

Integrating Reading and Writing - Transitioning to the 2014 GED® Test

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*Resources
for the
Classroom*

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The IPDAE project is supported with funds provided through the Adult and Family Literacy Act, Division of Career and Adult Education, Florida Department of Education.

Activity 1 – Webb’s Depth of Knowledge

Level 1: Recall

- A. Focus is on specific facts, definitions, details, or using routine procedures (measure, divide, follow recipe, etc.)
- B. Explaining “that...”
- C. Can be “difficult” without requiring “deep” content knowledge to respond to item (memorize a complex theory without being able to explain its meaning or apply it to a real work situation)
- D. Combination of level ones does NOT = level 2.
- E. One right answer

Level 2: Skill Concept

- A. Focus is on applying skills and concepts (in a familiar/typical situation), relationships (compare, cause-effect), main ideas.
- B. Requires deeper knowledge than definition
- C. Explaining how or why
- D. Making decisions
- E. Estimating, interpreting in order to respond
- F. One right answer

Webb's Depth of Knowledge

Level 3: Strategic Reasoning

- A. Focus is on reasoning & planning in order to respond (e.g., write an essay, apply in new/novel situation).
- B. Complex and abstract thinking is required.
- C. Often need to provide support for reasoning or conclusions drawn.
- D. More than one “correct” response or approach is often possible.

Level 4: Extended Reasoning

- A. Requires complex reasoning, planning, and thinking (generally over extended periods of time) for the investigation.
- B. Assessment activities have multiple steps with extended time provided.
- C. Students may be asked to relate concepts within the content area and among other content areas.
- D. Students make real-world applications in new situations.

Activity 2 – Rubrics

Trait 1 – Creation of Arguments and Use of Evidence

- Argument
 - Creation of argument
 - Evidence – use of text citations to support created argument of source text(s)
- Validity
 - Assessment of the argument in source text(s)
 - Analysis of the issue
- Integration
 - Integration of claims, explanations and textual evidence
 - Connection of purpose to prompt

Trait 2 – Development of Ideas and Organizational Structure

- Ideas
 - Development (reasoning)
 - Elaboration of ideas
- Progression
 - Progression (flow) of ideas
 - Connection of details to main ideas
- Organization
 - Structured to convey message
 - Transitional devices
- Words
 - Appropriate word choice
 - Advanced vocabulary application
- Awareness
 - Demonstrated to audience and purpose
 - Form of writing – objective rhetorical and persuasive

Trait 3 – Clarity and Command of Standard English Conventions

- Conventions – Application of standard English (e.g., homonyms/contractions, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage, placement of modifiers, capitalization, punctuation)
- Sentence Structure
 - Variety
 - Clarity
 - Fluency (e.g., correct subordination, avoidance of wordiness, run-on sentences, awkwardness, usage of transition words, appropriate usage for formal structure)
- Errors
 - Mechanics and conventions
 - Comprehension based on errors

Materials from GED Testing Service®

Activity 3 – Integrating Best Practices

Practice	Activity
Strategy Instruction	
Summarization	
Peer Assistance/ Collaboration	
Setting Goal Products	
Word Processing	
Sentence Combining	
Process Approach	
Inquiry	
Pre-Writing Activities	
Writing as a Tool for Learning	
Study of Models	

Activity 4 – Sentence Combining

- Meditation can help you relax.
- Meditation is a technique.
- The technique can be learned.

- Nina applied for a job.
- Nina needed to earn money.
- Nina is a hard worker.

- A sports car screamed around the corner.
- The sports car was red.
- It screeched to a stop in front of the doors.
- The doors led into the hospital.

- The sprinter approached the starting line.
- She stretched one last time.
- The starter called for runners to take their mark.
- She found her lane.
- She got into starting position.
- Finally, she heard the “pop” from the starter pistol.

Activity 5 – Important Ideas

British Pass Stamp Act – March 22, 1765

Hoping to raise sufficient funds to defend the vast new American territories won from the French in the Seven Years' War, the British government passes the notorious [Stamp Act](#) in 1765. The legislation levied a direct tax on all materials printed for commercial and legal use in the colonies, including everything from broadsides and insurance policies to playing cards and dice.



Though the Stamp Act employed a strategy that was common in England, it stirred a storm of protest in the colonies. The colonists argued that Parliament could not impose taxes upon them without their consent. Believing this right to be in peril, the colonists rioted and intimidated all the stamp agents responsible for enforcing the act into resignation.

Not ready to put down the rioters with military force, Parliament eventually repealed the legislation. However, the fracas over the Stamp Act helped plant seeds for a far larger movement against the British government and the eventual battle for independence.

<http://tms.org/British Pass Stamp Act – March 22, 1765>

Getting the GIST: Summarizing the 5Ws and H

Name of Article _____

Complete the following.

Who? _____

What? _____

When? _____

Where? _____

Why? _____

How? _____

Write a GIST Statement of 20 words or less that summarizes the text.

Activity 6 – Unpacking a Prompt

Prompt 1

In the two autobiographies, the authors describe the challenges they must overcome to learn essential skills. Using specific details from the two passages, compare and contrast the challenges that each author faces and describe how each addresses those challenges. Type your answer. This task may require approximately 45 minutes.

Do	What

Prompt 2

According to the article, evergreen trees are often found in cold, icy climates where water may be frozen. Describe how the tree survives in these conditions. Use multiple details from the article to support your answer.

Do	What

Activity 6 – Unpacking a Prompt

Prompt 3

Explain a key similarity between Truman’s speech and Roosevelt’s speech. Use evidence from both articles to support your response.

Type your response in the box. This task may require approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Do	What

Prompt 4

Though the Texas Court of Civil Appeals ruled against weather modification in *Southwest Weather Research v. Joe Rounsaville et al*, not everyone agrees with the decision.

In your response, analyze the passage to determine which position is best supported. Use relevant and specific evidence from the passage as well as your own understanding of the U. S. Constitution to support your response.

