Nancy **Steineke** / Harvey "Smokey" **Daniels**

Texts AND Lessons

for CONTENT-AREA WRITING

with more than **50** *Texts* from

National Geographic

The New York Times • Prevention

The Washington Post • Smithsonian

Harvard Business Review

and many others

HEINEMANN
Portsmouth, NH

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INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT SETS **240**

**TO ACCESS THE ONLINE RESOURCES FOR
TEXTS & LESSONS FOR CONTENT-AREA WRITING**

1. Go to **http://hein.pub/textsandlessonscaw** and click the **Log In** link in the upper right. (If you do not already have an account with Heinemann, click the **Create Account** link in the upper right.)

2. Register your product by entering the code XXXX.

3. You will need to have your copy of *Texts and Lessons for Content-Area Writing* with you to complete registration.

4. Once you have registered your product it will appear in the list of **My Online Resources**.

1 WRITING TO LEARN CONTENT

GREETINGS, COLLEAGUES. Welcome, teachers of science, social studies, language arts, math, art, world languages, business, technology, shop, music, PE, and every other subject we teach in middle and high school.

We are Smokey Daniels and Nancy Steineke, joining you with a new resource that we hope you'll find useful. This is the third in our series of *Texts and Lessons* books, each designed to help teachers of any subject enhance their students' ability to understand—and this time, to also *write about*—texts and topics.

Before we talk (briefly) about how the book will benefit you, let us mention some things it *won't do*.

- Steal gobs of class time from your course objectives
- Require your students to do long, tedious writing exercises
- Ask kids to write about anything except content-area material
- Send you home with papers to grade
- Require you to teach spelling, grammar, or sentence diagramming
- Have you assign or orchestrate any term or research papers
- Turn you into an English teacher (unless you already are one, in which case, thanks for joining us!)

Here is what this book *will* do for you:

- Build students' writing fluency, confidence, clarity, correctness, and craft through frequent, high-quantity practice (in short: improve student writing)
- Dramatically increase student engagement
- Build and extend your students' subject-area knowledge
- Nurture a supportive, collaborative learning climate
- Spark thoughtful, lively discussion
- Help you teach thirty-five ready-to-use content-literacy lessons
- Introduce your kids to more than fifty kid-friendly "mentor texts" that demonstrate the "moves" of skillful nonfiction writers
- Generate concrete evidence of kids' thinking and writing skills
- Provide one hundred example topics for extended writing projects
- Create a safe space for respectful peer feedback on writing
- Complement the efforts of all your school colleagues as you prepare kids for high-stakes external assessments.

Is that a deal?

Since the first *T&L* book came out in 2011, we have worked with schools in twenty-three states, conducting workshops for teachers and offering demonstration lessons in middle and high school classrooms. Nancy has just retired from her longtime "day job" at Victor J. Andrew High School in suburban Chicago, and now consults full time with schools and districts around the country. Smokey continues to serve as a guest teacher in places like Texas, California, Chicago, Georgia, New York, Los Angeles, Wisconsin, Colorado, and the extraordinary Federal-Hocking schools in Appalachia. Everywhere we go, our job is to support teachers with content to teach, like you.

Feel Any Pressure?

These days, all of us who teach are being called upon not just to cover our own (often voluminous) content, but also to help kids grow as writers, readers, researchers, and lifelong learners (not to mention digital citizens and non-bullies). It seems like nothing ever gets subtracted from the agenda, only added.

There's pressure on us from our departments and principals, from our school districts, from the state and national standards, and especially from all those high-stakes tests. Maybe we are not directly responsible for a given kid's writing performance on the state test, but there is a new emphasis on team accountability. Everyone wants us "content-area" teachers to do our part to make sure that kids can write, read, understand, remember, and apply the subject matter in our own disciplines—and all across the curriculum.

If it really does take a village to raise a child, we are inescapably among the villagers. The Common Core State Standards (2010) for "Literacy in History/ Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects" require that "Beginning in grade 6, the literacy standards allow teachers of history/social studies, science, and technical subjects to use their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language in their respective fields." Math teachers are conscripted also: the Common Core math standards strongly encourage the use of prose writing, note taking, drawing, modeling, mapping, and other graphic representations as ways for students to achieve and communicate mathematical understanding.

As all these tasks are added to our already full plates, perhaps we might be forgiven for saying: Wait a minute! We are swamped over here! We need all the time we have to teach our science, math, history, literature, economics, health, and French. It's not like our schedules are riddled with "fallow" class periods, left free, like untilled fields. Nor are we silently hoping that some fresh mandates will come along to fill our idle hours.

Good News

But wait. This so-called mandate actually works for us. Those writing activities we are being encouraged to do with our kids? Among them are some of the most valuable and powerful teaching strategies (forget writing!) ever. We are not becoming writing teachers at all—instead, we are getting a whole new repertoire of teaching strategies that help kids *learn our subjects*. When you

start doing some of these quick writing-to-learn activities—giving one, three, or five minutes to having kids do a quick write and talk about it—you see much higher engagement, more curiosity, better distributed participation, and more thoughtful ideas. Bottom line: when we use these quick writes, students retain more of our content than they do when we simply tell and present.

And here's the bonus you'll only believe once you try this stuff: these strategies add joy to our teaching. Classes feel crisper and more energetic; there is flow between writing and talking, quiet and loud, reflection and action. Kids take more responsibility, and some pressure slides off us; the shy or introverted kids, the language learners, the kids with IEPs, now get equal "airtime" with everyone else. Having chances to rehearse their thinking quietly in writing and then out loud in safe small groups, they become far more likely to speak up, even in the whole class. Kids gradually shift into new dimensions. Who thought that Ilsa would ever shine so bright? Who thought that Devin would come this far as a learner? Who thought these kids could actually work together so well?

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Standards and Realities

While the Common Core has lost some of its national consensus, it has had a great influence on our thinking about writing in states and districts. The anchor standards for writing include the following ten items, which are also the basis for many "revised" state standards.

TEXT TYPES AND PURPOSES

1. Write *arguments* to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

2. Write *informative/explanatory* texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

3. Write *narratives* to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF WRITING

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

RESEARCH TO BUILD AND PRESENT KNOWLEDGE

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

RANGE OF WRITING

10. 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 lessons in this book support *every one* of these standards. By their very design, they build the fluency, confidence, clarity, audience awareness, curiosity, and correctness that kids need to write to others—and generate stamina for longer pieces. In this content-area resource, we specialize in the "shorter time frame" writings that most directly enhance day-to-day learning in content fields. As you use these quick writes, you will be making a contribution to your school's overall efforts toward literacy, while still focusing on your own curriculum.

