



Collins Education Associates

# The Collins Writing Program

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

## The Collins Writing Exchange

March 27, 2025 Issue #82



### Why Should Teachers Use the Collins Writing Framework?

*Because . . .*

*"Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection." - Mark Twain*

Our recent newsletters have explored ways to use real, relevant, and relatable writing in all content areas. This month, we are highlighting how our strategies are equally effective when used as a "learning to write" framework. In fact, our foundational work was intended for ELA teachers, and it worked so well that we expanded to "writing to learn" across the curriculum. Knowing that writing is not exclusively a skill for the ELA classroom is important—but it is not the complete picture of who we are.

*WHY* use our simple, effective, and efficient strategies for teaching writing?

A need for writing instruction at all grade levels was the inspiration for the tools, protocols, and methods that are the heart of our learning to write framework. The research, experiences, and testimonials of teachers, authors, researchers, and students included here validate *Why* we do it the way we do.

This issue honors our roots as a *Learning to Write* initiative.

*"Good writing matters because it empowers students to express their ideas clearly and succeed academically. For teachers, effective writing instruction is essential as it transforms their ability to guide students in developing critical thinking and communication skills."*

*- Dr. Karen Harris, SRSD Creator, Arizona State University*

### The WHYS of Learning to Write

While **Type One** and **Type Two Writing** are all about "writing to learn," **Types Three, Four, and Five** provide a proven framework

for "learning to write." FCAs, the hallmark of Type Three, Four, and Five Writing, are based on decades of research on effective teaching and learning. For Collins Writing users, they are the foundation of "learning to write."

FCAs provide:

- *Focused practice for students and focused assessment for teachers*
- *A clear focus for student-centered revision*
- *A practical and effective structure for self- and peer-editing*

**Why *this* Learning to Write triad?**

Because ... each of the three corners supports student independence, confidence, success, and, ultimately, writing progress. Experts have weighed in and articulated that learning to write is hard, and teaching writing is even harder. Our framework provides simple-to-use strategies and protocols that empower both students and teachers in the writing classroom.

***WHY*** do we do what we do when it comes to teaching writing? [Click here to see what the experts say about our triad of key practices...](#)

With Collins Writing, students are *empowered* to become confident, independent, and proficient writers. Similarly, teachers are given a plan that *empowers* them to increase writing frequency, focus their writing instruction, and streamline the feedback process for maximum writing proficiency.



## Put Learning to Write into Action

If you're new to using Type Three Writing with your students or just need some fresh ideas, our **Type Three Assignments and Lesson Plans** are a great place to start. Each of these ready-to-use assignments (which we refer to as *Seven Element Assignments*) includes an authentic writing prompt, suggested FCAs, and—the best part—step-by-step instructions for carrying it all out in your classroom!

This "Influential Person" essay is a great example of a versatile Type Three Writing assignment that can be used across grade levels. And if you think out of the box, this assignment can even be used across content areas as students write about an influential historical figure, scientist, artist, etc.

K-2

3-5

6-12

Looking for a fun Type Three to use with virtually any content? Try the "Student Survival Guide."

K-2

3-5

6-12

And finally, download our **go-to FCAs** for meeting state standards and plug these right into your existing assignments!

# Snapshots of Type Three Writing Across Grade Levels

Here are a few of our favorite Type Three samples from ELA classes. Notice how the FCAs provide the focus for student practice, revision, and teacher feedback.

And a few more Type Threes from content area classes. FCAs help students to convey content learning clearly and effectively.

**CEA** **Collins Writing**  
**Type Three Sample**

**Grade 5**  
Write a book review recommending a book to next year's 5th graders.

**FCAs are clearly recorded in the upper left corner of the paper as a reminder of what's expected.**

**On Type Three Writing, students skip lines to allow room for revision.**

**State your Opinion, List reasons + Details, Complete Sentences.**

X Dear Mrs. Williams,  
X I think next year's 5<sup>th</sup> graders  
X should start out the year reading  
X *Mainiac Magee*. They would like  
X this book because in a way it's  
X historical. It goes back to when  
X black's and white's were pre-  
X ritus. It also gives yourself a

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**CEA** **Collins Writing**  
**Type Three Sample**

**Middle School**  
After today's lesson, what do you now know about the American Revolution. Focus especially on the causes (C) and results (R) of this war.