Type your essay in the box. This task may require approximately 25 minutes.

Do	What

Activity 7 – Constructed Response Organizer

Restate the question

When the British government passed the Stamp Act in 1765, it led to an immediate response by the colonists.

Answer the question

The colonists protested against the Stamp Act and more importantly Great Britain's right to pass any type of tax without the colonists' approval.

Reason(s) for your answer

1. They didn't think it was fair to pay taxes that they didn't approve.

2. A tax was required on everything printed, even playing cards and dice.

3. Only the colonists were taxed for printed goods, not Great Britain.

Evidence from the text(s)

- a. Colonists "rioted and intimidated" the British agents who were sent to enforce the new Stamp Act so that these agents couldn't obtain any funds.
- b. Colonists "argued" against the right of the British government to be able to tax them without their vote or consent.
- c. The Stamp Act is referred to as "notorious" and the "fracas" caused by this one act led towards the Revolutionary War.

Explanation on how evidence supports your answer

The year 1765 was an important one for American colonists as they fought against Britain's right to impose taxes on them without their approval. The colonists' response and the ultimate repeal of the Stamp Act was one event that led towards the Revolutionary War and America's independence.

Activity 8 – Constructed Response Organizer

Excerpts from *Chocolate: The Bitter Sweet Saga*
Palm Beach Post, Thursday, April 19, 2001



Milton Hershey

Milton Hershey was born in rural Pennsylvania to Mennonite parents who didn't agree on much. His mother was a strict observer of the frugal religion. His father could have been a changeling – he read Shakespeare, loved science and politics and was a dreamer. He also was a dismal failure at all he tried.

(So much did his mother despise his father that when he died, she left his deathbed, piled all of his books into a nearby field and danced around the bonfire she had lit.)

Hershey ended up with his father's dreams and, it appears none of his mother's meanness.

After several missteps of his own (two ailed candy operations, one at the over expansion urgings of his father), he hit on a winner with a caramel factory in Lancaster, Pa. In 1898, at the age of 41 and very wealthy, he married. In 1900, he sold the nation's No. 1 caramel factory for \$1 million.

And then it was on to chocolate. But more than chocolate – he wanted his own Candyland. He purchased 1,200 acres of farmland near his birthplace and set to work.

Eventually, Hershey, Pa., would house the Hershey factory, schools, houses, a library, a hospital and, most important an orphanage – Hershey School.

Today, all profits of this public company are invested in the Hershey Trust to be directed to the school's 1,000 orphans and abandoned children from mostly inner cities. Those children receive the equivalent of a \$35,000-a-year education at the behest of Milton Hershey, who died in 1945 as a widower with no heirs. The trust is now worth \$5 billion.

Forrest S. Mars

Forrest S. Mars has a background just as mean in spirit as Hershey's. His parents divorced, after his dreamer of a father tried and failed at several candy companies – usually leaving town just before the bill collectors arrived.

Forrest was sent to live with his mother's parents in Canada. With the help of a very quick mind, he landed a scholarship to the University of California at Berkeley in 1922.



By odd happenstance, he met up with his father, whom he hadn't seen since he was 6, in Chicago. And his father was still in the candy business – albeit with more success this time. He was making butter-creams and selling them, like most candy makers, locally. Only Milton Hershey was selling a national product.

Mars and his father came up with the idea for the Milky Way – a big, fat, nougat candy bar that could compete with the flat 5-cent Hershey bar. The first year it was on the market, 1924 the Milky Way raked in \$800,000.

Forrest was on his way. But not before having a falling-out with his father (he was absent from his father's funeral). Or before his father-in-law had to rescue his daughter and grandchildren from the unheated apartment Forrest had rented so that he could put more money into his business. And not before badgering his cancer-stricken half-sister to sell him her part of his father's company.

Forrest died in 1999 at age 95. Mars, a private company, is still run by his three children in McLean, Va.

The trio tied for 40th-richest American on last year's Forbes list, with \$7 billion each.

Prompt

Hershey and Mars were successful businessmen in the chocolate industry. Explain a key similarity between Hershey's and Mars' lives that assisted them in their success. Use evidence from both articles to support your answer.

Type your response in the box. This task may require approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Unpack the Prompt

Do	What

RARE² Graphic Organizer for a Constructed Response Question

The Question _____

Restate the question as a thesis statement

Answer the question

Reason(s) for your answer (in your words)

1.

2.

3.

Evidence from the text(s) (quote or paraphrase)

a.

b.

a.

b.

