



Research-Based Writing Supported by Over 30 Years of Proven Results

November 2017

The Collins Writing Exchange

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

Featured Writing Assignments

The Ten Percent Summary: A Focus on Close Reading and Careful Writing

The Ten Percent Summary remains one of the most robust assignments we can present to our students. It requires students to closely read complex text, analyze the content, and then distill that content down to its core ideas in roughly 10% of the original text.

Collins teachers from elementary grades to high school are using the Ten Percent Summary to build both reading and writing skills. We have identified free online resources where you can find articles for your students (even for primary grades!) to read and summarize. See our [Annotated List of Resources Available on the Web by Grade and Subject Area](#).

Use the resources below to help your students "get the gist" of summarizing engaging articles.

- ["Summarize to Get the Gist"](#) (an *Educational Leadership ONLINE* article by Dr. John Collins)
- [S "T" A r t Graphic Organizer](#) (elementary & middle school, 2 pages)
- [S "T" A r t Graphic Organizer](#) (secondary, 1 page)
- [S "T" A r t Graphic Organizer](#) (Spanish, secondary, 1 page)

Special Note:

Feedback from teachers on our in-class support is excellent! Consider having a Collins Associate demonstrate a Ten Percent Summary or model other lessons in your classrooms. To learn more, contact us by [email](#) or at 800-932-4477.

Collins Writing Tip of the Month

Have Students Self-Assess Their FCAs

Focus Correcting is a selective approach to correcting student writing. Using Focus Correction Areas (FCAs) has benefits beyond clarifying expectations for students and focusing our instruction: it also simplifies assessment. FCAs make evaluating

papers easier and more efficient.

We can also use FCAs to engage our students so they more effectively self-assess their work. By asking them to check specific aspects of their writing by marking their papers (e.g., underlining or circling certain features of their writing) before they turn them in, we simultaneously reinforce good writing traits and save time for the teacher.

FAQ Series

For more details, see the [FAQ: How do we get students to check their work more carefully before they turn papers in?](#)

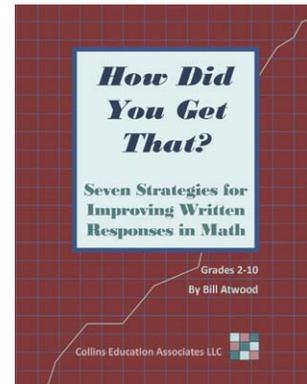
Research into Action

Four Kinds of Writing in Math

In a recent article in *Teaching Children Mathematics*, authors Janine Firmender, Tutita Casa, and Madelynn Colonnese stress that it is important to have students explain and justify their mathematical ideas in writing. See the [Marshall Memo summary](#) of their article, "Write On," in which they suggest four kinds of math writing.

See Bill Atwood's suggestions for thoughtful [math writing prompts](#) from his book *How Did You Get That?* Also use the links below for ready-to-use, grade-specific Type One and Type Two prompts for math writing.

- [Grades K-3](#)
- [Grades 4-6](#)
- [Grades 7-12](#)



Available in Print & PDF Versions

Professional Development

Collins Online Conversations: Menu of Topics



Looking for an effective way to support your teachers' use of Collins Writing, but don't have an available in-service day? Do what other Collins schools are doing: Schedule an affordable 1- to 2½-hour online professional development session focused on your staff's needs. We call these sessions "Collins Online Conversations."

Formerly called "Coffee with Collins," the enhanced "Conversations" features a [detailed menu of training topics](#) in 10 categories, such as:

Content-Specific Writing

- Developing content-specific assignments (i.e., lab reports, test essay questions, slide show presentations, etc.)
- Comparing and contrasting
- How to sound like a scientist
- Improving general academic and content-specific vocabulary

We also design sessions that are tailored to your school improvement plans. For more information call us at 800-932-4477 or see our "[Collins Online Conversations](#)" [flier](#) with a menu of sample topics for online training and follow-up.