**Type Three helps non-ELA teachers focus on content. After a one-day introduction to the American Revolution, this social studies teacher emphasized content FCAs (including use of domain-specific vocabulary, correctly capitalized) to guide students in explaining the causes and results of the war.**

How much do you know about the American Revolution? Some facts about the American Revolution are that this war started because King George III kept taxing the colonists. Colonists also had to say in Parliament the Treaty of Paris is what ended this war. As a result, the United States of America gained full freedom. I hope you learned more about the American Revolution.

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## Looking for More?

Our website has an entire page dedicated to the ins and outs of **Type Three and Four Writing**, including student writing samples, standards-aligned FCAs, and tips for getting started. You can also check out our **Free Resources** to find FCA-templated paper, detailed instructions on revising and editing, strategies for making feedback manageable, and more!

For even more from the experts and for Case Studies that demonstrate our success, visit **Why Choose Collins Writing**.

*"Write. Rewrite. When not writing or rewriting, read. I know of no shortcuts." – Larry L. King*

**We Want to Hear from YOU!**

*If you have another **WHY?** as a result of your own work with the Collins Writing Program, or a great Type Three assignment to share, please send it to Cheryl McDonough and receive a free resource!*

## Stock Up on "Learning to Write" Materials



## Desktop Guides and More

*Vocabulary Cards Guide*

*Sentence Expansion Guide*

*Collins Writing "At-a-Glance" (Gr. K-12)*

*Primary FCA Stamps*

*Writing Roadmap Spiral Bound*

*Essential High School FCA Poster*

*Also highly recommended for writing teachers are our **Student Writing Portfolios**, **Teacher's Implementation Portfolio**, and the **Check Mate** series for teaching conventions and incorporating them as FCAs.*

## Book PDFs

*Writing Roadmap*

*Writing Strategies for the Primary Grades*

*Writing Projects for the Elementary Grades*

*Developing an Effective Writing Program for the Elementary Grades*

*Seven Sentence Building Activities to Develop Advanced Writers*

*Selecting and Teaching Focus Correction Areas*

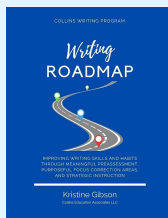
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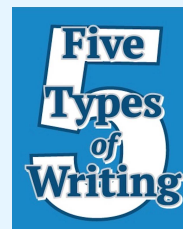
## How About PD in Your PJs? Learning in Your Living Room? Practice by the Pool?

You can do all of these with Pre-Recorded Offerings at *your* convenience!  
*Offered in Collaboration with Central Intermediate Unit 10 in PA*



**Writing Roadmap**  
Improving Writing Skills and Habits Through Meaningful Preassessment, Purposeful FCAs, and Strategic Instruction

*Three one-hour, pre-recorded video modules are highly*



**Introduction to the Collins Writing Program**  
An At-Your-Own-Pace Introduction to the Five Types of Writing

*Six one-hour, pre-recorded video modules that are great as*

*recommended for teachers of writing.*

*Anytime, Asynchronous Access*

Instructor: Kristine Gibson

*an introduction or a refresher.*

*Anytime, Asynchronous Access*

Instructor: Dr. John Collins

## Online Course Being Offered Summer 2025 Both Graduate and Undergraduate Credit Available Registration Coming Soon!



### Using Work Keys to Unlock CTE Skills and Understanding: Effectively Prepare CTE Students for both Class and Test Success

Designed for educators in career and technical schools to create practical strategies and techniques to improve student literacy skills while tackling the challenges of the ACT Work Keys Test. Teachers will become familiar with all portions of the test while generating effective strategies and techniques to benefit students in class, on the test, and within their career or profession.

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## New PD Topics!



### Customize New PD to Fit Your Needs

- *Portfolio and Project-Based Assessment Using the Five Types Framework*
- *Writing as a Tool for Test Prep*
- *Literacy in CTE Schools*
- *Using Literacy to Build Stamina and Confidence for WorkKeys*

We are adding new sessions all the time! Continue to check our **Public Courses** for updates.

*"If you want to change the world, pick up your pen and write."*  
– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



*Have an idea for a training topic? Send it to Cheryl McDonough, and if we take your suggestion, we will send you a free print or PDF item of your choice from our online store!*

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*Next Month: Common Methods for Learning to Write AND Writing to Learn*

*Send your questions, challenges, or ideas to Cheryl McDonough. Those included in our next issue will receive a free Desktop Guide!*

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