

RE-VIEW  
**Video: The Plastic Plight**  
*The Writing Process*  
*(prewriting)*

Nate had some ideas to write about, and through a series of starts and stops, he eventually came up with and hatched a plan. He utilized brainstorming, webbing, talking with Turner, scratching notes and drawing in his writers' notebook. But the unstructured process he went through was necessary so he could find and focus on something important to him.

Now it's **Your Turn**: Look at Nate's notebook to see how he processed his thinking. Pay special attention to the list Nate started and the web it evolved into to see how this process worked for him, then create a list and web for yourself.



#### Nate's Think Aloud – Creating His List:

**Nate's Think Aloud:** "While walking across campus, I considered that the glut of plastic water bottles was just a trash-collection problem. I felt the need to encourage recycling. So, in order to capture some of my thoughts, I reached for my writers' notebook.

I began just scribbling ideas about all the ways I see plastic being overused. Bottles are everywhere; people are wasteful; they don't recycle--all contribute to global warming. We need to do something right away. I thought about encouraging people to "go green."

After getting down my initial list, I was ready to go deeper."

#### My initial list:

- *Bottles, Bottles, & More Bottles*
- *Overuse of Plastics*
- *Recycle*
- *Global Warming*
- *Meet with Staff Sgt. Van Ginkel*
- *Go Green!*
- *Campaign to Recycle*

Now it's your turn to make a list of memorable moments on the template below. Ideas could be moments you've experienced or topics you're passionate about – the sky's the limit. However, if you're having trouble getting started, consider these ideas:

- Think about ways you like to spend your free time.
- Describe a person you admire and consider some of the traits he or she possesses.
- Ponder a special event in your life. Capture the moment.

My initial list of experiences or topics to explore further include.....

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



#### Nate's Think Aloud – Creating His Expanded List

**Nate's Think Aloud:** "In an attempt to organize my notes, I looked at my initial brainstorming list and added to the ways I saw plastic being overused. I considered adding possible topics, even though I wasn't sure which one I would use. I knew I had to narrow my scope, but I wasn't ready to do that yet. I didn't have a preference for a topic. I scribbled down plastic shopping bags and packing materials. Then I added diapers and plastic water bottles, plastic plates, cups, and silverware. It seems like plastic is everywhere! Two phrases from my initial brainstorming list kept swishing around in my head: "Recycle!" and "Global Warming!"

I decided the overuse of plastic water bottles should be my focus. So I checked out some Internet sites to find reliable facts. I discovered that 1,500 bottles are used every second. Plastic can leak toxins into our environment and toxins equal poison! Fifty billion bottles are bought per year and 17 million barrels of oil are used to make these bottles. I found out that 80% of all bottles end up in landfills. And plastic isn't biodegradable – talk about a global crisis!

My list and some occasional doodles continued to develop. I remembered and scribbled down Staff Sergeant Van Ginkel's name. Then I even hatched a plan of action to have our battalion engage in a yearlong campaign of recycling. When I talk to Van Ginkel, I'll suggest that starting slow might be a good way for the campaign to begin. We can collect and recycle soda cans and give the money to charities. We can stop using Styrofoam cups. I'll even suggest that forming a committee to spearhead the new campaign might be a good idea. Finally, I'll recommend a contest to encourage recycling on a grand scale. We could reward the finalist who collects the greatest amount of recycling with some sort of award ~ as long as it's not plastic!

Creating and capturing my brainstormed ideas in writing helped me during prewriting because now I have something I can work with."

*My expanded list:*

*OVERUSE OF PLASTICS:*

- ❖ *Shopping Bags*
- ❖ *Packaging*
- ❖ *Disposable diapers*
- ❖ *Plates, Cups & Silverware*
- ❖ *Water Bottles*
  - *1500 bottles used per second*
  - *Plastic leaks toxins*
  - *50,000,000,000 bottles bought per year*
  - *80% of bottles end up in landfills*
  - *17,000,000 barrels of oil used per year to make bottles*



#### Now It's Your Turn:

You have written your list of several topics. It's time to choose one to explore further on the blank template. Stretch your thinking about the incident, experience, or topic you selected.

Let your ideas and memories percolate and brew. That way they'll become richer and more aromatic. Just let your mind go to include memories, ideas, details, and emotions. Add them to your expanded list.

Reflect on the list you've created to make sure you've captured your ideas accurately. Is there anything you need to add or modify? Remember, Nate spent time working and reworking his list so that it made sense to him. Often it helps to walk away from something you've started and revisit it later to see where holes or gaps might exist. When you think you're finished, share your list with a trusted friend and prepare to tell your story

My expanded list

Topic \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_



#### Nate's Think Aloud – Creating His Web:

**Nate's Think Aloud:** “After creating my list of brainstormed ideas, the next logical step was to take those thoughts and create a web. Because my initial ideas revolved around recycling, I made “Going Green” my central idea, created a large circle, and wrote it in the center. From that point, I came up with six subcategories which included environment, global warming, landfill space, recycling, pollution, and overuse of plastics.

I began my work on the second layer. Creating a web is more detailed than just making an expanded list. Deeper processing took place in this second layer where I included reliable statistics and facts. I was still trying to search for a topic to land on. Writing about all of these environmental issues would make my writing too broad.

Thinking about the environment, my first thought involved the ecological footprint. I added that as a branch from environment. That led to renewable energy, composting, and finally conservation. These topics seemed logically connected.

The next subcategory was global warming. I came up with two branches because sea levels rise and extreme weather occurs.

