

# √ The Idea Web: A Graphic Organizer for Collecting Ideas

**Grade appropriate:** 4th grade and older to adult.

**Approximate length of time to complete lesson:** 50 minutes

**Objective:** To provide students with a technique for:

- Generating and organizing ideas on a topic.
- Staying focused on a few ideas within their topic.
- Making the shift from idea gathering to writing topic sentences and forming paragraphs.

## **Summary:**

Students can use the idea web as a visual tool to collect their ideas for any kind of writing, i.e. persuasive, narrative, descriptive. The lesson that I teach on the use of the web, which is sometimes repeated with subsequent assignments, involves making the following points:

- √ The topic for the essay is the main theme. This will be the center oval.
- √ Students record all their thoughts on the theme and draw circles around these words.
- √ When specific questions are to be answered in the essay, these questions become the various subtopics.
- √ Each subtopic will support the main theme and will be its own paragraph when it comes time to writing the rough draft.
- √ Each subtopic will have supporting details that give the reader more information about the subtopic.
- √ Supporting details are recorded simply as simple phrases on the idea web but will become sentences in the rough draft.

I always have my students include their idea webs when they turn in the final draft so that I can see how they used the tool to develop their essay. I also try to spot check idea webs when they are first writing their rough drafts to alert them to those those ovals that have the same information. By no means does the idea web have to be a perfect match to their final writing. I sometimes find that rich meaningful details that are on their web never make it to the draft stage, but since they are not lost, students can use them in their revisions.

## **Resources:**

*Writing the Natural Way*, Gabriele Lusser Rico; ISBN 0-87477-236-2

*Write to Learn*, Donald Murray; ISBN 0-03-061996-3

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