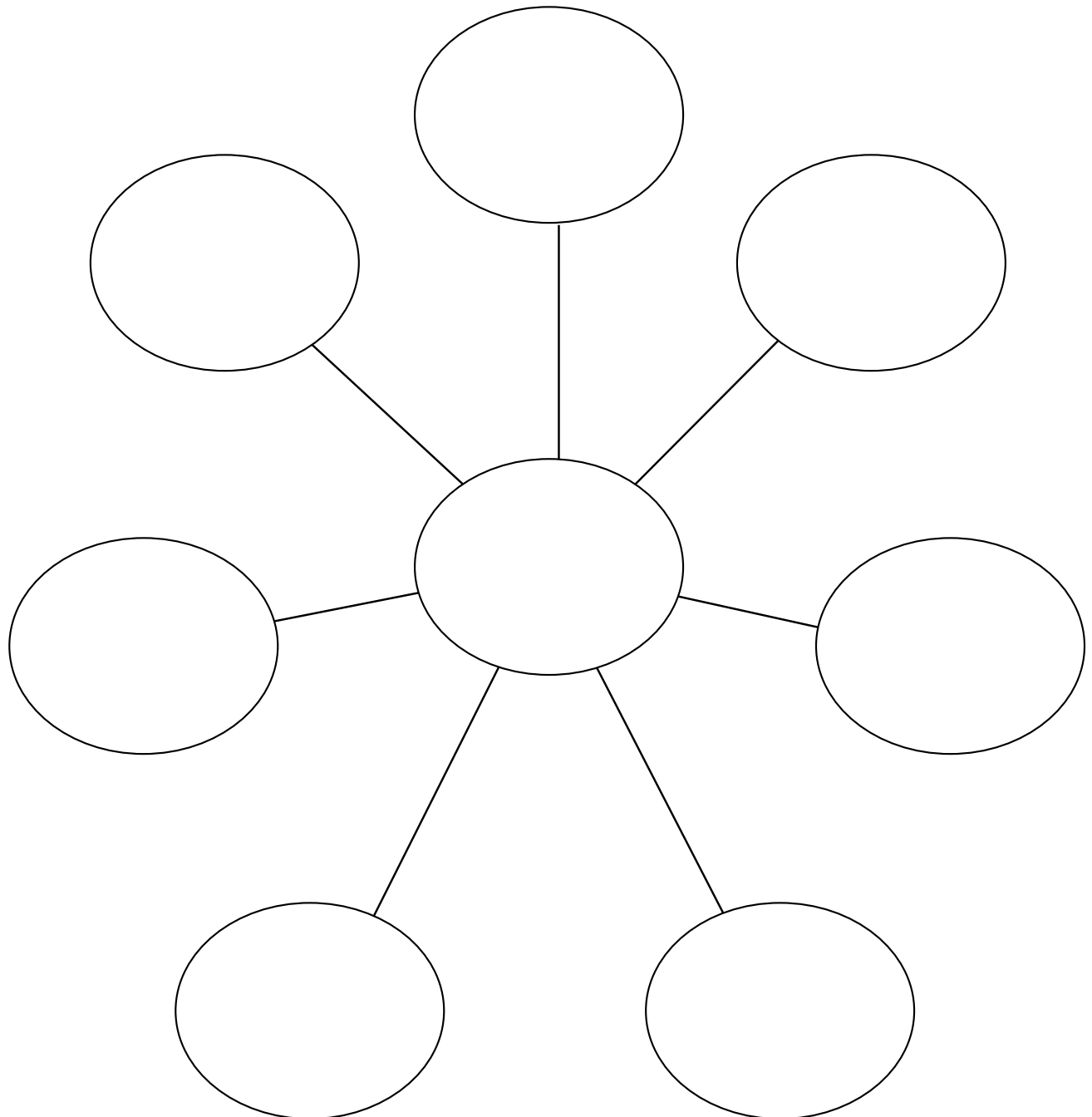
