HOW TO TEACH STUDENTS TO DEVELOP A TOPIC

Advanced Develop a Topic Checklist

Step 1

Analyze your writing

Scan your writing and underline the details, definitions, summaries, quotes and descriptions you have in your writing. Now record the number of each that you found:

_____ Details

_____ Quotes

_____ Definitions

_____ Descriptions

_____ Summaries

Step 2

Ask yourself:

Do I have enough details?

If you have enough details, check all that apply:

- ◯ Did I explain why the detail was important each time I introduced a new detail?
- ◯ Did I cite the appropriate sources?

Then, make any adjustments and move to Step 3

If you need to add details, **then** ask yourself:

- ◯ Do I need to grab the reader's attention at a certain point or points?
- ◯ Is there information that I can provide that will set me up as more of an expert on the topic?

If you checked one or both boxes, **then** find at least two places that you can add more details and move to Step 3

Step 3

Ask yourself:

Have I provided definitions?

If you have enough definitions, check all that apply:

- ◯ Did I write the definitions in my own words?
- ◯ Did I introduce definitions in the body of my writing only?
- ◯ Did I only define the must-know words or did I go overboard?

Then, make any adjustments and move to Step 4

If you need to add definitions, **then** ask yourself:

- ◯ Are there terms that are really important for my reader to pay attention to and know?
- ◯ What words do I need to briefly define so the reader can understand my thesis statement and most important ideas?

If you checked one or both boxes, **then** find at least two places that you can add more definitions and move to Step 4

Step 4

Ask yourself:

Have I provided a summary?

If you have a summary, check all that apply:

- ◯ Is it short enough to give "just the gist" of the information?
- ◯ Did I put the summary in my own words?
- ◯ Did I transition into it so it makes sense with the rest of this piece?

Then, make any adjustments and move to Step 5

If you need to add a summary, **then** ask yourself:

- ◯ Do I need to set myself up as an expert on the topic?
- ◯ Are there studies or resources that set the stage for what I'm writing about?

If you checked one or both boxes, **then** find at least one place that you can add a summary and move to Step 5