We feel that longer, highly polished public writings are the special province of the ELA teacher, who can use class time to enact the full process-writing model, routinely demonstrate her own work, set up writing workshops, present skill minilessons, confer one-to-one with young authors, and help kids shape pieces over days and weeks. However, for those times when it is genuinely useful to your content-area study to have students work through a longer writing assignment, we've provided some help. At the end of each lesson in Chapters 3 through 10, you'll find a list of ideas for using students' work in the lesson as the foundation for larger research and writing projects, with options for narrative, informative/explanatory, and persuasive writing. The suggestions give both a general direction for a writing assignment, no matter what content area you're in, and a fully developed example of what that kind of assignment might look like. All of these suggestions parallel specific Common Core writing standards, and, if you are so inclined, you can easily address *all* of the CCSS writing requirements by working through a few of these assignments over the course of the year. (To help you plan, in Appendix 2 we offer a chart that correlates all the lessons in this book to the CCSS for writing.)

Balance in Writing

Unfortunately, the Common Core writing standards really missed the boat on *balance* in writing tasks. If you read through the various grade-level writing standards and the student writing samples in Common Core Appendix C, you'll see a distinct emphasis on occasional long reports and essays, featuring full-process multiple-draft pieces resulting in highly polished and edited final work that is graded on complex and exacting rubrics. In other words, the Core leans toward having kids write *big pieces once in a while.*

But where are those longer formal writings supposed to come from? What foundation are they built upon? Magic? Alien ghost writers? Listen, if kids can't get lots of words on the page quickly, with confidence and stamina and awareness

of how they sound to readers, they're not going to be crafting big public pieces anytime soon. Above all, students need huge helpings of writing *practice*, starting small and working their way up.

So the CCSS are backwards and wrong. Kids should be writing:

- much more often than the CCSS call for
- far more than teachers could ever read, much less grade
- about curriculum content in every class
- five, seven, or twelve times a day (a couple of minutes each)
- about science experiments, news articles, textbooks, novels, math problems, current events, and more
- about some topics they have chosen for themselves
- to put ideas and concepts into their own words constantly
- to build fluency, stamina, and strategies for engaging an audience
- to receive immediate responses from live readers (classmates, not just overloaded teachers)
- without fear of demoralizing red-ink feedback

The Core authors—mostly standardized test makers and literary scholars—didn't understand the complementary roles of writing to learn (WTL) and formal public writing. The chart below lays out the distinctions between quick writes and those longer public pieces in detail.

WRITING TO LEARN	PUBLIC WRITING
Short	Substantial
Limited sharing	Open to the public
Spontaneous	Planned
Exploratory	Authoritative
Informal	Conventional
Single-draft	Multiple-draft
Unrevised and unedited	Revised and edited
Ungraded but used in class	Designed to yield a grade

Kids need to work both sides of this dichotomy. Some of their writing practice needs to include tasks that are short in both length and time (free writing, brainstorming, note taking, modeling, listing, mapping, and exchanging short notes with classmates). Building on this experience (and upon their reading, and what they are learning in English classes), kids can move up to longer, more staged and polished pieces like essays, reports, term papers, biographies, investigations, and extended arguments.

Research has shown that writing, *even very short pieces,* helps kids remember subject matter better than just listening or talking. In a major meta-analysis of studies on writing as a tool of learning, students experiencing frequent in-class writing outperformed conventional students. As researchers reported:

In twenty-four of the studies, students completed writing assignments in class, so researchers could record the time spent on the writing tasks. What appears to

matter more than the amount of time given to an assignment is the nature of the writing task, the kind of thinking that gets done. . . . In general, these studies and other research suggest that writing can benefit learning, not so much because it allows personal expression about subject matter as because it scaffolds metacognitive reflection on learning processes. And the cost need not be great: even relatively brief tasks can boost learning. (Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, and Wilkinson 2004)

Balancing writing to learn with formal pieces is a well-established approach among writing scholars (Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde 2012) and long practiced by the National Writing Project, through its hundreds of teacher training sites around the country. Pioneers of this balanced approach (Fulwiler 1986, 1987; Countryman 1992; Daniels and Zemelman 1988) developed explicit WTL pedagogies that serve us well decades later.

WHAT MAKES WRITING EASIER

Classroom Conditions That Nurture Young Writers

1. Teachers often compose in front of students, explicitly modeling their own writing strategies.
2. Students engage in short, authentic writing tasks every day, in every class.
3. Students write to explore subject-matter content.
4. Writing topics are interesting, intriguing, significant, surprising, and/or discussable.
5. Writing assignments offer students choices in how to respond.
6. Students' writing products are used during class to advance the lesson.
7. Students regularly write for classmates, to get an immediate audience response.
8. Students use writing as a way to build working relationships with others.
9. Teachers withhold the red pen and focus on the writer's ideas.
10. Teachers assess short writings using the Good Faith Effort standard (see page 9).
11. Teachers periodically collect and review pieces to gauge engagement and thinking.
12. Teachers assign much more writing than they will read; they trust in unmonitored practice.
13. Students may write before, during, and after studying a topic.
14. Students write for purposes and audiences beyond the teacher's inbox.
15. Teachers break longer writing assignments into a series of doable steps.
16. Students recognize and emulate the craft techniques found in mentor texts.
17. Students write with an eye toward voice, creativity, originality, and humor.
18. Students use writing to explore and monitor their own thinking processes.
19. Students use writing to connect with peers.
20. Students use writing to take action in their communities—and around the world.

Mentor Texts: Short Writing Models

For kids to become skillful writers they need to *read* skillful writers, and we have assembled an honor roll of them here. Most of the texts we chose for this book are what we call "one-page wonders" (with the occasional few-page wonder thrown in). What do these OPWs have in common?

- Interesting and relevant to kids
- Surprising, puzzling, funny, quirky, or funky
- Complex enough to justify time and thought
- Invite the reader to visualize places, faces, and events
- Feature people you can get interested in
- Provoke lots of questions
- Contain debatable issues that invite lively written conversations
- Support an array of writing responses and topics

We use the articles in the book in two ways. First, they provide subject matter—rich and relevant content that kids can enjoy writing and talking about. But they also serve as "mentor texts," examples of adult published writing that students can study for their organization, voice, style, vocabulary, sentence patterns, and above all, those special little "moves" that writers make to hook us and keep us reading. We zoom in on several of these in Chapters 11, 12, and 13.

For our first two *T&L* books we found 135 great short pieces, and we didn't have any trouble rounding up more than fifty others for your class this time. Remember, our job is to offer you the first demonstration of each writing strategy—after that, the strategies are yours to exploit with fresh articles from your own subject field. Not to put a curse on you, but we hope you become a nonfiction nerd like us, so you are always adding new pieces to your collection. As you work with these kinds of texts, you'll decide what constitutes a "wonder" for you and your students, and you'll start hoarding your own.

About Reading Levels

You'll notice that the articles, columns, infographics, and book excerpts we have included here are not "leveled." We didn't even look up the Lexile scores. That's because we know how inaccurate this measure can be, and because our lessons support readers so thoroughly that they can handle what's on the page. In this book, we are offering your kids "free range" texts, captured from the wild—which is to say from the diverse world of contemporary nonfiction that people voluntarily read. So this is all "adult" text, and we will make sure your kids can manage and enjoy it, by keeping the interest level high, the text brief (to knock out reading speed as a factor), and the scaffolding abundant.

