Chapter 2

WRITING WARMUPS

In a workout, warming up before strenuous activity has several benefits. It stretches muscles and loosens up your joints, gets your heart rate up before the real workout, and helps prepare the body for the activity that will follow. In other words, warming up helps get the body ready for what's to come. Plus, not only does a proper warmup provide a preview of the upcoming workout, but it can also help prevent injuries, alleviate early fatigue, and help the athlete perform better.

Much like a warmup before a physical workout, writers need opportunities to loosen up and warm up with words before they begin a longer writing task. When students warm up before they begin a strenuous writing engagement, they often produce better final products and can write longer, more extended pieces. While warming up is beneficial for longer, more involved writing compositions, even abbreviated writing tasks can benefit from a warmup to activate prior knowledge and experiences. Allowing students time to warm up before they start writing has a number of benefits:

- Gets ideas flowing
- Activates prior knowledge
- Allows time to stretch their writing muscles, through thinking and processing material
- Gives students time to prepare for an extended response
- Serves as a preview of the engagement to come
- Helps develop connections between the warmup and the task to follow

Warming up BEFORE an extended response can increase the likelihood for success since it allows students some preview and practice space over a short period of time. Plus, these warmups allow teachers the unique ability to integrate multiple writing practice opportunities on a regular and consistent basis, some with limited preparation and planning.

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While writing warmups are typically short periods of writing that are low intensity, they can always be extended into longer engagements. For example, the Warmup With Music activity can easily become a fully involved piece, as you will see in a later chapter where we critically interpret a music video. Likewise, Quick Writes, which I have used for over a decade, can serve as warmups and also can be extended into longer responses, depending on the purpose of the overall lesson.

A writing warmup is most beneficial if it clearly relates to the larger task at hand. For example, in a physical workout, you would not typically see an intense cardio warmup before a yoga class. Instead, you might see a warmup that focuses on breathing, stretching, or balance. Why? Because those are the types of activities and moves that will be the focus for the yoga class that follows. With this principle in mind, writing warmups work best when they feed into the day's writing or help students practice a skill that might be used in a larger genre. Plus, you can use different types of warmups that address the same larger, overarching skill, which can help students by offering multiple opportunities for additional practice of a targeted skill.

For example, in my teaching, I noticed that the construction of dialogue was a difficult skill for some students to master, yet it was one that was required in ELA standard sets and included in the county-mandated writing rubric. However, when students implemented dialogue in their writing, their dialogue sounded canned, mimicking narration and less like the actual words that might come from a character. Thus, a variety of dialogue warmups would be beneficial for students to use when practicing this skill. If I wanted students to warm up with some dialogue activities, I might have them complete the Say, Say, Say warmup, the Sounds Like warmup, or the That's What They Said warmup. Each of those strategies addresses the subtle nuances of dialogue in a low- stakes, relaxed setting for a brief time, yet they all are meant as strategies that can assist students in the effective construction of dialogue. However, these could also be used as a drop-in, kind of like the Parachute Writing included in my book *Write Now & Write On* (2022).

While writing warmups that are centered around the same theme can be used to effectively address a skill over the course of multiple days, they can also be used as a way to review a type of writing that students are already familiar with. For example, the persuasive genre appears in almost all grade-level standards sets, starting as early as kindergarten. A writing warmup that addresses some sort of persuasive component can offer students the opportunity to limber up with something they are familiar with because their past experience can assist them in the task completion. Plus, because this genre is seen across content areas, in multiple formats, and is crafted for myriad audiences, completing warmups that are focused on this genre can be used for a number of purposes. And the persuasive genre is one that is especially prevalent in the real world, including social media. This offers another authentic example of writing in today's world.

The writing warmups in this chapter have been organized into different sections based on the nature and type of warmup. Each includes anchor National Council of Teachers of English and International Literacy Association ELA Standards included on the companion website as well as suggestions for modifications, extensions, and connections to overarching lesson goals. As you plan your instruction, think through the big ideas and concepts you will be teaching along with the skills and competencies that students need additional practice to master. Choosing appropriate warmups that can reinforce these skills can make for successful instruction.

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MUSIC INFOGRAPHICS

One of my favorite types of texts to use with students is music. Warmups that incorporate music offer unique opportunities for students to interact with a variety of musical styles and capitalize on student interest and ideas in the classroom. Plus, because there are so many possibilities for variation with different genres and artists, they are an easy implementation tool that keeps students engaged. Music is also an easy win for students because they can make connections between their academic and nonacademic lives and can prolong the learning intentions of the lesson by adding their own suggestions from their personal music choices later.

While using music in lessons offers students the opportunity to connect their personal interests to academic learning, incorporating infographics in teaching can offer students opportunities to look at data and information in a new way. This allows students to take advantage of their creativity and artistic notions to effectively present information. Plus, an infographic makes data appear much more meaningful and adds a cool factor to what can sometimes be viewed as a boring and dull task.

Fitness Beat graphic designed by Alva Rovalino for National Geographic, 2011

One way to incorporate music and infographics is through this activity using one of Alva Rovalino's infographics called "Fitness Beat" (scan the QR code in the margin to see this graphic and share with students). It is a great warmup for presenting textual evidence and gives students an auditory textual example. And it capitalizes on student interest by allowing students to connect their personal interests with an academic task. It also allows students to see data presented in a different way, with a combination of figures and images in tandem with numbers and statistics.

Putting It to Work

1. Display the "Fitness Beat" infographic for the class. Hover over the QR code in the margin to show the infographic to students (you can find it online here: https://www.alvarovalino.com/Fitness-Beat).
2. Discuss the physical activities that are listed on the infographic.
3. Play a portion of one song from each physical activity listed. (This means you should play a portion of one of the songs from all categories including resting, walking, training, and high intensity training.)
4. Have students discuss as a class the characteristics of the samples played.
5. Discuss the appropriateness of each sample for the physical activity that corresponds with the song. Have students orally justify the song choices on the infographic with their classmates.
6. After all the samples have been played and discussed, instruct students to locate a new song that fits into each of the categories.

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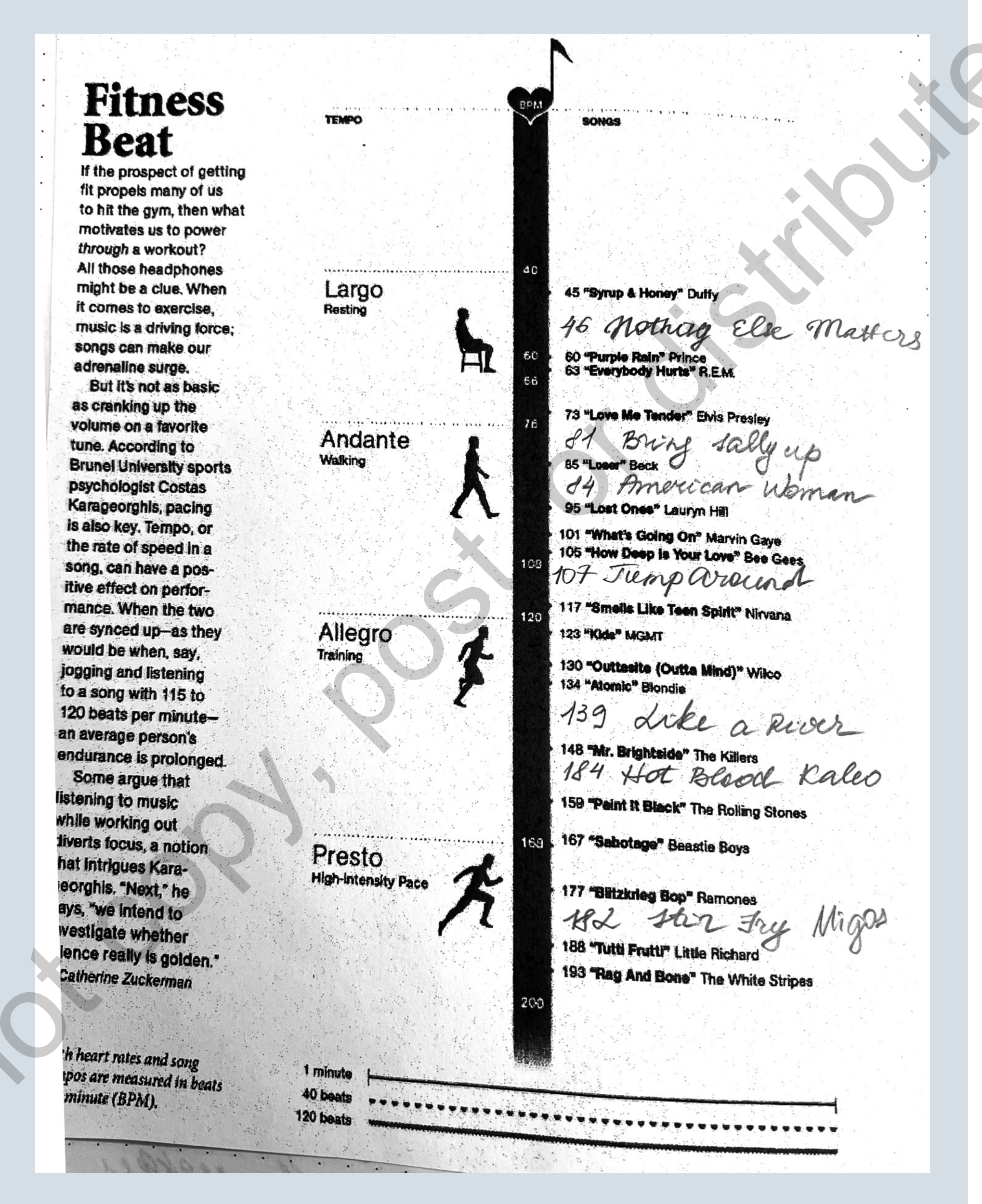
7. Students can record their new choices on sticky notes or on a piece of paper divided into sections.