Explanation – How the evidence supports your reasons and answer

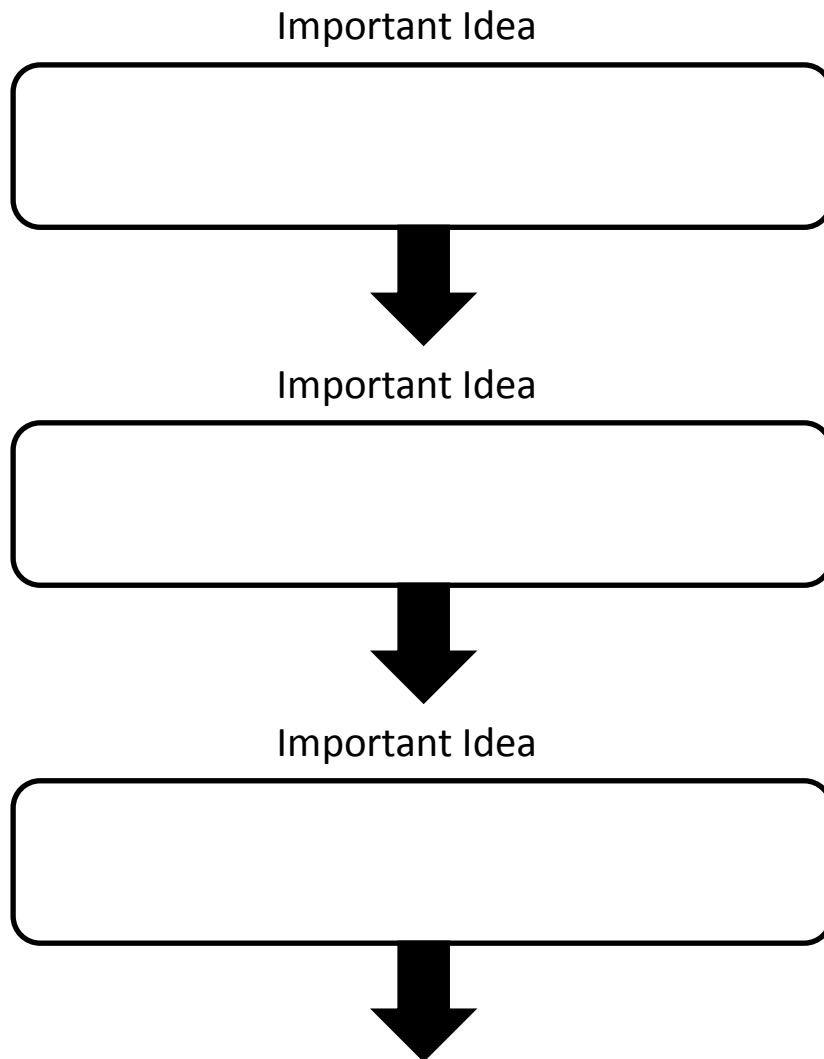
Handouts for the Classroom

Implementing TIPP? with Advanced Activities or Higher-Level Readers

After teaching the TIPP? process, the teacher may wish to have students monitor their own skimming process by using the following chart prior to reading an assignment.

Elements	Notes
T – Title What do the title, subheadings, and layout tell me about this text?	
I – Introduction What is included in the introduction?	
P – Paragraphs What information is included in the first sentence of each paragraph?	
P – Photographs What do the photographs, maps, charts, tables, illustrations tell me?	
?? – Questions What questions do I have about this text?	

Summarizing Nonfiction



Summary Sentence (Use 15 words or less)

Getting the GIST: Summarizing the 5Ws and H

Name of Article _____

Complete the following.

Who? _____

What? _____

When? _____

Where? _____

Why? _____

How? _____

Write a GIST Statement of 20 words or less that summarizes the text.

Getting the GIST – Summarization Method

(Passage Version)

Read the paragraph. Write a summary of the paragraph using no more than 15 words.

Read the next paragraph. Write a summary of this paragraph using no more than 15 words.

Read the paragraph. Write a summary of the paragraph using no more than 15 words.

Read the paragraph. Write a summary of the paragraph using no more than 15 words.

The GIST of this passage is:

6 steps for drafting a constructed response

1. Re-read the passage at least once, then re-read the question carefully to decide all the parts it is asking for. Mark the key words in the question. The key words are the verb or verbs, any character names, and key literary terms.
2. Rewrite the question in your own words to make sure that you know exactly what is being asked. Then, turn that question into a topic sentence for your answer.
3. Go back to the passage and collect the needed information. Make sure you get the relevant details (if the question asks for 3 details, make sure you find 3 details).
4. Organize the details into a logical order. Use a graphic organizer if that helps.
5. Write your answer neatly.
6. Re-read your answer to make sure you answered all the parts of the question.

WritingFix - <http://writingfix.com>

RARE² Graphic Organizer for a Constructed Response Question

The Question _____

Restate the question as a thesis statement

Answer the question

Reason(s) for your answer (in your words)

1.

2.

3.

Evidence from the text(s) (quote or paraphrase)

a.

b.

a.

b.

a.

b.

Explanation – How the evidence supports your reasons and answer

Constructed Response Organizer

Prompt/Questions:

Restatement of
question in own words

Sample answer

Detailed body of
evidence that
supports answer be
sure to include
enough details to
answer the question.
Make sure that all
details address the
questions and are not
Off-topic.

Restated question
Concluding thoughts

Constructed Response Organizer

Prompt/Questions:

Restatement of
question in own words

Sample answer

Detailed body of
evidence that
supports answer be
sure to include
enough details to
answer the question.
Make sure that all
details address the
questions and are not
Off-topic.

Restated question
Concluding thoughts

Text 1

Text 2

Sample Completed Constructed Response Organizer

Excerpt

. . . In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. . . .

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, “When will you be satisfied?” We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities.

We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro’s basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. . . . No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. . . .

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. . .

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1963

1. According to Dr. King, what must the African-American community guard against in the pursuit of civil rights justice?

Sample Completed Constructed Response Organizer

<p>Prompt/Questions: According to Dr. King, what must the African-American community guard against in the pursuit of civil rights justice?</p>	
Restatement of question in own words	In their pursuit for civil rights justice, the African-American community must be vigilant.
Sample answer	Dr. King asked that all people approach obtaining civil rights for all through peaceful means and that they be vigilant against violent means.
Detailed body of evidence that supports answer be sure to include enough details to answer the question. Make sure that all details address the questions and are not off-topic.	<p>Shouldn't be guilty of "wrongful deeds" – illegal actions</p> <p>Shouldn't be bitter or express hatred against others</p> <p>Need to do all things with dignity and discipline</p> <p>Should use peaceful demonstrations, not violence</p> <p>1960s civil rights movement</p>
Restated question Concluding thoughts	During the 1960s, Dr. Martin Luther King led an important civil rights movement supporting that all people, regardless of the color of their skin, be provided with equal rights. In one of his speeches, Dr. King shared with fellow demonstrators that throughout their pursuit for civil rights justice, peaceful means should be used. Dr. King focused on the need for each individual to be vigilant against committing illegal actions and expressing bitterness or hatred against others. Peace, not violence, was the message of Dr. King and others during this time of demonstrations throughout the United States.

