

# Guidelines for Brainstorming Activities

## **Purpose:**

1. to activate students' prior knowledge about a topic.
2. to foster sharing and cooperative learning.
3. to provide material for further exploration.

## **Procedure:**

1. Students may work as a whole group, with the teacher recording responses on the chalk board or chart paper. Students may also work in small groups, with one member of the group serving as recorder.
2. Until students are accustomed to brainstorming activities, it is helpful to begin each session with some reminders about brainstorming. Students should be reminded that the goal is to generate as much information about the topic as quickly as possible, that they should simply share whatever "pops into their heads" about the topic, and that they should refrain from passing judgement on others' contributions.
3. The brainstorming session can be initiated with a comment like, "What pops into your head when you think about (the topic)?" or "What does (the topic) make you think about?" or "What do you know about (the topic)?"
4. The teacher or student recorder should record others' responses verbatim and as quickly as possible. As with others in the group, the teacher or student recorder should not make judgements about individual contributions.
5. Brainstorming contributions ordinarily come in "waves." A flurry of contributions is typically followed by a lull, with another flurry a minute or so later. The teacher or student recorder should simply wait during the first lull, knowing that group members are thinking and that additional contributions will be forthcoming.