

Late Winter 2016

# The Collins Writing Exchange

Ideas, Tips, and Resources on Writing from [Collins Education Associates](#)

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## Featured Writing Assignment

### Spotlight on Narrative Writing

Narrative writing, along with informative and opinion/argument writing, is an essential part of writing instruction. Writing personal and invented narratives helps students develop a wide variety of skills, from organizing and elaborating ideas to making the writing as vivid as possible for the reader.

To help brighten your students' narrative writing, try the assignments below. Each lesson is a fully developed plan with prewriting activities and graphic organizers.

**Grades K-3:** [Retelling a Story](#)

**Grades 3-6:** [The Skate of a Lifetime](#)

**Middle School:** [Writing a Personal Essay](#)

**High School:** [Writing a "Who Am I?" Biography](#)

#### Special Note:

If you would you like to see a Collins Associate demonstrate these and other lessons in your school's classrooms, contact us or see the [In-District Consulting and Coaching](#) page of our website.

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## FAQ: Associate Bill Atwood Answers a Frequently Asked Question

### How Do I Find Time for Writing in Math Class?

Most teachers realize that writing can be, or should be, an important part of their math instruction. But what about the time it takes? Is it worth it?

Bill Atwood, author of [How Did You Get That?](#), emphasizes that writing need not take a lot of time to be beneficial. He also stresses that writing means "more students will be engaged and more students will be thinking." See Bill's complete answer to the question: "[How do I find time for writing in my math class?](#)"



### *Talk to the Author*

## Discuss Powerful Sentence-Building Strategies with Author Jerry Morris

Jerry Morris's popular book, [\*Seven Sentence Building Activities to Develop Advanced Writers\*](#), began as a solution to a common problem: His students' poor writing was rooted in lack of understanding of sentence structures and sentence parts.

Inspired by Strunk and White's classic, *The Elements of Style*, Jerry devised a series of lessons to build his students' writing abilities one sentence at a time. Join over 10,000 people who have watched the [video](#) of Jerry teaching one of his sentence-building activities. Although the lesson is done with older students, the strategies can be used effectively as early as kindergarten.



**Watch Sentence-Building in Action**

Read the entertaining story behind Jerry's sentence-building activities and find out how to [talk directly with Jerry](#) about his experiences and success using these activities.

[About Jerry Morris](#)

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### *Worth Noting: An Excerpt from the [Marshall Memo](#)*

## Synthesis of Research on Practices That Improve Elementary Student Writing

Steve Graham and Karen Harris have published findings from their meta-analysis of instructional practices that have a proven track record of improving student writing in the elementary grades. Read a [Marshall Memo summary](#) of their findings and see how closely these recommendations align with Collins Writing tenets such as writing frequently in all content areas, creating a supportive environment for writing, and setting clear, specific writing goals for students.

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### *Convention Wisdom*

## Quotation Marks: Use the "P Before Q" Rule

With a little practice (and a lot of reminding by teachers), most students get the hang of putting quotation marks around a person's or a source's exact words. The tricky part is getting the proper placement of the closing quotation mark in relation to punctuation.

Our popular quick reference guide for essential conventions, *Check Mate*, reminds students to use the "P Before Q" rule. That is, in most cases the punctuation mark comes before the quotation mark.

To see the *Check Mate* guide panel that explains this rule, select the appropriate level below. If you are interested in a few of the exceptions to the "P Before Q" rule, select Level C.

[Grades 2-3 \(Level P\)](#)

[Grades 4-6 \(Level A\)](#)

[Middle School \(Level B\)](#)

[Special Note:](#)

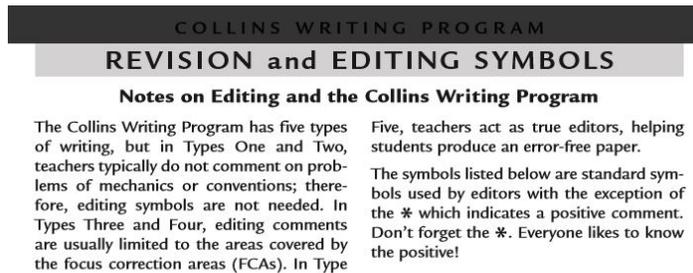
Looking for more tips on navigating the rules of writing? See all the [Essential Conventions components](#) including Check Mate student reference folders, classroom posters, and Teacher Resource Guides (TRG) at our web store. You can download a free Teacher Resource Guide sampler to try with your students using the link on the TRG product description pages.

**Quick Links**

## **FREE Resource: Revision and Editing Symbols Mini Poster**

An essential part of writing is revising and editing a draft. To help students be self-reliant with the revision and editing process, we must give them tools for success. And that doesn't mean erasers!

As students find ways to improve their work, we want them to use the standard symbols that editors use. Download this [mini poster](#) to give to your students to refer to as they learn the symbols they need to use when making corrections and improvements to their drafts.



^ Insert

frag. Sentence fragment

**Upcoming Events**

## **Dr. Collins in Pennsylvania, Cheryl McDonough in Maine, and More**

**Attend one of these open to the public sessions!**

- **April 1: Session 1:** [Build a Strong Foundation of Writing Skills Through the Collins Writing Program](#), K-3, Instructor: Gary Chadwell, **Session 2:** [Digging Deeper Into the Collins Writing Program](#), grades 4-12, Instructor: John Collins, Trinity High School, Washington, PA
- **April 5:** [Problem Solving and Open Response](#), grades 2-8, Instructor: Bill Atwood, [SERESC](#), Bedford, NH
- **April 12:** [More Writing. Less Grading! A Manageable Approach to Writing Across the Curriculum](#), grades 6-12, Instructor: Kristine Gibson, [Morris Union Jointure Commission](#), New Providence, NJ
- **April 14:** [Improving Student Performance Through Writing and Thinking Across the Curriculum](#), grades 6-12, Instructor: Cheryl McDonough, Thornton Academy, Saco, ME



[View the schedule](#) for details and registration information on these and other upcoming events. New offerings are added regularly, so if you don't see something in your area, check back soon.

A reminder: You can [host a Collins Institute](#) in your school or district, open it up to outside participation, and underwrite some or all of the costs of the workshop for your teachers.

Would you like to speak to a Collins Associate about offering a professional development session in your school or district? [Email](#) or call us at 800-932-4477 to learn about options or pricing or to set up a FREE phone consultation. We offer highly competitive rates and will customize the training to suit your school's needs!

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*About Our Newsletter*

## **Helpful Resources for Busy Educators**

We truly appreciate your interest in our e-newsletter and hope you will share it with others. Please forward *The Collins Writing Exchange* to your colleagues who might be interested.

For those of you who had this issue forwarded to you, [join our mailing list](#) and receive future issues directly.

Missed a previous issue? Read it now.

[Winter Post Script 2016](#) ~ [Winter 2016](#) ~ [Fall 2015](#) ~ [Back-to-School 2015](#) ~ [Summer 2015](#) ~ [Spring 2015](#) ~ [Late Winter 2015](#) ~ [Winter 2014](#) ~ [Fall 2014](#) ~ [August-September 2014](#) ~ [Spring/Summer 2014](#)

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Collins Education Associates | 800-932-4477 | Fax 978-363-2212 |  
[info@collinsed.com](mailto:info@collinsed.com) | [www.collinsed.com](http://www.collinsed.com)

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