Another Graphic Organizer for Extended/Constructed Responses

Step 1: Analyze/Plan			
Know	Do	Facts/Content	Support
What is the question about? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underline or highlight important information Identify and circle the performance verbs 	What specific tasks is the question asking me to do?	What are the facts I need to provide to answer each part of the question	What are the supporting details that will help make my answer clear to the reader?
Step 2: Write your answer – Be sure to use the “RAS” Method for Written Response.			
R: Restate the question	A: Answer the question using your notes	S: Support your answer with evidence (supporting details)	
Step 3: Go back and review, revise, and edit your answer.			

Article 1: A Summary of Harry S. Truman's 1947 Speech on Civil Rights

On June 20, 1947, the thirty-third president of the United States, Harry S. Truman, addressed the 38th Annual Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In a speech calling for civil rights and human freedom, Truman described the efforts his administration had initiated as well as his hopes for the future.

Opening with a determined tone, Truman urged Americans to work together to repair racial schisms. He suggested that the country had reached a turning point – that for the first time in its history, America was ready and willing to guarantee freedom and equality to all its citizens. He continued with an assertion that the government should protect and provide for all its peoples. According to the president, all Americans should possess decent homes, adequate medical care, worthwhile employment, and the right to a fair trial.

Truman did not paint a one-sided, naïve picture, though. At the heart of his speech was a sobering depiction of the social situation, facing the nation during its post-World War II era, which included a discussion of disheartening issues ranging from racially motivated insults and intimidation to mob violence. However, he did not dwell on these grim topics but instead cited the issues as fuel for promoting change.

After observing the complexities in expanding and improving federal laws, Truman pointed out several examples of his administration's efforts to make such improvements, including the 1946 appointment of the President's Committee on Civil Rights and the request that Congress pass legislation to extend basic civil rights to people living in both Guam and American Samoa. Additionally, the President cited the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, chaired by former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and the committee's efforts to prepare the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Truman concluded his speech by invoking words Abraham Lincoln had written in 1862. The sixteenth president had called for the nation to remain united – despite class or conditional barriers – not only for itself but for future generations.

Article 2: A Discussion of Eleanor Roosevelt's 1948 Speech on Human Rights

In 1948, during Eleanor Roosevelt's tenure as chairman of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, she gave a speech, "The Struggle for Human Rights," at the Sorbonne in Paris, France.

She began her speech by informing her audience that her purpose was to talk with them about the preservation of human freedom. Throughout the course of her talk, she tackled several topics, including the commission's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the difficulties she and the members of the United Nations faced during the drafting process.

In the speech, the former First Lady outlined the two components of the International Bill of Rights. The first part, Roosevelt explained, served as a declaration of the basic human rights that any individual is entitled to no matter where he or she lives. The second part, unfinished during the time she spoke, was a covenant on human rights that would be presented to every nation. It was intended that, once ratified

by each nation, the bill would be used as a reference to reshape any national laws that did not conform to the bill's principles.

At the time of Roosevelt's speech, the bill's declaration had been approved by most of the United Nations' member countries. However, four nations, including the Soviet Union and other Soviet satellite states, abstained from a vote of acceptance of the bill. Drawing the audience's attention to these nations, Roosevelt described the difficulties in deciding upon universal definitions for the bill's conception of democracy. She drew out the comparison between the United States and the Soviet Union and spoke about the two governments' divergent approaches to and uses of power, citing the media in each country as examples. While stating that the U. S. government did not punish expressions of any political viewpoints in its newspapers, Roosevelt suggested that the government in the USSR would close down any papers that criticized its political philosophy.

She concluded her speech by repeating a call to action from the opening statement of the assembly. Roosevelt passionately encouraged unity from the delegates and asked that they overwhelmingly approve the Declaration of Human Rights.

Explain a key similarity between Truman's speech and Roosevelt's speech. Use evidence from both articles to support your response.

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Research and Articles

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR TEACHING WRITING

Amy Gillespie and Steve Graham reveal the techniques that have been proven to work when teaching students to write

Retrieved from the World Wide Web at:

<http://education.jhu.edu/newhorizons/Better/articles/Winter2011.html>

WRITING IS A MULTIFACETED TASK THAT involves the use and coordination of many cognitive processes. Due to its complexities, many students find writing challenging and many teachers struggle to find methods to effectively teach the skill.

Gathering evidence for effectively teaching writing

Advice from professional writers and the experiences of successful writing teachers offer some guidance in developing sound writing practices. However, these accounts are frequently based on testimonials involving the writing development of an individual or a single classroom. This makes it difficult to understand how or why a writing strategy was effective and what elements of the strategy would be essential to make it work in new situations.



Scientific studies of writing interventions provide a more trustworthy approach for identifying effective methods for teaching writing; they supply evidence of the magnitude of the effect of a writing intervention, how confident one can be in the study's results, and how replicable the writing strategy is in new settings with new populations of students.

What does the research show?

The list of recommendations presented below is based on scientific studies of students in grades 4–12. The strategies for teaching writing are listed according to the magnitude of their effects. Practices with the strongest effects are listed first. However, the effects of some writing interventions differ minimally from the effects of others. Therefore, one should not assume that only the first several strategies should be implemented. All of the strategies are potentially useful, and we encourage teachers to use a combination of strategies to best meet the needs of their students.

Evidence of the effectiveness of each strategy or technique was compiled from research studies that met several criteria. First, a recommendation was not made unless there was a minimum of four studies that showed the effectiveness of a writing intervention. Second, in each study reviewed, the performance of one group of students was compared to the performance of another group of students receiving a different writing intervention or no intervention at all. This permitted conclusions that each intervention listed below resulted in better writing performance than other writing strategies or typical writing teaching in the classroom. Third, each study was reviewed to ensure it met standards for research quality and that study results were reliable (reducing the chance that error in assessment

contributed to the results). Fourth, studies were only included if students' overall writing quality was assessed post-intervention. This criterion was used to identify strategies that had a broad impact on writing performance, as opposed to those with a more limited impact on a specific aspect of writing such as spelling or vocabulary.

