



Collins Education Associates

... creators of the proven
COLLINS
WRITING
PROGRAM



A Collins Writing Program Workshop

The Book Commercial Perfect Assignment for Readers and Writers

Activities and Strategies to Strengthen Reading and Writing Skills

with Bill Atwood

thebillatwood@gmail.com

617-686-2330

Free ELA Resources at <http://collinsed.com/about-bill-atwood/ela-resources/>

Book Commercial PowerPoint

Two Skills in One: Summarizing and Sentence Combining

Opinion Unit (PowerPoint for Students)

The Book Commercial An Overview for Students

Summary: Millions of dollars are spent advertising movies and video games, but have you ever seen a book commercial? Because I want you to read a lot and to become great writers, this year we are going to prepare commercials to advertise great books. This assignment will be one or two short paragraphs.

Purpose: This is a combination of opinion writing and persuasive writing. You've got to convince people to read your book!

Writer's role: You are an advertising whiz! You know how to write a strong opinion with enough evidence to convince your audience.

Audience: Your audience is people who haven't read the book, and they may or may not be interested. Be honest, but try to get them to want to read your book!

Form: A short one to two paragraph book commercial.

Focus Areas

1. Use 1 of our 5 Hooks/Closers which names your book! (10 points)
2. Brief but clear plot summary that follows our template (25 points)
3. 1-2 reasons with specific text details to support (60 points)
4. 1+ transition words (5 points)

Procedures:

1. I will show you some great book commercials, and then we will do a quick write: "What are the essential ingredients of a great commercial for a book?" After some sharing, we will make a list of important qualities and features to include in your commercial.
2. We will use a transparency sheet to practice finding the key features of a book commercial. I will ask you to identify things like the summary, reasons, and evidence.
3. After I model how to use a template for summarizing fiction or nonfiction, we will practice writing an opinion/claim and a 1-3 sentence book summary.
4. You will practice writing a summary for a book you read.

DAY 2

5. We will review the key ingredients for an effective summary, and I will pass back your summaries which we will use later.
6. Next, we will look at a weak opinion paragraph and note areas that could improve it.
7. I will introduce the acronym CATSMILE to help you find reasons for reading a book.
8. We will practice using the acronym and two column notes to plan our book commercials.
9. You will practice filling out a simple organizer of reasons for a book of your choosing.
10. Using the summary, two column notes, and your input, I will model writing a commercial.
11. You will write your commercial.
12. You will edit your commercial to make sure you have the all the key parts by marking them: opinion/claim; summary; reasons; text evidence; transitions.
13. You will darken all ending marks and capital letters to make sure you have complete sentences.

Main Reading and Writing Standards Addressed

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2](#)

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5](#)

Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.8](#)

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1](#)

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.5](#)

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.6](#)

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9](#)

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10](#)

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Book Commercial Lesson Plan for Teacher

Time Required: 2-3 sessions of 45-60 minutes

The first time you do this lesson it may work best over two to three sessions. After that, students will be able to complete the assignment in a single session. You can find the supporting materials on the Book Commercial PowerPoint. www.collinsed.com/about-bill-atwood/ela-resources/

On the first day, introduce a sample of an excellent book commercial, and use the sample to identify the key characteristics of strong opinion writing. Next, teach students how to write a brief plot summary of a book.

On the second day, review the key aspects of a good book commercial, and teach students how to use a graphic organizer to develop convincing reasons and text evidence to recommend a book. After teacher-modeling, students write and edit their commercials.

Extending the lesson can be done in a variety of ways. Students can do a second draft of the commercial and then perform it. The commercials can be video or audio taped for a later broadcast. They may submit them to be a part of a book of opinions or taken to the library as part of a visual display.

Most importantly, try and find ways to repeat this assignment many times over the course of the year. As students get more practice, their commercials will improve. You can also vary the assignment to include opinions on whether a certain passage or selection from a book is written well enough to be included in a book you are thinking of writing called *The Book of Powerful Passages*. With this assignment, students can focus on a single paragraph of text.

