

WRITING

Standards W.6, 7, 8.10

Adapted from "With Rigor for All" Workshop
by Carol Jago

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

The Power of Short-Time-Frame Writing Assignments: Making the Transition to Routine Writing

-Reliance on long and relatively infrequent writing assignments provides students with little opportunity to practice and develop their writing ability.

-We must do more than the four portfolio writings. Our curriculum guides include many other writing opportunities. Feel free to modify and /or add your own.

-Short writing tasks can provide a bridge between students' acquisition of new knowledge and their ability to demonstrate what they know.

-Short writing tasks can be designed to meet almost every one of the precise Common Core learning targets, for example:

-determining theme/central idea

-summarizing key points in a reading

-analyzing characterization, point of view, structure, argument, etc.

-comparing texts

-Short writing tasks:

-Provide immediate focus for student writing

-Prepare students for whole class and small group discussion

-Prepare students for extended time frame writings

-Help students hone introductions, bodies, and conclusions

-Enable teachers to monitor student learning and adjust instruction in response

-Reduce the burden of reading extended-time-frame papers

**SHORT-TIME-FRAME TASKS SHOULD PROMPT STUDENTS TO
PRODUCE A SMALL AMOUNT OF WRITING FROM A LARGE AMOUNT OF THINKING**

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Addressing W.6, 7, 8.1-3

Some Step-by-Step Prompts for Short-Time-Frame Argument, Informative/Explanatory, and Narrative Writings.

Argument

1. Choose Issue./Read about an Issue.
2. Describe the issue in one or two sentences.
3. _____ matters because _____. Give example with citation.
4. People who disagree with this stance believe _____.
5. Write a concluding sentence that ties your issue to the world.

Informative/Explanatory

1. Read Informational article(s) about a subject.
2. Talk with a partner to find the most important point(s) in the text(s).
3. Identify minor points and/or supporting details.
4. Write a paragraph-long summary of one of the articles. Be sure to distinguish between major and minor ideas in your summary. OR
Write a paragraph-long comparison of the information about the subject presented in each article.

Narrative

1. Look at a painting and imagine what might have happened just before the moment depicted.
2. Make a list of words that come to your mind as you view this image.
3. Write a brief story inspired by this painting with clear setting, characterization, one or two main events/episodes.

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Responsive Writing Instruction

Protocol for Responding to Short- or Extended-Time-Frame Writing

1. Teacher, Group of Teachers, Student, or Paired Students identifies one area of strength in the student writing—something the writer has done well.
2. Write or List for 3 minutes: "In order for this writing to be more effective, the writer needs to . . ."
3. Teacher or student identifies concepts the student writer must know in order to make these changes.
4. Teacher brainstorms ideas, chooses a lesson or assigns a choice board option(s) that teaches these concepts efficiently.
5. After teaching lesson/engaging in lesson or choice board activity, students reread their writing and explain first to a partner and then in writing the changes they plan for revision. Students revise their writings and attach the statement of intention of revision.
6. Teachers evaluate the revised essay based only on the extent to which students accomplish their revision intentions.

Six Common Shortcomings in Student Writing and Ideas for Efficient/Effective Writing Lessons

Lack of development:

too brief-demonstrate the use of a cluster to generate ideas

wanders from focus-have students note in margins how each supporting paragraph relates to the thesis

makes unsupported assertions-have students underline main supporting points and write three additional sentences explaining each one

Inappropriately informal tone: offer students sentence starters that employ formal structures and vocabulary

Disorganized: ask students to outline the draft; model the process

Repetitive: have students underline their claim/thesis and main supporting points, then cross out any sentences that say the same thing that is in the underlined portions and replace (see syntax exercises)

Contains too much cited text: have student highlight all cited text and tell students that cited text can only make up 25% of the writing; teach them to use ellipses; teach them how to work cited text into their original sentences (see textual citation/PET bones handout)

Problems with mechanics and usage and spelling: have students read their drafts aloud; intentionally teach vocabulary/spelling and syntax (see syntax exercises)