Effective writing practices

- **Writing strategies:** Explicitly teach students strategies for planning, revising, and editing their written products. This may involve teaching general processes (e.g., brainstorming or editing) or more specific elements, such as steps for writing a persuasive essay. In either case, we recommend that teachers model the strategy, provide assistance as students practice using the strategy on their own, and allow for independent practice with the strategy once they have learned it.
- **Summarizing text:** Explicitly teach students procedures for summarizing what they read. Summarization allows students to practice concise, clear writing to convey an accurate message of the main ideas in a text. Teaching summary writing can involve explicit strategies for producing effective summaries or gradual fading of models of a good summary as students become more proficient with the skill.
- **Collaborative writing:** Allow students to work together to plan, write, edit, and revise their writing. We recommend that teachers provide a structure for cooperative writing and explicit expectations for individual performance within their cooperative groups or partnerships. For example, if the class is working on using descriptive adjectives in their compositions, one student could be assigned to review another's writing. He or she could provide positive feedback, noting several instances of using descriptive vocabulary, and provide constructive feedback, identifying several sentences that could be enhanced with additional adjectives. After this, the students could switch roles and repeat the process.
- **Goals:** Set specific goals for the writing assignments that students are to complete. The goals can be established by the teacher or created by the class themselves, with review from the teacher to ensure they are appropriate and attainable. Goals can include (but are not limited to) adding more ideas to a paper or including specific elements of a writing genre (e.g., in an opinion essay include at least three reasons supporting your belief). Setting specific product goals can foster motivation, and teachers can continue to motivate students by providing reinforcement when they reach their goals.
- **Word processing:** Allow students to use a computer for completing written tasks. With a computer, text can be added, deleted, and moved easily. Furthermore, students can access tools, such as spell check, to enhance their written compositions. As with any technology, teachers should provide guidance on proper use of the computer and any relevant software before students use the computer to compose independently.
- **Sentence combining:** Explicitly teach students to write more complex and sophisticated sentences. Sentence combining involves teacher modeling of how to combine two or more related sentences to create a more complex one. Students should be encouraged to apply the sentence construction skills as they write or revise.
- **Process writing:** Implement flexible, but practical classroom routines that provide students with extended opportunities for practicing the cycle of planning, writing, and reviewing their compositions. The process approach also involves: writing for authentic audiences, personal responsibility for written work, student-to-student interactions throughout the writing process, and self-evaluation of writing.

- **Inquiry:** Set writing assignments that require use of inquiry skills. Successful inquiry activities include establishing a clear goal for writing (e.g., write a story about conflict in the playground), examination of concrete data using specific strategies (e.g., observation of students arguing in the playground and recording their reactions), and translation of what was learned into one or more compositions.
- **Prewriting:** Engage students in activities prior to writing that help them produce and organize their ideas. Prewriting can involve tasks that encourage students to access what they already know, do research about a topic they are not familiar with, or arrange their ideas visually (e.g., graphic organizer) before writing.
- **Models:** Provide students with good models of the type of writing they are expected to produce. Teachers should analyze the models with their class, encouraging students to imitate in their own writing the critical and effective elements shown in the models.

What we know

Evidence-based practices for teaching writing include:

- Teaching strategies for planning, revising, and editing
- Having students write summaries of texts
- Permitting students to write collaboratively with peers
- Setting goals for student writing
- Allowing students to use a word processor
- Teaching sentence combining skills
- Using the process writing approach
- Having students participate in inquiry activities for writing
- Involving students in prewriting activities
- Providing models of good writing

Additional suggestions

With any combination of teaching strategies a teacher chooses to use, students must be given ample time to write. Writing cannot be a subject that is short-changed or glossed over due to time constraints. Moreover, for weaker writers, additional time, individualized support, and explicit teaching of transcription skills (i.e., handwriting, spelling, typing) may be necessary. For all students, teachers should promote the development of self-regulation skills. Having students set goals for their writing and learning, monitoring and evaluating their success in meeting these goals, and self-reinforcing their learning and writing efforts puts them in charge, increasing independence and efficacy.

Teachers should supplement their current writing practices and curricula with a combination of evidence-based practices that best meets the needs of their students.

A combination of effective writing practices

No single strategy for teaching writing will prove effective for all students. Furthermore, the above strategies do not constitute a writing curriculum. Teachers should aim to supplement their current writing practices and curricula with a mix of the aforementioned evidence-based writing practices. The optimal mixture of practices should be tailored to best meet the writing needs of the class, as well as the

needs of individual students. It is especially important to monitor the success of each technique implemented to be sure that it is working as intended, and to make adjustments as needed.

About the authors

Steve Graham is the Curry Ingram Professor of Literacy at Vanderbilt University. His research focuses on writing and writing instruction. Steve is the author of *Writing Next* and *Writing to Read*, meta-analyses conducted for the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Amy Gillespie is a doctoral student in the Department of Special Education at Peabody College of Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt University. She is in the Experimental Education Research Training Program (ExpERT) at Vanderbilt, supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences (IES). Her primary research interests include writing activities that support reading and interventions for struggling writers.

Further reading

Graham S (2010), *Teaching Writing*. P Hogan (Ed), *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language Sciences* (pp. 848–851). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. Graham S & Perin D (2007),

Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools – A Report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. www.all4ed.org/?les/WritingNext.pdf

Key Concepts for Sentence Combining Retrieved from the World Wide Web at:

