

Spring/Summer 2014

The Collins Writing Exchange

Ideas, Tips, and Resources on Writing
from
Collins Education Associates

The Power of the Ten Percent Summary

Using Writing to Develop Close-Reading Skills

Asking students to write brief summaries of challenging articles from different disciplines, such as science, literature, and mathematics, may not be the perfect assignment, but it comes very close. Dr. John Collins has been urging schools for several years now to use the Ten Percent Summary as a way of meeting the Common Core's cross-curricular literacy expectation.

To learn more about this unique, powerful approach to reading and writing across the curriculum, read Dr. Collins's article, "[Summarize to Get the Gist](#)," which appeared in Educational Leadership's *EL Online*.

Worth Noting

More Research on the Power of Type Two Writing

What are the most effective strategies for learning new material?

That was the question John Dunlosky and his colleagues explored on in their recent *American Educator* article, "[Strengthening the Student Toolbox](#)." Dunlosky identifies 10 learning strategies that "promote efficient studying to support robust learning." He points to self-testing, or taking practice tests on material being learned, as the most effective learning strategy, regardless of the subject matter or age of the learner. Students benefit the most, he reports, when generating answers (writing a short response) rather than choosing answers (taking a multiple-choice quiz).

Teachers using Collins's Type Two Writing on a regular basis consistently echo these findings. Frequent quizzing with Type Two Writing promotes learning, they report.

Type 2: Respond Correctly

Type Two writing shows that the writer knows something about a topic or has thought about the topic. It is a correct answer to a specific question, graded as a quiz. *One draft.*

Classroom Tips That Work

Support Your Students' Self- and Peer-Editing Efforts

All teachers strive to make their students more independent when it comes to refining first drafts. The key, writes Collins Associate and author Gary Chadwell, is structure and support for self-editing and peer-editing that gives students the "tools to be more self-reliant in their writing." Read [Chadwell's blog](#), "How Can I Address the Self-Editing and Peer-Editing Void in the Classroom?" to learn about four strategies to help your students.



Featured Writing Assignment

A Letter to Next Year's Teacher

This is one of our favorite assignments for all grades. It is perfect for spring as it requires students to do reflective, evidence-based writing about the work and progress they've made during the current school year. In the assignment, students are asked to review their own work products, make generalizations, and support them with evidence. It is a terrific year-end Type Three, Type Four, or even Type Five task.

A Letter to Next Year's Teacher About Your Own Writing

Telling a Teacher About Your Writing Ability

Project Summary: Good writers write often. They also think about their writing abilities. They think about what they do well, what they would like to do better, and what they like to write about. In this project, you will write a letter to the teacher you are going to have next year. You will explain to the teacher what you think you do well as a writer. You may also tell what you think you are

For detailed instructions on the assignment including graphic organizers, click on the following links for a complete Collins Seven Element Assignment guide.

[Primary](#) [Upper Elementary](#) [Middle School](#) [High School](#)

Convention Wisdom

A Tip for Using Quotation Marks Correctly

For writers of all ages, using quotation marks properly can be tricky. Getting the quotation marks around the spoken dialogue, the quote, or the source is easy enough. But where does the punctuation mark go? Inside the quotation mark? Outside?

Check Mate, the Collins Writing student resource for essential conventions, has a helpful hint. Just remember the "P Before Q" rule, punctuation comes before the quotation mark. View the [Check Mate hint](#) for rules and examples.

Quick Links

Share a Writing Related Link and You May Win!

Download these PDF files, and introduce new lessons to your students:

- [#1: Seven Element Assignment Template](#)
- [#2: Math Preview Game](#)

Have a link you'd like to share in the next edition of *The Collins Writing Exchange*? Email it to us and we'll consider it for inclusion here. Anyone who submits a link (whether we use it or not) is eligible to win this month's raffle prize, a free [Essential Conventions Check Mate Poster](#).



Upcoming Events

Summer Courses, Institutes, and Workshops

Summer is almost here! While it's time for fun and a break from the classroom, it's also a great time to learn new skills. Make next year even better and, in some cases, earn graduate credit!

Check out our professional development [schedule](#) for our full list of summer and fall workshops near you.

About Our Newsletter

Helpful Resources for Busy Educators

Thanks for taking a look at our newsletter, designed for the Collins Writing Program user community. Our goal is to provide readers with brief and useful information as all of us are looking for ways to make writing instruction more effective. We have a lot of ideas for *The Collins Writing Exchange*, and we plan to incorporate your ideas in future editions. If you have a topic or question you would like us to address in a future issue, please [email](#) us and let us know.

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