Develop Your Topic

If a topic is *not* assigned, identify a subject that interests you.
Refer to your text book, a lecture, a hobby you have that relates to the subject, something that you are curious about.

**Set your topic**
State your thesis, theme, or objective in a sentence or two at most:

If the topic is assigned, or when you have identified your subject:

- **Note key ideas or words you think will be important.**
  Use only short phrases or individual words at this point
  Construct a map using these words and phrases
  Refer to our Guide on [concept mapping](#) on how to create one

- **Identify what you want to do** with the concepts!
  Refer to our list of [terms for essays](#)
  Pick a likely verb (or two) and write out the definition to keep before you.
  Are you to develop a persuasive or expository essay, or a position paper?
  What has the teacher assigned?

- **List out what sources you will need** to find information for your essay:
  Start small: what does an encyclopedia say about it?
  Is there a reference librarian who can help you find sources, both for an overview and for detailed research?
  Is a search engine enough? Or too boring?
  Think big: are there experts you can talk to? an organization?

- **Analyze your topic so far**
  Is it too vague or broad, or too narrow?
  Is it interesting enough? Is there a controversy to explore, or do you think you can help others understand a problem? Will you provide information from two points of view, or only one while anticipating questions and arguments?

- **Summarize your topic** and present it to your teacher for feedback.
  Bring these first few steps with you in case the teacher will want to help you refine or restate your topic

- **Write out your opinion on, or approach to, the topic**
  Remember: you are writing an essay as a learning experience and you may find information that is against your position. You will need to resolve this.

- **Keep an open or critical mind** as you research:
  You may only see your side and not be objective.
Your position could be prejudicial to, or otherwise affect, your investigation

Reference: www.studygs.net