<http://penningtonpublishing.com/writing/teaching-essay-strategies.html>

1. **Sentence construction ability is a critical skill for a writer to master.** Sentences are the structures that words are placed into in writing in order to convey meaning. While there are no set rules for what type of sentence works best in a particular situation, well-crafted sentences can improve writing, make it more enjoyable to read, and lead to higher grading of written products.
2. **Sentence combining is an effective method to directly teach sentence construction skills.** Sentence combining instruction generally begins with combining kernel, or irreducible, sentences into effective longer sentences. Students can combine the kernels in any grammatically acceptable way, and begin to explore adding or removing details, and rearranging words or phrases. This method has been found to be effective with students from elementary age to college age. Sentence combining teaches students a method of manipulating sentences that results in more mindful writing practice. Sentence combining teaches sentence structure, sentence editing, punctuation, and paragraph organization. It also provides students with practice controlling syntax, which may improve students' ability to create variety in their writing.
3. **Sentence combining has benefits on the physical demands of writing.** The activities involved in sentence combining often increase student motivation, and reduce the use of choppy or run-on sentences. Sentence combining may also increase students' willingness to experiment with syntactical variations in their writing. Sentence combining activities may also improve students' understanding and use of punctuation, and foster an increased awareness of how readers might respond to their writing, thereby prompting students to consider revision.
4. **Revision is often a sentence-combining act.** Revision is the process of taking already written sentences and transforming or manipulating them to improve them. Sentence combining gives students experience and confidence in the act of revision, and area that is often difficult.
5. **Sentence combining has benefits on the cognitive demands of writing.** Students become more familiar with the syntactic structures used in writing by experimenting with sentence combining, and can free mental energy. Students can also experiment with word order and sentence construction without focusing on generating content.

Implications for Teachers:

1. Organize lessons to include teacher modeling, supported practices, and independent practice.
Introduce: Explain to students that sentence combining is an activity that will help them write more interesting sentences that sound better to readers. Explain that good writers often work with their sentences to make them sound better. Let students know that there can and most often will be more than one right answer, and explain that when there are "mistakes" it's okay. Model: Display clusters of kernel sentences and model or collaboratively model with students how to combine: (The students are happy. The students are smart.) Be sure to explain that many combinations are possible. Discuss the different features of the different sentences. (The smart students are happy. The happy students are smart. The students are smart and happy. Happy and smart are the students.) Supported Practice: Work with students collaboratively, or have students work alone or in groups to practice. Teachers can also provide cues, such as underlining the word that should be combined, providing a cue word in parenthesis, or giving a specific direction as to what types of words to add or remove. (The girl fell over the log. She lost her balance. (because) = The girl fell over the log because she lost her balance. The cake was delicious. The cake was chocolate. = The chocolate cake was delicious.) Independent Practice: Assign activities and have students complete. Share several options at the end, and have students discuss which are the best options, and why.

2. Teach students techniques to use in their sentence combining. Suggest that students try some of the following when combining sentences. (a) Combine the kernels in any grammatically acceptable way. (b) Change the form of words (“threw” to “was throwing”). (c) Add appropriate function words (because). (d) Rearrange by moving words, phrases, and clauses around to produce the best effect. (e) Add or eliminate details.
3. Make sentence-combining activities meaningful. Sentence combining activities can be organized in set sequence, but can also be taught depending areas of need in student writing. These activities can also be organized around content areas, or used with classroom books or literature. Reduce these passages down to kernel sentence levels, and have students combine into new sentences. Compare to the author’s original work, discuss the differences, and reinforce content.
4. Sentence-combining activities must be without risk. Students should be encouraged to experiment in sentence-combining activities. If a combined sentence is grammatically acceptable, there should not be a “right” or “wrong” answer. Rather encourage students to explore and discuss what makes sentences more or less effective for different purposes.
5. Build activities and instruction that will help students’ transfer sentence combining into their own writing. Sentence combining activities must not be stand-alone skill building exercises, but rather transfer to students’ actual writing. Use student-writing examples for sentence combining and include sentence combining as a key element on rubrics for student writing pieces.

SENTENCE COMBINING: TEACHING RULES OF SENTENCE STRUCTURE BY DOING

Retrieved from the World Wide Web at: <http://www.interventioncentral.org/academic-interventions/writing/sentence-combining-teaching-rules-sentence-structure-doing>

Students with poor writing skills often write sentences that lack 'syntactic maturity' (Robinson & Howell, 2008). That is, these writers' sentences often follow a simple, stereotyped format. In public schools, grammar skills have traditionally been taught in isolation to give students the advanced writing knowledge required to master a diverse range of sentence structures. However, isolated grammar instruction appears to have little or no positive impact in helping poor writers become better writers (Graham & Perin, 2007). A promising alternative is to use sentence combining (Graham & Perin, 2007; Strong, 1986). In this approach, students are presented with kernel sentences and given explicit instruction in how to weld these kernel sentences into more diverse sentence types either by using connecting words to combine multiple sentences into one or by isolating key information from an otherwise superfluous sentence and embedding that important information into the base sentence. In a simple demonstration of sentence combining, a student may generate these two sentences in her composition on the American Revolution: The American army had few supplies in the winter of 1776. The American army had few trained military leaders.

The instructor might meet with the student and have the student recopy the two sentences in this format:

The American army had few supplies in the winter of 1776.
The American army had few trained military leaders. (and)

The student would be encouraged to combine the two shorter sentences into a more comprehensive sentence by using the connecting word (coordinating conjunction) 'and' to combine objects: The American army had few supplies and few trained military leaders in the winter of 1776.

Formatting Sentence Combining Examples

These simple formatting conventions are used in sentence-combining exercises (Saddler, 2005; Strong, 1986):

In each example, the base clause (sentence) appears first. Any sentence(s) to be combined or embedded with the base clause appear below that base clause.

- Example: **Base clause:** The dog ran after the bus.
Sentence to be embedded: The dog is yellow.
Student-generated solution: The yellow dog ran after the bus.

Connecting words to be used as a sentence-combining tool appear in parentheses at the end of a sentence that is to be combined with the base clause.

- Example: **Base clause:** The car stalled.
Sentence to be combined: The car ran out of gas. (because)
Student-generated solution: The car stalled because it ran out of gas.

The element(s) of any sentence to be embedded in the base clause are underlined.

- Example: **Base clause:** The economic forecast resulted in strong stock market gains.
Sentence to be embedded: The economic forecast was upbeat.
Student-generated solution: The upbeat economic forecast resulted in strong stock market gains.

