

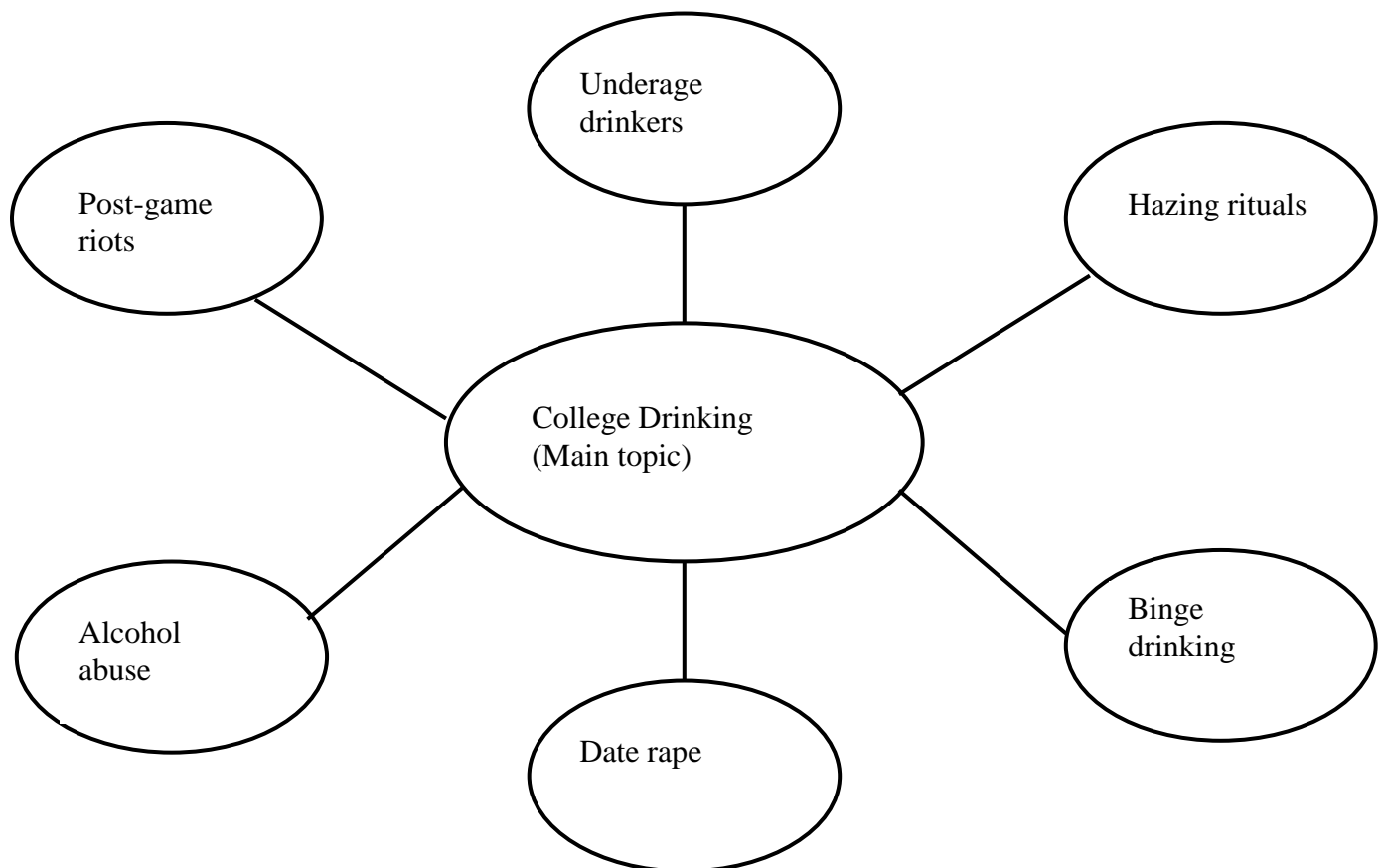
Thesis Statements and Concept Maps

Concept maps are one way of developing your thinking on a topic. They are not the only way to do this but they have the advantage of being both visual and verbal, and of encouraging you to link together related thoughts and ideas. They can be a good way to get started by getting some thoughts down on paper very quickly.

