

**Magellan**—<http://magellan.excite.com>

**Webcrawler**—<http://www.webcrawler.com>

**Northern Light**—<http://www.nlsearch.com>

## Meta-Search Engines

Meta-Search Engines check several search engines for information on your topic. The following are popular Meta-Search Engines:

**Dogpile**—<http://www.dogpile.com>

**Inference Find**—<http://infind.com>

**MetaCrawler**—<http://www.metacrawler.com>

Choose three of the above search engines. Go to each. Answer the following for each.

1. Name of engine \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does this engine have a directory? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, on the back of this page list the entries in the directory.

3. Is this a commercial site? How can you tell? \_\_\_\_\_