When you are building your own collection of one-page wonders, you can keep these factors in mind, along with the bulleted list above under "Mentor Texts: Short Writing Models." When you come to creating the kind of bigger, multi-article text sets we feature in Chapters 11–13, look for pieces that link directly to curricular units you need to teach. When you make your own text

"If students are to make knowledge their own, they must struggle with the details, wrestle with the facts, and rework raw information and dimly understood concepts into language they can communicate to someone else. In short, if students are to learn, they must write."
—NATIONAL COMMISSION ON WRITING (2008)

set collections to support more extended inquiry, be sure they *are* leveled so kids can specialize: include selections for your students who read at, above, and below grade level.

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KEY ELEMENTS OF POWERFUL WRITING EXPERIENCES

The Carnegie Corporation's reports *Writing Next* (Graham and Perin 2007) and *Writing to Read* (Graham and Hebert 2010) identify the elements of current writing instruction found to be effective for helping adolescent students learn to write well and to use writing as a tool for learning:

- **Writing for content learning** uses writing as a tool for learning subject-area material.

- **Writing about text** in ways that include personal response, analysis, interpretation, and summarizing.

- **Collaborative writing** uses instructional arrangements in which adolescents work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their compositions.

- **The study of models** provides students with opportunities to read, analyze, and emulate models of good writing.

- **Inquiry activities** engage students in analyzing immediate, concrete data to help them develop ideas and content for a particular writing task.

Each of these structures is an integral feature of this book's lessons.

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Assessment of Writing to Learn

We live in a world where anything students spend time on is supposed to be graded or awarded points (or deductions). The kids, of course, are totally socialized into this system (except for the ones who have already mentally dropped out) and they will demand to be paid in the coin of numbers or letters if we forget to score them. And on top of that, there is a long tradition (largely perpetuated by parents with poor memories) that student writing in particular needs constant, critical feedback and tough numerical scoring. This is a case of Stockholm Syndrome if there ever was one. So many parents remember their own writing being returned from teachers, dripping with red ink, and somehow reconceptualize this scarring experience as a *good* (or at least a necessary) thing. If you would like to read a whole book chapter containing the research on such "intensive correction" and its utter futility, check out "The English Teacher's Red Pen: History of an Obsession" in Daniels and Zemelman (1988).

But how do you assess your students' writing today without resorting to time-eating and ineffective practices? Here's how to evaluate the kinds of writing-to-learn pieces generated from our lessons:

- Never mark them for mechanics, spelling, or grammar.
- Never grade them summatively, with a letter or number.
- Always use them explicitly in class to advance the work of the course. They might be read by others (silently or aloud), talked about, responded to, posted on the walls, shared online, or quoted by you.

- Intermittently collect and review them to assess their level of engagement, types of thinking, and guidance for future lesson planning.

The "never" items make sense because in assigning these quick writes, we do not provide any time or procedures for revision, rewriting, editing, or polishing. These are by definition first-draft writings and that's it. It would be nonsensical to punish kids for not doing things they weren't asked or given time to do. And no, "bad habits" will not take root in the absence of our red pen.

But we can't forget the kids who are hooked on grades and points. "Good Faith Effort" to the rescue! Our pal Jim Vopat coined this term in his *Writing Circles* (2009, p. 158). The idea is simple and kids understand it well.

> *When we do these writing-to-learn activities, you will be graded on the basis of Good Faith Effort. If you enter the activity with good faith, do the writing, share and discuss with others as asked, shouldering your share of our work together—then you get 10 points. If you don't, you get 0 points. There are no in-betweens, no scores of 3 or 7.5 are available—this is pure binary grading, all or nothing. If your page, paper, notecard, or screen is empty, that's no points. If there is something relevant and ample on that surface, 10 points for you! GFE is easy for us both to recognize: If you jump in and do the work, you'll know it— and I'll know it.*

From a practical point of view, this means we only need to keep track of the few kids who *don't* put forth that GFE, and remember to enter that zero in our gradebook later on.

Still, let's be honest. Giving points is not assessment, it's just grading. When we want to get serious and really scrutinize kids' thinking in these activities, we have to take further steps. As kids do the activities in these thirty-five lessons, they naturally create and leave behind writings, lists, drawings, notes, and other tracks of their thinking. So why pop a quiz? Instead, collect, study, and save the naturally occurring by-products of kids' learning. These authentic artifacts, this residue of thinking, are far more meaningful than a disembodied "72" in your gradebook. The kids' own creations are also far more relevant in a parent conference or a principal evaluation than a string of point totals.

A Final Word

What should a student's day look like in a content-area class? Reading fascinating materials. Doing quick writing pieces. Sharing ideas. Responding to others. Discussing the big concepts, patterns, and processes of the discipline. Debating controversies. Wanting to know more. Becoming an inquirer in the field.

Now that's a class worth attending—and teaching! Let's go to work.

This resource has three main sections: two are in your hands; the third is online. Chapters 3 through 10 present thirty-five strategy lessons for engaging students' content-area reading, writing, and discussion, using thirty-seven short "mentor texts." In Chapters 11, 12, and 13, we offer three text set lessons, using thematically connected assortments of pieces designed to be studied, written about, and debated together. On the web, you'll find downloadable copies of all the texts, articles, forms, prompts, and other projectables for your classroom.

Chapters 3–10: Strategy Lessons

The strategy lessons are each accompanied by at least one "one-page wonder"— an enticing article, essay, argument, or image that engages students in close reading, quick writing, and lively discussion. We selected these pieces with topical relevance, writing quality, and student engagement foremost in our minds. They cover a wide range of genres and themes; only a few were abridged. The lessons accompanying these readings offer specific suggestions and language you can use to teach them. They are written as "generically" as possible, so you can use (and reuse) the steps and language with any other text you choose. And the strategy lessons are quick: most are designed to be completed within ten to forty minutes. All are an investment in future collaboration, writing, and thinking.

The strategy lessons appear in what we'd call a "mild sequential order." For example, it's much easier to support an argument after you've practiced some one-minute writes. The first five lessons would make a terrific set of first-week experiences if the calendar works (and are also helpful if you are bringing in these lessons midyear and want to get a smooth start).

We have grouped the lessons into families based on their thinking and writing focus.

Chapter 3: Setting the Stage for Writing

Chapter 4: Sparking Thinking with Quick Writes

Chapter 5: Writing Before, During, and After Reading

Chapter 6: Taking Note

Chapter 7: Digging Deeper into Texts

Chapter 8: Time for an Argument

Chapter 9: Writing for Understanding

Chapter 10: Closer Writing About Content

Very generally, the lessons become more complex and socially demanding as they unfold. But, that being said, use them in whatever order you like; so far, no fatalities have been reported due to reordering. You can also mix and match any

lesson with any reading selection, ours or yours. If a piece looks too easy or hard for your kids, don't give up on the lesson—find an alternative text elsewhere in the book or in your own collection, and carry on. Just remember to always study any potential lesson text carefully to be sure it is appropriate for your students and the community where you would like to continue teaching.

Chapters 11, 12, 13: Text Set Lessons

The text sets are divided by the three most common (and standards-based) nonfiction genres, with one extended lesson each for narrative, informative/ explanatory, and persuasive/argumentative writing.

