

# JTC 300: Final Technical Report ‘Brainstorming’

## *Steps for Starting a Position & Recommendation Paper*

- The Proposal and Final Technical Report are part of a multi-step writing process:
    - (1) This project begins with the **Proposal Memo** wherein you identify a topic for your Final Report and outline the content it will include. Your instructor will review your Proposal Memo.
    - (2) Assuming you have proposed a strong project, you will receive approval to proceed with the research and writing for the **Final Technical Report** (i.e., your capstone writing assignment in this course).
  - Completing the process outlined below should help you to determine a topic for this paper and begin the research and writing process for your Proposal Memo.
- 1) Start by determining the issue or problem you want to investigate. Explore the ‘hot topics’ in your field.
    - What is currently being discussed in the news and/or the academic sources related to your field (e.g., journal articles, blogs, etc.)?
    - What would make a strong topic for this type of paper?
  - 2) Address these questions to ensure that you will be able to present a strong argument:
    - Is it a real issue, with genuine debate, controversy, or uncertainty?
    - Can you distinctly identify two positions (i.e., ‘sides’) or perspectives on the issue?
    - Are you personally interested in advocating one of these positions?
    - Is the issue narrow enough to be manageable for the scope of this assignment?
  - 3) Target audience analysis – ask yourself the following questions:
    - Who is your target audience (i.e., the primary readers you are writing for?)
    - Where do they stand on the issue?
    - How are their interests involved?
    - What evidence is likely to be effective with them?

### **Analyzing an Issue and Developing an Argument**

- 1) Once you have selected your topic, start doing some research on the subject matter.
  - Clearly identify two sides of the issue (e.g., side A and side B). This will require some secondary research.
- 2) List out the two sides of the topic along with a list of **supporting evidence** for both sides.
  - Do your best to devote equal attention to both sides of the issue (e.g., do not devote 20% coverage to one side, and 80% to the other).

**Supporting evidence** may include the following:

- Statistical Information – interpretation and examples of an accumulation of facts.
  - Informed Opinion – opinion developed through research and/or expertise of the claim (i.e., news articles, blogs by credible writers, peer-reviewed journals, textbooks, etc.).
  - Primary Data – insight shared by an expert on the topic (i.e., professor in the discipline or an industry professional who is established in the field).
- 3) Once you have made the list from Step 2, compare the information side by side. Considering your audience, as well as your viewpoint, choose the position you will take.
    - Your job is to take one side of the argument (i.e., *your position*), and persuade your audience that you have well-founded knowledge and informed reasoning for why you feel the way you do.

It is important to support your position with **evidence** (i.e., solid secondary and/or primary sources) to demonstrate the validity of your position as well as to address any counterclaims to show you are well-informed about both sides or perspectives of the issue.