Using Sentence Combining in Instruction

Teachers who use sentence combining in their writing instruction should follow a direct-instruction approach (Saddler, 2005). The instructor fosters a learning atmosphere that encourages students to take risks when participating in sentence-combining activities. When first introducing sentence-combining to the class, the instructor explains that using varied sentence structures helps writers to better convey meaning. The instructor tells students that there are often multiple correct ways to combine sentences. The instructor completes several sentence-combining examples in front of the group, using a think-aloud approach to show his or her thinking process in successfully combining sentences. Students should then complete sentence-combining examples in pairs or groups, with the instructor circulating through the class to check for student understanding. Eventually, students work independently on sentence combining tasks to demonstrate mastery. They may then be asked to look in their own writing for examples in which they could combine sentences to improve. When creating lessons on sentence combining, instructors should review the potential types of sentence-combining shown in Table 1 and decide the order in which those types might be presented to their class.

<p>Multiple (Compound) Sentence Subjects or Objects:</p> <p>Two or more subjects can be combined with a conjunction (e.g., or, and).</p> <p>Two or more direct or indirect objects can be combined with a conjunction (e.g., or, and).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base Clause: Skyscrapers in the city were damaged in the hurricane. • Sentence to Be Embedded: Bridges in the city were damaged in the hurricane. • Solution: Skyscrapers and bridges in the city were damaged in the hurricane. • Base Clause: When they travel, migratory birds need safe habitat. • Sentence to Be Embedded: When they travel, migratory birds need regular supplies of food. • Solution: When they travel, migratory birds need safe habitat and regular
<p>Adjectives & Adverbs:</p> <p>When a sentence simply contains an adjective or adverb that modifies the noun or verb of another sentence, the adjective or adverb from the first sentence can be embedded in the related sentence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base Clause: Dry regions are at risk for chronic water shortages. • Sentence to Be Embedded: Overpopulated regions are at risk for chronic water shortages. • Solution: Dry and overpopulated regions are at risk for chronic water shortages. • Base Clause: Health care costs have risen nationwide. • Sentence to Be Embedded: Those health care costs have also risen quickly. • Solution: Health care costs have risen quickly nationwide.
<p>Connecting Words:</p> <p>One or more sentences are combined with connecting words.</p> <p>Coordinating conjunctions (e.g., and, but) link sentences on an equal basis.</p> <p>Subordinating conjunctions (e.g., after, until, unless, before, while, because) link sentences with one of the sentences subordinate or dependent on the other.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base Clause: The house was falling apart. • Sentence to Be Combined: No one seemed to care. (but) • Solution: The house was falling apart, but no one seemed to care. • Base Clause: The glaciers began to melt. • Sentence to Be Combined: The earth's average temperature increased. (because) • Solution: The glaciers began to melt because the earth's average temperature increased.
<p>Relative Clauses: Sentence contains an embedded, subordinate clause that modifies a noun.</p> <p>Sentence contains an embedded, subordinate clause that modifies a noun.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base Clause: The artist was the most popular in the city. • Sentence to Be Combined: The artist painted watercolors of sunsets. (who) • Solution: The artist who painted watercolors of sunsets was the most popular in the city.

<p>Appositives: Sentence contains two noun phrases that refer to the same object. When two sentences refer to the same noun, one sentence be reduced to an appositive and embedded in the other sentence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base Clause: The explorer paddled the kayak across the raging river. • Sentence to Be Embedded: The explorer was an expert in handling boats. • Solution: The explorer, an expert in handling boats, paddled the kayak across the raging river.
<p>Possessive Nouns: A sentence that describes possession or ownership can be reduced to a possessive noun and embedded in another sentence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base Clause: Some historians view the Louisiana Purchase as the most important expansion of United States territory. • Sentence to Be Embedded: The Louisiana Purchase was President Jefferson’s achievement. • Solution: Some historians view President Jefferson’s Louisiana Purchase as the most important expansion of United States territory.

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Twelve Tips to Teach the Reading-Writing Connection

July 15th, 2009 | Mark Pennington, MA Reading Specialist

Retrieved from the World Wide Web at: <http://penningtonpublishing.com/writing/teaching-essay-strategies.html>

Educators often talk about the reading-writing connection. Dr. Kate Kinsella of San Francisco State University summarizes the reading-writing connection research as follows:

- Reading widely and regularly contributes to the development of writing ability.
- Good writers were read to as children.
- Increasing reading frequency has a stronger influence on improving writing than does solely increasing writing frequency.

Developmental writers must see and analyze multiple effective examples of the various kinds of writing they are being asked to produce (as well as ineffective examples); they cannot, for example, be expected to write successful expository essays if they are primarily reading narrative texts.

Teaching reading and writing strategies concurrently certainly does allow teachers to “kill two birds with one stone.” Now this is not to say that reading or writing instruction should always be taught in tandem. There are certainly important lessons and skill development exclusive to each field. However, the following twelve tips to teach the reading-writing connection will enhance students’ facility in both disciplines.

1. Teach the Author-Reader Relationship

Both reading and writing involve interactive relationships between author and reader. Reading really is about communication between the reader and the author. Now, it’s true that the author is not speaking directly to the reader; however, readers understand best when they pretend that this is so. Unlike reading, writing requires the thinker to generate both sides of the dialog. The writer must create the content and anticipate the reader response. Teaching students to carry on an internal dialog with their anticipated readers, *while they write*, is vitally important.

Strategy: Write Aloud

2. Teach Prior Knowledge

What people already know is an essential component of good reading and writing. Content knowledge is equally important as is skill acquisition to read and write well. Reading specialists estimate that reading comprehension is a 50-50 interaction. In other words, about half of one’s understanding of the text is what the reader puts into the reading by way of experience and knowledge. However, some disclaimers are important to mention here. Although prior knowledge is important, it can also be irrelevant, inaccurate, or incomplete which may well confuse readers or misinform writers. Of course, the teacher has the responsibility to fill gaps with appropriate content.

