

# Fusion

Integrated Reading and Writing

Book 2

KEMPER / MEYER / VAN RYS / SEBRANEK

Second Edition

## Chapter 4 – Ideas





# Learning Outcomes

- \* By the time you finish reading and studying this chapter, you should be able to:
  - \* LO1 Read for topics.
  - \* LO2 Select a topic for writing.
  - \* LO3 Read for main ideas.
  - \* LO4 Establish a main idea for writing.
  - \* LO5 Read for supporting details.
  - \* LO6 Draw inferences.
  - \* LO7 Choose supporting details in writing.

# Reading for Topics

- \* **Topic** can be defined as *what the writing is about*.
- \* When reading, the first step is to identify the topic.
- \* Topics are often identified in the *title, first few sentences, or first few paragraphs*.



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## Topics can be a(n):

**person** – Barack Obama

**place** – New Orleans

**object** – baseball bat

**idea** – loyalty

**animal** – penguins

# Selecting a Topic for Writing

## \* Choosing a Topic

- \* Writing is often tied to subjects you are studying.
- \* Most assignments will identify a general subject area as a starting point.
- \* Always select a topic that interests you!

*Figure 4.1 The Selecting Process*

**Assignment:** Analyze the cause and effects of a pet-related problem in urban areas.

General subject area

pet-related problem in urban areas

Narrowing the subject

providing space  
for dogs

Specific topic

development of  
dog parks

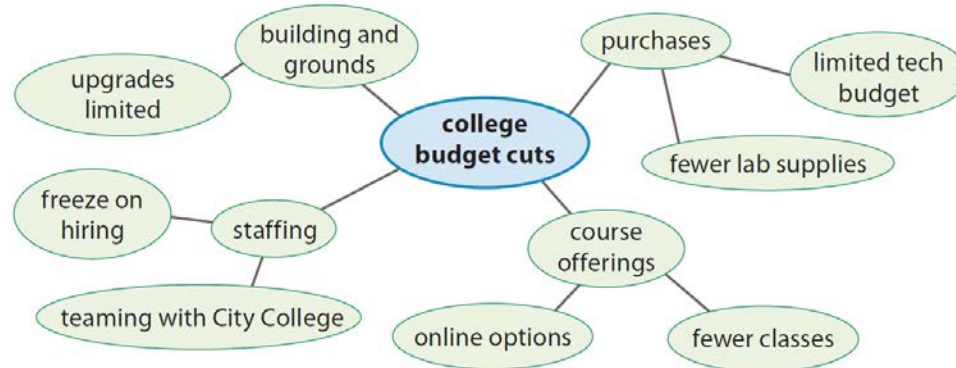


# Selecting a Topic for Writing

## \* Searching Strategies

- \* **Clustering** – begin with the general subject in the middle, and cluster related words around it
- \* **Freewriting** – write nonstop for 5-10 minutes without stopping to judge, edit, or correct your writing
- \* **Developing a Dialogue** – create a conversation between yourself and another person

Figure 4.2 Cluster Strategy



# Reading for Main Ideas

- \* **Main ideas** are a special feature, part, or feeling about the topic that the author emphasizes.
- \* The main idea of a paragraph is usually found in the **topic sentence**.
- \* The main idea of an essay is usually found in the **thesis statement**.
- \* Main ideas can also be:
  - \* found in a summary statement near the end of a text.
  - \* implied or suggested, rather than directly stated.
  - \* varied in longer, more complex essays.

# Reading for Main Ideas

- \* In **informational essays**, main ideas tell you what *feature* of the topic or *pattern of organization* will be addressed.  
*Example: Teenagers use and abuse drugs for many reasons, some of which are low self-esteem, parental neglect, and peer pressure.*
- \* In **argument essays**, main ideas identify the *claim* about a topic that the writer will argue for.  
*Example: The usage of steroids in high school sports is increasing daily and must be stopped immediately.*
- \* In **narrative essays**, main ideas tell you how the writer feels about the *experience* or event.  
*Example: I never truly realized the effect my parents' divorce had on me until I started having marriage problems of my own.*

# Reading for Main Ideas

## \* Follow these steps to find the main idea:

1. Review the title, headings, and first and last paragraphs.
2. Read the opening part for a general understanding of the topic.
3. Look for a sentence or two in an opening paragraph that directs the writing.
4. Underline, highlight, or write this sentence down.
5. Continue reading to see if that sentence makes sense as the main idea.
6. If your thinking changes, write down the new main idea.



# Establishing a Main Idea for Writing

Here are some **brainstorming ideas** to help you establish a main idea for your writing.

Ideas	Description
<b>Five W's</b>	Answer <i>who, what, when, where, and why</i> about your topic. Add <i>how</i> to generate more information.
<b>Listing</b>	List first thoughts and questions about your topic. Record ideas nonstop for as long as you can.
<b>Clustering</b>	Begin with your topic in the middle. Cluster related ideas around it.
<b>Focused Freewriting</b>	Write freely about your topic for at least 5 minutes. See what thoughts and feelings you can uncover.
<b>Dialoguing</b>	Discuss your topic with another person.

# Establishing a Main Idea for Writing

- \* **Questioning** – questions can guide your search for additional information about a topic

Table 4.1 Categories of Questions				
	Description	Function	History	Value
Problems	What is the problem?	Who or what is affected by it?	What or who caused it?	What is its significance?
Policies	What are the most important features?	What is the policy meant to do?	What brought this policy about?	What are its advantages and disadvantages?
Concepts	What is the concept or idea?	Why is it important?	When did it start?	What value does it have?

- \* **Choosing a focus** – a strong focus or main idea helps you decide what information to include and in what order
- \* **Forming a thesis statement** – a thesis is the controlling idea in an essay (**topic + opinion = thesis**)

# Reading for Supporting Details

- \* **Supporting details** are used to develop the main idea.
  - \* **Major details** explain or illustrate the *main idea*.
  - \* **Minor details** complete or clarify the *major details*.
- \* Here are some **types of details** often included in writing:

Facts and statistics	Explanations
Anecdotes	Examples
Quotations	Definitions
References	Reasons
Analysis	Reflections
	Descriptions

# Reading for Supporting Details

- \* It is also important to *evaluate details* that you read.
- \* Use the following criteria to decide if you can trust the details in your reading:
  - \* The source is a textbook, or the reading comes from a respected publisher, periodical, or domain (.edu, .org, .gov)
  - \* The author is identified and writing in the field of expertise.
  - \* The topic is covered in-depth, information is balanced and timely, and reading is clear and logical.

# Choosing Supporting Details for Writing

**\* When planning a piece of writing, you need to:**

1. Select a topic
2. Gather details about the topic
3. Form a thesis or focus for writing
4. Decide how best to use the details

