

# Ideas & Content

There are four key pieces to improving the ideas and content of your writing. They are:

1. **Selecting an idea (topic)**
2. **Narrowing the idea (focus)**
3. **Elaborating on the idea (development)**
4. **Discovering the best information to convey the idea (details)**

## 1. Selecting an Idea (Topic)

There are many ways a person may go about selecting a topic:

- ✍ Free writing- simply write down anything that you may want to use as your topic. No limits, no rules.
- ✍ Flashback- use old journals, photographs, souvenirs, or anything else that evokes memories and feelings.
- ✍ Favorite places- make a list of places you enjoy and use them as the setting.
- ✍ Prompts- use teacher given prompts, or find a book or list of prompts on the Internet.
- ✍ Corral- keep a list of interesting topics, ideas, events, stories, etc. Then refer back to this list for inspiration when trying to find a topic.

Once the topic has been chosen, you should brainstorm everything you know about the topic. It does not matter if it is correct or not. Since this is simply a tool for getting the ideas flowing, there are no limits here. Corrections can be done later.

## 2. Narrowing the Idea (Focus)

R.A.F.T.S. is an acronym for:

- R- *role of the writer***- decide on point of view and voice
- A- *audience***- know the target group
- F- *format***- how will the information be presented
- T- *topic***- zero in on main ideas and focus
- S- *strong verb***- directs writer to purpose (persuade, create, predict, compare, defend, analyze, inform)

## 3. Elaborating on the Idea ( Development)

- 👍 **Ask a question**- share an idea, story, or piece of information with a classmate and then have him or her ask three questions about your topic. This will help you see where you left gaps.
- 👍 **Outline**- create an outline of your topic. Make it a bare bones outline first, then add to the original until the details and information are complete.
- 👍 **5Ws & H**- Who, what, when, where, why, and how. Check to see how many are represented and needed in your writing.

## 4. Discovering the Best Information (Details)

- 😊 **Show Me, Don't Tell Me**- take a statement that is non-specific and turn it into a detailed and unique statement. Have others help you identify these statements.
- 😊 **Observe Closely**- look at your surroundings and record all the minute details. Dig deep to use all of your senses. You may need to take a mental trip to help you.