Strategy: KWHL

3. Teach Sensory Descriptions

Both readers and writers make meaning through their sensory experiences. Recognizing sensory references in text improves understanding of detail, allusions, and word choice. Good readers apply all of their senses to the reading to better grasp *what* and *how* the author wishes to communicate. They listen to what the author is saying to *them*. For example, good readers try to feel what the characters feel, visualize the changing settings, and hear how the author uses dialog. Applying the five senses in writing produces memorable “show me,” rather than “tell me” writing.

Strategy: Interactive Reading

4. Teach Genre Characteristics

All reading and writing genres serve their own purposes, follow their own rules, and have their own unique characteristics. Knowing the text structure of each genre helps readers predict and analyze what the author will say and has said. For example, because a reader understands the format and rules of a persuasive essay, the reader knows to look for the thesis in the introduction, knows to look for the evidence that backs up the topic sentence in each body paragraph, and knows to look for the specific strategies that are utilized in the conclusion paragraphs. Writing form is an important component of rhetorical stance. Knowing each genre (domain) also helps writers include the most appropriate support details and evidence. For example, persuasive essays often use a counterpoint argument as evidence.

Strategy: Rhetorical Stance

5. Teach Structural Organization

Readers recognize main idea, anticipate plot development or line of argumentation, make inferences, and draw conclusions based upon the structural characteristics of the reading genre. For example, readers expect the headline and introductory paragraph(s) of a newspaper article to follow the structural characteristics of that genre. For example, since news articles include Who, What, Where, When, and How at the beginning, the informed reader knows to look for these components. Similarly, writers apply their knowledge of specific structural characteristics for each writing genre. For example, knowing the characteristics of these plot elements: problem, conflict; rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution will help the writer craft a complete narrative.

Strategy: Numerical Hierarchies

6. Teach Problem Solving Strategies

Good readers and writers act like detectives, looking for clues to understand and solve a case. In a persuasive essay, the reader should detect how a thesis is argued, how the variety of evidence is presented, and if the conclusions are justified in light of the evidence. In a narrative, the writer needs to clearly state the basic problem of the story and how that problem leads to a conflict. Through the elements of plot, the writer must deal with this conflict and resolve it to the reader’s satisfaction.

Strategy: Evidence

7. Teach Coherency and Unity

For both reading and writing, the object is to make sense of the content. Recognizing the author's rhetorical organization, grammatical patterns, transition words, and use of writing techniques such as repetition, parallelism, and summary will facilitate comprehension. Knowing *how* the author communicates helps the reader understand *what* is being communicated. Applying an organizational pattern appropriate to the writing content and effective writing techniques will help the reader understand the content of the communication. Writing unity refers to how well sentences and paragraphs stay focused on the topic. For example, readers need to train themselves to look for irrelevant (off the point) details. Similarly, writers need to ensure that their writing stays on point and does not wander into tangential "birdwalking."

Strategies: Coherency and Unity

8. Teach Sentence Structure Variety

Good readers are adept at parsing both good and bad sentence structure. They consciously work at identifying sentence subjects and their actions. They apply their knowledge of grammar to build comprehension. For example, they recognize misplaced pronouns and dangling participles, such as in "The boy watched the dog beg at the table and his sister fed it" and are able to understand what the author means, in spite of the poor writing. Good writing maintains the reader's attention through interesting content, inviting writing style, effective word choice, and sentence variety. Knowing how to use different sentence structures allows the writer to say what the writer wants to say in the way the writer wants to say it. Most professional writers plan 50% of their sentences to follow the subject-verb-complement grammatical sentence structure and 50% to follow other varied sentence structures. No one is taught, convinced, or entertained when bored.

Strategy: Grammatical Sentence Openers

9. Teach Precise Word Choice

Understanding the nuances to word meanings lets the reader understand precisely what the author means. Knowing semantic variations helps the reader understand why authors use the words that they do and helps the reader "read between the lines," i.e., to infer what the author implies. When writers use words with precision, coherency is improved. There is no ambiguity and the reader can follow the author's intended train of thought.

Strategies: Vocabulary Ladders and Semantic Spectrums

10. Teach Style, Voice, Point of View, Tone, and Mood

Good readers recognize how an author's writing style and voice (personality) help shape the way in which the text communicates. For example, if the style is informal and the voice is flippant, the author may use hyperbole or understatement as rhetorical devices. Recognizing whether the author uses omniscient or limited point of view in the first, second, or third person will help the reader understand who knows what, and from what perspective in the reading. Identifying the tone of helps the reader

understand how something is being said. For example, if the tone is sarcastic, the reader must be alert for clues that the author is saying one thing, but meaning another. Identifying the mood of a literary work will enable the reader to see how the plot and characters shape the feeling of the writing. For example, knowing that the mood of a poem is dark allows the reader to identify the contrasting symbolism of a “shining light.” In addition to applying the writing tools described above, good writers need to be aware of errors in writing style that do not match the rules and format of certain forms of writing, such as the formal essay.

Strategy: Writing Style Errors

11. Teach Inferences

Both reading and writing is interpretive. Readers infer meaning, make interpretations, or draw logical conclusions from textual clues provided by the author. Writers imply, or suggest, rather than overtly state certain ideas or actions to build interest, create intentional ambiguity, develop suspense, or re-direct the reader.

Strategy: Inference Categories

12. Teach Metacognition and Critical Thinking

Reading and writing are thinking activities. Just decoding words does not make a good reader. Similarly, just spelling correctly, using appropriate vocabulary, and applying fitting structure to paragraphs does not make a good writer. Knowing one’s strengths and weaknesses as a reader or writer helps one identify or apply the best strategies to communicate. Knowing how to organize thought through chronology, cause-effect, problem-solution, or reasons-evidence rhetorical patterns assists both reader and writer to recognize and apply reasoning strategies. Knowing higher order questioning strategies, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation helps the reader and writer see beyond the obvious and explore issues in depth.

Strategies: Self-Questioning and Reasoning Errors