

June 2017

# *The Collins Writing Exchange*

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

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*New! Online Professional Development*

## **Coffee with Collins Webinar**



As you plan your support for Collins Writing next year, consider what other schools are doing: a 1 to 2½ hour online private webinar with John Collins or your Collins Associate. Participants share successes and ideas and also receive responses to their specific questions and concerns. Best of all, it saves you time and money! See our [Coffee with Collins flyer](#) for more information or call us at 1-800-932-4477.

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*Featured Writing Assignment*

## **Fun, Thoughtful Assignments for End of the Year**

Asking students to have a little fun, interact with one another, and do precise, thoughtful writing is a winning combination. And the end of the school year--or during a summer session--is the perfect time for an assignment with this combination.

The writing projects below will engage your students and lead them toward a carefully written, informational composition. Each assignment is a fully developed, ready-to-use lesson complete with suggested Focus Correction Areas (FCAs).

- [Making Careful Observations: Using "Slow-Motion Sketches" to See Details](#) (grades 1-3)
- [Making and Explaining a Tangram Puzzle: Writing Instructions for Someone Else](#) (grades 3-5)
- [Collecting and Interpreting Data: Gathering Information About Your Classmates and Comparing It to National Statistics](#) (grades 6-8)
- [It's a Must! Making Thoughtful Recommendations](#) (grades 9-12)

*Special Note:*

To support your teachers' use of the program, consider having a Collins Associate demonstrate one of these assignments or model other lessons in your classrooms. To learn more about our [professional development options](#), contact us by [email](#) or at 1-800-932-4477.

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### Summer Reading Recommendations

## Suggestions for Professional Reading This Summer

As educators wrap up the school year, they also enter their "sharpen the saw" time of year. With no daily lesson plans to prepare or papers to grade, summer is a time when many of us catch up on deferred reading, including professional reading.



For the last two summer issues of the *Exchange*, we asked Collins Associates to make recommendations of professional books and articles they feel have the most interest and relevance for the Collins Writing community. Annually, it is one of our most popular features. Check out the [2017 summer reading suggestions](#).

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### Classroom Strategies That Work

## Practical Tips for Peer Editing



While most teachers agree that peer editing is an important aspect of the writing process, it is also one of the most difficult to manage effectively. There are myriad problems in fostering an environment that truly benefits students and their writing.

In her *Education Update* (ASCD) article, "[Peer Feedback Without the Sting](#)," Sarah McKibben offers helpful parameters for promoting high-quality peer feedback in the classroom. Collins Writing teachers will be pleased to see that using FCAs helps with two of McKibben's key parameters: "be specific" and "be helpful."

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### Convention Wisdom

## One-Minute Clinic: **C**apital **L**etters

We all tire of marking capital letter mistakes in our students' writing ("capital punishment," as some students call it), especially when it seems the rules for capital letters are fairly straightforward. But the reality is that beyond the rules for first word in a sentence, names, and the pronoun *I*, there are some subtleties that can be easy to trip over.

Look at the four sentences below, and see if you can determine which one has no capitalization mistakes. Can you identify the problems with the other sentences?

1. *My dad always quotes lines from Uncle Nick's favorite Dylan song, "Blowin' in the Wind."*
2. *My Uncle took us to the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in Cleveland last summer.*
3. *After we returned, Dad--who thinks he could teach a rock and roll 101 course--kept lecturing us about the significance of music from the sixties.*

4. Then mom reminded us that dad once had a band that toured all over the midwest.

See the [answer key](#) to check on your answers. Download a PDF with essential capitalization rules from our *Check Mate* quick reference guides for:

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

*Special Note:*

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

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### Quick Links

## Standards-Based FCAs for Opinion/Argument Writing

Today's standards place opinion/argument writing at the heart of academic writing. It's also a mode of writing that many students need to strengthen. As Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein say in their widely used book, *They Say/I Say*, students need an "inventory of basic moves" to succeed with academic writing.