Chapter 11: Writing an Interview with Paul Robeson

Writing Focus: Nonfiction Narrative

Chapter 12: Creating a Fact Sheet About Edible Insects

Writing Focus: Nonfiction Informative

Chapter 13: Writing a Letter to the Editor About Military Animal Use

Writing Focus: Nonfiction Argument

In each text set, kids encounter two to six coordinated reading selections. Students can now range though multiple texts representing different genres and authors, each of them taking a different angle on a common subject. These lessons focus on rich and fresh topics, offering multiple points of entry for students, and providing for a deep and sustained engagement in reading, writing, and thinking. Each text set leads to a focused writing activity that is based on the subject matter of the text set and also on the close study of a highlighted mentor text, directing students' attention to a particular element of craft essential to writing in the narrative, informative, or persuasive genres of nonfiction.

Always study any potential lesson text carefully to be sure it is appropriate for your students and the community where you would like to continue teaching.

A Word About the Texts

As mentioned earlier, we choose our articles based on interesting events, themes, or trends in the world, especially subjects of curiosity or importance to the young people we teach. Plus, we're always thinking about how these subjects might correlate with a wide variety of content areas.

However, even when we find an amazing topic, we don't always find the perfect article for sharing with students—for instance, sometimes the author assumes a level of background knowledge that most students won't have; other times we find a juicy example but deem it too edgy for school use. Additionally, some of the rights holders of the texts we would have liked to use either would not grant permission to include the texts in this book or insisted on terms that we couldn't honor. Because of these issues, we had some gaps to fill. So when you see an article from the source WrapUp Media, you know that it's a nonfiction piece we wrote ourselves, just for this book. Writing these articles gave us the chance to "find" some pieces that were *exactly* what we wanted for a lesson or text set: they're custom made! In fact, we've heard back from many of our colleagues who have used the first two *Texts and Lessons* books in schools year after year that they've also resorted to the

Steps and Teaching Language: This is the core of the lesson, where all the activities and teacher instructions are spelled out in sequence and in detail. Text that appears in regular typeface indicates our suggestions for the teacher. Text in italic is suggested teaching language that you can try on and use.

Text Type: We've labeled every selection by genre: biography, infographic, opinion column, feature, interview, photograph, map, etc.

Source: Publication information.

Title: Names the teaching strategy.

Time: Tells the expected length of the lesson. Most strategy lessons range from a few minutes to a class period. *For the Text Sets:* Each lesson fills at least one 50-minute class period—and we give you steps and language to dig deeper over several additional periods.

Groupings: Tells the different social structures (pairs, small groups, whole class, etc.) that will be used.

Standards Met: Refers to the Common Core Writing Anchor Standards.

When to Use: Explains situations in which this lesson would be helpful for you and your students.

Introduction: Gives background on the writing strategy and the topic of the text being used, previewing the lesson's value for students.

Preparation: Lets you know what you need to gather, do, or consider before teaching the lesson.

Web Resources: All the texts, images, writing prompts, charts, lists, or forms that need to be projected for any lesson are ready for you at our website (see instructions on page 19). Items that may be downloaded for projection are highlighted with the "download" icon.

◀ **Steps** & **Teaching Language**

STEP 1 **Prepare kids for the read-aloud.** Begin by tossing out a few questions to activate students' background knowledge and engage their thinking. (No writing yet.)

Who here has played a video game?

What are some of your favorite games?

What do you like about the game?

Who do you think plays video games more, boys or girls?

How popular do you think video games are compared to movies, music, or sports? Do you think gaming will grow or fade away?

What do you think of complaints that video games and video game culture is sexist?

STEP 2 **Hand out index cards and read aloud.** Pass out the index cards and explain that students will use them to do a super-quick write after you read them an article. This is your chance to say something like: *See, when I say a short piece of writing, I really mean it!* Have kids put their names on the cards now.

Now invite students to listen as you read aloud. Be ready to pause if they need thinking time, or if they are reacting aloud (as they may to the finding that women predominate gaming).

Students use cards for quick writes. Next, invite students to write ... the front side of their index card ...

C H A P T E R

4

SPARKING THINKING WITH QUICK WRITES

Now that students have co-created and practiced some norms around partner work, kids practice writing short, responsive pieces triggered by nonfiction articles and complex images.

LESSON 6

Card Talk

TIME ▶ 20 minutes

GROUPINGS ▶ Whole class, pairs, individuals

STANDARDS MET ▶ See pages 306–307.

WHEN TO USE ▶ This uber-simple early lesson gets students thinking, writing, and conversing about a complex text.

TEXT	AUTHOR	SOURCE	TEXT TYPE
"More Women Play Video Games Than Boys"	Drew Harwell	*Washington Post*	Feature story

Many kids, whatever the grade, come to us fearful of writing. Our colleague Jim Vopat says that, sooner or later, almost all American school students (and graduates) join the march of "the writing wounded" (2011). Without probing all the causes here, we know the truth of it: many of our students suffer from blank-page fever when asked to write—especially in classes like math, science, and social studies, where they expect to be safe from English teachers and their infernal writing assignments.

To reduce that fear at the start of our course, we can send a concrete signal that we just want *a little* writing. We have kids write on index cards sized to the class writing anxiety level: 3×5 for the abjectly terrified; 4×6 for medium-level trepidation; and 5×7 for the almost-ready-for-a-full-page writers.

To make it even easier, we can read aloud some juicy information for kids to write about—this way, constraints like varying silent reading rates and proficiency with annotation are set aside briefly.

You simply read aloud a relevant, engaging, and surprising article—and then ask kids to jot a quick response on a notecard. This piece from the *Washington Post* really fills the bill.

PREPARATION

1. Practice reading "More Women Play Video Games Than Boys" beforehand, so your smooth and animated delivery will support kids to understand the text without their seeing it (permission rights do not include printing/copying).

2. Download the lists for Steps 3 and 4 and have them ready to project.

3. Have right-sized index cards ready for students to write on in Step 3. We usually start with 4×6.

4. Think about how to handle the card passing at Step 4.

The Washington Post

More Women Play Video Games Than Boys

By Drew Harwell

The stereotype of a "gamer"—mostly young, mostly nerdy and most definitely male—has never been further from the truth. In the United States, twice as many adult women play video games as do boys, according to the Entertainment Software Association, the industry's top trade group. Male gamers between ages 10 and 25 represent a sliver of the market, only 15 percent, according to Newzoo, a games research firm.

Yet America's 190 million ~~players~~

stereotypical 17-year-old male gamer playing 'Call of Duty.'"

As games have expanded from consoles and computers to cellphones and social media, developers and publishers have found whole new niches for attracting a paying audience. "Kim Kardashian: Hollywood," a "red-carpet adventure" with a predominantly female audience, has made $51 million since launching in June and has ~~become~~

◀ **Research Projects for Extended Writing**

Longer writing projects—reflecting the key genres required by the national standards—can be built on the work students have already done in this lesson. As kids continue to explore the topics of our reading selections, we expect that they will bring fresh background knowledge, recent thinking, and genuine curiosity to the task. When you use the lesson above with your own content, you can also use the assignments below as models for extending that content into longer writing projects.

