



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

October 2017

# The Collins Writing Exchange

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

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## Featured Writing Assignments

### College Essays: How to Support Students

It's college-essay writing season for many of our high school seniors. The [2017-2018 essay prompts](#) for this high-stakes task are available at The Common Application.

Teachers can help prepare their students for the essay by using John Collins's popular assignment, [Preparing a College Essay](#). It's a fully developed, ready-to-use writing project and includes an invaluable resource: a [College Essay Editing Checklist](#).

Focus  
Sheet

### College Essay Editing Checklist

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- Try a vivid description.  
Go back over your essay and look for a person, place, or thing. Then try to describe it so well the reader could draw it. The description need not be long, but it should be vivid.

Of course, students of all ages should have practice with the kind of reflective and thoughtful writing required on college essays. The assignments below are complete lesson plans and consistent with the themes suggested by The Common Application. Select one and help prepare your students for their future!

- [I Am Unique](#) (primary grades)
- [Describing a Special Place](#) (upper elementary grades)
- [Writing a Personal Essay](#) (middle school)
- [Preparing a College Essay](#) (high school)

#### Special Note:

In-class support for teachers is our most popular professional development. Consider having a Collins Associate demonstrate one of these assignments or model other lessons in your classrooms. To learn more, contact us by [email](#) or at 1-800-932-4477.

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#### Collins Writing Tip of the Month

**Number Compositions and Use Past Papers!**



## Convention Wisdom

# One-Minute Writing Clinic: Complete Sentences

In his book *How to Write a Sentence: And How to Read One*, noted author Stanley Fish quotes poet Kenneth Koch:

*One day the Nouns were clustered in the street.  
An Adjective walked by, with her dark beauty.  
The Nouns were struck, moved, changed.  
The next day a Verb drove up, and created the Sentence.  
(from the poem "Permanently," 1960)*

Fish describes a sentence as "a structure of logical relationships." That may be so, but avoiding problems with sentences remains a challenge for many writers. Even experienced writers sometimes have problems with these logical relationships.

Look at the four examples below, and see if you can determine which one is a complete sentence with no problems. Can you identify the problems with the others?

1. *The Tivoli Day festival takes place every fall, it is always well attended.*
2. *Every runner worked out, ate well, and was hoping for cool weather on race day.*
3. *Orville and Wilbur Wright designed their first airplane in Dayton, Ohio; they flew it first in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.*
4. *Columbus Day is celebrated in the United States in October it has been a national holiday since 1937.*

See the [answer key](#) to check on your answers. Download a PDF with reminders about complete sentences from our *Check Mate* student folder for each level:

### **RULE 1. COMPLETE SENTENCES**

Every sentence requires the first word to be capitalized. Each sentence expresses a complete thought and has a subject that tells what the sentence is about. It also has a verb (also called a predicate) that tells what action takes place.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Verb (or Predicate)</u>
Alexander Graham Bell	invented the telephone.
The duob in your eye	acts larger in the dark.

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

## Quick Links

# Standards-Based FCAs for Opinion/Argument Writing

Opinion/Argument writing remains a focus in our classrooms as students work to develop compositions that are clear and well supported. We have combed through the standards and developed a priority list of Focus Correction Areas (FCAs) specifically related to this genre of writing. Use the links below to get our grade-specific FCAs, which include descriptions and examples that will help you guide your students' writing.

- [Grades K-2 Opinion FCAs](#)
- [Grades 3-5 Opinion FCAs](#)
- [Grades 6-8 Argument FCAs](#)
- [Grades 9-12 Argument FCAs](#)

*October & November Events*

**Cheryl McDonough and Kristine Gibson at AMLE2017; John Collins in Pennsylvania; Gary Chadwell in Florida**



<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Session</i>	<i>Grades</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
10/19/17	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
10/19/17	CIU #10, State College, PA	<a href="#">Developing a Strong Foundation of Writing Skills Through the Collins Writing Program (Day 1)</a>	K-3	Kristine Gibson
10/23/17	Central Susquehanna IU, Milton, PA	<a href="#">Text- and Evidence-Based Writing: TDA, DBQ, and SAT</a>	3-12	John Collins
10/26/17	Macclenny, FL	<a href="#">Improving Student Performance Through Writing and Thinking Across the Curriculum</a>	K-12	Gary Chadwell
11/6-8/17	AMLE2017 Conference, Philadelphia, PA	<a href="#">Blueprint for Powerhouse Assessments</a>	5-9	Cheryl McDonough
11/6-8/17	AMLE2017 Conference, Philadelphia, PA	<p><b>Sessions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Write to Learn: The Power Behind Writing Across the Curriculum</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">A Picture Is Worth 1000 Words: How to Use Graphics to Improve Math</a></li> </ul>	5-9	Kristine Gibson

		<p><u>Performance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Dare to Summarize-- Dream Big, Start Small--How to Set the Groundwork for This Critical Skill</u></li> <li>• <u>The Power of Quickwrites and How to Use Them to Improve Content Understanding</u></li> </ul>		
11/7/17	WIU #7, Latrobe, PA	<u>The Big Three: Research-Based Practices That Make the Greatest Impact on Student Achievement</u>	3-12	John Collins
11/13/17	CAIU, Enola, PA	<u>Improving Student Performance Through Writing and Thinking Across the Curriculum</u>	3-12	John Collins
11/14/17	Morris-Union Jointure Commission, New Providence, NJ	<u>The Big Three: Research-Based Practices That Make the Greatest Impact on Student Achievement</u>	3-12	Kristine Gibson
11/14/17	NEIU #19, Archbald, PA	<u>Text- and Evidence-Based Writing: TDA, DBQ, and SAT</u>	3-12	John Collins
11/16/17	Allegheny IU #3, Homestead, PA	<u>Text- and Evidence-Based Writing: TDA, DBQ, and SAT</u>	4-12	John Collins

New sessions are added frequently. See additional workshops on our website's [Public Schedule](#). 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*

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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 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:

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

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