# Prewriting & Brainstorming

First, it is important to figure out what you know about a topic. Since many ideas come to mind when you begin to think about a topic, take time to write them down. First thoughts are easily forgotten if they are not committed to paper. You can do this with a prewriting technique such as **brainstorming, clustering, mapping,** or **listing**. You can use <u>graphic organizers</u> like **charts, story maps, diagrams,** or **a cluster**. (For an example of what a cluster looks like, see the following page.)

Some students begin by writing the essay topic on a piece of paper, but if you are unsure of what to say about this topic, think back on what you have read, discussed, and written in your class discussions. One method for doing this is going back through your notebook to see what notes or journal entries you've taken, and underlining or highlighting the terms, themes or ideas that are most closely related to what the professor has written on the essay assignment sheet.

Once you have gathered all of the above-mentioned materials, you can revisit the assignment sheet and write down what you see as the broadest and most relevant terms that capture the focus of your course thus far. For example, if your course theme is on work and labor, you might ask yourself: What about work and labor does this assignment ask me to examine?

Let's imagine that the assignment revolves around deciding if we believe that young people should choose between careers that they're passionate about and careers that make money but involve very little passion. At this point, you might write the terms "work" and "passion" in your notebook, circling both terms and drawing lines that go off in different directions. Each of these lines should have a circle attached to it, and these circles should eventually contain more specific information. Below, please find an example:

Continue on next page
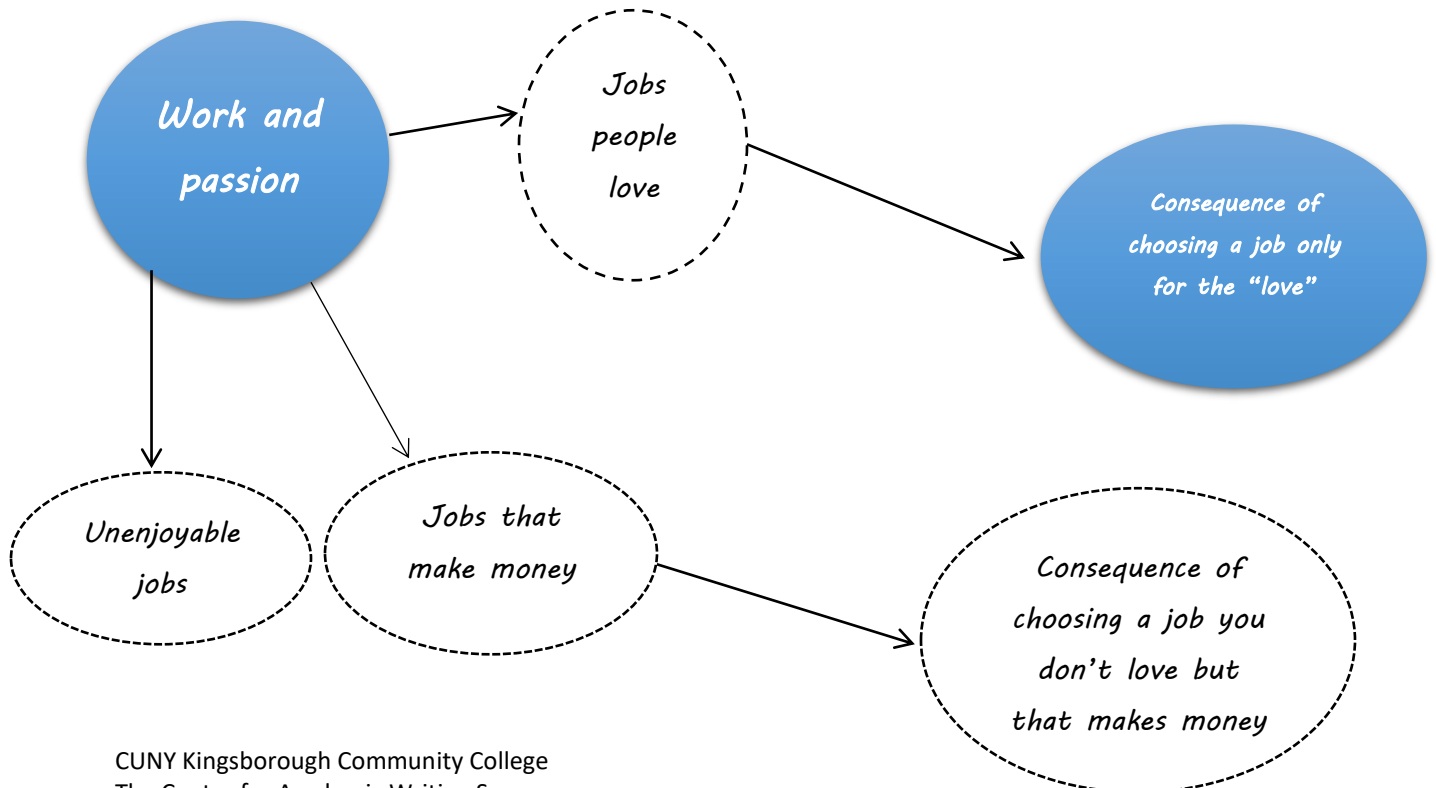
AFTER HAVING CONSIDERED THE ABOVE, YOU ARE NOW READY TO FORM AN OPINION ABOUT THE TOPIC THAT CAN SERVE AS THE BASIS OF YOUR THESIS. If your opinion is that young people should search for jobs that make money instead of looking for jobs that are both enjoyable and lucrative, it will be a good idea to generate examples of each type of job. If you find the above brainstorming cluster useful, you might want to use a similar process to generate examples so that your readers understand your claims. Below, you will find an example of what is called a **_Venn diagram_** containing the three main categories from the above brainstorming cluster:

