

Collins Writing Exchange

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

COMING SOON! A New Content Learning and Retention Tool

The Retrieval Routine

Four Activities That Apply the Science of Learning to Help Students Understand and Remember Content



We are always looking for ways to help our students remember what we teach. *The Retrieval Routine* combines research on learning and memory, habit development, and formative assessment into a series of short, classroom-friendly activities to help students understand and retain essential content.

A 2020 synthesis of 56 carefully vetted studies concluded that “writing about content reliably enhanced learning. It was equally effective at improving learning in science, social studies, and mathematics as well as the learning of elementary, middle, and high school students.” (Graham, p. 197, “The Effects of Writing on Learning in Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics: A Meta-Analysis”). However, teachers often shy away from using writing as a learning tool due to student resistance or concerns over how much time it takes. *The Retrieval Routine* solves these problems by keeping the writing short, the questions predictable, and the grades or evaluations focused on one dimension—content.

This brand-new resource includes:

- Detailed explanations, examples, and supporting research for each of the four retrieval activities
- Efficient strategies for giving clear, specific feedback to students
- Strategies to improve study skills and activities to increase student engagement
- Reproducible student resources, including carefully curated lists of general academic vocabulary words, 10 great prompts teachers and students can use to create their own quiz questions related to current content, a letter to parents explaining The Retrieval Routine, and much more

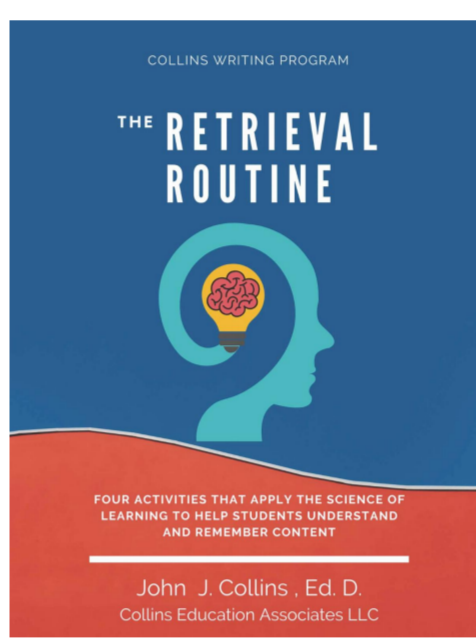
We are sure that *The Retrieval Routine* will be a valuable tool for teachers at all grade levels, helping them structure lessons that maximize content learning and retention.

Purchasing Options

Ready to Try *The Retrieval Routine*?

Preview [The Retrieval Routine book](#) and the complementary laminated desktop [Summary guide](#), and then take advantage of our special introductory pricing:

- Option 1:** Purchase *The Retrieval Routine* book as a single-user PDF (coming soon, 58 pages), and receive the laminated desktop Summary guide FREE.
- Option 2:** Purchase the standalone four-page *Retrieval Routine Summary* guide (coming soon as single copies or in packages of 10).
- Option 3:** Schedule *Retrieval Routine* training with Dr. Collins or your favorite CEA associate. [Contact Us](#) to discuss your needs and arrange a free consultation with Dr. Collins or an associate.



Do you want us to notify you when *The Retrieval Routine* is released for purchase (expected early June)? [Click here](#) to send us an email and get on the notification list.

Featured Assignment

Writing Test Questions

As the end of the school year approaches, many teachers find themselves reviewing and preparing for final exams. But this preparation should really be the work of the students, not the teacher!

“... One technique that is particularly useful both for getting students to clarify, share, and understand learning intentions and for informing the teacher about the students’ level of understanding is to have the students design test items, with correct answers, about what they have been learning. In a study involving several experiments with 260 college students, this was shown to be more effective than administering practice tests, giving students study guides, or leaving them to prepare for tests in their own way. . . . This can be a particularly effective strategy with disaffected older students, who often feel threatened by tests. Writing a test for the topic they have completed, and knowing that the teacher is going to grade the questions rather than the answers, can be a hugely liberating experience for many students.”

Dylan William, *Embedded Formative Assessment* (2011), p. 68

This short Type Three assignment provides an alternative to teacher-created study guides and shifts the accountability of review to the students. It’s also a great extension to *The Retrieval Routine*. When students create their own test questions, we learn not only what they know about the content we’ve taught, but also what they believe is important.

