

March 2017

The Collins Writing Exchange

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

Featured Writing Assignment

Informative Writing: Conveying Information and Ideas

Informative/explanatory writing is the mode of writing used most often outside of the classroom. It is used to convey information and ideas clearly and accurately to others. Informative writing can take many forms, including articles, essays, summaries, and instructions. The goal is always to inform, describe, or explain.

Collins Writing publications recommend a variety of informative/explanatory tasks. Use the links below to get started with these essential assignments.

- [Write an Expert's Alphabet Book](#) (grades 1-3)
- [Writing a Piece for a Classroom Time Capsule](#) (grades 3-5)
- [Creating a Multimedia Presentation](#) (grades 6-8)
- [Class Log: Creating a Description of Class for a Student Who Was Absent](#) (grades 6-12)

Special Note:

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

New Narrative Workshop by Bill Atwood

"Tell a Story About a Time . . ."

For years, Bill Atwood has been developing strategies and resources aimed at helping students become better narrative writers. His work in this area reflects the research that storytelling can also be an important aspect of informative and opinion writing.



Bill's practical, fast-paced (and always fun!) workshops include easy-to-use resources and text models that can be put to use in the classroom immediately. His upcoming narrative writing workshop in Bedford, NH, is aimed at

educators in grades 1-8. [Learn more!](#)

Special Note:

If you are interested in Bill doing a narrative writing workshop for your school or district, contact us by [email](#) or at 800-932-4477.

FAQ: Featuring Gary Chadwell, Collins Associate and Author

With So Much Content to Teach, How Can I Fit in Writing?

It is well proven that writing enhances learning, yet few teachers feel they have the time for students to write about new learning as often as they would like. Time is the enemy of writing across the curriculum in most classrooms. In every school he works with, Collins Associate Gary Chadwell encounters concerns about insufficient time for writing. Gary offers perspectives and suggestions on this vexing problem in his FAQ, "[With So Much Content to Teach, How Can I Fit in Writing?](#)"

Convention Wisdom

One-Minute Clinic: Apostrophes



You don't have to be a card-carrying member of the [Apostrophe Protection Society](#) (dedicated to ending "abuse" of members' favorite punctuation mark) to notice that apostrophes cause many writers problems. For many young writers, apostrophes often become a favored accessory to form plural nouns. Even some mature writers struggle with the difference between *it's* and *its* or *you're* and *your*.

Apostrophes really have just a couple of simple functions. They are used to show possession (*the car's engine*) and to mark omitted letters in contractions (*it's* for *it is*; *can't* for *cannot*). With only a few exceptions, apostrophes are not used to make plurals. Look at the sentences below. Which sentence contains no apostrophe mistakes? Can you identify the apostrophe abuses in the other sentences?

Were having dinner with the Walker's tonight.

Jazz music of the 1960's was featured in Chris's and Paul's film.

Ms. Warwick's note said no &'s should have been used in Jay and Molly's submission since it was a formal proposal.

The DVD's were my sister-in-law's favorite possession's.

See the [answer key](#) to check on your answers. Download a PDF with essential apostrophe rules from our *Check Mate* guides for students and Tip Sheets for Specialized Rules from our Teacher Resource 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 apostrophes and other 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

Ten Percent Summary Resources

For grades 3-12, the most powerful informative writing assignment is the Ten Percent Summary. This is an essential assignment for students because it involves close reading, builds content knowledge, and develops essential writing skills.

10%
Summary

If you're looking for sources of articles for your students to read in different content areas, see our [annotated list](#) of free online resources for articles. Use our graphic organizers--the one-page version ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) or [two-page version](#) for less experienced writers--to guide your students' efforts.

Upcoming Events

John Collins, Kristine Gibson, and Bill Atwood in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New Hampshire



Date	Location	Session	Grades	Presenter
March 15, 2017	MUJC, New Providence, NJ	More Writing ... Less Grading: A Manageable Approach to Writing Across the Curriculum Details Register	K-5	Kristine Gibson
March 22, 2017	CIU #10, West Decatur, PA	Opinion and Argument Writing	4-12	John Collins
March 24, 2017	Pittsburgh, PA	Three Essential Writing Assignments: Preparing for the PA Core	3-12	John Collins
April 4, 2017	MUJC, New Providence, NJ	More Writing ... Less Grading: A Manageable Approach to	6-12	Kristine Gibson

		Writing Across the Curriculum Details Register		
April 5, 2017	SERESC, Bedford, NH	Tell a Story About a Time: Improving Narrative Writing	1-8	Bill Atwood
April 20, 2017	CIU #10, West Decatur, PA	Designing Curriculum-Based Writing Assignments	4-12	John Collins
May 11, 2017	SERESC, Bedford, NH	It's All in the Design! Creating Cross-Curricular Writing Assignments	2-12	Bill Atwood

[View more training events here.](#)

New offerings are added regularly, so if you don't see something in your area, check back soon.

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.

WHY OFFER A COLLINS WRITING PROGRAM INSTITUTE?

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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:

[February 2017](#) [January 2017](#) [December 2016](#) [November 2016](#)

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

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