



Research-Based Writing Supported by 28 Years of Proven Results

Late Winter Post Script 2016

The Collins Writing Exchange

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

Featured Writing Assignment

Focus on Research-Based Writing: Creating a Multimedia Presentation

This writing assignment puts a spotlight on two essential skill sets: researching and organizing information and then using 21st-century technology to present the ideas. Most students are familiar with the first part of the assignment, which requires them to gather information about a prominent person.

Focus Sheet

Profiling a Prominent Person

My Notes on _____

The second part asks students to create an engaging and effective PowerPoint presentation of their biography, which might pose a challenge.

Taken from *Twelve Assignments Every Middle School Student Should Write* by Gary Chadwell, the assignment is easily adaptable to students in grades 4-12. [Download](#) the complete lesson plan, including Notes to the Teacher, PowerPoint Presentation Guidelines, and a graphic organizer for students.

Special Note:

Would you like to see a Collins Associate demonstrate these and other lessons in your school's classrooms? Contact us at info@collinsed.com or 800-932-4477.

Working with English Language Learners

Essential Practices for Building Writing Skills

The demands on English language learners (ELLs) are formidable, especially in the area of writing. In an *Educational Leadership* article, "The Write Stuff," Carol Booth Olson and colleagues focus on three research-based strategies that help ELLs meet this daunting challenge.

Collins Writing Program users will recognize the strategies: creating a writing

community, providing solid strategy instruction, and teaching academic language. All are embedded in the Collins approach to effective writing instruction. Read the [article](#) and share it with your colleagues.

Special Note:

"The Write Stuff" by Carol Booth Olson, Robin Scarcella, and Tina Matuchniak was reproduced with permission of Educational Leadership.

Convention Wisdom

The One-Minute Writing Clinic

If you don't think commas are important, consider these two sentences:

Let's eat Grandpa!
Let's eat, Grandpa!

Clearly, commas can save lives. Yet, as important as they are for clarity, commas still cause our students (and us!) indigestion. In fact, in Lunsford and Lunsford's "Mistakes Are a Fact of Life: A National Comparative Study," 5 of the 20 most common writing errors by college freshmen directly involved comma errors and at least 3 others involve comma usage.

To learn more see Gary Chadwell's [blog post](#), "What Does The Top Twenty Study Reveal About Writers Today?"

Try your hand at the paragraph below. It contains eight problems with missing or unnecessary commas. Can you spot them all?

By the way baseball season is under way. Yes the games have begun and they will continue for six, long months. Of course there are certain dates on the calendar that are important to all baseball fans. Mid-July is when the annual All-Star Game is played and early August is the deadline for making player trades. After the regular season is over the World Series is played in the dark chilly evenings of October.

Did you find all eight? See our [answer key](#) to check your answers.

To assist your students, our popular *Check Mate* folders provide students with an easy-to-use guide to essential conventions. Download a PDF of the essential comma rules excerpted from *Check Mate* to use in your classroom:



RULE 3. COMMAS

- [Level P \(grades 2-3\)](#)
- [Level A \(grades 4-6\)](#)
- [Level B \(grades 6-9\)](#)
- [Level C \(grades 9-12\)](#)

Special Note:

See all the [Essential Conventions components](#) including *Check Mate* student reference folders, classroom posters, and Teacher Resource Guides (TRG) at our web store.

Free Resources from Our Website

Just Released! Focus Correction Areas FCAs Aligned to Common Core Standards

Teachers always want their focus correction areas (FCAs) to be clear, specific, and appropriate for their students' writing task. We can help with that!

We looked closely at the Common Core State Standards and compiled high-priority FCAs for all grade ranges (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) for each of the key genres of writing: opinion/argument, informative, and narrative. Check out this [free resource](#) on our website and download the lists most appropriate for your classroom.

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Focus correcting is a selective approach to correcting student writing.

Quick Links

This Month's Top Five Web Pages

- [Free Resources](#)
- [The Five Types of Writing](#)
- [About the Collins Writing Program](#)
- [Focus Correction Areas](#)
- [Workshop & Institute Schedule](#)

Questions about the Collins Writing Program? Learn more at collinsed.com.

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. *The Exchange* is issued six times a year plus occasional *Post Scripts*, like this one.

Missed a previous issue? Read it now.

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