Jobs people love

Unenjoyable Jobs

Jobs that make money
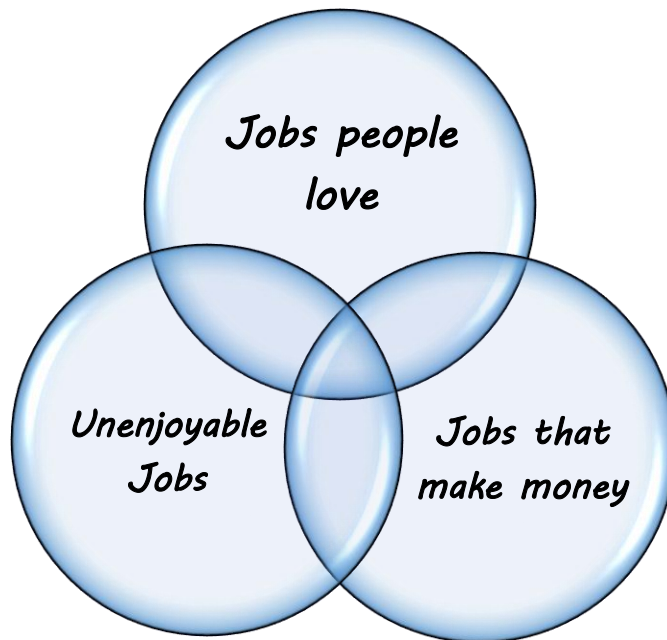
With each example you generate, you may want to see where it falls in the above diagram. For example, a job as a business owner of a fashion company might be a job that is both loveable and that makes money. If you think this job is one that fits both criteria, you might write "*CEO of a fashion company*" in the overlapping region between "*Jobs that make money*" and "*Jobs people love.*" Then you might need to decide how realistic it is for young people to strive for this goal.

The point is to generate a list of examples of jobs, and to then determine where they fall in the above diagram. Following this, you might use these jobs as examples that help you support your answer to the question outlined on page one about whether you believe young people should choose jobs based on their potential to generate income or based on their potential to satisfy a person's passions.

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