8. Have students draft a one- to two-sentence explanation for their choice.



Fitness Beat

If the prospect of getting fit propels many of us to hit the gym, then what motivates us to power *through* a workout? All those headphones might be a clue. When it comes to exercise, music is a driving force; songs can make our adrenaline surge.

But it's not as basic as cranking up the volume on a favorite tune. According to Brunel University sports psychologist Costas Karageorghis, pacing is also key. Tempo, or the rate of speed in a song, can have a positive effect on performance. When the two are synced up—as they would be when, say, jogging and listening to a song with 115 to 120 beats per minute—an average person's endurance is prolonged.

Some argue that listening to music while working out liverts focus, a notion hat intrigues Karaeorghis. "Next," he ays, "we intend to vestigate whether lence really is golden."
Catherine Zuckerman

h heart rates and song pos are measured in beats minute (BPM).

When to Use It

- When introducing or reinforcing textual evidence.
- To integrate disciplines (health/fitness, the arts, and literacy).
- For lessons that involve data presentation and delivery.

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- When you want students to practice utilizing textual evidence in a brief writing task.

Guess where I originally found this resource? In the *National Geographic* magazine. You never know where you'll find ideas for writing!

Why It Works

- It provides a second sensory experience with a literary element/competency.
- Choice is key here; there are multiple answer options for students.
- It capitalizes on student choice and background knowledge.
- It offers multiple connections between kinesthetic, verbal, and auditory means.

Modifications

- Instead of using music, try different scenes from movies that follow the same intensity levels.
- Have students complete this engagement with a partner.
- Instead of having students come up with their own new songs for each section, have a ready-made list of sample options that students can search and listen to from a song bank.
- Use artwork or photos instead of music.
- Play the music samples first and have students guess which physical activity might go with the music.

Extensions

- Have students create a pictorial image that corresponds with the song chosen.
- Have students create a word bank of adjectives that can be used to describe the chosen song.
- Get students to attack or defend a classmate's song choice using textual evidence from the infographic and song lyrics (for ideas using this strategy, see my book *Write Now & Write On* [2022]).
- Create a playlist using a compilation of student songs for each level of activity. Provide the playlists to PE teachers to use in their teaching based on the level of training the students are completing in class.

Digital Direction

- Post the infographic in a virtual classroom platform such as Google classroom.

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- Use an add-on recording application like Mote for Google documents so students can record their comments with the infographic.
- Use a web application such as Diigo for digital annotation and comments.
- Have students video themselves completing the training listed in the infographic while listening to their chosen song. For example, for the resting phase, they may video themselves sitting on a couch listening to one of their songs associated with that activity. Students would create a trailer that includes video clips of all the physical training activities and songs associated with each.

Quick Tip!

Here's a super cool web tool for presenting text in a more visual manner: www.voyant-tools.org. Voyant is a web-based reading and analysis environment for digital text. Users can paste text into the search box to see their text represented in multiple ways.

Lesson Lead-Ins

- Use this as an introduction or warmup for research writing that includes a visual data representation component.
- Position this as an opening for a lesson on mood or tone in writing.
- Warm up with this activity prior to beginning an extended piece that requires the integration of textual evidence.
- Use this as a warmup for the Songs for Voice (see page 86).

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SAY, SAY, SAY

My stepmother often used the expression "There's more than one way to skin a cat" whenever she wanted us to acknowledge that there were multiple ways to approach a situation or solve a problem. Much like this old saying, there are multiple ways to say the same things. Yet in many cases, students resort to the same phrases or words, especially when constructing dialogue.

When constructing dialogue, students experience challenges with creating authentic and believable words that actually sound like real dialogue. Part of this difficulty can be attributed to the lack of experience many students have with writing dialogue. Because this is a sophisticated skill to master, multiple opportunities to practice are beneficial. Plus, students can benefit from practicing multiple ways to say the same thing. Take the phrase "I've got a lot of work to do." Think of all the ways that you could say this. Some examples include

"I've got so much to do with this new project I'm working on."

"I'm covered up with work."

"I'm in the weeds." (This is my own personal mantra.)

"I've got a full plate right now."

"I'm slammed."

"I'm swamped."

I bet you could add a few examples that would work here as well. The point is, there are multiple ways to say the same thing. Students can practice this skill by warming up with Say, Say, Say.

Putting It to Work

1. Put a common statement on display for students to see.
2. Discuss the different ways that the phrase can be stated.
3. Make sure that items such as word tiers/levels (the formal or informal tone or use), audience, and person speaking are discussed. For example, a formal example might be "This new project has added a lot of extra tasks to my daily work." An informal example might be "I'm up to my eyeballs in work!"
4. Divide the class into pairs or groups. Have each group draft a new way to say the statement.
5. Have students share with the class.

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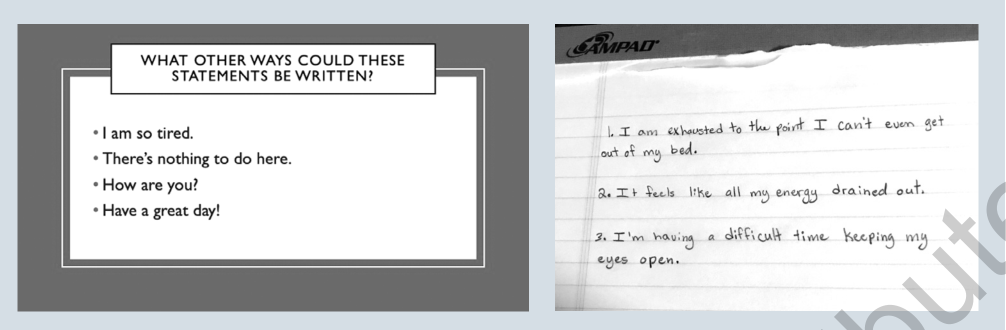
6. As a class, determine the three best ways to revise the target statement.



When to Use It

- When introducing or reinforcing dialogue.
- To practice constructing dialogue.
- To practice revising dialogue to make it sound more authentic.

Why It Works

- It allows students the opportunity to practice writing and rewriting a common phrase.
- Because students are all working on revising the same statement, collaborative partnerships are easy since the overarching focus is the same.
- Revising on the small scale makes this phase of writing more attainable.