Materials to Prepare:

1. Download the PowerPoint Book Commercial from www.collinsed.com/about-bill-atwood/ela-resources/ and print slide # 2 (reproduced also on page 8)
2. Transparency sleeve for each student with whiteboard marker, eraser (felt, tissue paper, sock...)
3. Template C for fiction summary (page 10)
4. Print or display weak student sample of *Diary of Wimpy Kid* paragraph (page 16)
5. CATSMILE planner (page 18 or from PowerPoint slide #44)
6. Lined paper with focus areas (pages 20–21)

Introduction/Hook: (2 minutes)

Ask students to imagine the dire situation faced by publishers today. Billions are spent on advertising movies, video games, sporting events, and television shows but books are woefully under-marketed. Have they ever seen a commercial for a book? Additionally, sportscasters and DJs spend hours arguing over which athlete or song deserves to be in the top 100, but have they ever read an argument why a book should be in the Reading Hall of Fame? Tell students that this year they will have the opportunity to give their opinion of books by writing brief commercials. While some advertising techniques may be appropriate, they will need to focus on providing evidenced-based reasons to explain why a book is worth reading. They have to prove that their book is a winner!

Development: (10 min)

In this part of the lesson, students will do a close reading of a text and analyze it to find characteristics of strong, clear, opinion writing.

Begin this part of the lesson by passing out a sample of a well written book commercial. I have included a sample on page 8. Read it aloud, or have students read it to themselves, or have them read it with a partner. Encourage every student to read it at least twice. Another version (landscape style) can be found by downloading the PowerPoint Book Commercial from www.collinsed.com/about-bill-atwood/ela-resources/

After students have read the commercial, do the quick write (Activity #1 on PowerPoint) *What makes this a good commercial?* Ask for at least 4 lines of text in 3 minutes (or some other appropriate quota and time limit). Remind students to focus on generating ideas and not to worry about their spelling or grammar.

Sample student writing reaction to the model text is shown below.

This book commercial is good because it has a good hook and it also lets you know the plot of the book but does not go on and on and give away all the details. Also, it gives a good reason to read the book with examples from the text. It is well organized and has a good closer and also it seems like it has a lot of voice. It's enthusiastic.

Next, have students draw a line under what they have written and share with a neighbor, adding new ideas below the line. When everyone has shared and recorded ideas from a partner, call on students and quickly build a list of key features of a good book commercial. What follows are some possible criteria:

1. Hook (This one begins with a prediction: If... then. For other hooks, see page 9.)
2. Clear opinion with book's title
3. Summary of book includes: genre, author, characters, problem, setting
4. Gives a reason to read (plot keeps you on edge of seat)
5. Gives specific text evidence to support reason (Chapter 10, Troll in bathroom... Later on, Harry nearly dies on broom)
6. Explains the evidence why it works (keeps you reading into the night)
7. Closer (this one uses a call to action: Get it today! For other closers, see page 9.)
8. Organized with transitions (here, for example, later on, so...)
9. Good paragraphing (First paragraph gives claim and quick summary. Second paragraph gives reasons and evidence.)
10. Sentence variety (varies lengths and beginnings)

Analysis of Text: (Activity #2 on PowerPoint) (15 min)

Next, have students put the writing sample (page 8 or PowerPoint slide #2) into a transparency sleeve and guide them through the text with questions that ask them to find particular parts of this text. For example, have students: bracket the [hook]; box a transition in line 12; put parenthesis around the (summary of the book); find and number the reasons and identify each specific example given to support the claim with the letters a, b, c; use a squiggly underline to show where the author explains the evidence or interprets it in lines 14-16. You can see a sample of this activity in Book Commercial PowerPoint at <http://www.collinsed.com/about-bill-atwood/ela-resources/>

If you don't have transparency sleeves, have students put their finger on the place in the text and raise their hand. For more on this see the Look Back Game at www.collinsed.com/about-bill-atwood/ela-resources/

After working with the sample commercial, point out that in this model, the book commercial has two sections: the summary paragraph and the opinion. In the next part of the lesson, students will work on the first paragraph by learning to write a 1-2 sentence summary of a book.

Summary of Book: (20 min)

Remind students that in the sample commercial the author began with a claim or opinion: “If you don’t start reading *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, you may regret it for the rest of your life.” Next, the author quickly summarizes the novel. Tell students to notice that summarizing fiction and nonfiction texts can be done relatively quickly and easily. The trick is to get in a lot of information about the book’s plot or theme in a short space by learning how to combine sentences. Point out how the author does this in sentences two three, and four. Then tell them that today, we will use a sample template to practice.

Pass out a fiction summary template (B, C, or G) to each student (see pages 10, 12, 13). Then, together as a class, practice summarizing a book that everyone has read. I have included a sample for *Holes* by Louis Sachar (page 11 and slides 30-39 on PowerPoint) For more templates and samples, see Two Skills in One: Summarizing and Sentence Combining at www.collinsed.com/about-bill-atwood/ela-resources.