Narrative: *Relate your experience with this topic*

Write your own "personal history with video games," if you hav~~e~~ any other game/sport/hobby you participate in: card player, skat~~er~~ baseball player, water skier, swimmer. Describe your path from ~~when you~~ encountered the game, tell how you developed and got better—o~~r~~

Informative/explanatory: *Pitch a related product*

Develop a concept for a new video game. (This doesn't mean ~~an actu-~~ ally marketable product, unless you have lots of time, coding ~~skills, and a~~ hundred coworkers.) This is more like a proposal—a few pag~~es describing~~ the environment, the players, the goals or conflict, the basic ru~~les, the~~ levels—and most important, an explanation of why your game ~~is exciting~~ and unique. Drawings of some screens or features would be a ~~plus.~~

Persuasive/argumentative: *Take a position on a current, relate~~d~~*

Investigate the controversy called "Gamergate." Dig into the ~~online~~ coverage of this issue and you'll find much polarized opinion ~~and infor-~~ mation, then take your own position.

Suggestions for How to Respond

- Make a comment
- Share a connection
- Ask a question
- Agree and give reasons
- Disagree and give reasons
- Make a relevant drawing or illustration

STEP 5 **Whole class shares.** Invite several students to read aloud both sides of the card they just answered, along the lines of: "I got Randy's card, and he said (read text). I wrote back to him and I said . . ." Then invite others to comment or join in ("Jane and I said something similar . . ."). Let the conversation conclude with thoughts about the video game phenomenon and any of its gender issues that interest kids.

STEP 6 **Collect student writing.** Gather all the cards and scan them later for engagement, quality of thinking, and ideas for future minilessons.

Tip ▶ Since this topic and article offer some surprising information, it can lead to a lively, even vociferous discussion among the kids. This is a good thing, of course. But be ready to moderate a spirited exchange, as those students who care deeply about gaming may challenge ideas—and each other.

Variations ▶ Instead of having kids pass cards around the room to achieve a random distribution, gather the cards yourself, shuffle the deck with a flourish, and deal them back out, making sure no kids get back their own cards.

As an intermediate step between 4 and 5, have the pairs who randomly coauthored each card pull their seats together and talk briefly about what they wrote. Then, when you move to the whole class in Step 5, these pairs can each read aloud their own side of the card.

Shoptalk ▶ While we specifically feature a teacher read-aloud here, most of the upcoming lessons have kids reading the texts on their own. But you know your kids best. For any future lesson, if you think reading the text (or part of it) aloud to your students will better scaffold their comprehension, by all means do it.

50 CHAPTER 4 / *Sparking Thinking with Quick Writes*

Reading Selection/Mentor Text: Each lesson is built around a short piece of narrative, informative, or persuasive text. For all but one lesson (Lesson 6, in which the text is used as a read-aloud), we have paid the publication for "reproducible" rights, so you may copy and distribute the pieces to students legally. Your kids must be able to write and mark directly on the page, so *make copies for everyone*—not just one set that gets passed from class to class.

Research Projects for Extended Writing: If you decide to use the work students have done in the lesson as a foundation for an extended research and writing project, consider the suggestions in this section for narrative, informative, and persuasive projects.

Tips and Variations: These sections offer different ways of adjusting the lesson to your students, with specific troubleshooting for particular steps.

Shoptalk: We go into shoptalk mode when a lesson reminds us of some broader teaching issue, something that applies beyond this single lesson.

CHAPTER 2 / *How to Use This Book* **13**

same strategy when necessary. Don't worry—our lovingly homemade pieces are factual: we've cited our references at the end of the book, so you can take a look at our research material if you'd like.

Digital Writing to Learn

As this book comes off the press, we are in a technological transition in American education. In some schools, we see kids using their own devices in every class; for others, it's still notebook paper. And everything in between. We've written these lessons in their baseline form, with kids writing on tree-based surfaces and sharing by handing paper around. There is something basic and human and aesthetic about writing by hand. Besides, paper never crashes, and pencils can be sharpened in a few seconds.

But many of these activities can be duplicated or enhanced on digital devices of many kinds. This has certainly changed our own lives: when we teach now, we can offer the learners a backchannel like TodaysMeet, where they can post their comments as the class goes on, and then we can stop periodically to project those comments and answer questions. Like, wow. And we often visit classrooms where teachers use Edmodo or Google Classroom as a space where kids can compose and share their writing with classmates in limitless conversations. If you are in the lucky position where your students have 1:1 devices, or you have access to these platforms and apps, by all means digitize our lessons.

Just a couple of cautions. For the quick writes and sharing work, every kid must be using the same device or platform and be able to use it with zero friction—as simply as paper and pencil. If you start trying to have kids pass around assorted devices to read and respond, the lesson fails immediately unless you've already explicitly taught kids how to operate every device in use.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

These lessons are generally pretty low-tech. Mostly, you just make copies of the articles and prepare kids to think, write, and talk about them. But there are a few supplies we like to keep around:

- Post-it notes of various sizes.

- Index cards—3×5, 4×6, and 5×7-inch varieties.

- Large chart paper, newsprint, or rolls of butcher paper, plus tape.

- Fat and skinny markers in assorted colors.

- Clipboards: When kids are working with short selections, they may be moving around the room, sitting on the floor, writing in various locations, meeting in different groups. They'll need to bring a hard writing surface; a weighty textbook works, but feather-light clipboards were made to be portable desks.

- A projector to show the lesson instructions we've parked for you on our website, as well as images, work samples, and web pages related to the lessons.

- Whenever possible, laptops, tablets, or smartphones for everyone, for composing and sharing writing as well as doing quick research.

Student Collaboration

Every one of our lessons has students working with other kids in some way. Collaboration is embedded, first and foremost, because we've seen it work in our own classrooms for an unmentionable number of decades. We consistently observe more student engagement, persistence, enjoyment, and simple retention of content when the work is more sociable than solitary. We're also immersed in the decades of research showing that when kids practice working together in a friendly and supportive way, their achievement goes up (Daniels and Steineke 2013). In fact, we wrote a whole book about this body of knowledge and practice; if you'd like to learn more, check out *Teaching the Social Skills of Academic Interaction* (2014).

These days there are a couple of other reasons why highly collaborative and interactive classrooms are necessary. For one thing, most state standards require us to teach speaking and listening skills, which typically include pair and small-group work. And then there are the classroom assessments that we as teachers face, where someone comes in our room and rates us on a rubric. If you look at these rubrics, including the predominant ones from Charlotte Danielson (2013) and Robert Marzano (2013) as well as the home-grown versions from some individual states, you'll notice great overlap on one factor: you get maximum points for having a highly collaborative, interactive classroom where kids are working with each other much of the time—and even sharing class leadership with you. For example, if you are observed while only a few kids join in a whole-class discussion, you can be rated "Unsatisfactory" on one Danielson four-point scale.

