

Collins Writing Exchange

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

A Note to Our Readers

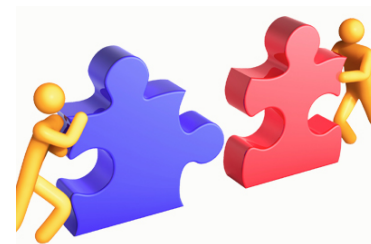
The Power of Writing to Improve Comprehension

"Almost every subject requires that you read something ... so writing is a really powerful tool for helping you think about what you read. You can answer questions about text that you've read, you can take notes on it, you can summarize it, you can personalize the information in terms of how you think it applies to your daily life, you can talk about how it might be applied in daily life, and you can analyze and interpret what that text means."

Dr. Steve Graham,
Arizona State University
[Online Interview](#)

"Reading and writing go hand in hand. In fact, encouraging students to write about what they read is proven to improve comprehension."

- Steve Graham and Michael Hebert in *Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading*, 2010



Type Two Writing is perfect for eliciting quick responses before, during, and after reading and for encouraging students to summarize, make connections, interpret, and analyze text in a low-risk environment. Type Three Writing, particularly the Ten Percent Summary, helps students refine their responses to and deepen understanding of text, both literary and informative.

Read on for specific strategies to build comprehension of print material that are easy to use in any subject area.

Strategies That Work

Quickwrites for Building Comprehension

Whether you're a literacy teacher or a content area teacher, your students will be tasked with reading in your class. Try some of the prompts below to help students make sense of what they read, whether it's an article from a scientific journal, a picture book, or a multistep word problem.

- **Math:** Based on this word problem, identify the units for the answer and explain how you know.
- **Science:** Briefly summarize the written instructions for today's lab in your own words. Be sure to include all 5* steps.
- **Reading:** Identify the theme [conflict, setting, point of view, etc.] in the novel or passage and support your answer using 2-3* pieces of evidence from the text.
- **Social Studies:** Summarize the following excerpt (75-150 words) from an informational article or section of our textbook in 15 words or less.
- **Great for Primary Grades:** Draw two pictures of events that happened in the story—one from the beginning and one from the end.

* or some other appropriate number

For a full list of prompts, check out our newest free resource, [Type Twos to Promote Comprehension](#).

Featured Assignment

Getting S"T"Art-ed with Summary Writing

Writing summaries is the second most impactful strategy to improve student achievement, according to meta-analyses conducted in 2007 by Graham and Perin and 2001 by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock. In a 2014 article, *Summary Writing as a Critical School Improvement Strategy*, Dr. John Collins states, "... the best way to encourage the careful reading of non-fiction texts that will add content and vocabulary knowledge is to ask students to summarize what they have read in writing, not orally."

For many teachers, assigning and grading summaries feels daunting and even futile. Many students simply prefer to copy and paste their so-called summaries from the original text.

TEN PERCENT SUMMARY

The Ten Percent Summary streamlines the summary writing process while still providing the benefits of increased comprehension, improved vocabulary, and more thoughtful text-based writing. When we choose high-interest articles related to the content we're teaching, we reinforce our curriculum objectives while helping students develop critical lifelong literacy skills.

S"T"Art Focus Sheets

The S"T"Art Focus Sheets provide students with easy-to-use graphic organizers for identifying central ideas and citing the passage sources accurately.

- [Primary](#)
- [Elementary](#)
- [Secondary](#)

Seven Element Summary Writing Assignments

See the assignments below to get started using the Ten Percent Summary in your content area.

- [Primary Assignment](#)
- [Scaffolded Elementary Assignment](#) (best for grades 3-5 and older students with little experience writing summaries)
- [Secondary Assignment](#)

Paper of the Month

A Closer Look at Ten Percent Summaries

This school year, each issue of the *Collins Writing Exchange* will feature student writing samples that can be used to model and practice key writing skills and habits. This month's edition includes two student versions of the Ten Percent Summary. The [first model](#) is a well-composed summary that meets all criteria. The [second model](#) contains several errors with the Focus Correction Areas (FCAs) that are common among students who are just learning how to summarize.

Ideas for using these papers with your students:

- Use the [first sample](#) as a model of how to compose a Ten Percent Summary.
 - Hand out hard copies of this writing sample and ask students to circle, underline, or highlight evidence that each FCA was met.
 - Project this writing on your interactive whiteboard and use it as a reminder of what a S"T"Art sentence or complete Ten Percent Summary should look like.
 - Place a copy of this writing sample in a plastic sheet protector for each student. Ask students to circle the proper nouns or commas used and identify the *Check Mate*™ rule applied for each.
- Use the [second sample](#) to practice editing skills or to troubleshoot common issues with the Ten Percent Summary.
 - Project this writing on your interactive whiteboard and assign a Type Two that asks students to explain how they would score the summary for each FCA.
 - Place a copy of this writing sample in a plastic sheet protector for each student. Ask students to delete unnecessary details, correct mechanics errors in the S"T"Art sentence, eliminate personal opinions, add transitions, and replace overused verbs (*said, want, find, etc.*).
 - Hand out hard copies of this writing sample and, as a Type One, ask students to use the margins to provide the writer with one piece of positive feedback, one tip for improving the content of the summary, and one tip for improving the mechanics.

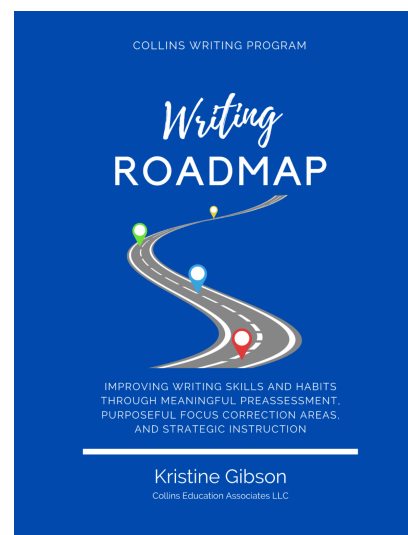
Looking for more examples of student papers to model writing expectations? Find 16 authentic annotated samples at varying grade levels from kindergarten to 12th grade in [Writing Roadmap](#).

Where Are You? Where Are You Going?

Resources for Collins Writing Success

1. Not sure how to select FCAs for upcoming assignments? Looking for a great bank of FCAs to target key writing skills at your grade level? *Writing Roadmap* is more than just a tool for diagnosing writing needs. This new digital resource includes specific instructions for selecting and using FCAs to improve writing and 15 pages of student-friendly, ready-to-use FCAs for any assignment.

Download the [single-user PDF](#), schedule live training with author [Kristine Gibson](#), or purchase the three-part [Writing Roadmap instructional video module](#) for asynchronous professional development.



2. Need a refresher on the [Five Types of Writing](#)™? Brush up on your Collins IQ by taking our [quick quiz](#) or try a sample of our [quick self-assessment survey](#) to review basic, intermediate, and advanced Collins implementation strategies.

3. Looking to go a little deeper with your Collins practice? Purchase [Dr. John Collins'](#) video course [Introduction to the Collins Writing Program](#).

You can also [contact our main office](#) or your favorite Collins associate to schedule training for your staff.

Quick Links

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

Everything you need to know about our PD options, workshops, institutes, and courses.

FREE RESOURCES

Ready-to-use Type Threes, Focus Correction Area lists, graphic organizers, and more!

ESSENTIAL CONVENTIONS

Check Mate™ and other resources to tackle teachers' biggest writing pet peeves!

EXCHANGE ARCHIVE

All previous newsletters with FREE writing assignments in every edition!