



Unleash The Power of Brainstorming Improve Your CELPIP Writing Score

Why People Skip Brainstorming?

One of the most common reasons why people skip brainstorming and immediately jump into writing is because they fear that it is a waste of time.

But is that fear really true?

Consider this quote from Dr. Randi Reppen, a professor of Applied Linguistics and TESL at Northern Arizona University:

“Brainstorming provides time to generate ideas related to the writing task. It allows us to jot down ideas and vocabulary related to the topic. In cognitive terms, it activates our prior knowledge.”





Ideas to think about:

Brainstorming offers you the gift of time! It doesn't steal it from you.

Brainstorming will help you turn on, activate, what you already know about the situation the exam is asking you about. Chances are, you've already experienced the situation the CELPIP exam is asking you about, or you know something about it.

Additional Benefits of Brainstorming:

- A. **It will help you come up with what to write** about before you start writing.
- B. **It will help you identify important topic sentences** and supporting arguments which will help you create your paragraphs.
- C. **It will help you achieve your word count goal.** Taking 2-3 minutes to brainstorm before you start writing will make a huge difference in this area because, well, see point A! You'll have a pool of ideas to draw from as you write.
- D. **Brainstorming will help you get organized** so your ideas aren't all over the place.
- E. **Brainstorming will help you relax** because it will give you a map of where you'll be going with your writing. Having ideas down on paper BEFORE you start writing your answer will help you to see which ideas should go first, second, third etc.

How to Brainstorm: Quick Tips

Set limits - no more than 2 - 3 minutes.

Use Point Form: Don't write in full sentences. Only write enough for you to remember what you're talking about.

Brainstorm the details of the question. Use the details of the question to show you what to brainstorm about.

Think about what it would feel like if the situation were happening to you.

*Imagining that the situation being presented in the exam for you to respond to is happening to you will improve your ability to answer the question well.

Good news: on the CELPIP exam, brainstorming not for creative purposes, but to access your own experiences and knowledge.

*"[Test takers] are often under the impression that their responses need to be original and creative, and they feel that they don't have a good enough imagination to come up with ideas. In fact, **creativity is not a factor included in the Writing or Speaking performance standards.***

While test takers are welcome to be creative in their CELPIP responses (provided that they stay on topic and keep the tone appropriate), raters don't assess entertainment value. What they do evaluate—in the Content/Coherence dimension—is the depth, clarity, and flow of the ideas. A strong response has a clear purpose and presents identifiable main ideas supported with meaningful, precise details. Brainstorming practice can help learners maximize their ability to produce such content—not through imagination or invention, but by accessing their knowledge and experience." -Neil Gray.





Thank you for listening to the podcast!