Believe it or not, every class—yes, of teenagers—can collaborate all year long *if we show them how.* Kids are not born knowing how to work effectively in small groups: we have to teach them and give them repeated practice. That's why our lessons are so tightly structured:

- The readings are interesting.
- The instructions are explicit.
- Every kid-kid meeting is highly organized.
- Every lesson follows a "socially incremental" design: kids typically begin working with just one other person (a more controlled scenario than starting in groups of four or five).
- Once collaboration is established, kids can move from pairs to small groups.
- Finally (and always), lessons finish in a whole-class discussion, orchestrated by the teacher.

As you will see, we begin with *pairs* or *partners* in these lessons—and in all our work with young people. When students are meeting with just one other learner, they experience maximum "positive social pressure." That means both persons totally need each other to complete the task. There's no chance to pull back and hope that some other group member will pick up the slack. There are no other members—you two are it! So you have to pay attention, listen carefully, speak up, and take on your share of the work. With pairs, there tend to be fewer

distractions, sidetracks, and disputes of the kind we sometimes have to manage in larger groups. Also, pairs can work more quickly and efficiently than larger groups. And since we expected you would be just a little pressed for time, you'll notice that a majority of the lessons use pairs for this very reason.

In almost every lesson, you'll have to decide how to form pairs (or at times, groups of three or four), and there is a lot to think about. You already know what happens when you blithely say, "Everyone find a partner!" Some kids cling to their best friend, whom they've been exclusively partnering with since prekindergarten. These friend partners have plenty to talk about, mostly things other than your lesson. Meanwhile, some kids get left out altogether, while others form groups of five. Instead of letting kids pick their own partners, keep mixing kids up, different partners for every activity, every day. This is part of your community building. Everyone gets to know everyone. No one gets to say, "I won't work with him." To achieve this shuffling, write each kid's name on a Popsicle stick and keep them in a coffee mug; when it's time to pick partners, they draw from the mug. Better yet, use the class list randomizer called "The Hat" (found here: www .harmonyhollow.net/download.shtml) or any one of the numerous randomizing apps available for smartphones and tablets.

Take a look at the following chart, which is adapted from Stephanie Harvey and Smokey's book, *Comprehension and Collaboration* (2015). You'll see seven strategies that skillful collaborators use. All these behaviors are embedded over and over again in this book's lessons. As you conduct the writing, reading, and discussion activities, your kids will get plenty of collaboration practice, and become better partners and group members.

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES/ACTIONS	SOUNDS LIKE	DOESN'T SOUND LIKE
1. Be responsible to the group	• Come prepared: work completed, materials and notes in hand • Bring along interesting questions/ideas/artifacts • Take initiative, help people get organized • Live by the group's calendar, work plan, and ground rules • Settle problems within the group • Fess up if unprepared, and take on some other work	"Does everyone have their articles? Good, let's get going." "Let me show you this great website I found . . ." "I'm sorry, guys, I didn't get the reading done." "OK, then today I'll take notes on the meeting."	"What? There's a meeting today?" "I left my stuff at home." "Teacher, Bobby keeps messing around." Arriving late, unprepared, without materials
2. Listen actively	• Make eye contact • Nod, confirm, look interested • Lean in, sit close together • Summarize or paraphrase • Use names • Take notes when helpful	"Joe, pull your chair up closer." "I think I heard you say . . . " "So you think . . ." Asking follow-up questions	Not looking at speaker(s) "Huh? I wasn't listening." Playing with pencils, shuffling materials

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES/ACTIONS	SOUNDS LIKE	DOESN'T SOUND LIKE
3. **Speak up**	• Join in, speak often, be active • Connect your ideas with what others have said • Ask lead and follow-up questions • Use appropriate tone and voice level • Draw upon the notes, materials, or drawings you've brought • Overcome your shyness	"What you said reminded me of . . ." "Can I piggyback on this?" "What made you feel that way?" "Let me show you my drawing."	Silence Whispering or shouting Not using or looking at notes Hiding from participation Only repeating what others say
4. **Share the air and encourage others**	• Show friendliness and support • Take turns • Be aware of who's contributing; work to balance the airtime • Monitor yourself for dominating or shirking • Invite others to participate • Build upon and learn from others' ideas	"Can you say more about that, Chris?" "We haven't heard from you in a while, Joyce." "I better finish my point and let someone else talk." "That's a cool idea, Tom."	"Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah . . ." "I pass." "You guys are so boring." Declining to join in when invited
5. **Support your views and findings**	• Explain and give examples • Refer to specific passages, evidence, or artifacts • Connect or contrast your ideas to others' • Dig deeper into the text or topic; revisit important ideas	"I think Jim treats Huck as a son because . . ." "Right here on page 15, it says that . . ." "The person I interviewed said . . ." "My thinking was a lot like Jennifer's . . ."	"This book is dumb." "Well, that's my opinion anyway." "No, I didn't consider any other interpretations."
6. **Show tolerance and respect**	• Receive others' ideas respectfully; no putdowns allowed • Try to restate opposing views • Use neutral language in disagreeing • Offer your different viewpoint; don't be steamrolled • Welcome and seek insight in divergent viewpoints	"Wow, I thought of something totally different." "I can see your point, but what about . . . ?" "I'm glad you brought that up; I never would have seen it that way."	"You are so wrong!" "What book are you reading?" "Where did you get that idea?" Rolling eyes, disconfirming body language
7. **Reflect and correct**	• Do frequent reflections or "think-backs" on group processes • Identify specific behaviors that helped or hurt the discussion • Talk openly about problems • Make plans to try out new strategies and review their effectiveness • Keep a written record of group processing	"What went well today and where did we run into problems?" "We are not sharing the talk time evenly." "OK, so what will we do differently during our next meeting?"	"We rocked." "We sucked." "It was OK." "Who cares?"

This resource stands on its own, offering immediately usable readings and language for collaborative lessons in writing about nonfiction texts. But it was also created to be used with several recent books by our "family" of coauthors. Over the past ten years, our own collaborative group has created a small library of books focused on building students' knowledge and skill through the direct teaching of learning strategies in the context of challenging inquiry units, extensive peer collaboration, and practical, formative assessments.

