PRE-COMPOSING

Pre-Composing (a.k.a. prewriting, inventing, pre-drafting, etc.) is a term used to describe the initial phase of the composing process. While some authors choose not to pre-compose, studies have found the practice actually beneficial to composers, especially for the purposes of "getting started" (which roughly equates to "inventing" content and "arranging" content) for a longer paper/project.

Some methods of pre-composing actually help composers to arrange (or organize) their thoughts very effectively while others methods are great for helping the mind to conceive of thoughts and "invent" (or conceive of) material.

One thing you want to do is to adopt a two Pre-Composing Strategies when you plan to compose a paper (one for inventing material, and the other for organizing the material).

You should definitely take advantage of pre-composing when composing a longer paper, which may need more planning than a shorter paper.

PRE-COMPOSING STRATEGIES FOR INVENTION

1. Free-listing
In Free-listing, you try to list of all ideas and words relative to your topic

EX: (George Lucas' *Star Wars* is based on Akira Kurosawa's *The Hidden Fortress.)*
      People
      Ships
      Planets
      Weapons
      Light Saber
      Katana
      Ways of Living
      Jedi
      Samurai
      Darth Vader
      Princess Leia
      Queen Amidala
      Princess Yukihimi
      Obi-Wan Kenobi
      Rokurota Makabe
      Luke Skywalker
      Death Star
      Prison
      R2-D2 (Tahei)
      C3-PO (Matakichi)
      Jedi Path
      Buddhism
      Hinduism

2. Free-writing/Freewriting

In Free-writing, you should try to write a short passage focusing on the topic for 15 minutes without stopping for spelling or punctuation errors. Just write whatever comes into your head.

EX: (Name an American icon)
Jimi Hendrix is one of the most influential guitarists of all time. He invented modern rock. His inoovative playing of his guitar which was copied by Eric Clapton, the beatles, the doors, and others is very noticable. He used many different types of guitars and innovated with his effects and his different types of ammplification. He was inspiring. His playing techniques were equally impressive. He would take short cuts harmonically which would help him to play more for less. For example, instead of playing an entire chord, he would only play the root of the chord and the fifth of the scale. In addition, instead of making many changes of chords, he would simply play the roots. Mostly he would play octaves. He used many blues influences in his development of his technique including slides and bends. Sometimes, he would even make percussive effects on his guitar, which is something influential (consider Tom Morello of Rage Against the Machine and Audioslave). He was a great guy when discussed by others. He was a good boyfriend. He was also very spontaneous and aggressive at times. His band was comprised of many exceptional musicians. Noel Redding, the bassist, had played with many other bands.

3. Conventional Clustering/Webbing
List the central ideas of your topic and group the ideas into separate spaces on the page with lines going outward to new and relative ideas. Some people use circles, ovals, squares, etc.

4. Bubble Clustering
Similar to conventional clustering, in a bubble cluster, you simply create a series of large and small circles on a piece of paper. Large circles should be filled with major thoughts. Smaller circles should be filled with minor thoughts.

5. Zero Drafting
Begin your drafting of the paper immediately without expectations and see where the topic takes you. As you come up with information and organization, use them. Make sure to leave holes for information to go later. Just write as best as you can with missing pieces to be provided/finished and improvements to be made later

6. Question and Answer (Q&A)
Playing games with yourself can help you to invent new material. For instance, find questions relative to the assignment and ask them of yourself. Start with the following and try to add the endings: what, when, how, why, where, which, etc. Try to write as much as you can in terms of answering the questions.

EX: (Argument Questions)

What is a controversial topic?
Which side do I want to take?
What can I say about the topic (from that side)?
What kinds of support do I need?

EX: (Narrative Questions)

Where was I?
Who was there?
What time or when was it (day and time)?
What happened?

7. Talking It Out/Using Audio Recording & Dictation Software
Grab an audio recording device (e.g., computer, cellphone, voice recorder, etc.) and "talk out the paper" into the device. Later you can dictate your ideas into text form by transcribing (from recording to type). And, with a little revision, you might find that you have a coherent draft. Side note: Many types of audio recording software are available online for free; further, many cellular phones are equipped with audio recording apparatuses. In addition to audio recording devices, many other technologies allow a person to change speech to text. The benefit of an audio recording device is that you may record your thoughts.