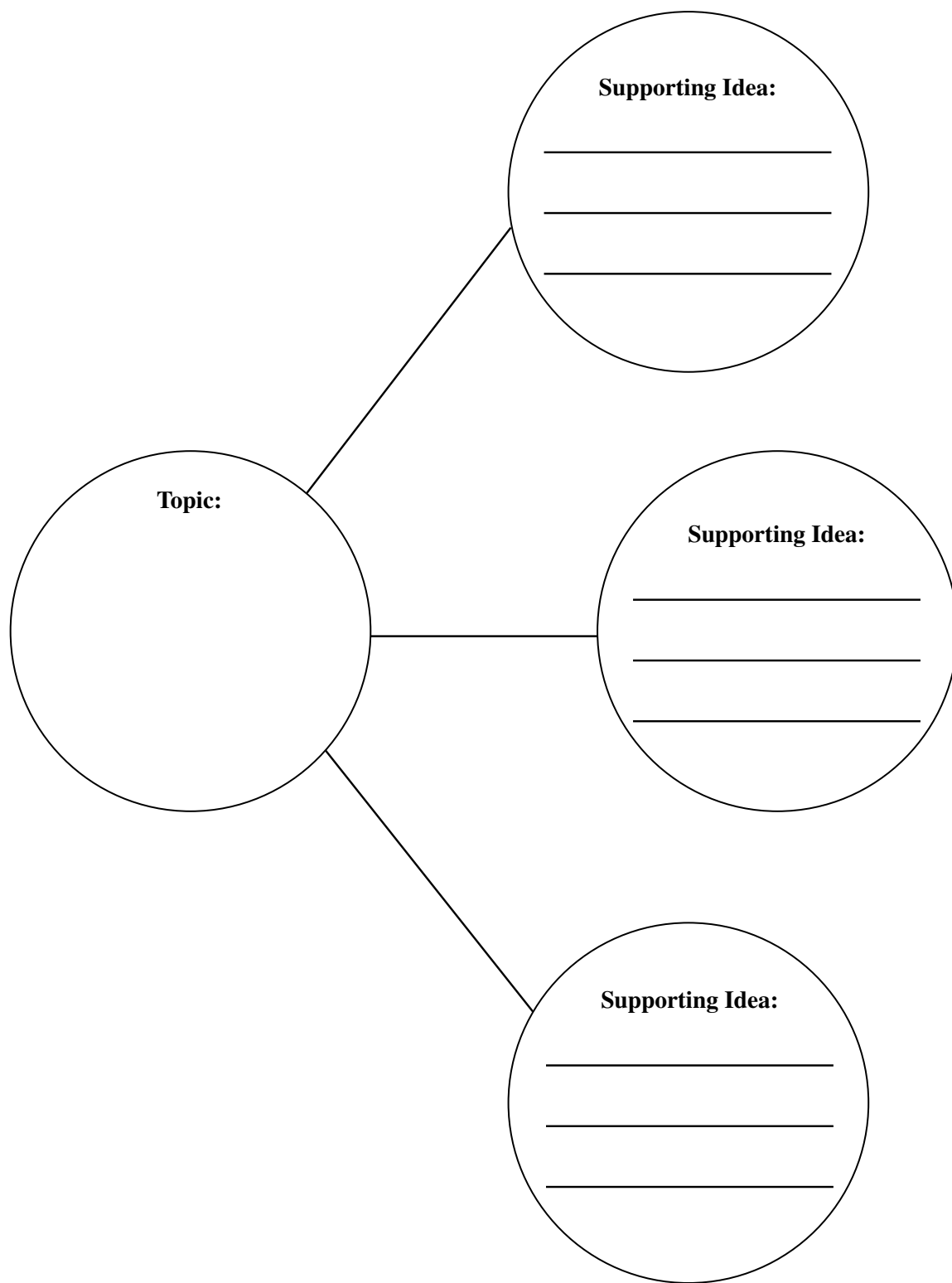