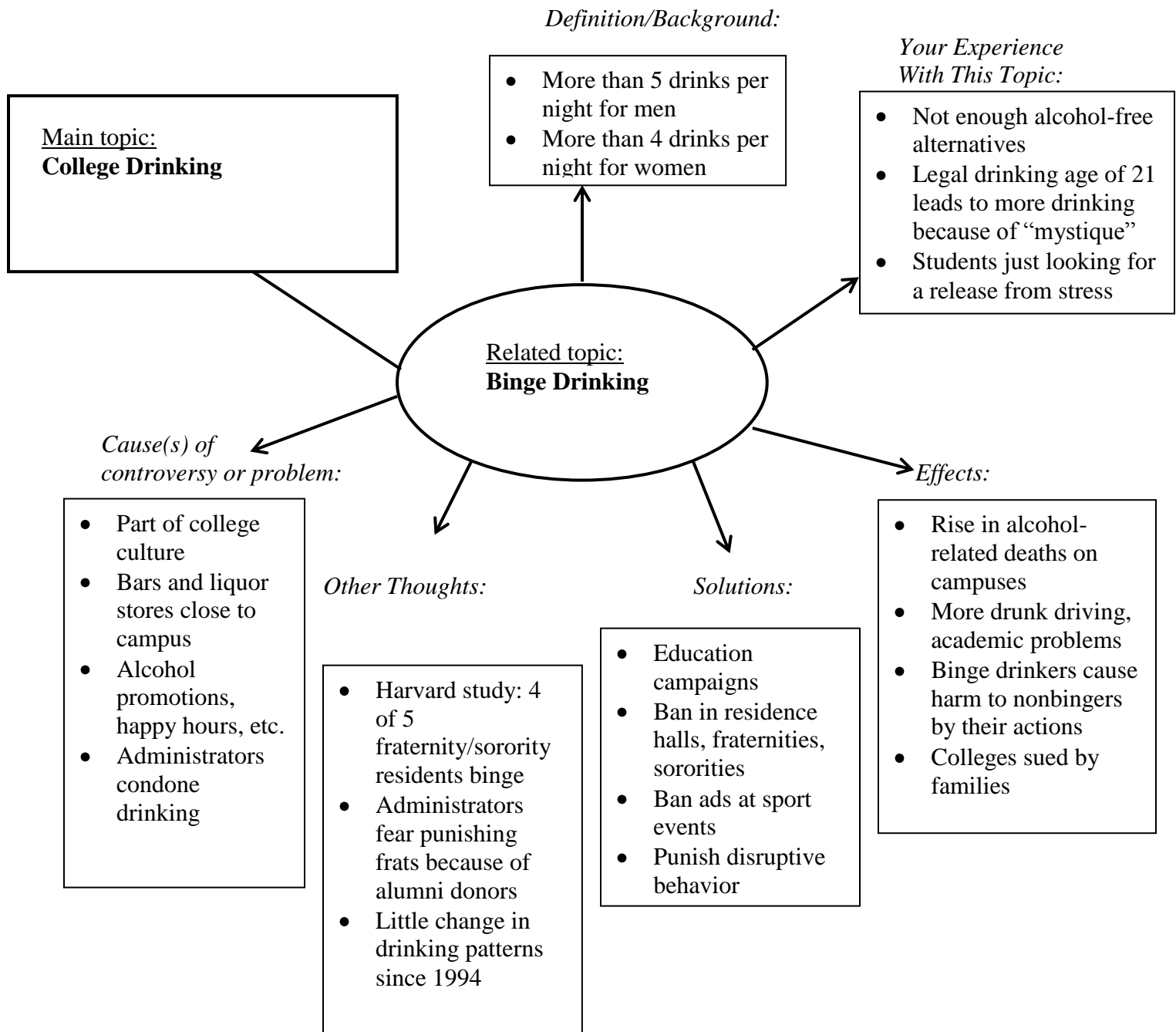
Identifying your main focus

Starting with a general topic, write the topic or theme in the center of the diagram (below, see the topic “College Drinking”.)

Next think of as many related ideas as possible. You may need to read a small amount of background information to be able to complete this section. This is an open-ended, free-wheeling part of the exercise, so try not to judge your results or rule ideas out. Just get them all down (you’ll sift through them later.)



Using one of the related topics used in the concept map on page 1, we'll use this second concept map to fill in detail and to think in-depth about the related topic. Including a *definition* of your topic is crucial. Note that keeping the main topic you started with connected to your related topic reminds you to keep the topic you are developing related in some way to the starting point.



Source: Faigley, Lester. *Good Reasons: Designing and Writing Effective Arguments*. 2nd Ed. New York: Longman, 2003. ON RESERVE under INFS 1000.