Modifications

- Instead of using a printed statement, use a video clip of dialogue instead.
- Use clips from a movie that has been remade and compare the differences between the actor's dialogue.
- Take lines from famous speeches and have students complete the same activity.
- Provide students with the modified statements ahead of time and have students choose which statement is best.
- Provide students with a character sketch of the person who might be saying the dialogue. Have them use this information to help them determine what would sound like their assigned character.

Extensions

- Have students take their dialogue options and draft character descriptions for the character who might say them.

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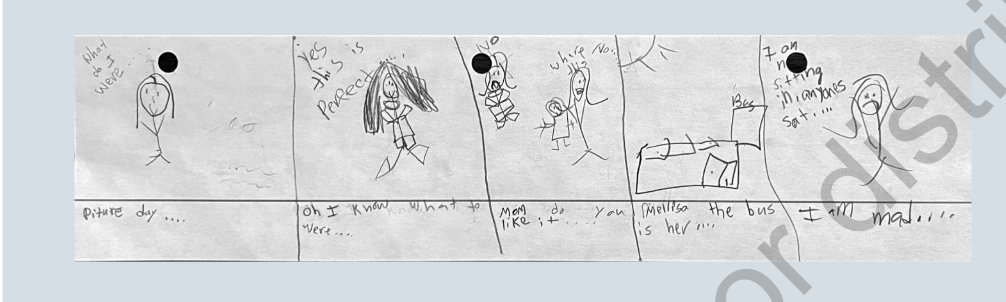
- Continue the engagement by formally punctuating and inserting the dialogue into a written composition.
- Match a character from a literary work to the dialogue that sounds like that character.

Digital Direction

- Use an application like Make Belief Comix (https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/) to develop a multipane comic with the options for dialogue.



- Use the PuppetMaster app to create an animated drawing of the character with the recorded dialogue.
- Adobe Character Animator can be used to design a digital character that can be animated with motion and sound.

Lesson Lead-Ins

- Use this warmup as a lead-in when students are incorporating dialogue into their writings.
- Position this warmup when working on character analyses or character development in writing.
- When beginning a unit on research writing and academic language, use this warmup as a way to illustrate formal and informal tone.

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SOUNDS LIKE

Sometimes, when we really get to know a person or character, we hear certain words or phrases and say, “That sounds like . . . !” This happens because we know enough about that person that we can assign certain attributes and characteristics to them, which we then connect to the words they say or might say. Because of our past experiences with a person or character, we are often able to use this knowledge to make assertions and assumptions about a figure. Students can warm up and practice the skills that help them build dynamic characters with the Sounds Like activity. This can also be related to students’ social media savvy by calling it Tweets Like, Posts Like, Snaps Like, Toks Like, etc.

Putting It to Work

1. Determine which characters or figures are the focus of the lesson. These could be characters from a novel, pop culture icons, or historical figures.
2. Locate multiple quotes that come from each of the figures. If using a fictional character from a novel or movie, use the character’s quotes from the novel or from the video clip. See some examples in the image below.

Who said it? Which character from The Odds of Getting Even said these?

- “We should put gossip on the menu.”
- “Ride with me, Soldier.”
- “A smart leader knows when to step aside, and let others lead.”
- “Church at 11 hours.”

3. Post the quotes on notecards or sticky notes, but don’t reveal the source of the quote.
4. Make a chart with each character’s name on it or write the character’s name on a sentence strip and put it on the floor in a designated area.
5. At the beginning of the class period, provide students with sticky notes. Have them record character traits or characteristics on their sticky notes for each of the focus characters. Place these in the designated location in the classroom.

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6. Discuss the traits with the class.

7. Next, provide each student with a quote.

8. Have the students place the quote with the name of the character who they think said it. (If they are unsure, they can use the character descriptors/traits that they compiled at the beginning of the activity.)

This is an important prior knowledge activator. It gets students thinking about the focus figures/characters and aids them in determining which quotes sound like the character.

9. After students have placed their quotes where they believe they belong, discuss as a class.

10. Reveal the true origin of any of the misplaced quotes.

When to Use It

- When you want students to match dialogue to a particular type of character.
- As another way to address dialogue.
- As a way for students to address quotes out of context.
- When you want students to begin a character analysis composition.

Why It Works

- It offers students a different way to examine character and character traits.
- Because the figures/characters used are ones that students are familiar with and have experience with, this activity leverages background knowledge and aids the student in making connections.
- The task is more attainable for readers and writers who are below grade level, students who are neurodiverse, or students learning English as a new language because students are focusing on small bursts of reading and writing (sticky notes with character traits and one- to three-line quotes from characters).

Modifications

- Instead of using direct quotes from characters, use social media tweets or posts.
- Play audio recordings of the quotes and have students determine who said them.
- Use mock Instagram posts complete with images and have students determine who posted them.

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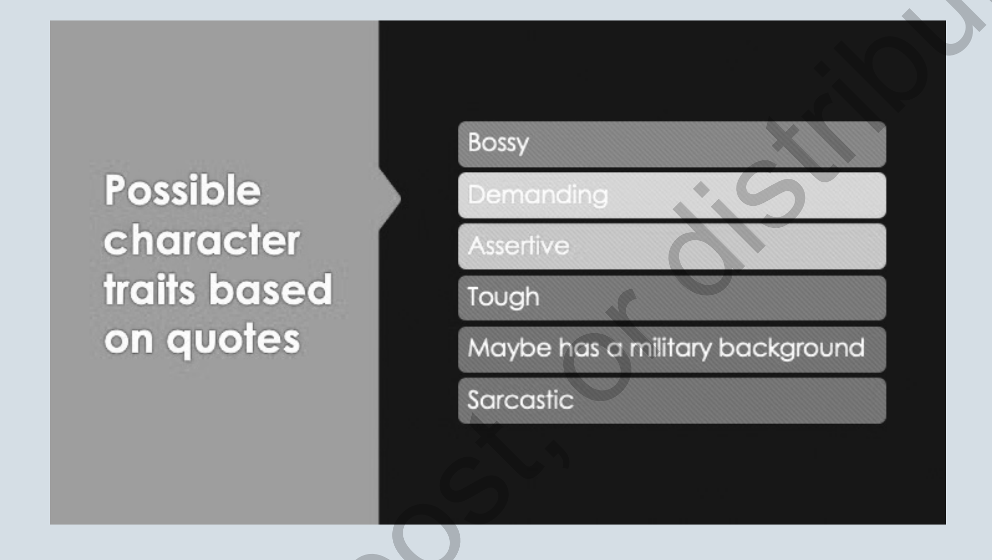
Extensions

- Instead of identifying specific figures as a focus, choose random quotes, tweets, or posts and have students group them in categories based on which ones sound alike. Once students have a large group of quotes that they think sound like a certain person/character, have them draft a list of character traits that that person might have.



- Start the lesson with quotes on Day 1, then extend it to include social media posts such as tweets and Instagram stories. In this extension, the warmup progresses daily. Day 1 warmup would be Sounds Like (using direct quotes), Day 2 warmup would be Tweets Like (using tweets for classification), and Day 3 would be Posts Like (using Instagram stories for classification).
- Have students create a mock social media handle for the characters and create sample tweets or posts for the character.
- Have students create their own quotes similar to the ones classified on the charts.

Digital Direction

- Use an application like PicStitch, PicCollage, or Canva to collect the quotes along with images of the focus figure.
- Use the breakout room feature in Zoom to engage students in collaborative discussions in the virtual environment.
- Have students animate the quotes of their characters using a digital application like Toon Boom or Pow Toon.

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Lesson Lead-Ins

- Begin lessons that capitalize on the importance of prior knowledge with this warmup.
- Incorporate this warmup in lessons that require students to make connections between multiple texts, figures, or concepts.
- Use this warmup as a lead-in to tasks that center around character analyses and/or character development.
- When working on writing pieces that involve the integration of dialogue, have students complete this warmup to practice different ways for their character to speak.