8. Using Software Dictation
Currently, many different types of software dictation, which will transfer your voice into words. While the application will transfer your spoken words into written text, you should try to keep in mind that it will be necessary to check the

PRE-COMPOSING STRATEGIES FOR ARRANGING/ORGANIZING CONTENT

1. Mapping
Instead of visualizing your paper by idea, you might consider direction (literally…). You might try drawing a map of the contents of your paper. Consider the task a linear procedure where you start, make different stops, and end.

2. Using Flowcharts
Similar to mapping and following a linear procedure, you might try constructing a flowchart of your paper. Start with a starting box, then draw an arrow to another box (a main point or event which you will explain). Then, draw an arrow from this box to another box (the next point), and so forth.

3. The Half Outline
Make an outline of your topic (using headings and subheadings while defining key components of your discussion/material). *Do not use complete sentences*. Also, try to use decimal numbering instead of alphabets and Roman numerals (most people do not know their Roman numerals and letters are limited by 26 characters). Remember: Numbers are infinite.

EX: (*Sea Creatures*)
1. Fish
>   *1.1. Flounders*
>   *1.2. Red Snapper*
>   *1.3. Rock Fish*
>   *1.4. Sea Bass*
2. Whales
>   *2.1. Blue Whale*
>   *2.2. Humpback Whale*

2.2.1. Males
　　　　　　　　2.2.1.1. Strong
　　　　　　　　2.2.1.2. Weak
　　　　　2.2.2. Females
　　　2.3. Killer Whale
3. Starfish
4. Jelly Fish
5. Sea Snake

4. The Full Outline

Make an outline of your topic (using headings and subheadings while defining key components of your discussion/material). *Use complete sentences*. Also, try to use decimal numbering instead of alphabets and Roman numerals (most people do not know their Roman numerals and letters are limited by 26 characters). Remember: Numbers are infinite.

EX: (Videogames & Health)
1. Videogames are dangerous to one's health.
　　1.1. The distinction between good gaming and bad gaming is level of physical activity
　　1.2. Some video game systems encourage physical activity.
2. Obesity is associated with "bad" games.
　　2.1. A record number of children are becoming obese.
　　2.2. While one issue related to obesity is food, the other is the level of physical fitness.
　　2.3. Physical activity promotes higher metabolisms (e.g., fat burning).
3. Lack of exercise causes harm to one's level of fitness.
　　3.1. Lack of exercise leads to a sedentary lifestyle.
　　3.2. Sedentary lifestyles can cause a wide range of illnesses (most are fatal or debilitating).
4. Instances of disease are increasing.
　　4.1. We must take action to prevent disease.
　　4.2. Parents need to limit a child's hours of gaming, unless the gaming is deemed useful/helpful for achieving a higher level of fitness.

5. Christensen's Approach

Use the numbers one through five, written vertically to represent paragraphs; then, write a sentence for each number (one supporting the other and so forth). Separate different ideas.

EX: (University Parking)
1. The university needs more parking
2. This problem is on-going.
3. We pay a heavy fee to park on campus
4.
5.

1. Students, staff, and faculty cannot find parking.
2. It took me nearly 20-30 minutes to find an open space.
3. Oftentimes, many people have to park and walk extremely long distances.
4.

5.

1. Why do we pay hundreds of dollars for parking, when there isn't parking?
2. Every semester, I paid one hundred dollars for parking.
3. So, given the fact that I take summer courses too, that equals three hundred dollars.
4. Where does the money go?
5.

PRE-COMPOSING STRATEGIES FOR ADAPTING TO/IMITATING NEW FORMS OF DISCOURSE

1. Using Templates
Templates are short phrases/clauses, which are commonly found in certain types of discourse. By examining some artifacts (i.e., similar types of documents), you can find some templates that can be borrowed or taken to form your own version of the document.

EX:
Here is a summary template (for the first line of a book report or summary):
(Title Goes Here)_____written by ____(Author's Name Goes Here) is about _____.

2. Borrowing the Frame (Imitation)
Sometimes, writing in a new style or in a new format can be very difficult. You might try "borrowing the frame." This technique essential means to borrow and/or imitate the structure of the paper (not the content). Look at how an author/writer conveys their thoughts and imitate it. Sometimes, you may need to analyze the different types of words, phrases, clauses, etc. used by the author before beginning.

EX:

Original:	Imitation:
In the following document, I will discuss the needs of the organization. Further, I will extrapolate the essential purpose of the organization. I hope to enlighten you with such discussion, and I hope you will fund our project.	In this document, I will talk about our needs. In addition, I will discuss the direction we hope to take. With these elements, I hope to present a good case for you to consider our proposal.