

Fast Facts about the Collins Writing Program

Collins Writing is designed to promote writing and thinking across the curriculum. It is based on research findings that writing facilitates student learning and promotes the highest levels of thinking across all disciplines.

The **PASD implementation of Collins Writing** includes these critical elements for improving student writing performance:

- ✓ Striving for a coordinated, district-wide effort to achieve consistency in “writing across the curriculum”
- ✓ Maximizing “writing as thinking” in all disciplines
- ✓ Employing a strategic teaching focus to limit the number of instructional goals presented at one time, while increasing accountability, i.e., “narrow the focus” while “raising the bar”
- ✓ Increasing student productivity and intellectual engagement in the learning process.

Collins Writing includes **five types** of writing assignments:

- ❖ **Type 1** – A quick-write, used to stimulate student thinking through reflection, brainstorming, or activating background knowledge. Teachers give students a minimum number of lines or ideas to include in their responses, along with a time limit – usually 3-5 minutes.

Example:

List eight things you know about _____ (the Civil War, gravity, quadratic equations, research process, etc.)

- ❖ **Type 2** – A written response, used as a review or informal assessment of content and/or skills taught previously. Teachers may give students a specific question or prompt based on what they have learned, along with a time limit – usually 5-10 minutes.

Examples:

Explain two ways that _____ and _____ are similar and two ways they are different.

Summarize the three most important points about _____ that we discussed in class yesterday.

- ❖ **Type 3 and Type 4** – More formal paragraphs or compositions of “best effort writing” that meet up to three standard requirements selected by the teacher, called “focus correction areas” (FCAs). Students plan, write, and revise their work based on the assignment and the specific FCAs. Type 3 includes self-revision and editing, while Type 4 includes peer-revision and a second draft. The composition may take a variety of forms, such as narrative, informational, persuasive, research, and include any content area. Writing is assessed and teachers provide specific feedback based on the FCAs.

Examples of FCAs with point values:

A topic sentence (or thesis statement) – 20 pts.

Five supporting details (or reasons/examples) to support the topic/thesis – 50 pts.

Complete sentences with correct use of capitals and end marks – 30 pts.

- ❖ **Type 5** – A composition that has undergone multiple revisions and drafts for possible publication. (These may include formal essays, short stories, poems, etc.)

Writing Folder Implementation: For 2010-11, students in Gr. 3-9 English/Language Arts classes will collect their Type 3 and Type 4 compositions using individual writing folders.

For more information about Collins Writing, please contact your child’s English/Language Arts teacher.