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THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID

When incorporating dialogue effectively into a composition, there's much more to consider than just *who* is saying it. In fact, good writers pay close attention not just to the *who* but also the *how*, *where*, and *why*. Certain words or phrases might be employed in specific settings, conversations might occur about a specific subject based on the characters doing the talking, and so on. For example, the dialogue that occurs in a funeral setting is completely different than what might transpire between the same characters at an amusement park. Plus, think about how we modify what we say based on who is our audience. I bet there are words you don't use when your grandmother is around! Crafting quality dialogue is not just finding the right words that sound natural; it's about juxtaposing those words so that they fit with the conflict in the story, the other characters, and the setting. Getting students to pay attention to those qualities can help them write better dialogue. Warming up with That's What They Said is one way to practice this skill.

> **Quick Tip!**
>
> Several years ago State Farm ran a series of commercials where they used the same dialogue dropped into two totally different scenarios. The overall meaning could not have been more different! Check them out at https://www.ispot.tv/ad/ASxV/state-farm-jacked-up.

Putting It to Work

1. Locate an image that has multiple individuals in the picture.
2. Pass out blank dialogue bubbles to the students.
3. Instruct students to look at the different characters in the photo. Ask them to make a list of who might be speaking in this photo.
4. Record this list for students to see.
5. Have students use their dialogue bubble cut outs to write possible dialogue that the different characters in the photo might say. Remind them to consider the setting, event portrayed, and other individuals pictured.
6. Have them brainstorm possible dialogue options for 5 to 7 minutes.
7. Share with the class.

> **Quick Tip!**
>
> Individuals do not have to be people. They can be animals as well. That would be a fun dialogue lesson—imagining what a room full of dogs would say!

When to Use It

- When you want students to practice writing dialogue but want to draw attention to the factors that influence and impact the words a character might say.
- As a warmup for additional dialogue writing.
- As a low-stakes brainstorming session.

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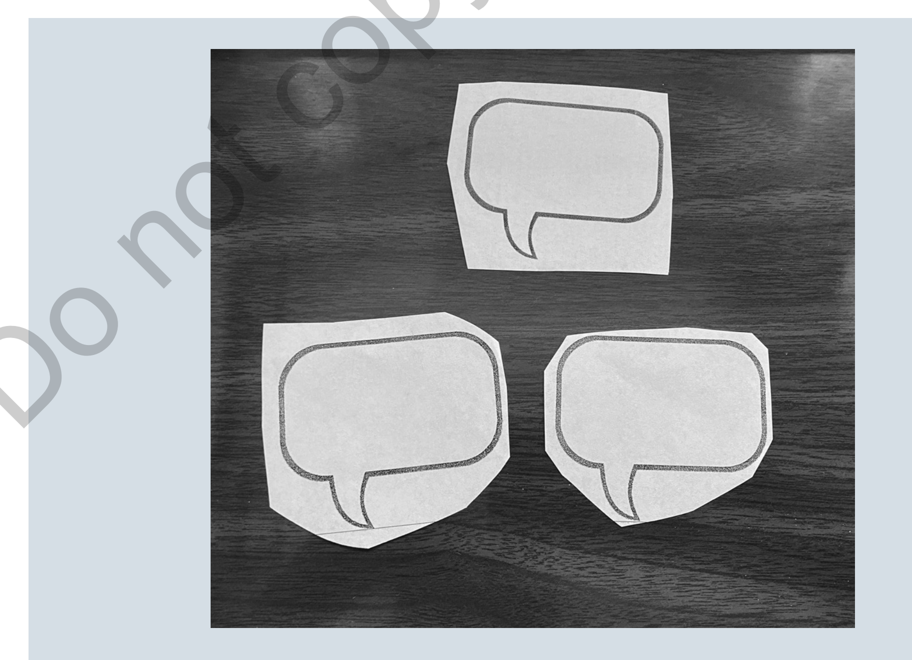
Why It Works

- Because this strategy focuses mainly on a picture as a starter, students are not tasked with reading a lengthy passage.
- It gives students a specific focus: the crafting of dialogue that is specifically connected to the image shown.
- It provides students an opportunity to consider the other factors in a scene that influence dialogue.

A great place to find free images online is www.pixabay.com. Search based on a topic or concept and find free photos to download.

Modifications

- Instead of having students write possible dialogue options for all the individuals/characters depicted in the image, assign students a specific character to focus on.
- Have ready-made quotes that students can match to the characters in the image and justify their selections.
- To draw more attention to the other elements in the photo, have students write down observations they have of what is presented in the image. Then have them start composing the dialogue.
- Place images on the floor of the classroom. Have students drop their written dialogue bubbles around the images that correspond with the appropriate pictures.



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Extensions

- Have students continue this activity by completing a collaborative extension with new photos. Provide each group of students a new photo and have them repeat the engagement.
- Use the dialogue that the students generated to begin drafting an extended composition that incorporates the material they used in their dialogue brainstorming session.
- Use scripts from plays to generate new dialogue.
- Have students use their dialogue to write a scene based on the image.

Digital Direction

- Use an application like PicStitch, PicCollage, or Canva to collect the quotes along with images.
- Have students discuss dialogue options on Padlet using the wall option.
- Transfer the image and the dialogue into the web application Storyboard That and add speech bubbles and characters right on the screen.

Lesson Lead-Ins

- Use this as a lead-in for writings that incorporate dialogue.
- Provide this as a warmup for the Soap Opera activity on page 226.
- Connect this to the Memory Maps strategy on page 29 by encouraging students to add dialogue to their maps.

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MEMORY MAPS

Memoir was one of my favorite genres to teach in middle school writing classes. Memoir writing can offer opportunities for students to realize that even simple moments in their lives can be blown up into full-fledged stories simply by paying attention to that time period in their lives. When teaching memoirs, I often read sections from Gary Paulsen's book *How Angel Peterson Got His Name* (2003) because it is a perfect example of how a writer can expound on a certain period in their life. Plus, the story is hilarious and makes for an awesome read-aloud.

Memory Maps are like the Neighborhood Map I wrote about in *Write Now & Write On* (2022) yet differ because they discuss a specific memory in preparation for drafting of a memoir. It might be helpful if your students have some experience with the Neighborhood Maps before they move into Memory Maps, but it's not necessary.

While I used Neighborhood Maps as an icebreaker activity to get to know my students or to illustrate a particular character in a literary work or historical event, Memory Maps are useful to help students think through specific events in their lives and generate ideas and memories of the event. As a result, they are natural warmups when students are working on memoirs.

Putting It to Work

1. Begin by brainstorming a list of memories students have about specific events. For example, you might ask students to think about memorable celebrations, events at school, family vacations, sporting events, and so on.
2. Record this list for the class to see.
3. Show students some examples of maps. Ask students questions about them. For example, you might ask what the map is for, what information is typically included on maps, where might you see maps, and so on.
4. Model how to complete a Memory Map. Begin by choosing a memory of your own to draw about.

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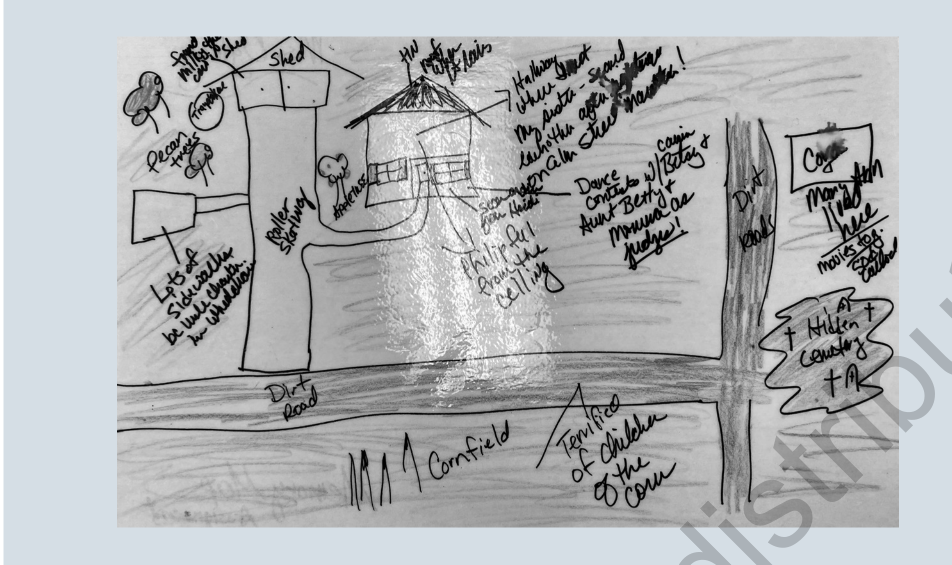

5. When drawing the Memory Map, make sure to include items such as the characters/people involved, setting, problem or theme, and possibly the resolution.
6. While modeling, make sure you talk through the pieces of the event that you are remembering. Include who was there, what was going on, where the memory occurred, and so on. This can serve as a reminder or nudge about items students can include in their own maps.
7. Encourage students to ask questions about your Memory Map.
8. Provide students with paper and have them first choose their memory that they are going to map out.
9. Have students draw their Memory Maps and then share with a partner.