Among these resources are:

- *Text and Lessons for Content-Area Reading* (Daniels and Steineke 2011)

- *Text and Lessons for Teaching Literature* (Daniels and Steineke 2013)

- *Upstanders: Engaging Middle School Hearts and Minds with Inquiry* (Daniels and Ahmed 2015)

- *Best Practice: Today's Standards for Teaching and Learning*, 4th edition (Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde 2012)

- *Best Practice Video Companion* (Zemelman and Daniels, 2012)

- *Comprehension Going Forward* (Daniels 2011)

- *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content-Area Reading,* 2nd edition (Daniels and Zemelman 2014)

- *Content-Area Writing: Every Teacher's Guide* (Daniels, Zemelman, and Steineke 2005)

- *Comprehension and Collaboration: Inquiry Circles for Curiosity, Engagement, and Understanding,* Revised Edition (Harvey and Daniels 2015)

- *Inquiry Circles in Elementary Classrooms Video* (Harvey and Daniels 2010)

- *Inquiry Circles in Middle and High School Classrooms Video* (Harvey and Daniels 2010)

- *Teaching the Social Skills of Academic Interaction* (Daniels and Steineke 2014)

- *Assessment Live: 15 Real-Time Ways for Kids to Show What They Know—and Meet the Standards* (Steineke 2009)

- *Minilessons for Literature Circles* (Daniels and Steineke 2006)

- *Reading and Writing Together* (Steineke 2003)

Do you have a class that needs extra support to succeed at student-led discussion? If so, the key is to explicitly teach the social skills kids need, *before* they head off into partners or small groups. You can begin with a separate minilesson based around this chart. Use the blank version of the chart on our website and discuss the seven categories of collaboration. Then have kids work in pairs to come up with both positive and negative examples of each, and to be ready to act them out, fishbowl style, for the whole class. As kids provide these demonstrations (expect some good laughs) you'll gradually be populating the chart with examples much like the ones in our filled-in chart. But these will be examples that your kids *own*. Keep your class-created chart visible in the room so kids can refer to it while working with partners. Return to this "anchor chart" as often as needed, like when you want to praise laudable compliance or prevent any backsliding toward incivility.

Ready to Go?

These days, the most common educational exhortations are for schools to add more rigor, higher standards, more complexity, more challenge, more testing— and for kids to show more self-regulation, more compliance, more "grit." But students don't have to pull themselves up by their mental bootstraps if school is engaging and relevant. Instead of more "rigor," we'd like to see schools add more choice, curiosity, exploration, and inquiry. You don't need "grit" if the work is interesting and worth doing. And that's what we are trying to support with this book.

Happy teaching!

TO ACCESS THE ONLINE RESOURCES FOR
TEXTS & LESSONS FOR CONTENT-AREA WRITING

1. Go to **http://hein.pub/textsandlessonscaw** and click the **Log In** link in the upper right. (If you do not already have an account with Heinemann, click the **Create Account** link in the upper right.)
2. Register your product by entering the code XXXX.
3. You will need to have your copy of *Texts and Lessons for Content-Area Writing* with you to complete registration.
4. Once you have registered your product it will appear in the list of **My Online Resources**.

Write an Opening

WHEN TO USE ▶ When students must write in more traditional, prescriptive styles (test writing, standard five-paragraph essays), coming up with an interesting start is often a roadblock. This lesson shows students how to approach an opening paragraph that captures the topic—and the reader.

TEXT	AUTHOR	SOURCE	TEXT TYPE
"Is It Safe? Young Teens Look to Older Kids, Not Adults, for Advice in Risky Situations"	Sarah D. Sparks	*Inside School Research* (*Education Week* blog)	Research summary

If you ever taught elementary school, you might remember a reading lesson called a "cloze" procedure. That's when kids are given a reading passage with a few words omitted, and then must guess the best word for each blank space, based on their background knowledge and the content of the selection. For the next three lessons, we are offering your kids a chance to write or predict *whole missing sections* from articles they read. This first one draws young writers' attention to the importance of creating a "hook" for readers, a beginning that draws the reader in while giving an accurate, though perhaps perplexing or fragmentary, preview of what's to come.

Our topic is how teens seek help when making high-risk decisions. Maybe parents (or even teachers) would love to believe that young people will ask their guidance in a pinch, but this study shows they are just as likely to ask an older peer.

download

PREPARATION

1. Make a copy of the body of the article "Is It Safe?" minus the opening (as we have set it up here in the book and online) for each student to use in Step 5. Also download that opening and be ready to project it for the final step of this lesson.

2. Decide how pairs will form at Step 1.

3. Appoint a student scribe to make the list at Step 2, so you can focus on moderating the contributions.

4. At Step 5, be ready to project the annotation codes.

Steps & Teaching Language ▶

STEP 1 **Pairs discuss risk taking.** *You guys, teenagers, are famous for engaging in so-called risky behavior. I am going to ask you to think about two questions related to that. Here's the first one: Can you list some situations where someone your age might do something dangerous? One category might be texting while driving—see what other ones you can think of. Work with your partner to make a list.* Assure them they will not be handing this in, if that concern seems present.

STEP 2 **Make a whole-class list.** *Let's see what we've got. Who thought of some risky behaviors that teenagers might try?* While a student scribe is recording on a whiteboard/chart paper/computer with LCD, elicit list items; expect things like drag racing, scaling heights, playing contact

sports, tagging or vandalism, using drugs or alcohol, sexual experimen-
tation, ignoring parent or legal curfews, not wearing a seat belt, riding
with a drunk driver, running with a "bad" crowd, gang activity, trespass-
ing, fooling with guns, self-harm, suicide, petty or serious crime. When
you've listed at least ten items, move on to Step 3.

STEP 3 **Pairs discuss the second question.** *Okay, talk about this and be
ready to vote on it in sixty seconds: Who do you think teens trust most for
advice about risky behavior—another kid or an adult?* Tally the result
and jot it down on the chart to assist kids with their upcoming reading.

STEP 4 **Preview Steps 5–7.** *Now that we have thought a bit about the risks
that teens sometimes take, and whom they look to for advice, let's read
a recent research report on this topic. Here's the catch: I have removed
the opening section of the article—what journalists call the lead—which
happened to be five sentences and ninety-two words long.*

*This means that you will be jumping into the middle of this research
report without knowing how the author started it off. So picking up the
thread may be a little harder than usual. I'll help you with that.*

*But here's the fun part: after you have read the rest of the article, you and
your partner get to create your own great opening to the piece. We will
read these aloud before we see the author's real opening. Finally, we'll
vote on which openings were best, yours or the author's. There may not be
cash prizes, but applause and admiring looks will definitely be awarded!*

STEP 5 **Set up the reading.** *This is a challenging article even when its opening
section is intact! So it will be important to annotate the text as you go.
While you are reading, be sure to stop when you come upon some infor-
mation that helps you understand whom teens turn to for advice about
risky behavior. You can mark the text with these codes.*

> ### Annotation Codes
>
> **A** – evidence that teens rely more on **A**dults for advice
>
> **T** – evidence that teens rely more on other **T**eens for advice
>
> **B** – evidence that teenagers rely on **B**oth peers and adults for advice

Project the codes for kids to see while reading.

Okay? Happy reading, everyone. Allow ample time for reading.

STEP 6 **Kids share impressions.** Invite conversation about the study findings.

STEP 7 **Individuals write new openings.** *Working alone for about three
minutes, you are going to write the best opening you can think of for this
article, which you have studied so closely. Remember, an opening gives
the reader an idea of what the piece will be about, so you'll need to con-
sider what you noticed as you read. Openings also reflect the tone or voice*

of the rest of a text, so consider how the author would sound when writing about this and try to match that in your own writing. Finally, keep in mind that openings often try to grab a reader's attention. You'll recall that the author's "real" opening was just five sentences (and ninety-two words) long. So that's your limit; come up with just a few sentences that really get people interested in reading this whole article.

Allow three or more minutes of writing time, depending on what you observe about kids' progress with the task.

