**Developing a topic**  
  
**Seven stages of writing assignments**  
  
**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   
**Identify what you want to do** with the concepts!  
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
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**Study Tips from Mr. Medina**

* + **Read Aloud with Your Child:**Research shows that reading aloud is the  
    single most valuable gift parents can give in  
    helping children learn to read and comprehend.  
    Why do it? You develop listening skills, stretch attention spans, expose children to good  
    grammar, building vocabulary, and build a  
    bonding experience with your child. The rules are easy:
    - • Take the time
    - • Make it special
    - • Examine Illustrations
    - • Discuss the story
    - • Show you value reading
    - • Join a public library
    - • Make sure your child sees you read
    - • Relax and have fun!
    - • Read, Read, Read