Brainstorm the Topic
To help you get started writing, try some of these suggestions:

• Read over the source material for your paper several times. Highlight points of interest and jot down ideas.

• Let ideas come to you and write them down, not worrying about whether they are good or bad.

• Find a friend and talk over your topic with that friend to get ideas.

• Make a diagram and/or outline of your ideas.

• Record some of your ideas as you go about your day. When you are ready to write, listen to these ideas to help get you started.
Read over the material, keeping a highlighter and notepad handy

- As you read over the source material, make sure you understand it thoroughly. If there are unfamiliar words, look them up in a book or online dictionary.
- If you have a topic already in mind, highlight words and sentences that go with your topic.
- If you do not have a topic in mind, highlight words or sentences that you find interesting or are repeated in the reading. This can help you form your topic.
- In your notepad, jot down whatever comes to your mind as you read. Use these notes as a takeoff point to help you get started with your paper.
Write down ideas as they come to you

• Let your thoughts flow. Do not feel inhibited about whether the ideas are good, bad, or useful. Write all your ideas down.

• Be certain to write these ideas down someplace where you can find them later: a notebook, computer, laptop, or cell phone.

• After you write down the ideas, set them aside for a little while. Come back to these ideas with an open mind, ready to decide which ideas you will be able to use.
Talk over your topic with a friend to get ideas

- Find someone you are comfortable talking with. Let them know you are trying to work out ideas for a paper.
- Set aside a time to talk with that friend. Take him/her out for a walk, a cup of coffee, or a snack.
- Encourage your friend to talk with you about the topic of your paper. Feel free to discuss anything remotely related to your topic.
- Afterwards, make notes of the interesting points of your conversation. Use these notes to help you get started writing your paper.
Make a diagram and/or outline of your ideas

• Use either a pen and paper or a computer to organize your thoughts. Create diagrams to help you understand the relationships between elements in the material.

• If you are using a computer, try making a table or SmartArt in Microsoft Word.

• Create an outline by listing the main ideas you have. You can enlarge on these ideas for your paper.
Record your ideas as you go about your day

• Take some type of recorder (your cell phone, a laptop, etc) with you as you go about your day.
• Whenever an idea comes to you, speak that idea into your recorder.
• Continue recording your ideas over several days.
• When you are ready to write, listen to these ideas to help get you started.