STEP 8 **Partners combine their openings.** *Now turn to your partner and share what you each wrote. Talk about what would be both an interesting and an accurate way to begin this article. Draw on the best parts of each of your openings and then co-create one that does the job best. Be ready to read your coauthored opening aloud (and with expression) in five minutes.*

Allow five or more minutes of writing time, as you observe pairs at work. If kids need more time, and they are seriously polishing their leads, allow it. Encourage out-loud reading practice.

STEP 9 **Volunteers read openings aloud.** Try to get a range of different approaches—puzzling, amusing, using a quote, asking the reader a question, telling a quick anecdote, and so on. Invite discussion about the kind of opening for a nonfiction article that makes people really want to grab it and read it.

STEP 10 **Reveal the original opening.** Project the text and invite discussion about the effectiveness of the author's lead. Don't sanctify it. If the reader doesn't happen to know the "jump off a bridge" reference, it isn't nearly as effective. It is entirely possible that one or more students may have come up with a better one for their own audience. If you want to make this a lighthearted contest, you can have the class vote for their favorite replacement openings.

Research ▶ Projects for Extended Writing

Longer writing projects—reflecting the key genres required by the national standards—can be built on the work students have already done in this lesson. As kids continue to explore the topics of our reading selections, we expect that they will bring fresh background knowledge, recent thinking, and genuine curiosity to the task. When you use the lesson above with your own content, you can also use the assignments below as models for extending that content into longer writing projects.

Narrative: *Compare research findings to your own experience*

Tell the story of a time that you took some kind of a risk in your life. Choose something you are comfortable writing about. This could have happened recently or earlier in your childhood. If someone was guiding you or influencing you, who were they and how did they affect your choices? Pay special attention to the opening of your story, using one of the techniques we discussed to hook your readers.

Informative/explanatory: *Organize specific examples into a continuum*

So-called risky teen behavior can range from simply playing soccer or football (because of injury risks) all the way to engaging in serious crime. Using the list we created in Step 2, research other behaviors to create a "continuum of teen risk." This might be a chart or infographic that displays risks running from sociably acceptable, adult-approved behaviors (swimming across a lake, playing hockey) up through increasingly dangerous (and often illegal) behaviors like drunk driving and shoplifting. Write an introductory paragraph as a lead for the visual.

Persuasive/argumentative: *Consider a less-widespread belief*

Many sociologists, psychologists, and educators work hard to document the dangers of teen risk taking and to prevent it. But other developmental experts believe that risk taking is wired into the teenage brain, and that the attraction to risk should be channeled, not suppressed. Maybe, they speculate, the best life is not the most risk-free life. Dig into this topic, gather evidence, and take a position. Is most teenage risk taking simply negative, or are some aspects of it healthy enough to be expressed, even encouraged, by adults? What are some ways we could offer "safe risk taking"?

Is It Safe? Young Teens Look to Older Kids, Not Adults, for Advice on Risky Situations

Sarah D. Sparks, *Inside School Research* (*Education Week* blog)

[The five-sentence, 92-word opening section is omitted.]

. . . Researchers led by Lisa Joanna Knoll, a psychologist at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience at University College London, in the United Kingdom, asked 563 visitors to the London Science Museum to rate the riskiness of common activities such as walking down a dark alley or crossing the street against a light. After one round of risk assessment on a 1 to 10 scale, the guests were shown a randomly generated "rating" labeled as being given by an adult or teenager, and later asked to rate the activities again.

In general, all groups tended to alter their risk assessments based on those of others, but the older they got, the more they stuck to their original ratings. Moreover, children under age 11, and teenagers and young adults ages 15 and older, both were more likely to change their response in reaction to an adult's perception of how risky an activity was. Of all age groups, only young adolescents ages 12 to 14 were more likely to favor another teenager's view of risk over an adult's view, but throughout adolescence peer and adult influence ran neck and neck.
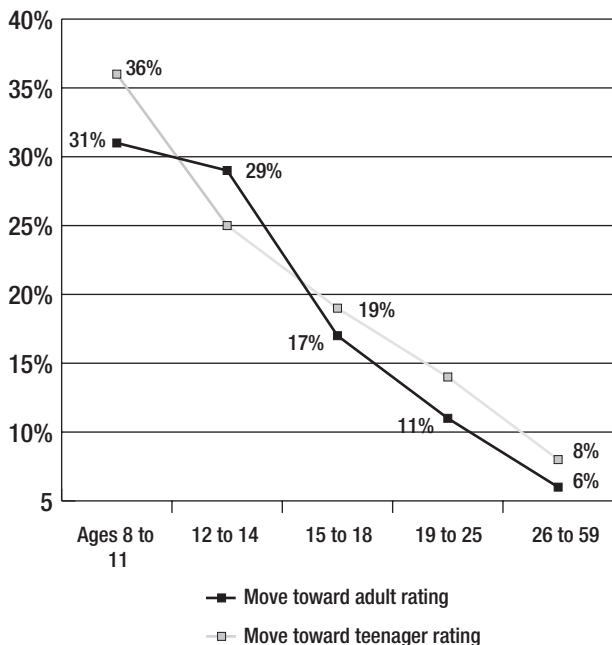
"We cannot say whether teenagers want to show off or feel safer in a group," Knoll told me. "We can only speculate that adolescents seek to conform to the same-aged influence group, not because they trust the ratings of *teenagers* more than they trust the ratings of *adults*, but because they want to be accepted by their peer group (in this case the *teenage* group)."

What's Behind Peer Pressure?

The findings are in line with emerging evidence suggesting adolescence may be as rapid and critical a period of development in social skills as the

toddler years are in cognitive development. Teenagers' seeming obsession with peers—so often bemoaned by adults—may be critical to students' developing healthy adult relationships.

Knoll said she was surprised that teenagers responded strongly to a totally imaginary peer, even when it was made clear that no one else would know how they rated a situation. Previous brain-imaging research found that teenagers showed stronger risk-and-reward responses to a game when they thought their play might be viewed by peers, even when no one was in the room.

Moreover, prior studies have shown that teenagers regularly overestimate how often other teenagers are engaging in risky behaviors. "Adolescence is the time when individuals begin to explore their independence, they start to spend more time with their peers than children do and social influence tends to change," Knoll said.

Knoll's findings give further evidence that traditional "scared straight" style programs may be the wrong approach for teenagers, but, "this social influence effect works in both directions," she said. "Our young teenage participants lowered their risk rating when other *teenagers* judged the risk as less risky and increased their risk ratings when other *teenagers* judged the risk as more risky, respectively."

Is It Safe? Young Teens Look to Older Kids, Not Adults, for Advice on Risky Situations

Sarah D. Sparks, *Education Week* blog, *Inside School Research*

Opening section:

If all of your friends jumped off that bridge, would you do it too? Well, it depends on how old you are, according to a new study in *Psychological Science.*

If you are in elementary school, the answer is probably "No way!" And if you are about to graduate from high school, the answer may well be, "What does Dad say?" But at the start of adolescence, students may just shrug; of all age groups, they are most likely to jump on the assumption that other teenagers must know what they are doing.