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When to Use It

- When you want students to focus on a specific moment or event for writing.
- As a warmup for memoir writing.
- As a low-stakes brainstorming session.

When working on the genre of memoir, it is helpful to begin priming the pump earlier with read alouds and other texts that might help students brainstorm ideas. Some of my favorites are:

- Jacqueline Woodson's *We Had a Picnic This Sunday Past*
- Eve Bunting's *The Memory String*
- Maribeth Boelts's *Those Shoes*
- Yangsook Choi's *The Name Jar*
- Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow's *Your Name Is a Song*

Why It Works

- Because this strategy focuses mainly on pictorial images and representations, students are not bound by spelling, grammar, or sentence structure.
- It offers layers of communication and meaning: pictorial representation, oral retelling, and written words.
- There is no definitive final product; students can continue adding to their Memory Map indefinitely.
- It never has to move beyond this brainstorming/drafting stage if needed.

Modifications

- Have students work collaboratively with a partner to map out a classroom memory that they both shared.
- Instead of having students draw Memory Maps about themselves, have them map out a character's memory from a novel or a memory of historical figure.
- Working with a partner, have one student orally retell their memory while their partner draws the Memory Map. Switch roles.

Extensions

- Have students connect their Memory Maps to the Stretch to See on page 37.
- Encourage students to add sensory details to their Memory Maps.
- Use this strategy in tandem with the Neighborhood Map Activity (Harper, 2022).

Digital Direction

- Have students design a digital Memory Map using an application like Canva, PicCollage, or Pixpa.
- Use a digital drawing application like Sketchbook, Procreate, or iArtbook.

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Lesson Lead-Ins

- Use this as a lead-in for memoir writing.
- Provide this as a warmup for descriptive writing.
- Connect this to culminating writings at the completion of a literary work. Use Memory Maps to recall different events in an extended work.

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EXPERT/KNOW NOTHING LIST

One of the hardest parts of writing is simply starting and getting the words on the page—much like going to the gym when the most difficult part is getting in the car and heading that way. Writing, for some, is no different. Facing an empty page and trying to craft words into sentences is daunting, when in fact, many of us have a wealth of knowledge about several concepts as well as unique ideas that can manifest themselves into solid written pieces.

Having students generate an Expert/Know Nothing list provides students with a working list of possible options for writing and research. While this strategy is a little more simplistic than others in this chapter, don't let the simplicity fool you. By incorporating this easy-to-drop-in strategy, you'll find that it addresses several of the main roadblocks of writing: topic generation, research subjects, and background knowledge. Plus, lists are low-stakes writing engagements that are short and simple, but purposeful—just the right combination for today's busy classroom.

Try this strategy yourself by making your own chart. Now ask yourself, "Which of these topics would I want to write about?" My guess is that you would pick the Expert side, right? Yet every day we ask students to write about topics from the Know Nothing side and wonder why the writing is a struggle. Let that sink in for a minute.

Putting It to Work

1. Begin by having students make a T Chart on their papers.
2. Instruct them to label one side Expert and one side Know Nothing.
3. Have them brainstorm a list of items that they know a lot about. These could be school related, but more than likely, they will come from personal experiences and interests. Ask students to consider items/skills/tasks they enjoy, such as music, sports, crafts, trivia, and so on.
4. Have them share this list with the class.
5. Next, have students complete the part of the chart that includes information they don't know much about. These can serve as research ideas.
6. Share with the class.

Keep this running list in student folders for future additions and lesson ideas. Students can add to it throughout the year, too.

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CHAPTER 2 Writing Warmups
CHAPTER 3 Targeted Training
CHAPTER 4 High Intensity Training
CHAPTER 5 Cold Starts and Cooldowns
CHAPTER 6 Rest, Recover, Revise
CHAPTER 7 Stretch Day
CHAPTER 8 A Balanced Diet of Reading and Writing

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When to Use It

- When you want to have a running list of topics your students know about and ones they have limited knowledge with.
- As an alternative to an interest inventory, this Expert/Know Nothing list can provide teachers with suggestions for writing ideas that capitalize on student background knowledge.
- When you want to generate *researchable* topics without saying the word *research*. The Know Nothing section becomes a starting point for research.

Quick Tip!

Don't skip the share-outs! They are important because they can offer additional ideas for classmates to add to their own papers.

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Why It Works

> **Quick Tip!**
>
> In addition, this list can help teachers pick appropriate texts and read-alouds that take student interest into account.

- It is a low-stakes type of writing a list, which can be completed in a short amount of time.
- It never has to move beyond this brainstorming/drafting stage if needed.
- Making a list of what they know about and what they don't can help students start to generate ideas for writing and research.

Modifications

- Have students interview their classmates and record the information learned from their classmates on the template found on the companion website.
- Use pictures instead of words to complete the template.
- Complete one part of the chart at a time. Start with the Expert side and then later return to the Know Nothing side.

Extensions

- For self-selected writing days, have students refer to their lists for writing ideas.
- When discussing research topics, have students check their Know Nothing lists for possible paper ideas.
- Post your experts about certain subjects on a chart in your classroom. Need an expert reader on a specific topic? Refer to the chart to find a peer who can help.
- Match up students with other experts in the same content area or topic for collaborative projects. Do the same for research possibilities.
- You can take this a step further by having a trivia session in class the next day. For example, you might take the information you collected from the expert list and start class off by saying, "Jake is an expert in archery. What questions might we ask him about archery?" Or you could have students choose one item from their expert list and record it on a notecard. Have each student in class draft questions (they can only be yes or no questions) that they would ask their classmates to try to figure out their expertise that is recorded on the notecard.

Digital Direction

- Have students create a pictorial list of their information using a program like PicCollage or Canva.

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- Use Flipgrid to have students respond and collaborate with other experts or researchers of specific topics.
- Use the wall feature on Padlet for students to pose questions for the experts or share topic ideas.

Lesson Lead-Ins

- Use this as a lead-in for research writing as the Know Nothing list offers multiple topic ideas for research.
- Provide this as a warmup for topic generation.
- Use this as a different type of icebreaker when getting to know your students.

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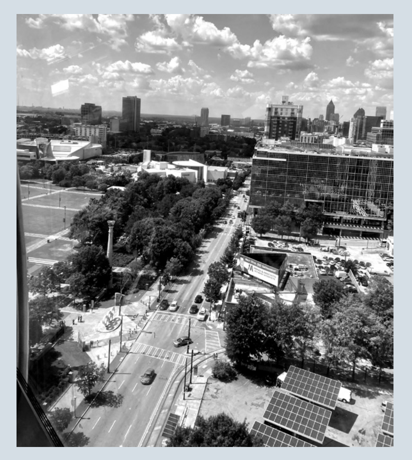
STRETCH TO SEE

One of the best resources for writing ideas and topics comes from images and photos. Because the number of images available are infinite, the possibilities for a writing class are endless. Plus, images offer another awesome added benefit: You can drop in any number of photos into a lesson with very little planning (Forgot your bell ringer for the day? Google a unique image and start writing about it.), or they can be strategically placed and purposely connected to a bigger idea or lesson. In this activity, you're asking students to describe an image or a portion of the image, which helps build observation and descriptive detail skills in a fun, low-stakes way, both of which aid them when writing. Images can also be helpful in setting up a reading, either fiction or nonfiction. For example, when reading a novel like Bryan Bliss's *Thoughts and Prayers* (2020), you might include an image of a teenager on a skateboard heading down a sidewalk next to a snow-covered field. This image is strategic and purposeful because it could represent a specific character in Bliss's novel. Pictures really can be worth a thousand words, especially in an ELA class!