It can be helpful to put the template under a document camera or work with one on a whiteboard with the whole class. As you model, remind students that the claim sentence has already revealed the title of the book so that does not need to be repeated. Next, show students how to work with the template crossing out and adding material as you work. Read it aloud to see *how it sounds*, and then fix it up a bit. Show students that writing can be messy, especially the first drafts. Model how you might include the setting or sometimes a hint of the theme. Whatever you decide, don’t give away the ending! Also, keep it brief!

For other models, consider looking on the copyright page of hardcover books where you will often see a one sentence summary of the book. (But be careful not to show this to students too early in the process!) You can also find teasers in various book club order forms. Usually, they will summarize a book by using a question: *Will Harry Potter be able to...?*

After modeling one sample, have students try a summary for a book they have read. It could be a picture book or even a book they read when they were much younger. After the students finish, have them go back and re-read, checking to see that they have all the key focus areas. Next, have them darken capital letters and punctuation. Remind them to use commas between adjectives or introductory phrases.

Collect the summaries. Evaluate using the focus areas on the top of the summary template sheet and pass back the next day.

Closer: (3 min) As an exit ticket, ask students to list 3 features of a good book commercial.

Day Two

Review: (5 min) Open by asking students to think back on the previous lesson. Ask the class to do a quick write: In 2 minutes, list as many things as you can remember that should be included when you summarize a fictional book (title, author, adjectives, characters, problem, setting, hint of theme...).

When they have finished, have students draw a line under their writing, compare with a neighbor, and add an idea from the neighbor below the line. While they are talking, pass back book summaries that they wrote on the previous day. Give feedback as necessary. Sometimes I put a few student samples under the document camera and highlight strengths or fix weaknesses.

Introduction: (Activity #3 on PowerPoint) (5 min) Tell students that on this day, they will learn to write the second part of the book commercial in which they must offer one or more reasons to read a book and support the reasons with evidence from the book.

Show students a sample of a weak opinion. (Use Student Sample *Diary of Wimpy Kid* on page 16.) Ask students to do another quick write: *What are the main problems with this opinion, and how could it be made better?* 4+ lines 3 minutes.

After talking to a neighbor, lead students into a discussion of why it is important to have a variety of reasons and lots of evidence in order to convince someone. Tell them that thinking of reasons can be difficult, and then introduce the CATSMILE acronym on page 17.

Development: Using the Organizer to think of reasons and find evidence (10 min) After learning the acronym, model how to fill out a graphic organizer using a book that everyone has read. I used *Harry Potter* and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* on slides 42-43 in the PowerPoint. Be sure to model that writing *notes*, or very short sentences, work best on the organizer. Next model how to select one or two reasons and add specific detail from the text to support the reasons (slide 45). As you work with this organizer, have students add in other ideas to support other reasons.

When students feel comfortable, have them try to fill out the organizer for the book they summarized in the previous lesson.

Modeling the writing of paragraph 2: (10 min) When everyone has 1 to 3 reasons and evidence, tell them you will now model how to write the whole commercial using the organizer. First show them how you might number the reasons in the order that makes the most sense. Then, using the paper on pages 19 and 20, point out the focus areas that will guide you as you write: "Let's see, I need to have a clear opinion. I think I'll say it's really a winner because of the realistic plot lines and great drawings." As you write, model skipping lines, looking back at your organizer, adding specific details, and transitions. If students are ready, add in short explaining sentences after each piece of evidence. This extra challenge can become an expectation that might be required on later commercials (see additional focus areas on page 9). You don't have to write the whole paragraph but just enough that students can see how to proceed (see model on page 17 or slide 47).

Students Write and Edit: (15 min) Have students try the second paragraph following the model you showed. Remind students that this paragraph will follow the claim and summary paragraph they worked on yesterday. *Note:* It might be best to start with just one reason so that students work harder to include evidence to support. Avoid the temptation to just list reasons.

When students finish, they can check the focus areas by underlining the opinion, using the margins to number their reason(s) (1, 2, 3) and label their evidence (a, b, c), and boxing the transition. They can also check for conventions you are working on by marking complete sentences, darkening capitals and ending marks, or checking for issues with quotations or commas by highlighting.

