# Clustering

Clustering is an **associative writing method** that can be traced back to Gabriele L. Rico. The basic idea is that both hemispheres of the brain are activated to form the basis for holistic thinking and well-rounded texts. It looks similar to a mindmap but is less structured. You develop a **spontaneous network of ideas**.

The starting point of your cluster is a **core word** which you write down in the centre of your sheet of paper (at least A4 to give you enough space). Circle the word and form chains of association from it: Write down the first word that comes to mind next to the first one, circle it and connect the two circles with a line. Continue with the new word and so on until you can't think of anything else. Then go back to the centre and start again.

## This is what it looks like:
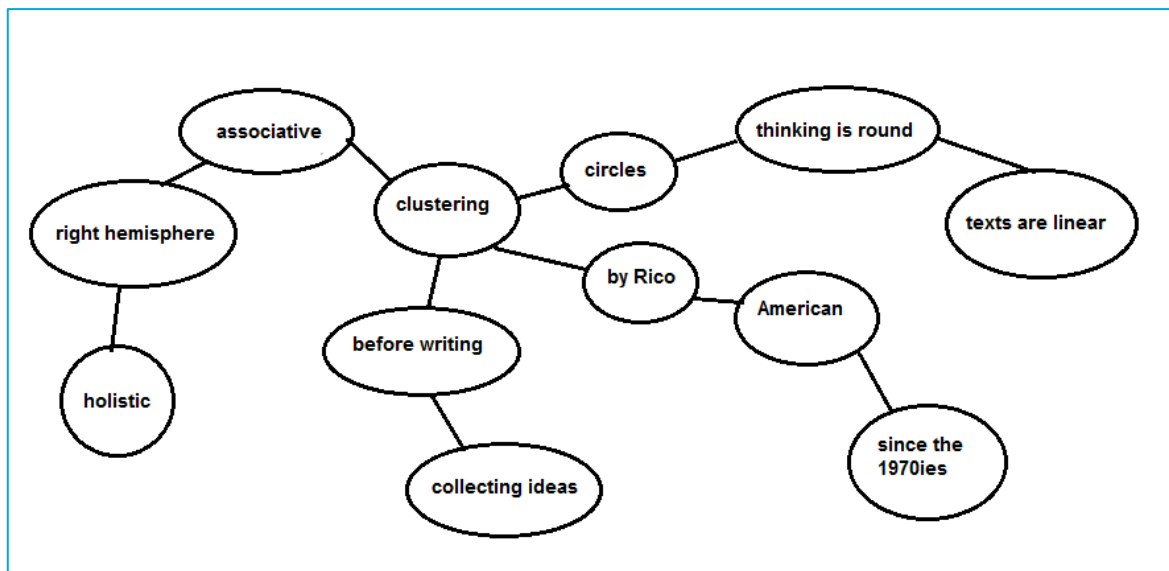


The circles and lines serve to keep your writing hand in motion. This helps you form free associations and prevents you from judging your ideas.

**Please note:** You are not supposed to structure, evaluate or order things when you cluster. There are no hierarchies and no wrong ideas. Every association is written down right where you have it. Let your ideas, your imagination and your creativity run wild. There may also be additional links or junctions in your cluster.

Clustering ends when the sheet is full or – as Rico intended – when you feel an urge to write. Then you should write your text quickly and fluently. The individual terms you used in the cluster do not have to appear in the text.

If during your clustering you notice that there is another central term, you can use this one to form a new cluster. Another possibility are opposite clusters in which you work with two central terms at the same time.