



Research-Based Writing Supported by 30 Years of Proven Results

April 2017

The Collins Writing Exchange

Ideas, Tips, and Resources on Writing from [Collins Education Associates](#)

Featured Writing Assignment

Narrative Writing: Telling Real or Imagined Stories

Narrative writing, which includes both invented and personal stories, is not just about creativity. It is an excellent vehicle for developing a range of writing skills, including many that can be used to strengthen opinion/argument and informative writing.

Collins Writing has resources that give students both instruction and practice to help develop their narrative writing skills. Use the links below to get your students engaged with these essential assignments. Each is a fully planned lesson with prewriting activities and teaching suggestions.

- [Retelling a Story](#) (grades 1-3)
- [Creating a Historical Diary](#) (grades 3-5)
- [Writing a Personal Essay](#) (grades 6-8)
- [Creating a Folktale for Young Children](#) (grades 9-12)

Special Note:

To support your teachers' use of the program, consider having a Collins Associate demonstrate one of these narrative assignments or other lessons in your school's classrooms. To learn more about Bill Atwood's new workshop, *Tell a Story About a Time*, contact us by [email](#) or at 1-800-932-4477.

The Big Three

A New Workshop Features New Resources

This winter, John Collins introduced The Big Three, a workshop that focuses on three critical learning strategies:

1. Getting information by distilling and summarizing complex text
2. Recalling information with a retrieval routine to promote retention of new content
3. Organizing information using compare and contrast strategies

The hands-on workshops were enthusiastically received as were the new handouts

and resources.

As part of The Big Three workshop, John created a series of resources to help students create a compare and contrast grid that leads to a well-organized, content-rich, multiple-paragraph essay.

Scaffolding a Compare and Contrast Essay

by John Collins, EdD

[View New Compare and Contrast Free Resources](#)

This new teacher resource outlines the steps, offers a completed grid, and provides a multiple-paragraph essay based on the three modes of writing: narrative, informative, and opinion/argument. These helpful resources give teachers and students a specific example of how to turn a completed grid into an essay, as well as a clear description of the similarities and differences among the three modes of writing.

Special Note:

If you are interested in bringing this highly interactive, practical workshop to your school, contact us by [email](#) or at 1-800-932-4477. Whether you use the Collins Writing Program or not, this engaging professional development session provides dozens of next-day ideas and strategies for all elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

New Blog Post by Bill Atwood

Make Content Review Fun, Active, and Effective



Teachers frequently tell us, "I taught this concept or skill, but the kids don't remember it!" The good news is that there is ample research on effective ways to review skills and content with our students. The best news is that Collins Associate Bill Atwood makes those review strategies both lively and playful.

"Reviewing material with students doesn't have to be drudgery," insists Atwood. Using research on how to rehearse and retain content knowledge, Bill's new blog post, "[Make Content Review Fun and Active](#)," offers sure-fire strategies that work and keep students engaged.

Special Note:

To preview Bill's groundbreaking book for math teachers, *How Did You Get That?* or his innovative DVD *Math Words in Motion*, visit Bill's [web page](#).

Convention Wisdom

One-Minute Clinic: Quotation Marks



If your students have difficulty with quotation marks and properly punctuating quotes, don't despair: it is a common problem. In fact, "Mechanical Error with Quotation" is the sixth most common error among college freshman according to Andrea and Karen Lunsford's study called [The Top Twenty](#).

Look at the four examples below. Can you identify the one that has no errors in

it? Can you identify the problems with the other examples?

1. The term fake news has been talked about frequently. TV's "bloviators" mention it almost daily.
2. "The secret of getting ahead is getting started", Mark Twain famously said.
3. The teacher asked, "What was Dylan's favorite song?" I didn't really know. Could it be "Masters of War"?
4. There were two main themes in his song "My Town:" It was lonely, and it was cold.

See the [answer key](#) to check on your answers. You can also download a PDF with essential quotation mark rules from our *Check Mate* quick reference guides.

