Probe Organizer

A graphic organizer used to synthesize multiple sources
Write your thesis in a central circle

• Break your thesis into several sub-topics
• Draw a line for each of your sub-topics
• Write a single sub-topic on each line
• In a location next to, beneath or connected by a line to the sub-topic line, write facts, details, quotations, etc. that can help you address the sub-topic
• Code each of your details with a number, color, or symbol to represent the source of your information
• Create a list of sources at the bottom or on the back of your organizer, or on a separate sheet. Make sure your codes match!

Breaking up your thesis into sub-topics

• Your thesis is a “road map” for an essay. Where is your thesis road map taking the reader?
• Examples:
  • Andrew Jackson was justified in leading Indian removal from southeastern United States because expansion of the U.S. was inevitable, and this approach was best for all concerned, including the native people.
  • The removal of the Cherokees was unjustified because they were not required to abide by a treaty that was negotiated by a team that did not have the authority to speak for their tribe.
The removal of the Cherokees and other native people of the southeastern United States was undertaken almost solely for the purpose of enriching the white settlers of those lands, making the Indian removal simply a government-sponsored robbery of private property.

SAMPLE – USING A THESIS FROM THE JACKSON FILES LESSON 1

A. Statistic about Cherokee removal.
B. Statement about where the Cherokees started and where they ended up.
C. Statistic about how many Cherokees began the Trail of Tears and how many were left at the end.
D. Example of another Indian Removal, like the Seminoles in Florida.
Keep track of your sources. Use the same number, symbol or color on your organizer.

A) MLA citation for source A.
B) MLA citation for source B.
C) MLA citation for source C.

Be sure to put these citations with the codes you gave each source on the probe organizer (front or back) or on a separate piece of paper attached to the organizer.