

August-September 2014

The Collins Writing Exchange

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

Worth Noting

More Evidence That Type Two Writing Enhances Learning

Research confirms what most teachers see in their classrooms: Much of the new content that is learned by students is quickly forgotten. In *The New York Times* article "[How Tests Make Us Smarter](#)," psychology professor and researcher Henry Roediger explains why frequent low-stakes quizzes like Type Two Writing have such a positive effect on the retention of knowledge. The key is that frequent quizzing requires a learner to practice retrieving information which, in turn, makes the learning more deeply embedded. Roediger's recent article also describes ways of making the most effective use of informal quizzing.

Teachers using Collins's Type Two Writing on a regular basis consistently echo Roediger's findings, reporting that frequent quizzing with Type Two Writing promotes learning.



Type Two Writing

DEFINITION: Type Two writing shows that the writer knows something about a topic or has thought about the topic; it is best used as a quiz. It usually has a number in the question.

Classroom Tips That Work

Getting Students Prepared for High-Stakes Assessments

Teachers should consistently use test-question vocabulary when giving written and oral directions to students in class. That's the advice of Joan Pokrant, author of *Open Response Writing: 18 Strategies to Improve Student Performance*. Without familiarity with test-question vocabulary, or "general academic vocabulary," as it's described in the Common Core State Standards, students often get stuck in a question and aren't sure how to proceed. Read Joan's [blog post](#), "Why Do Students Struggle When Answering Open Response Questions?" to see other suggestions and a link to her book. Or [preview](#) the book now.

Featured Writing Assignment

Who Am I? An Assignment to Help Your Students Get Acquainted

Here's a terrific early-in-the-school-year writing project that accomplishes numerous goals: students interview a classmate in order to create an

autobiographical sketch. Through the project, they practice listening, speaking, and writing skills.

1. Writing a "Who Am I?" autobiographical sketch about a classmate

Interviewing and writing about a classmate

Appropriate for upper elementary, middle, and high school writers, the "Who Am I?" project also provides you with early writing samples to diagnose, allows students to get to know or reacquaint themselves with classmates, and builds rapport within your class. There is even a reproducible graphic organizer that helps students gather information and prepare their draft. [Download the organizer](#), and get started.

Meeting Student Needs

Advanced Placement Classes Can Be Challenging, Too

When she moved to a new high school in Brooklyn, teacher Brenda Mirsky was experienced with the Collins Writing Program. What surprised her were the writing needs of her Advanced Placement students. Read Mirsky's [blog post](#), "Integrating AP English and the Collins Writing Program," to see how she used Collins Writing to prepare her students for the AP Writing Curriculum and the Common Core State Standards.

Convention Wisdom

The One-Minute Writing Clinic

The Common Core Standards clearly expect students to use standard English and observe writing conventions more now than in previous years. The reality is that most students need far more practice with conventions than they get by simply self-editing their compositions. One of Collins's *Essential Conventions* resources, the Daily Quick-Fix Sentences, provides frequent, focused practice applying important language rules. The exercises take only a few minutes each, but the frequent practice helps students internalize essential language conventions. Can you find the fixes in this example from a middle school exercise?

is an atom smaller than a molecule yes an atom is the smallest unit of a
chemical element atoms link together too form molecules (3 sentences/8 fixes)

Check your answers in the Answer Key for the Daily Quick-Fix Sentence Exercise 5. Download the [Essential Conventions Teacher Resource Guide Sampler](#) and try this and other exercises with your students.

Note: For elementary and high school samples, see the Quick Links section below.

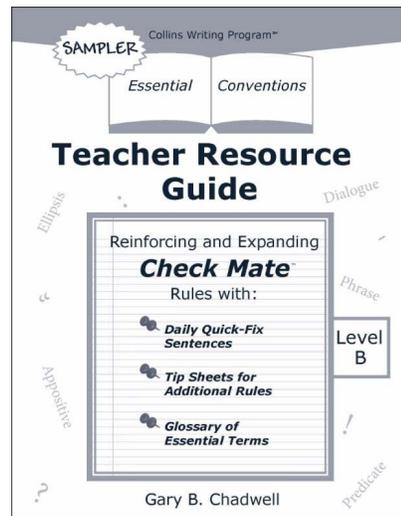
Quick Links

Free Ready-to-Use Lessons

Download these free PDF files, from our *Essential Conventions* Teacher Resource Guide Samplers to introduce new, ready-to-use lessons to your students:

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

Do you have a link to a great writing resource that 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.



Upcoming Events

Fall Institutes and Public (Hotel) Workshops

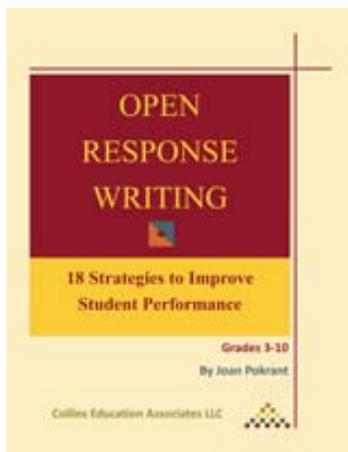
Fall is a popular time for professional development, and Collins Associates will be offering sessions around the country again this autumn. Check our professional development [schedule](#) for an institute or public workshop near you.

About Our Newsletter

Helpful Resources for Busy Educators

We were very pleased with your response to our inaugural *Exchange* in May and look forward to your input and suggestions again this fall. If you have any ideas or requests for future issues, please [email](#) us.

For those of you who had this issue of *The Collins Writing Exchange* forwarded to you by a colleague, [join our mailing list](#) and receive future issues directly. The *Exchange* is issued six times a year.



Calling All Administrators

Do you know what your staff practices are regarding open-response writing? Would you like to know, so you can tailor your professional development to meet those needs?

To find out, reproduce the survey below and give it to your staff at your next meeting. Then purchase a copy of *Open Response Writing* to address any instructional gaps you find.

[Preview](#) the survey.

[Buy](#) the book.



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