A third subcategory was lack of landfill space. Again two branches came to mind: polluted environment and methane offgassing.

My fourth subcategory was recycling. It was the first topic I considered when I saw all the plastic water bottles, so this branch was easy to create. I included providing employment opportunities, saving trees, saving money and energy, and reducing air pollution.

The fifth subcategory was pollution. I added environment and then human health.

The final subcategory was the overuse of plastics. Again, I found myself thinking about all the plastic water bottles and all the other uses of plastic that plug the landfills. I added branches that included shopping bags, packaging, disposable diapers, plates, cups and silverware, and plastic water bottles. That took me to all the details I found when I did the Internet search, so water bottle-overuse took on a life of its own. From that branch, I researched, found, and added five more specific details which included: 1,500 bottles used per second; plastics leak toxins; 50,000,000,000 plastic water bottles are bought annually; 80% of all bottles end up in landfills; and 17,000,000 barrels of oil are used per year to make the bottles.

My web seemed complete. During my initial research, I surfed the Internet and found more details about water bottles. It looks like that will be my focus as I continue writing, since I have so many details. I'm energized and ready to turn my web into paragraphs.



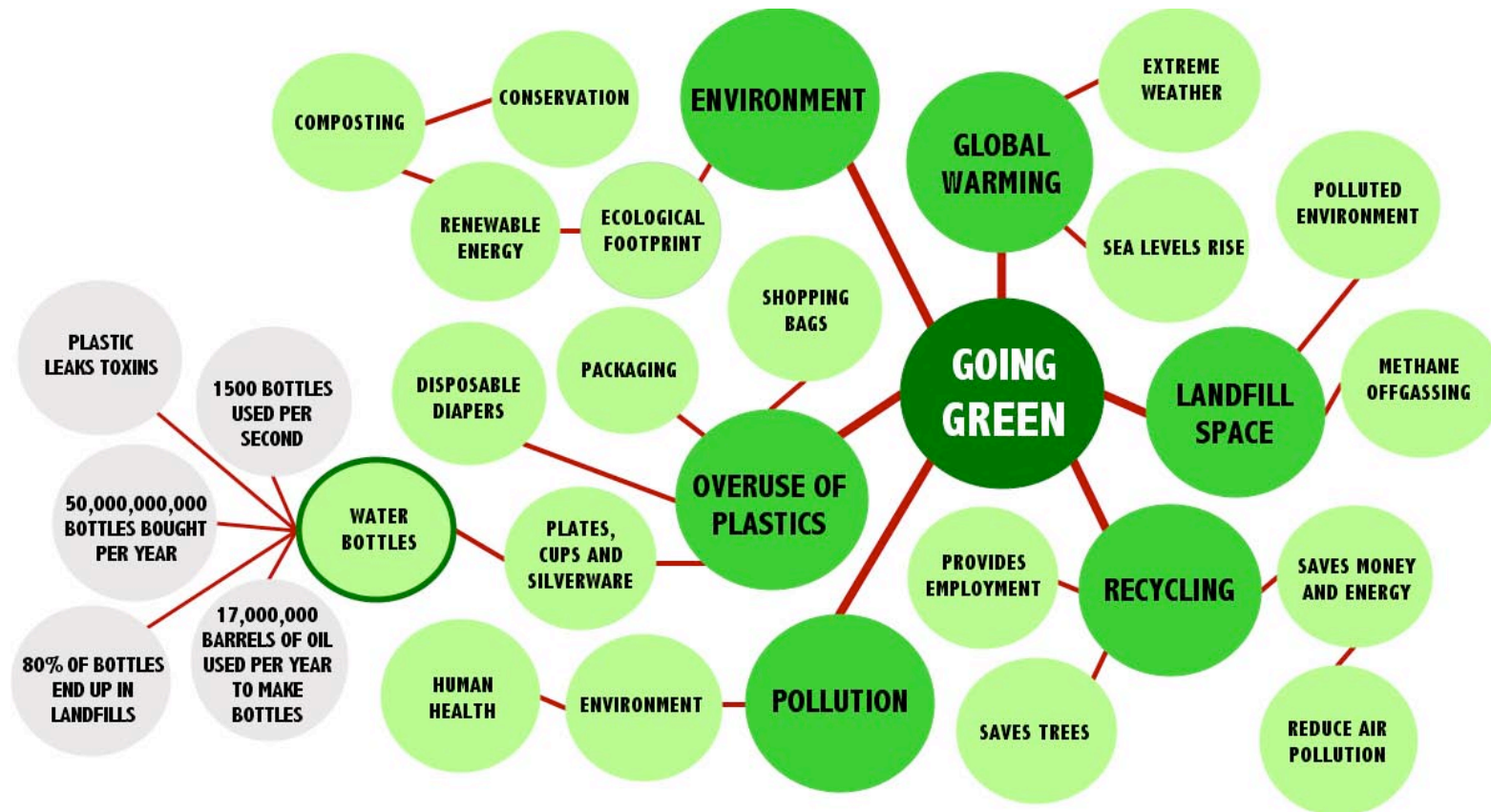


#### Check Out Nate's Web:

**Nate's Web:** "After creating my list of brainstormed ideas, the next logical step was to take those thoughts and create a web."

#### Questions To Think and Talk About:

- Why does Nate use his notebook to capture his ideas?
- In what way is the notebook helpful to Nate as he narrowed down his topic?
- How did Nate organize his ideas?
- When might you use the same process?





**Create Your Own Web:**

Take your thoughts and create your own web.