If your students have not done this activity before, do one together as a class. Don't be tempted to skip this part, especially if you are asking them to make connections to abstract concepts. Working on the first one together will make independent work much easier.

Putting It to Work

1. Post an image for the entire class to see. Discuss the image and talk about what you notice about the photo.
2. Give them a specific item/concept to find in the photo. For example, you might ask students to find the math in the picture. Have them record their noticings on their paper. (By the way, you'd be amazed at how many math concepts are hidden in photos: angles, lines, shapes, volume, reflections, and more.)



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3. Have students share their observations.
4. Choose another item for students to find. For example, you might ask them to find the figurative language in the photo.
5. Share with the class.

When to Use It

Quick Tip!

You can have students find as many concepts as you'd like for a number of subjects. However, it is important to have them focus on abstract concepts and not literal ones. For example, don't ask them to find all the animals in the picture—too easy—this isn't a seek and find, but rather a stretch to see.

- When you want students to focus on abstract concepts that might be overlooked or unseen.
- As a way to have students pay close attention to different aspects of images.
- When you want students to examine a photo through a critical lens. This could be done with a number of photos, but the questions would shift. You might ask questions like these:
  - What systems of power are present in this photo?
  - Where are the biases in this photo?
  - Make a list of the inequities in this image.

Penguin Photo → find all math items
- # of penguins
- depth of water
- temperature of air
- height/weight of penguins
- elevation
- time of day

↳ find science items
- habitat
- animal
- coral
- water
- motion

↳ find SS items
- population
- emigration
- leadership
- nat. resources
- environment

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Why It Works

- Because this strategy focuses mainly on pictorial images and representations, it gives students a visual starting point. While they are still reading, instead of reading words, they are reading an image.
- Students are tasked with generating a list of words, not sentences, which can make the task more accessible for some.

Modifications

- Have students locate their own images and develop potential writing prompts and quick writes that can be used with their images.
- Instead of having students come up with all the words on their own, post a word bank or provide words listed on notecards that students can use as starters for their own collection.
- Show students several images (3–5) and a group of words. Have them determine which photo best represents the descriptor words based on the prompt/question.

Extensions

- Extend this into a grammar lesson with the NVA² activity on page 66.
- Have students connect this warmup to the Pop-Up Poems on page 114, the NVA² strategy on page 66, or the Wordless Picture Books strategy on page 107.
- Instead of having students find abstract concepts, ask students to develop questions that might be either generated by viewing the image or answered by looking at the details in the image.
- Connect this to the Pictures for Mood lesson on page 90.

Digital Direction

- Use PicCollage to collect images and words for this strategy.
- Have students collaboratively discuss their ideas using a digital application like Parlay or dotstorming.

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Lesson Lead-Ins

- Use this as a lead-in for extended pieces focusing on description.
- Focus your questions and prompts with the pictures on specific lessons that address concepts such as figurative language, prepositional phrases, point of view, and more.
- Connect this to lessons that focus on adding more details including Descriptive Writing With Calendars (page 125) and Pictures for Mood (page 90).

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PICTURE POINT OF VIEW

One ELA focus that is constant across grade levels is point of view (POV). While early literacy classes tend to focus on who is telling the story, as students progress in their schooling, POV becomes more specific and detailed, with students reading and writing stories told from multiple points of view. Now students must recognize, identify, and navigate multiple options for POV including first person, second person, third person limited, and third person omniscient. For some, the lines between the different types of third-person points of view becomes a little blurry, and yet for others, sometimes when they see the pronoun "I," they make the leap that the text they are reading must be written in first person.

Most ELA engagements that address this skill tend to approach it from an identifiable stance, meaning students are asked questions like "Identify the point of view in passage A." "From what point of view is passage B told?" Those types of questions or tasks require students to read and label: Passage A is first person; Passage B is third person limited. The problem with these types of tasks is that they do not allow for the *experience* of POV. One way that teachers can attempt to create a more thorough understanding of POV is through a strategy called Picture Point of View.

Putting It to Work

1. Begin by discussing each form of narrative POV as a reminder and review. This is especially important when you are utilizing first person, second person, and third person limited and omniscient.
2. Divide the class into four groups of students.
3. Pass out different colored sticky notes to the students. Use four different colors, one for each POV.
4. Explain what color represents which POV. Explain to students that the color sticky note they received indicates which POV they will focus on for this activity.
5. Show students an image. This image might include a photograph of a group of people, an image with one character, a piece of artwork with multiple individuals present, or a drawing with multiple characters.

Quick Tip!

A lot of students confuse perspective with POV. Perspective addresses the attitudes and stance, if you will, that the narrator assumes when telling a story. POV focuses on the type of narrator telling the story. Some great books that help drive this point home are:

- *Counting by 7s* by Holly Goldberg Sloan (This novel alternates between first person narration and third person.)
- *Zoom* by Istvan Banyai (This book is a great visual example of perspective.)
- *Because of Mr. Terrupt* series by Rob Buyea (These books utilize the same type of narration but tell the story from multiple perspectives.)
- *The Pain and the Great One* by Judy Blume (This book tells a story from the differing perspectives of a brother and sister.)
- *Flipped* by Wendelin Van Draanen (This novel is told from two different narrator perspectives.)

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6. Have students work with their group to brainstorm narration that would fit the picture in the POV they were assigned.
7. Give students about 5 to 7 minutes to complete this task.
8. Have each group share their ideas.
9. Take up the blank sticky notes and redistribute to different students. (By doing this, you are modifying the group structure.)
10. Direct students to areas in the room where new pictures are posted.
11. Explain to students that they will be completing a gallery walk around the room and will be writing about each image from the new POV they have been assigned.

Quick Tip!

I suggest that you post images on large pieces of chart paper like shown in the example. This way, students can post their ideas all around the picture as they complete their gallery walk around the room.

12. Give students about 5 minutes at each station before moving on to the next station.
13. Once the class has rotated to all stations, have the last group at each station share all the collected information from each POV with the class.
14. Ask students to comment on how the POV affected the details that were provided in the writings.

When to Use It

- When you want students to practice writing with images as a starter.
- As a warmup for writing in different points of view.
- As a collaborative engagement.

Why It Works

- Because this strategy uses images as the central method for developing a story, students aren't spending significant amounts of time unpacking text.
- It allows students the ability to capitalize on their individual ideas and background knowledge when drafting their ideas.
- It never has to move beyond this brainstorming/drafting stage if needed.