For years Collins Associates have been stressing opinion/argument writing. We have also reviewed the standards to identify priority FCAs for this essential mode of writing. Use the links below to see FCA guides for each grade level that include a brief description and examples that clarify.

### Opinion/Argument 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.

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### Upcoming Events

## Kristine Gibson and Cheryl McDonough at AMLE 2017 in Philadelphia, Bill Atwood in Vermont



<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Session</i>	<i>Grades</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
July 10-14, 2017	Bennington, VT	<a href="#">Designing an Effective Writing Program</a>	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  <a href="#">See page 10 of conference program for session details.</a>	5-12  K-12  5-12	Cheryl McDonough
August 15, 2017	CIU #10, State College, PA	<a href="#">The Big Three: Research-Based Practices That Make the Greatest Impact on Student Achievement</a>	3-12	John Collins
October 9, 2017	Curwensville, PA	<a href="#">How Did You Get That? Improving Written Responses in Math</a>	K-12	Kristine Gibson
October 9, 2017	Johnstown, PA	<a href="#">Focus on Three Essential Writing Assignments (Day 2)</a>	3-12	John Collins
October 9, 2017	Pittsburgh, PA	<a href="#">Improving Student Performance Through Writing and Thinking Across the Curriculum</a>	7-12	Henry Dembowski
October 19, 2017	CIU #10, State College, PA	<a href="#">Text and Evidence-Based Writing: TDA, DBO, and SAT</a>	3-12	John Collins
October 19, 2017	CIU #10, West Decatur, PA	<a href="#">Developing a Strong Foundation of Writing Skills Through the Collins Writing Program (Day 1)</a>	K-3	Kristine Gibson
November 6-8, 2017	AMLE2017 Conference, Philadelphia, PA	Blueprint for Powerhouse Assessments (Details to Come)	5-9	Cheryl McDonough
November 6-8, 2017	AMLE2017 Conference, Philadelphia, PA	<b>Sessions:</b> <a href="#">Write to Learn: The Power Behind Writing Across the Curriculum</a>  <a href="#">A Picture Is Worth 1000 Words: How to Use Graphics to Improve Math Performance</a>  <a href="#">Dare to Summarize--Dream Big. Start Small--How to Set the Groundwork for This Critical Skill</a>  <a href="#">The Power of Quickwrites and How to Use Them to Improve Content Understanding</a>	5-9	Kristine Gibson
January	CIU #10, West	<a href="#">Coffee with Kristine:</a>	K-3	Kristine

25, 2018	Decatur, PA	<a href="#">Connect, Share, and Fine-Tune (Web Session)</a>		Gibson
February 1, 2018	CIU #10, West Decatur, PA	<a href="#">Coffee with Collins (Web Session)</a>	3-12	John Collins
March 7, 2018	CIU #10, West Decatur, PA	<a href="#">Meeting the Challenges of the PA Core, Sentence Building, and Essential Conventions with the Collins Writing Program (Day 2)</a>	K-3	Kristine Gibson
May 8, 2018	CIU #10, West Decatur, PA	<a href="#">Designing Curriculum-Based Writing Assignments, Unit Planning, and Grading Calibration in the Primary Grades (Day 3)</a>	K-3	Kristine Gibson

[View more training events here.](#)

Workshops and institutes are being now added for summer and next school year. If you don't see something in your area, check back soon!

### *Collins In-Service*

## 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*

## Save 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.

## WHY OFFER A COLLINS WRITING PROGRAM INSTITUTE?

To earn **FREE TRAINING** for your school or district!

[Click to Learn More!](#)

### *About Our Newsletter*

## Helpful Resources for Busy Educators

Our goal is to make our newsletter rich with ideas, research, and resources related to writing and thinking skills instruction. 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](#) to receive future issues directly.

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

[May 2017](#)   [April 2017](#)   [March 2017](#)   [February 2017](#)   [January 2017](#)  
[December 2016](#)   [November 2016](#)   [October 2016](#)   [September 2016](#)

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