- [Level P](#) (grades 2-3)
- [Level A](#) (grades 4-6)
- [Level B](#) (grades 6-9)
- [Level C](#) (grades 9-12)

Special Note:

To help your students with the rules of writing see *Check Mate*, the student guide for essential conventions. Or order the *Essential Conventions* Teacher Resource Guide (\$25 for the PDF; \$30 for hard copy) from our [web store](#). You can also download free [Samplers](#) of each Teacher Resource Guide to try with your students.

Quick Links

Standards-Based Focus Correction Areas for Narrative Writing

With narrative writing making up anywhere from a third (in elementary grades) to a fifth (in secondary grades) of the writing that students do, it is important that we have clear goals for improving students' narrative. After a careful review of current writing standards, we identified high-priority Focus Correction Areas (FCAs) for narrative writing for grades K-12.

Use the links below to review these critical FCAs. Each includes a brief description of the FCA and an example to clarify it.

Narrative FCAs:

[Grades K-2](#)

[Grades 3-5](#)

[Grades 6-8](#)

[Grades 9-12](#)

Be sure to visit the Focus Correction Areas section of our [Free Resources](#) web page to preview and download detailed information about narrative, informative, and opinion/argument FCAs. Each set of FCAs includes FCA grids, related vocabulary, and teaching suggestions.

Upcoming Events

**John Collins, Kristine Gibson, Cheryl McDonough,
and Bill Atwood in Pennsylvania, Michigan,**

Vermont, and New Hampshire



<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Session</i>	<i>Grades</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
April 20, 2017	CIU #10, West Decatur, PA	<u>Designing Curriculum-Based Writing Assignments</u>	4-12	John Collins
May 11, 2017	SERESC, Bedford, NH	<u>It's All in the Design! Creating Cross-Curricular Writing Assignments</u>	2-12	Bill Atwood
July 10-14, 2017	Bennington, VT	<u>Designing an Effective Writing Program</u>	K-8	Bill Atwood
July 12-13, 2017	MI Reading Association, Bellaire, MI	The Literacy Demands of the SAT Collins Writing: A Framework for Literacy Across the Curriculum The Literacy Concerns of the Secondary Teacher <u>See page 10 of conference program for session details.</u>	K-12	Cheryl McDonough
October 9, 2017	Curwensville, PA	<u>How Did You Get That? Improving Written Responses in Math</u>	K-12	Kristine Gibson
October 19, 2017	CIU #10, West Decatur, PA	<u>Developing a Strong Foundation of Writing Skills Through the Collins Writing</u>	K-3	Kristine Gibson

		Program (Day 1)		
November 6-8, 2017	Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE), Philadelphia, PA	Blueprint for Powerhouse Assessments (Details to Come)	Middle School	Cheryl McDonough

[View more training events here.](#)

Workshops and institutes are being now added for summer and fall. If you don't see something in your area, check back soon. Or give us a call at 800-932-4477 to arrange a workshop in your area.

Collins Training

Professional Development for Your Staff

Would you like to speak to a Collins Associate about offering a professional development session in your school or district? [Email](#) us or call us at 800-932-4477 to learn about options and pricing or to set up a FREE phone consultation. We offer highly competitive rates and will customize the training to suit your school's needs.

Collins Institutes

Stretch Your PD Dollars!

Host a [Collins Institute](#) in your school or district and open it to outside participation to underwrite some or all of the costs of the workshop.

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About Our Newsletter

Helpful Resources for Busy Educators

Our goal is to make our newsletter a useful link to ideas, research, and resources. We hope you will share it with other educators. Please forward *The Collins Writing Exchange* to your colleagues who might be interested.

For those of you who had this issue forwarded to you, [join our mailing list](#) and receive future issues directly.

Missed a previous issue? Read it now at the [Collins Writing Exchange Archive](#). Or click on a recent edition:

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[November 2016](#) [October 2016](#) [September 2016](#) [Summer 2016](#)

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