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Tools for Expression

Topic Investigation Worksheet

Print these two pages out when you need to produce or expand on ideas and concepts related to your topic. This system works by channeling your effort through the six categories used by reporters for investigating stories. This method will not only help you generate more ideas, it can save you time organizing them.

On page two, you'll see six boxes with one-word headings. Each represents an investigation-question category:

- *Who* are the people related to or influenced by your topic?
- *What* things are related to or influenced by your topic?
- *When* do the events related to or influenced by your topic take place?
- *Where* do these events take place?
- *Why* do these events take place?
- *How* do these events take place?

In each box, simply write down what comes to mind related to the category. Consider each section in terms of the *past*, *present* and *future*. To help stimulate more ideas, look at each category from the angle of what's *beneficial* or *helpful* to your topic. Then, reverse your point of view and define what creates a *barrier* or *hinderance*.

It's best to write these thoughts out by hand because manually forming words in longhand (or printing) engages more areas of the brain. You'll find that more ideas, and more associations between ideas, will be triggered as you focus your thinking within each category. This method will also help you discover new approaches that you can take with your subject.

Always remember—just write your thoughts down as they surface. *Don't criticize or censor them!*

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WHO

WHAT

WHEN

WHERE

WHY

HOW