Find the assignment for your students below and feel free to repeat it multiple times for various topics throughout the year or in preparation for final exams.

Writer’s Purpose	Your job is to write test questions to check understanding of what we’ve been learning. Questions should be clear and easy to understand.
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- Grades K-3:** [Make Your Own Trivia Game with 5Ws + H](#)
- Grades 4-8:** [Create a Test](#)
- Grades 9-12:** [Create a Test](#)

Administrators’ Corner

Get a Handle on Student Progress with Collins Portfolios

If you’re looking for a way to build a consistent writing practice and see results, look no further than Collins Portfolios. Nearly all of our schools with high implementation levels use them! Portfolios are a great way to jump-start the 2022-23 school year, and the good news is they need not be complicated (or costly!) to be effective.

Encourage teachers to get students into the habit of placing completed writing assignments into a working portfolio that’s easy to use and always at their fingertips. Our portfolios don’t simply collect work—they facilitate learning all year long by:

- Encouraging students to reflect on their writing and teacher feedback and to apply what they’ve learned to future papers.
- Providing ready access to past papers that can be used to practice new skills. Better than worksheets!
- Enabling teachers to track individual and class needs and progress.

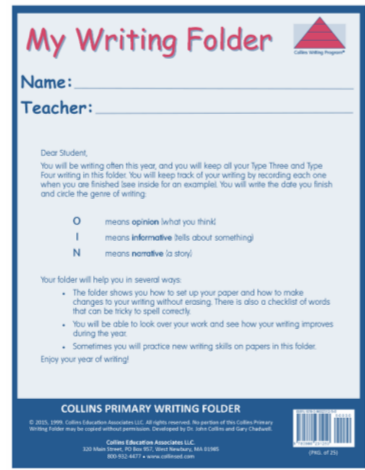
For school leaders, Collins Portfolios offer additional benefits:

- They contain concrete evidence of writing assignments and [Focus Correction Areas](#) (FCAs), making it easier to determine what kind of writing is actually happening in classrooms.
- They can be used as evidence for data-collecting, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), and other measurements of student learning.
- They make great discussion starters at faculty meetings. See our past tips for [Using Student Writing Samples to Improve Teacher Instruction](#).

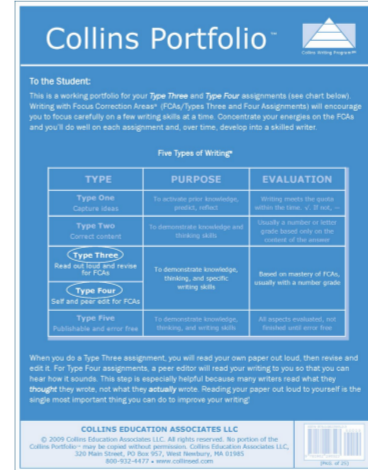
Help teachers get started with Collins Portfolios with this [handy portfolio how-to guide](#).

Take a look at our ready-to-use portfolios, available for less than 75 cents per student for the full school year!

- [Collins Primary Writing Folder](#) (grades K-3)
- [Collins Portfolio](#) (grades 4-12)



Grades K-3
[Collins Primary Writing Folder](#)

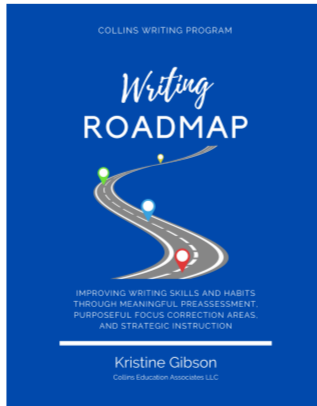


Grades 4-12
[Collins Portfolio](#)

Start Planning for 2022-2023

Looking for Collins Support?

1. Ease your workload and tighten instruction with *Writing Roadmap*. This popular 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 PDF NOW
- SCHEDULE TRAINING WITH AUTHOR
- PURCHASE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD) MODULES AT CIU10

2. Recalibrate your implementation of Collins Writing. Administer this quick [self-survey](#) at your next faculty meeting and reach out to your favorite CEA consultant for help filling in the gaps.

3. Offer your staff an asynchronous Collins refresher. Purchase [Introduction to the Collins Writing Program](#), a six-module video course presented by [Dr. John Collins](#).

Quick Links

- PD 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!