

**Brainstorming**

Definition via Mirriam Webster: **a group problem-solving technique** that involves the spontaneous contribution of ideas from all members of the group

Keys to productive brainstorming:

* Quantity over quality. This is a giant brain dump. Items may be analyzed afterward.
  + Emphasize unfiltered ideas, participants may self-filter because they don’t feel their ideas are “good enough”
  + Pay attention to the introverts. They need quiet thinking time. Don’t start by shouting out ideas.
  + Conversations are often dominated by only a few people. Find ways to include everyone’s voices.
* **Free Writing**: write down ideas during some sustained quiet time
  + What are some alternative uses for a paperclip?
* **Figure Storming**: How might others perceive this issue? Write from their point of view. What would Mr. Rogers do?
  + How would your mother describe your job, in one sentence, to someone she just met?
* **Round Robin style**: form a circle and go around, contributing one idea or topic each.
  + How do you maintain a healthy work/life balance?
* **Star Bursting**: Instead of coming up with answers, come up with as many questions as you can
  + I need to narrow down my research topic about cats.

To prime a group for creative and productive brainstorming (depending on levels of comfort and trust) try asking each person to describe a time they were embarrassed.

<https://www.wrike.com/blog/techniques-effective-brainstorming/>

<https://hbr.org/2017/10/research-for-better-brainstorming-tell-an-embarrassing-story>

Tips for when things slow down:

* stay focused on the task at hand
* don’t just say an idea, explain it
* when ideas run dry, restate the problem and encourage more thinking
* prompt those not talking to contribute