

Content Area Writing: Every teacher's guide  
By Daniels, Steineke & Zemelman

This book is organized around two equally important and valuable kinds of writing, *writing to learn* and *public writing*. Some examples of works that fall under each category are listed below:

**Writing to Learn**

notes  
brainstorming  
jottings  
write-arounds  
pro-con lists  
to-do lists  
journaling  
outlines  
free writes

**Public Writing**

research papers  
lab reports  
mathematical proofs  
proposals  
biographies  
historical accounts  
speeches  
essays  
poems

This text provides suggestions on how to get students to master both types of composing, and become powerful writers and thinkers, inside and outside of your content area classroom.

**Double-Entry Journal (pg. 85)**

What It Is: Similar to a pros and cons list

When to Use It and Why: This structure enables students to do two kinds of thinking by recording ideas side by side in two columns on their paper. In the left-hand column go notes that outline information as students read, listen to a lecture or otherwise take information. The right-hand column is used to respond or reflect on the information in some way. Double-entry journals are very flexible and can be used to deepen text understanding, show thinking behind problem solving or compare ideas, information, characters and so on.

**Nonstop Write (pg. 92)**

What It Is: A timed writing usually between 3-5 minutes in which students are asked to respond to a prompt. This might be a content specific prompt or a more open-ended prompt.

When to Use It and Why: Non-stops are very versatile and can be used throughout the study of any content. Students can use their writing to explore ideas about a subject before studying it, or they

can read some text and then respond to the information. Students can also use non-stops to trace their thinking about a subject and recognize the depth of their learning.

### **Teacher-Student Correspondence (pg.106)**

What It Is: A way to develop active correspondence with all of your students. No matter what you teach, you should try writing letters to your students a few times a year spending just ten to fifteen minutes of class time on each round. The benefits will be higher class morale, deeper understanding of the material, better targeted instruction, and a more personal, meaningful relationship with your students.

When to Use It and Why: Talk about differentiation! This tool helps you know, reach and teach every student as an individual. Written correspondence between students and teachers may be the most neglected and potentially powerful teaching strategy of all.

### **People Research (pg. 142)**

What It Is: A concrete, tangible and fun spin on the traditional research paper. This strategy allows students to learn the complex skill of research by first setting the bar at a reachable level.

When to Use It and Why: This strategy should be used prior to sending students off to research abstract ideas as it gives them lots of practice gathering and analyzing data. There are two main types of concrete research that you can adapt to any subject: questionnaires and interviews.

### **Faction (pg. 149)**

What It Is: A marriage of factual research and imagination. In the best examples of this type of work, the writer meticulously researches a topic and then weaves a story around the facts that educates the reader while entertaining him as well.

When to Use It and Why: Faction offers tremendous potential as an alternative assessment, guided research project or extension activity. If pursued repeatedly, students can progress through the year from highly guided to more independent forms of research. Faction gives students a chance to personalize their learning, connecting it with other parts of their lives, as they pull from prior knowledge and experiences in order to create a believable fictional subtext.

### **Brochure (pg. 167)**

What It Is: A simple way to adapt the inviting graphics and quick-read nature of commercial brochures into classroom topics.

When to Use It and Why: Brochures, like many other public writing examples, work well as summative activities for a unit or line of inquiry. They can be used as a review activity before a test or as an alternative assessment in lieu of a test. This is a great way to get students to re-read their notes before an exam.