Follow up:

After passing in the papers with feedback from the teacher, have students put the whole thing together using pages 22 and 23. Include both the revised claim and summary from the template (paragraph 1) and the reason section (paragraph 2). If you have given feedback on each part, they should include your suggestions in the final draft. If there are additional skills that the whole class needs to see modeled, you can put student work in the transparency sleeve and practice finding the good parts and fixing the weak or incomplete parts.

1 If you don't start reading *Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's*
2 *Stone*, you may regret it for the rest of your life! In this fantasy
3 novel, J.K. Rowling tells the tale of the 10-year-old orphan,
4 Harry Potter, who discovers he is a talented wizard and journeys
5 to Hogwarts Wizarding School. Here he meets his loyal friends
6 Ron and Hermione. Together they must solve mysteries and then
7 battle the powerful but evil Lord Voldemort.

8 I won't spoil it for you, but you'll have to trust me--this
9 book will keep you on the edge of your seat. For example, in
10 Chapter Ten, Harry and his friends take on a giant troll while
11 they are in the bathroom! Later in another scene, Harry nearly
12 falls to his death while riding on his broom. This kind of action
13 will keep you turning the pages long after your parents tell you to
14 "Turn off the light and go to sleep!" So, if you are looking for a
15 book to keep you up at night by pulling you into a wild plot with
16 lots of action, this is the one! Get it today!

Focus Correction Areas (FCAs) for Writing

To make criteria clearer for students, it is helpful to adopt a system of focus correcting for student writing. To do this, simply identify 3–4 areas for students to address in their first draft. Have students abbreviate these requirements and list them on the top left corner of the page. Then direct your feedback toward these criteria. For this assignment, consider some of the following.

FCAs

1. Clear opinion with Title and Author
2. Brief 2–3 sentence summary of plot (include genre, character, setting, problem)
3. 1–2 reasons why book is worth reading with specific text support
4. 1–2 short quotes (include context: when, what, who...)
5. Explain the quotes or evidence
6. 1–2 effective transitions
7. Use 1 attention getting beginning or powerful closer

Samples Attention Getting Beginnings

1. Question
2. Amazing fact/statistic/survey
3. Imagine
4. Description
5. Quotation
6. Story/anecdote
7. Explain the history/importance of the topic
8. Definition
9. Fragment: series of words
10. Pose a riddle/challenge
11. Establish credibility (I'm an expert...)

Powerful Closers

1. Call for action
2. Restate position or summarize main points
3. End with a thought-provoking question
4. Short, powerful statement—end with a zip!
5. Make a prediction
6. Quotation
7. Imagine
8. Answer question raised in the beginning

Transitional devices

1. Words/phrases: *first, furthermore, additionally, also, another, most importantly*
2. Repeat part of the previous sentence: *Not only is the book funny, but it's also ...*
3. Use a synonym to describe something in previous sentence: *Jeff Kinney's hysterical drawings* (replaces *funny illustrations* in previous sentence) *don't just make you laugh, they also inspire you to practice your own drawing skills.*

Claim

TEMPLATE C: Fiction Summary with prepositional phrase and using characters as subject of sentence

FCAs

genre and Author, 20

adj. Character(s) (setting) 20

Describe basic problem with vivid verb (avoid unimportant details) 60

name

In this (adj) genre

by Author,

(Adj.) Character(s) (wise, young, old, clever, brave, innocent, poor, lonely, desperate...)

problem and/or main idea with vivid verb (learns, discovers, journeys, fights, overcomes, searches, battles, encounters, meets, struggles, tries to, sets out on a, must, has to survive, faces...)

problem continued

The novel *Holes* should be on everyone's summer reading list!

Claim

TEMPLATE C: Fiction Summary with prepositional phrase and using characters as subject of sentence

FCAs

genre and Author, 20

adj. Character(s) (setting) 20

Describe basic problem with vivid verb (avoid unimportant details) 60

name

In this adventure story by Louis Sachar, a likeable but powerless boy

In this (adj) genre

by Author,

named Stanley Yelnats gets sent to a juvenile detention camp for a crime

(Adj.) Character(s) (adjectives: wise, young, old, clever, brave, innocent, poor, lonely, desperate...)

he did not commit. Here, while forced to dig holes to build character, he

problem and/or main idea with vivid verb (learns, discovers, journeys, fights, overcomes, searches, battles, encounters, meets, struggles, tries to, sets out on a, must, has to survive, faces...)

must find friendship, courage, and a path to ending his family's cursed life.

problem continued

Claim

TEMPLATE B: Fiction Summary with who phrase...

