



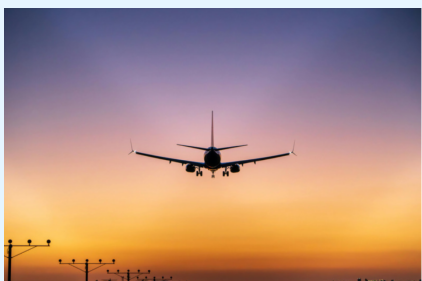
Collins Education Associates

The Collins Writing Program

A Writing Across the Curriculum Program with Over 35 Years of Proven Results

The Collins Writing Exchange

August 28, 2026 Issue #90



Soft Landing

A Safe, Comforting, and
Low-Pressure Entry

*"If children feel safe, they can take risks,
ask questions, make mistakes, learn to trust,
share their feelings, and grow."*

--Alfie Kohn

Not long ago, I was telling my grandchildren about how we always knew that if the Jerry Lewis telethon was on, vacation was over!!!! Although those poor kids had no idea what I was talking about, many of you do. Many of our own school experiences were not that different from those of current students. We all remember that feeling of nervous excitement about the first day of school. What will I wear? I can't wait to see my friends! What will my new teacher be like? Will there be new kids? Where will I sit? Do I bring or buy lunch? It may seem trivial to adults (now) – but these thoughts are still real and often worrisome for kids. Being in school is a major part of their lives, and if it is a place where they feel worried, scared or isolated, they cannot learn or be productively engaged in the classroom. The opening of school sets the tone for the year and begins the nurturing of a learning environment that kids feel good about. Having our classrooms ready to welcome students to a space where they are free to learn and not scared to be wrong is a needed foundation for learning.

Risk-Free Writing for the Beginning of School



Setting the Stage

Get to know your students, establish routines, build excitement and curiosity—and set the stage for a year built on student engagement and visible thinking.



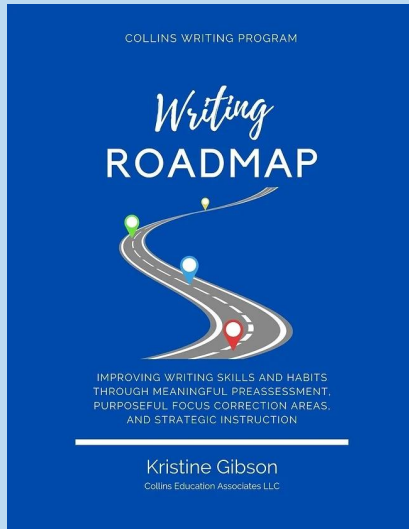
Who's Who in the Classroom?

Our favorite first-month activity gets kids talking and helps students get to know each other to build a safe and healthy environment for learning.

Download and use tomorrow!

**Quickwrite Prompts for
All Grade Levels
(Yes--Kindergarten, too!)**

**K-2
3-5
6-12**



Diagnostic Writing Made Simple

Find out who each of your students is as a writer while also finding out something about them as people. This should also feel risk-free for them as the diagnostic part is just for you!

Download the prompts here.

**K-2
3-5
6-12**

For more diagnostic tools and for ideas on how to process the data you collect, check out our Writing Roadmap resource.

"I can see a child's physical body when they're with me, but I can't see their thoughts, emotions, feelings, fears."
--Dave Stuart, Jr.

Writing is visible thinking; an incredibly effective tool to see who your students really are.
Let us know how you use writing to build connections with students and you could win a free Collins resource.

Send your ideas to: cmcdonough@collinsed.com

**Looking for more tips and resources to help
make the start of this year a soft landing?
Follow us on your favorite social media platform.**



Professional Development

Come and see us in Ohio and New York!
Or schedule a personalized session for your school.



**Join us in Ohio for three great sessions.
Pick your favorites or attend all three!**

Location:
**Indian Lake Middle School,
8920 Co Rd 91, Lewistown, OH 43333**

Presenter: Kristine Gibson

Registration Required

Improving Student Performance Through Writing and Thinking Across the Curriculum

September 22, 2026

Our foundational workshop. Discover how the Five Types of Writing can deepen learning, boost student engagement, and make thinking visible in every content area.

[Learn More](#)

Exploring and Maximizing the Reading-Writing Connection to Build Literacy

September 23, 2026

Align your reading program with purposeful writing that strengthens comprehension—and use workshop time to plan ready-to-use writing assignments using the materials you already have.

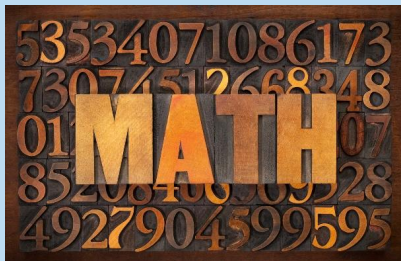
[Learn More](#)

Collins Writing Expert Session: Building Strong Routines Across Content Areas

September 24, 2026

Take your Collins practice to the next level--or get started with a clear, practical entry point--using four high-impact activities: Ten Percent Summary, Vocabulary Cards, Retrieval Routine, and Sentence Expansion.

[Learn More](#)



Do the Math! Four Powerful Strategies to Engage All Students in Mathematical Thinking and Problem Solving

Location:
Instructional Support Center @ Sequoya
750 Waverly Avenue
Holtsville, NY 11742

Instructor: Bill Atwood

November 20, 2026

Bring math learning to life with four engaging strategies that build vocabulary, problem-solving, fluency, and deeper understanding through fast-paced, social, and hands-on practice.

[Learn More](#)

***New* Targeted Workshops** (available live or virtual)

Authentic Integration of Literacy in CTE Schools
Building Stamina and Confidence for WorkKeys
The Magic of the Mistake
Measure What Matters

PBL to WBL - How to Move Project Proficiency to Work Proficiency
Portfolio and Project-Based Assessment Using the Five Types Framework
Test Prep in Disguise
Writing and PBL

*Questions About Targeted Workshops? **Cheryl McDonough**, School Improvement Strategist and CTE Division Lead, would love to talk with you!*

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