Graphic Organizer: Cluster Web

Use this web to organize the information you gather on a specific topic or issue. In the oval in the middle, write the key concept or idea. In the other ovals surrounding the middle oval, record notes and information you gather on this topic. Be sure to group similar notes and ideas together in one oval. Each oval represents a different topic or idea that ties back to the key concept.



Graphic Organizer: Paragraph Outline



How to Write an Essay

Writing an essay can seem overwhelming, but it is actually easier than you think. Follow these steps to ensure essay writing success.

Step 1

Read the writing prompt carefully. Figure out what the question is asking you to do. Are you comparing or contrasting, explaining, describing, or analyzing? Before you begin, be sure you understand exactly what your assignment is.

Step 2

Brainstorm and write all of your ideas. Think of a graphic organizer that can help you organize your thoughts. Think of the main idea of the topic and try to come up with at least three reasons to support your position.

Step 3

Write your thesis statement. This should be the main idea of the whole essay. Be sure that you have enough evidence and support for your thesis statement. It should be a restatement of the question and include the three categories of support that you have determined.

Step 4

Write the introduction. Your introduction will set the tone for the rest of the essay. You may even choose to begin your essay with a question. A question can catch the reader's attention and reel him or her in.

Step 5

Write at least three supporting paragraphs to support your thesis statement. Your topic sentence in each paragraph will address each supporting reason. The remaining sentences contain facts that support that topic sentence.

Step 6

Write a conclusion. The conclusion must restate the thesis. The conclusion needs to wrap up all of the loose ends of the essay. The conclusion will also make connections to the future and the relevance of the issue in society.

Sample Essay #2

Quotation:

“There is nothing deep down inside us except what we have put there ourselves.”

—Richard Rorty

Question:

How much influence do our parents have on us? How much of who you are is a result of who your parents are? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your thoughts on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples from reading, personal experience, and observations.

It Comes From Within

There will be many times when you wonder how you got to be who you are. How much of it is your doing and how much belongs to others? Much of who we are comes from within.

Parents play a pivotal role in our lives. They provide food, shelter, clothing, and other basic needs. We are indeed indebted to them for our foundation. But what is built upon that foundation lies solely in our own hands. We choose whether or not to accept the great things in our lives and work hard to add more.

We each have a choice to improve or accept what we have been given. Those of us who missed out on loving parents still have teachers, religious leaders, and friends to support us. We can choose to be angry with what we missed or we can let it go and make life better. We have a responsibility for what happens in our lives.

Many people who were given great opportunities have squandered them away as a result of laziness and self-indulgence. We cannot rely on others to make our lives what we want them to be. Self-reliance builds character, fortitude, and confidence.

So who are we? It depends on what choices we make. We must choose to accept the foundation provided, build upon it, and shoulder the responsibility to make life even better. Remember, we only get one chance at this.

Dangerous Sports

Dear Editor:

How many times do we have to read in the paper about another youth being injured or even killed in a sporting accident? Just last week, a report was published in *The Nation Weekly* showing a definite rise in sports-related injuries and accidents involving youth, ages 8–16. When will we face the facts that there are too many activities endorsed by communities and organizations that are not safe for children?

Sports such as football, hockey, rock-climbing, four-wheeling, and hunting should be reserved only for adults who are old enough to make their own decisions regarding their welfare. Many times these sports are played with little or no supervision. Participants are encouraged to be as aggressive as possible. Youngsters are also not provided with enough padding, helmets, and other safety equipment. The coaches and other adults coaching the games are living in a fantasy land thinking that no one will get hurt.

Let's be responsible and put the welfare of our children first!

Sincerely,

Margaret Hatcher



Question:

Do you believe there are sports that are just too dangerous for children to be involved in, and should thus be banned?



Directions:

Plan and write a persuasive essay in which you develop your point of view on this topic. To strengthen your position, consider alternative or opposing views. Be sure to support your position with reasoning and examples.

Global Warming

Dear Weatherperson:

We are having a problem here in Snow Haven. The weather has been nice and the sun is shining. So what's wrong with that? The problem is that it is not supposed to be this warm. We are still in the middle of winter. We should be hovering over a fireplace and not outside playing football. Despite the fact that our temperatures still fall below freezing in winter and there is still snow on the ground, it is just not like it used to be.

We have had the dogsled winter race each year here in Snow Haven, but this year there wasn't enough snow! We had to cancel the event. The average temperature in our state has increased by six degrees Fahrenheit over the last 25 years. The snow is melting earlier and earlier each year, and the ski resorts have to close sooner than they used to. As much as we complain about the snow, we need it. Can you change the weather forecast to some heavy duty storms? Bring back those dark, dreary days of winter.

Sincerely yours,
Steven

Question:

Do you believe global warming exists, or are all of the weather changes just part of constant changes in weather patterns?



Directions:

Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples. Be sure to support your position with clear and verifiable evidence.

Surfing the Web

Dear Principal Gates:

I have been attending Maverick Junior High for two years now. Our computer teacher treats us like small children. She doesn't allow us to do anything on the Internet without her being right there. Aren't we supposed to be learning about the Internet so that we can use it independently?

Mrs. Gaines is not going to be there every minute we are on the Internet. She is very strict. For example, every web page that we look at must be previewed by her first. She bookmarks each page prior to class. I don't think this teaches us how to research and use the Internet. She doesn't always have time to research for us after school, which puts us behind schedule when research reports are due. It really makes researching a topic tedious and difficult.

Help! I am feeling Internet challenged.

Sincerely yours,

Jennifer Beale



Question:

Do you think that students should be able to surf the Internet at school?



Directions:

Do the blocks on the Internet infringe on the rights of students? Why or why not? Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experiences, and observations. Be sure to support your viewpoint with valid reasons and conclusions.