FCAs

genre and Author 20

(adj?) Character(s) (setting?) 20

Describe basic problem (avoid unimportant details) 60

name

This (adj) genre

by Author

is about

(adj?)

Character(s)

who.....describe problem (give setting if important)

problem continued

Claim

TEMPLATE G: Fiction Summary using the author's name as subject of sentence

FCAs

In g phrase with some key detail 20

Characters, setting, or theme with adjectives 20

Describe basic problem with good verb (no details) 60

name

In this (adj) genre

Author

Verb (tells the tale of, describes, writes, warns the reader by describing, teaches, explains, offers us, entertains/scares/teaches/warns the reader with, creates/imagines/weaves/builds a...)

describe main Character(s) with adjectives (wise, old, clever, brave, innocent, poor, lonely, desperate...)

or describe setting (a village, country, town, community...)

or describe theme (revenge, triumph, struggle...)

problem and/or main idea with good verb (learns, discovers, journeys, fights, overcomes, searches, battles, encounters, meets, struggles, tries to, sets out on a, must...)

Samples

B. This classic fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm is about two abandoned children who must fight an evil witch who wants to eat them.

B. This incredibly scary fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm tells of two clever children who are abandoned in the forest by their father and wicked stepmother. After being lured into a house made of candy, they must escape from an evil witch who wants to fatten them up and cook them.

B. This classic children's story by E.B. White, ...

Samples

C. In this important fable by Aesop, a quick but lazy rabbit loses a race to a slow but determined turtle.

C. In J.K. Rowling's mysterious and compelling fantasy, a young boy named Harry discovers his magical powers and begins his education at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft. He, together with his friends Hermione and Ron, must battle the evil Lord Voldemort who wants to rule the world.

C. In the first chapter of the classic children's tale by E.B. White, a sensitive but brave farm-girl named Fern must...

Samples

G. In this clever and well-illustrated picture book, William Steig tells the story of a sweet but impulsive donkey who finds a magic pebble but accidentally changes himself into a rock.

G. In this magical picture book, Maurice Sendak creates a magical world filled with friendly but scary-looking monsters. It begins as...

G. In this novella, John Steinbeck tells a compelling but tragic tale about the impossibility of friendship in a harsh world. It opens with...

Claim

Nonfiction Summary

Level 3: S "T" A r t topic sentence: Source "Title" Author right verb topic

FCAs

Source/genre, "Title," Author 30

right verb 10

Clearly captures topic/big idea without details 60

name

In this

Source/genre,

Author

right verb (writes, reports, describes, argues, makes the case, explains, illustrates, informs, recounts, advises, warns, reviews, condemns, criticizes...)

topic or big/main idea...

Student Sample *Diary of Wimpy Kid*
What could make this paragraph better?

Everyone should read Diary of a Wimpy Kid because it is funny. It's really funny and it will make you laugh because it is so funny. Another reason is that it is goofy and it's humorous. Most kids will laugh when they read it. You will like it because it is funny and hilarious. All of the parts are funny.

Improved Version

1 Everyone should read *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* because
2 the plot lines are funny and believable. For example,
3 midway through the book in an episode called *Halloween*,
4 Greg and Rowley go trick or treating but their moms
5 make it miserable by changing their costumes in
6 ridiculous ways. Rowley's mom takes his knight sword
7 and gives him a glow stick! Later, they get attacked by
8 high schoolers with fire extinguishers and have to sneak
9 home to avoid getting soaked. These kinds of things
10 happen all the time on Halloween or at least you feel like
11 they *could* happen. This is why *The Diary of a Wimpy*
12 *Kid* is a perfect book for all kids-- you will feel like it's
13 happening to you and you will laugh out loud!

CATSMILE

Helping Students Discuss Literature

C characters



A action

T the point of view

S setting

M mood

I illustrations/images

L language (point of view)

E educational value or theme



Reason	Evidence/details/support

Paragraph 2 of Book Commercial

FCA Clear Opinion and closer 2 pts.

Name:

FCA 1-2 convin. reasons w/ sp text evidence 6 pts.

Date:

FCA 1+ transition 2 pts.

Comp. sent. 2 pts

skip

Begin here

skip

Book Commercial # _____

FCA Clear Opinion Sentence/Closer 2 pts. Name: _____

FCA Brief plot summary follows template 3 pts. Date: _____

FCA 1-2 convin. reasons with sp. text evidence 4 pts. Comp. sent. 2 pts

FCA 1 + transition 1 pts.

skip

Begin here:

skip

skip