

Mapping

Like the name suggests, mapping is a tool you can use to proactively plot your course through a writing project. Idea maps consist of ideas, topics, concepts, details, and so on, that are linked together in an intelligent sequence to bring them toward a logical conclusion.

The following is just one example of how an idea can be developed using an idea map:

1. Initial idea

The Twin Cities needs to maintain funding for neighborhood youth programs

2. Next step - Identify the problem(s)

- Current federal funding cut \$1.8 million
- Current state funding cut \$750,000
- 17 Twin Cities youth programs closed
- 32 youth programs cut back over 50% of projects
- 1,950 youth affected

3. Describe the extent of the problem – name the stakes

- At-risk youth need the activities, mentors and community youth programs provide
- Studies show youth involved with programs 93% more likely to graduate HS; 64% less likely to use drugs; 58% less likely to commit crime

4. State the opposition

- “Youth programs are a band-aid” and only offer short-term relief
- Real problem is economics—money should be spent developing new & existing businesses
- Building communities is not the government’s responsibility

5. Acknowledge and/or refute the opposition

- Funding youth programs is an investment in people
- Businesses and communities are inextricably linked, not separate entities
- Government by/for people is responsible for protecting communities (i.e., youth programs are pro alternative to reactively beefing up a police force)

6. Make a final plea

- Find ways of making youth programs pay partly for themselves (i.e., projects that involve making products of some kind or providing needed services, etc.)
- Create partnerships between youth programs and local businesses
- Youth programs are short-term investment with long-term results
- Distressed communities benefit directly & indirectly from youth programs