



ABCs of Prior Knowledge

Task: Race against the clock to quickly jot down what you already know about the important people, places, terms, and events surrounding your topic.

Instructions:

1. Jot your topic at the top of your page.
2. Set a timer for 7 minutes.
3. As quickly as you're able (to outrun your inner critic), jot down people, places, important terms, and events that relate to your topic, using the alphabet as your guide. You may have more than one word per letter if you'd like. (Don't stress! Do your best!)

TOPIC: _____

A

N

B

O

C

P

D

Q

E

R

F

S

G

T

H

U

I

V

J

W

K

X

L

Y

M

Z



4. After you've done some alphabet brainstorming, do the following:
- If you have gaps in your alphabet, do a quick web search. Can you find key people, places, terms, or events that relate to your topic and begin with that letter? Fill in the gaps as you are able.
 - Go through and code the things you've written down.
 - Use a ★ to indicate something you feel confidently about and know accurately.
 - Use a ? to indicate something you're a bit fuzzy on and would like to look up.
 - Use a ✓ to indicate something that feels super-relevant to your argument, so it's a must-include piece of context.
 - Cluster items together to see bigger ideas.
 - Are there items that naturally go together or form larger groups or clusters? Write these larger groups / topics here: