Organizing Ideas Before You Write

The first step to organizing your writing is to study the assignment prompt so you understand your task. You do not want to write an entire paper only to realize that you didn't answer the assignment! Once you understand your task, there are a few different ways you can organize your thoughts. There is no right or wrong way to organize your ideas! These are just some tips that

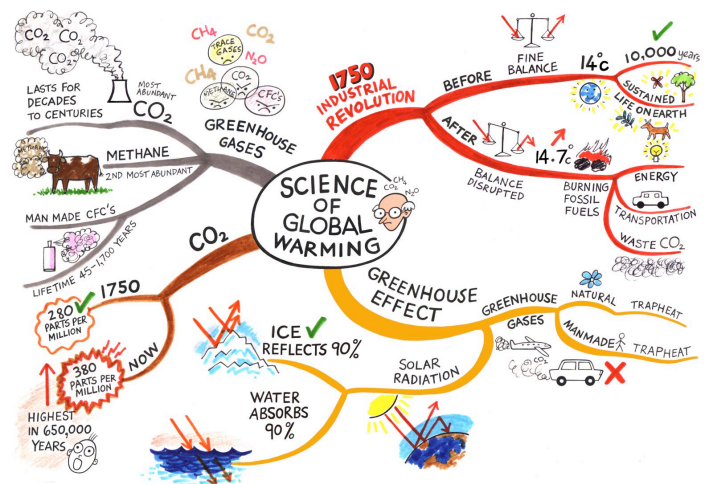## If you want to try a structured approach…

- Brainstorm and organize

- Grab a piece of paper and break down the goals/objectives of the assignment

- Go through and brainstorm ideas under each pat of the assignment

- List source materials or references under each section of the assignment. It will make things easier when you start citing references. You can even keep a running bibliography as you work.

When you get stuck (we all do):

- Start writing your paper anywhere you'd like! You can write a body paragraph first, or start with the conclusion.
- Switch locations! Try writing outside or in a new room of the house
- Take a break! Go for a walk, play with your pet, or stop for a snack break
- Start early, that way when you get stuck it's not a big deal

If you want to try a creative approach…

- Spill your ideas onto a sheet of paper. Don't think—just write! After you feel like you've gotten your ideas out, start going through and grouping the ideas together; *then* decide on an order.

- Create a graphic organizer (see below) with the topic or paper assignment in the middle. It can be organized or disorganized as you'd like.

- Make it tactile. Write details that support your thesis onto index cards and move them around until you feel like they're in the right order.

Source: http://jhakkas.wordpress.com/2009/04/15/global-warning/