Convention Wisdom

One-Minute Writing Clinic: Use LUCI to Avoid Common Comma Errors

Use the acronym LUCI (pronounced *Lucy*) to remind your students about comma uses that are sometimes problematic:

- L**ists
- U**nnecessary elements
- C**oordinating conjunctions
- I**ntroductory elements

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

1. *First responders must be able to think on their feet react quickly to sudden changes, and ignore distractions.*
2. *These traits, unfortunately, are not found in all applicants.*
3. *Although rap music, which descended from the Jamaican tradition of toasting, has been popular for four decades Jay-Z was the first rapper inducted into the Songwriter's Hall of Fame in 2017.*
4. *By the way, Northwestern University has the smallest enrollment of any Big Ten Conference school yet it is competitive in football most every year.*

See the [answer key](#) to check your answers. Download a PDF with reminders about the comma rules from our *Check Mate* guides for:

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

Also, see our special LUCI Tip Sheet from the Teacher Resource Guide for:

- [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 commas and other rules of writing. Or purchase the [Essential Conventions](#) Teacher Resource Guide (\$25 for the PDF; \$30 for the hard copy). Download [free samplers](#) of each Teacher Resource Guide to try with your students.

Quick Links

Build Discipline-Specific and General Academic

Vocabulary with Vocabulary Cards

Teaching vocabulary terms is one of the most important activities we undertake to ensure that students grow academically. Teachers increasingly understand the importance of teaching general academic vocabulary as well as discipline-specific terms.

In their popular book *Building Academic Vocabulary*, John Marzano and Debra Pickering suggest teachers can help students internalize vocabulary by having them use cards containing a term, a definition, a student-developed non-linguistic representation, and the term used in a meaningful sentence.

We have developed lists of high-value general academic terms for both elementary and secondary students. Each word comes with a student-friendly definition and an example sentence using the word. See our [introduction to the lists](#), then use the links below to access our lists of terms and our vocabulary card template that provides your students with a tool they can use again and again to expand their vocabulary.

- [Vocabulary Card Template](#)
- [General Academic Vocabulary Terms - Grades K-2](#)
- [General Academic Vocabulary Terms - Grades 3-5](#)
- [General Academic Vocabulary Terms - Grades 6-12](#)

Upcoming Events

John Collins and Bill Atwood in Pennsylvania; Kristine Gibson in New Jersey



| Date | Location | Session | Grades | Presenter |
|----------|--|---|--------|-----------------|
| 11/16/17 | Allegheny IU #3, Homestead, PA | Text- and Evidence-Based Writing: TDA, DBQ, and SAT | 4-12 | John Collins |
| 11/16/17 | Central Susquehanna IU, Milton, PA | Collins Writing for Math: How Did You Get That? | 2-12 | Bill Atwood |
| 12/7/17 | CAIU, Enola, PA | Text- and Evidence-Based Writing: TDA, DBQ, and SAT | 3-12 | John Collins |
| 12/20/17 | Morris-Union Jointure Commission, New Providence, NJ | Four Essential Writing Assignments: Preparing for the NJ Student Learning Standards | 4-12 | Kristine Gibson |
| 1/17/18 | Morris-Union Jointure Commission, New Providence, NJ | Cross-Curricular Literacy: The Smart Path to PARCC Success | 3-8 | Kristine Gibson |
| 1/23/18 | Morris-Union | How Did You Get That? | 3-12 | Kristine |

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|---------|--|---|------|-----------------|
| | Jointure Commission, New Providence, NJ | Improving Open-Ended Responses in Mathematics | | Gibson |
| 1/25/18 | CIU #10, West Decatur, PA | Coffee with Kristine: Connect, Share, and Fine-Tune | K-3 | Kristine Gibson |
| 1/30/18 | Central Susquehanna IU, Milton, PA | Collins Writing for Math: How Did You Get That? | 2-12 | Bill Atwood |

We add new sessions to the list regularly, so 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, 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 up to outside participation to underwrite some or all of the costs of the workshop. New sessions have been recently added!

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 rich with ideas, research, and resources related to writing and thinking skills instruction. We hope you share *The Collins Writing Exchange* with 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 an issue? Read all previous issues at [The Collins Writing Exchange Archive](#). Or click on a recent edition:

October 2017

The Book Commercial, College Essay Editing Checklist, the Power of Past Papers, and More

September 2017

Six Writing Principles, Coffee with Collins, Parents Do Matter, and More

June 2017

Coffee with Collins, Summer Reading List, No-Strings Peer Editing, and More

May 2017

Writing an End-of-Year Reflection, Emerging Writers and FCAs, Creating Great Type Two Prompts, and More

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