

## 20 Writing Activities to Enhance Learning

### 1.) Teach It to Know It

Students “teach” someone about a current topic through writing about a concept, idea, or theory. **Variation:** Develop a metaphor to “teach” something.

### 2.) Debate on Propositions

Students examine a proposition related to the unit of study and then pick a side to support or refute through writing.

### 3.) Voices

Develop a list of “voices” or quotations from the reading. Then have students examine their meanings and write brief reactions.

### 4.) The Double-Entry Notebook

Students divide their paper into two columns. On the left side they record important, confusing, interesting, or controversial statements, and on the right side they reflect.

### 5.) Paraphrase

Students, as a group or individually, take the key ideas from a reading or discussion and paraphrase. **Variation:** Students write a short summary of the topic for the day/week and respond to the main ideas. They can then compare with peers.

### 6.) Blogging

Establish a blog for students to post and respond to classmates’ thoughts and ideas.

### 7.) Critique

Through writing, have students critique a reading, discussion, or presented idea.

### 8.) Solving Real Problems

Students examine a real problem related to the topic of study and record a short synopsis of the problem and a solution. **Variation:** Set up a case within your discipline for students to role-play and collaborate on the proper steps or actions to take in order to find a conclusion.

### 9.) Visual Representation

Students produce a visual of a certain topic, issue, or conflict and provide a brief written explanation of its components.

### 10.) Exam Preparation

Students work in pairs or small groups to find the answers to challenging questions they have devised themselves. **Variation:** Students create their own discussion question for the topic being covered during the week. As a follow up activity, their questions can be collected and circulated throughout the class.

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**Yeah, Write**

Writing Activities  
for  
Designing Engaging Writing Assignments  
Adapted from Chris M. Anson and The WAC  
Clearinghouse

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### 11.) Microthemes

After reading or discussing the content, students write a brief essay limited to the space of an index card.

### 12.) Plans

Students write out a plan for something they will complete later on: an experiment, a computer program, a paper, an interview, study for a test, etc.

### 13.) Exit Slips

For one minute, at the end of class, students write about the topic: their confusions, problems, or insights.

**Variation:** Have students answer a question or write about the content as an Admit Slip at the beginning of class.

### 14.) Translation

After examining a text, students translate the writing from a technical explanation to one intended for non-experts or vice versa.

### 15.) Texts into Contexts

Students find an article or other form of text related to the topic of study. They then create a brief reflection discussing how it relates. **Variation:** Assign students “lenses” or different viewpoints through which to interpret an article.

### 16.) Explain a Difficult Sentence

Have students choose a sentence from their reading that may be difficult to comprehend. Then have them write to develop an understanding of what is really being said.

### 17.) Word Maps

Have students write the central idea of the topic in the middle of their paper. They then work to create a web, recording everything they remember about that topic. **Variation:** Have students work together in groups on this and circulate through the room adding on to each others’ maps.

### 18.) Creative Writing

Allow students to be creative, composing a written piece that is unique and imaginative to explain the ideas being studied.

### 19.) Guiding Questions

To start class, post a guiding question on the board and ask students to write a response. **Variation:** Give students several answers to the same question and ask them to determine which is the best or to write a better one.

### 20.) Annotations

Students note the key ideas, strengths, and weaknesses in an article or chapter. **Follow Up Variation:** Students synthesize ideas and concepts from multiple readings to decipher commonalities.

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