Modifications

- Have students complete the task using different colored markers to designate the POV they are focusing on. Instead of requiring students to always write in a designated POV, students can choose to add to the chart in the POV of

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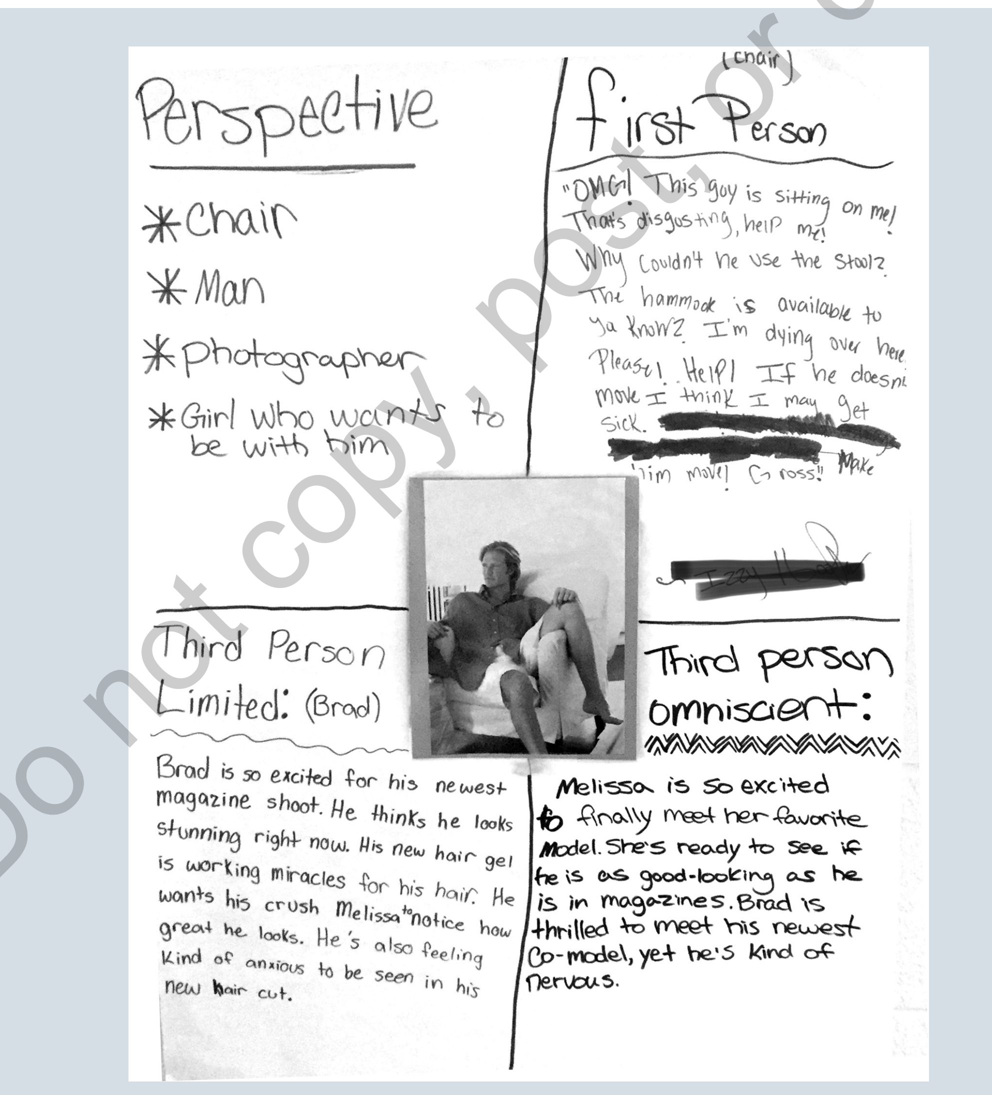
their choice. (Make sure students know what colors are for which POV so the information and ideas don't get mixed up.)

- Have sample narration examples already created for students to use. Based on the POV assigned, students have to locate which ready-made details fit that POV.

Extensions

- Have students practice modifying the perspective from which they write, but keep the POV constant. Discuss how perspective alters the story.
- Encourage students to take an existing piece of their writing and switch the POV. Compare how those POVs affect the story.



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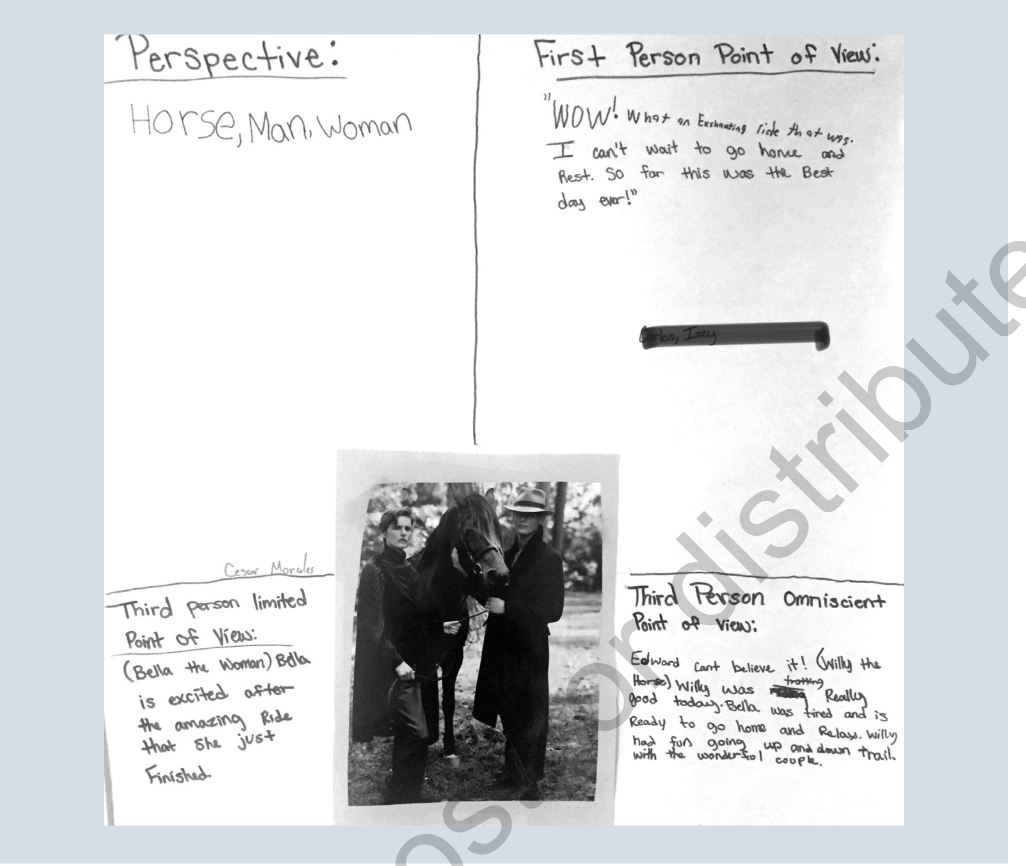

Digital Direction

- Map out different possible POV details using a digital program such as MindMeister.
- Use an online brainstorming application like dotstorming for a digital connection.
- Compare different POVs using an online application like PicCollage to collect the images and associated descriptions in a "Pinterest-like" board setup.

Lesson Lead-Ins

- Use this as a lead-in for writing in different POVs and in a variety of genres.
- Connect this lesson to ones on voice, mood, and perspective, because each adds a unique layer to a text's overall meaning.
- Use this as a lead-in for discussions of audience and purpose and how POV might be modified based on those.

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RESOURCE ROUNDUP

So many extended writing engagements require students to read and write widely across multiple sources. This is especially true in high school classrooms where Document Based Questions (DBQs) are a frequent resident. Yet developing a response that is well-thought out, articulates a clear argument or position, and incorporates multiple pieces of evidence from several sources can be intimidating for some students. In many instances, the sheer volume of material they must read just to be able to write their response can be overwhelming.

One way to address this complex task is by breaking it down into more manageable pieces. Students are likely to be more successful at writing a fully involved DBQ composition if they have had time and experience with the process, one component at a time. An easy way to start breaking down a large task like this is to begin with the documents themselves. That's where Resource Roundup comes into play. With this strategy, students start with the documents and examine them first before they start constructing a specific response that requires them to complete a response that incorporates material from all the sources.

Before you start this lesson, students should have a solid understanding of *how* artifacts should be examined, especially if you are utilizing different types of documents such as infographics, charts, historical quotes, and more.

Questions students should ask themselves when examining the documents might include

- What is the intended audience? Who is this written for?
- What is the purpose?
- Are there titles, headings, or other text features that should be attended to?
- Is there a graphic or figure incorporated in this document?
- What about annotations? Footnotes?

Putting It to Work

1. Start by determining what theme you would like your documents or artifacts to focus on. You might include several works by the same author, multiple sources about a particular topic, or different writing samples that focus on a specific genre.
2. Develop a few questions, no more than three or four, that could be used as part of a constructed or extended response task associated with these documents.
3. Divide students into groups and give each group one of the questions.

