



Collins Education Associates

# The Collins Writing Program

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

## The Collins Writing Exchange

May 20, 2026 Issue #89



### The Finish Line

**"Keep your eyes on the finish line and not on the turmoil around you."**

--Rihanna

We can almost believe that Rihanna was a teacher! All teachers look forward to coaching their students to the finish line. But, with that being said, now is the busiest time of the year. Classroom pack-up, learning wrap-up, and one last get-up mark both the beginning of summer and the ending of another school year. To that end, we are sharing with you our *pulling it all together* newsletter. Included you will find assignments to carry you--and your students--through these final days, materials to look forward to using in the new year, and summer training options to keep you on your game in between. And, be sure and look at our summer reads list from our associates--because we all deserve to kick back and relax once we reach the end-of-year finish line!

Here are some great ideas for making it over that finish line - measured progress and reflection can bring you over that line with an understanding of what the academic journey has been like for your students this year; and, what you should keep and what you can change for next year.

### Finish Strong!



#### Wrap Up with Writing

We love authentic assignments that have a real audience, which is why we love ending the year with each student writing a Letter to Next Year's Teacher.

In this Type Three assignment, students reflect on their writing (or any area of content learning), celebrate growth, and share what they've learned throughout the year.



#### Recap and Reflect

**Looking for some quick bursts of writing to fill end-of-year down time without losing focus? Use Type Ones for less formal reflection...**

- What are three writing skills you feel confident about? (2 minutes)
- What is one thing about writing (or this class) that you love? Explain in 3 or more lines. (2 minutes)
- What is the best thing you learned about writing this year?

Many schools collect and pass these letters along, giving next year's teacher a valuable snapshot of each student as a thinker and writer.

Download the lesson plans for your grade level--and feel free to adjust the content and FCAs to suit your class.

**Primary: K-2**

**Elementary: 3-5**

**Middle/High: 6-10**

Explain in 3 lines or more. (90 seconds)

- Write a quick note (at least 30 words) to your teacher about the one thing you will always remember that they taught you. (4 minutes)
- Set three learning goals for next year. (3 minutes)
- Write a good-bye note to Grade \_\_\_\_\_. Include two things you will miss and one thing you are glad to be leaving! (5 minutes)

***"There are times when you run a marathon and you wonder, Why am I doing this? But you take a drink of water, and around the next bend, you get your wind back, remember the finish line, and keep going."***

--Steve Jobs

## The Collins Summer Reading List

Looking to catch up on some reading this summer? Our Collins Education Associates have you covered! Our summer reading list has a little bit of everything—from light, page-turning beach reads to thought-provoking professional books that will get your brain buzzing. Whether you're reading by the pool, at the beach, or in the cool comfort of your AC, there's something here for everyone. Enjoy!



### Cheryl's Summer Selections:

#### **Summer Sisters and In the Unlikely Event, both by Judy Blume**

While browsing the bookstore with my 12-year-old granddaughter, I happened upon a reference to her favorite author, Judy Blume. And, much to my amazement, I learned that she has adult novels! I figured I had nothing to lose and picked up **Summer Sisters**. My granddaughter is not wrong--Judy tells a great story. If you are looking for a beach read that takes place at the beach, you just found it! And if you have a best friend who is more like a sister, you'll love this book. Because I loved **Summer Sisters** so much, I ordered **In the Unlikely Event**, based on the true story of three plane crashes that occurred within three months in Elizabeth, New Jersey, between 1951 and 1952 and the diverse New Jersey families' whose lives



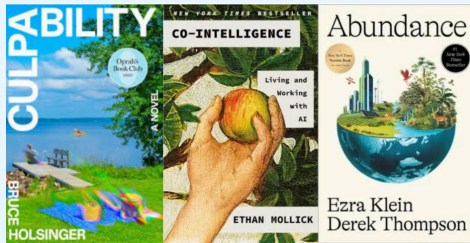
### Kristine's Can't-Miss Picks:

#### **The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife by Anna Johnston and Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt**

Perfect for anyone looking to escape the worries of the world and settle into the warm, comforting hug of a light but thought provoking summer read. Both novels blend humor, heart, and unexpected friendship with quirky yet relatable characters who remind us of the beauty of human connection and the value of second chances. I laughed out loud at the antics of Fred and finished both books with a smile on my face :) P.S. If you're skeptical about the talking octopus (I know, it's weird—I was skeptical, too), give Marcellus a chance! His refreshingly honest take on humanity is part of the charm of this book. And you may just find yourself wanting to take a deep dive into octopus intelligence. When that happens, check out *Secrets*

intersect, overlap, and are forever changed because of them.

of the Octopus on Hulu—your mind will be blown!



### John's Literary Lineup:

For fiction, I would recommend **Bruce Holtzinger's *Culpability***, an exploration of the new reality of chatbots, autonomous cars, drones, and other nonhuman forces. This is also the story of a family navigating how technology and humanity can work (or not work) together.

For non-fiction, ***Co-Intelligence* by Ethan Mollick**, is a great discussion of the effects of AI on our world today. I'm also a fan of ***Abundance* by Klein and Thompson**, which offers an optimistic view of the future, and, while not the typical beach read, might counter all the negative news we hear.

### Bill's Reading Roundup:

***Yesteryear* by Caro Claire Burke** is a satirical debut novel about a social media influencer who wakes up suddenly in the 19th century, facing the harsh reality of the traditional life she romanticized online. Equal parts disturbing and funny, this book is a wild adventure: smart, timely, fast-paced, and original. If you are reading it on the beach, you might not be able to nap!

Kristine seconds this recommendation!

*Reply to this email and tell us which book you're adding to your summer stack. We'll send you a surprise discount code for the Collins store!*



## Orlando, Here We Come!

Heading to the ACTE/ISTE 2026 Annual Conference this June? Come find us!

We'll be presenting **Making Thinking Visible: The Administrator's Playbook for Image-Based Math Assessment**—a high-energy session focusing on using image prompts and visual models to capture authentic mathematical reasoning, uncover misconceptions, and strengthen checks for understanding.

**Check out our session here.**

And if you're attending, be sure to bring a friend and stop by our exhibit booth for fun activities, free prizes, and plenty of Collins conversation!

## Can't Make It to Orlando? How About Some Beachside Professional Learning?

*Consider the following options for yourself, your team, or your school...and join us from wherever your summer happy place may be!*

Summer Sampler, Hold the Stress!

**Collins A la Carte**

*Register for made-to-order training sessions!*

Stuck in the Sand? Ask Us!

**Collins 9-1-1**

*Email us and have your questions answered by a Collins Associate!*

Binge-Worthy Tutorials (Best if viewed poolside)

**Collins Video Library**

*View our collection of FREE and engaging videos on a variety of topics!*

Virtual Deep Dive

**Collins Round Table**

*Email us to arrange a round table discussion of a topic you would like to know more about. Perfect for administrators or decision makers considering implementation of our program or looking to support their team.*

Summer, Sunshine, and CTE

**Career and Tech in a Nutshell**

*Interested in using good communication skills in your program to support success in careers or college?*

**Schedule a 30-minute virtual session**

*to learn more about our one-of-a-kind CTE-focused training and resources.*

Vacation Vibes, Real Teacher Talk

**Speed Dating with an Expert**

*Schedule a 15-minute "date" with one of our experts and bring your questions! Choose CEO **Kristine Gibson** for all things Five Types of Writing; Math expert, **Bill Atwood**; or, if looking for more of a non-traditional companion, choose **Cheryl McDonough** to learn more about Collins in CTE, PBL, and/or WBL!*



**CEA** |  Vermont State University

**Measure What Matters** [REGISTER NOW! →](#)

*A specially designed summer course for CTE teachers.*

**Join us for our newest virtual course!**

**Measure What Matters: Transforming CTE Assessments** is a flexible virtual course running from June through October that combines weekly Zoom meetings with meaningful classroom application.

Participants will explore how to design assessments that measure critical thinking, problem-solving, technical skills, and real understanding in CTE settings. Along the way, teachers will receive expert guidance, collaborate with colleagues, and build practical routines and tools they can immediately apply in their own classrooms.

Available for graduate credit, undergraduate credit, or PD hours only.

**Learn More and Register**

*For more information, email **Cheryl McDonough***

**Cool Ideas for Hot Days!**

Connect with us on social media!

Follow us for fun and helpful tips, videos, and free assignments. Like, Share, and Comment to help us spread the word about all the great things we're doing at CEA—and to celebrate all the great things YOU are doing with writing across the curriculum!



***The Collins Free for All:*** Browse our online **FREE RESOURCES** and download assignments, templates, letters to parents, FCAs, and more!

[Buy Products | Collins Education Associates](#)



[Contact Us Now](#)

[FREE RESOURCES](#)

[PUBLIC WORKSHOPS](#)

[RESEARCH & RESULTS](#)

[SHOP FOR PRODUCTS](#)

[ABOUT THE CWP](#)

Was this email forwarded to you by a friend or colleague?

[Sign Up](#)

to be added to our mailing list.

[f Share This Email](#)

[in Share This Email](#)

[✉ Share This Email](#)

[Our Company](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [FAQs](#)

Collins Education Associates | 601 Route 206 Suite 26-405 | Hillsborough, NJ 08844 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)