Because many constructed response questions are often multipart and have several questions built into one task, I like to use those as my starting points. I simply break those multipart questions into individual questions and use those as my starters for this lesson. Then, I can piece those questions back together for the full constructed response task. For instructions on this extension, visit the companion website at **resources.corwin.com/WritingWorkouts.**

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4. Provide students with the Resource Roundup template on the companion website.

Resource Roundup

Directions: Record the constructed response question in the table below. List the title of each document in the corresponding box in the table below. Include any information from the document that addresses the question posed.

Constructed Response Question	Document 1	Document 2	Document 3	Document 4	Document 5
	Football and Brain Injuries: What You Need to Know.	Exactly How Dangerous Is Football?	NFL Rulebook Safety Rules + Reg.	Infographic	photo
What are the dangers of football?	-Concussions -headaches -brain damage	TBI's		Memory loss Neck injury Concussion back/spine	
What are some safety measures in place?	Helmets mandatory sit-outs	helmet research long term studies			helmets pads
What is the NFL doing to address this?		helmet research studying former players	changing rules for hitting in head or neck area	testing former players for CTE	

5. Have students record their assigned question at the top of the template.

6. Show students where the resources are posted in the classroom and how many are displayed.

7. Before setting them loose, ensure that students have a solid understanding of how artifacts should be examined, especially if you are utilizing different types of documents such as infographics, charts, historical quotes, and more. Questions students should ask themselves when examining the documents might include

- What is the intended audience? Who is this written for?
- What is the purpose?

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- Are there titles, headings, or other text features that should be attended to?
- Is there a graphic or figure incorporated in this document?
- What about annotations? Footnotes?

8. Have the students rotate around the room with their question and template. They should visit every document station and examine the document to determine if any information on that item would help them answer their question. Students should mark their templates accordingly. (For groups with experience with this strategy, you can include as many as eight sources. For those who haven't practiced this strategy yet, keep it to around four samples.)
9. Once the groups have circulated around the room to all the samples, have them share their questions and which artifacts they deemed would be helpful when answering their questions.

When to Use It

- When you want students to view multiple sources on the same topic, genre, or idea.
- As a way to expose students to multiple texts in a short period of time.
- When you need to utilize multiple sources on a variety of reading levels.

Why It Works

- This strategy breaks a complex task (DBQ) into a series of steps, with Resource Roundup being the first.
- It gets students up and moving as they walk through the multiple sources station.
- Collaboration and discussion are key in this strategy as students can discuss with their groups which sources best answer their assigned question.
- It offers students the opportunity to examine sources for their quality and relevance to their question. Students can not only choose which sources should be used to answer their question but also the ones that can be omitted.

Modifications

- Start with one article or document but utilize multiple questions. Have students determine which questions can be answered by the selected document.
- Mix the types of texts used for this strategy to include pictures and other graphic representations of the content. Not only can this help striving readers, but it also gives students another opportunity to engage with texts in multiple formats.

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Extensions

- Have students return to class with their completed template on Day 2 and revisit only the documents/artifacts that they indicated would answer their question. Have them locate information from each document that answers their assigned question.
- Encourage students to find another document or artifact that could be used in conjunction with the activity.
- Use this strategy in tandem with the Annotate, Plan, Write strategy on page 168.

Digital Direction

- Instead of physical documents, use links to web resources like videos, virtual exhibits, or websites for students to examine.
- Collect responses using an application like Mural.
- Have students collaboratively examine documents using a Google document or have them digitally annotate using Diigo.

Lesson Lead-Ins

- Use this as a lead-in for extended constructed responses.
- Try this as a warmup for critically examining sources for credibility.
- Warm up to research writing with this strategy. With this approach, students are able to practice examining multiple sources for information, something that is required when completing research.

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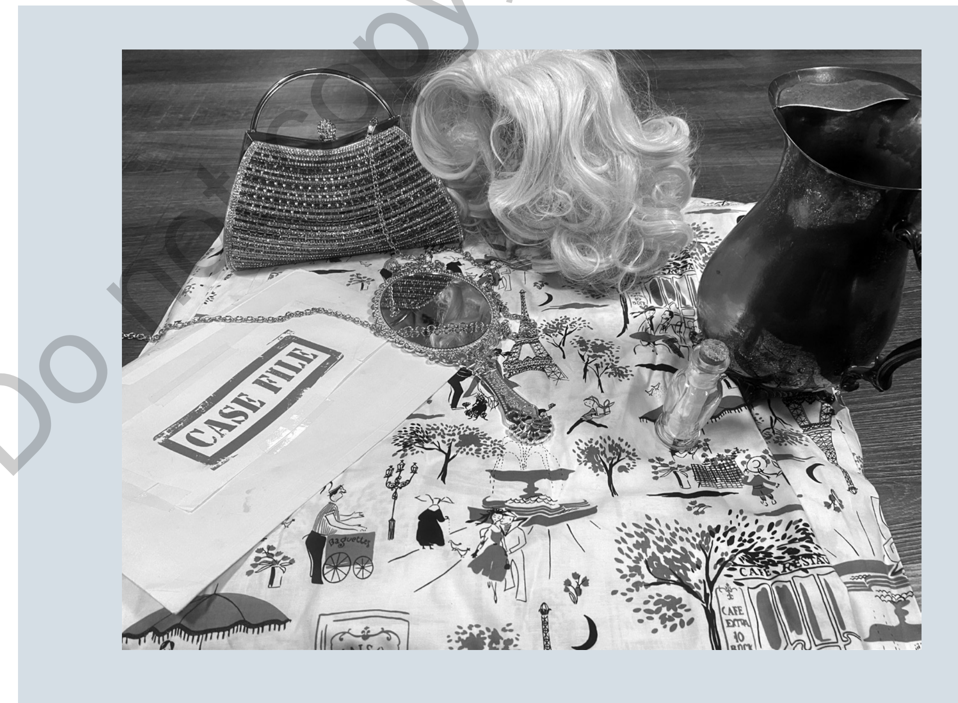
CHARACTER PROPS

One of the best parts about teaching ELA is the ability to read and utilize a wide range of literature in daily teaching. There are so many wonderful novels that introduce students to dynamic, rich characters who can make us love them, hate them, cry for them, and more. My favorite works of literature are often the ones that leave me feeling unsettled, changed, and bothered, but I also love books whose characters feel like people I know or wish I did know, like Miss Lana in *Three Times Lucky* by Sheila Turnage. As students interact with characters across multiple literary works, opportunities to write about characters in multiple settings can assist them as they are tasked with completing in-depth character analyses. One way to warm up with character writing is with Character Props.

Putting It to Work

1. Determine which characters or figures from reading will be the focus of the lesson.
2. Choose one character to use as a demonstration model for the class.
3. Display four or five physical objects in the front of the room for students to see.
4. Introduce each object. You might hold up each object so everyone can see and tell the class what it is.



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5. Remind students about the novel or other literary work they have been reading.
6. Give students a notecard or sticky note to record which character they think owns the displayed items. Have them explain and justify their reasoning.
7. Share with the class.
8. Put students in collaborative groups or with a partner.
9. Provide them with a list of possible characters to choose from.
10. Instruct students to come up with five objects that their character would have based on what they know about them. Make sure they know to justify and explain their choices. Use sticky notes to record their thoughts or use the template on the companion website.
11. Share with the class.

Character Props

Character Chosen: Ms. Lana

Character Traits: Caring, dedicated, loyal

Prop	Justification	Textual Evidence (if applicable)
wig	Ms. Lana is always changing her appearance by wearing wigs and different clothes.	"Miss Lana tucked a strand of her glossy Ava Gardner wig behind her ear..."
Eiffel Tower	The cafe had a Paris themed menu.	"Glancing around, I pegged today's theme as 1930's Paris—her favorite. A miniature Eiffel Tower graced the counter."
menu	Ms. Lana runs the cafe.	She, "wrote the day's specials on the chalboard."
order pad	Ms. Lana takes orders at the cafe and she wrote a note to the colonel.	"She scrawled across her order pad + handed it to him."

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When to Use It

- When you are reading a novel or other literary work that has multiple characters.
- If you want students to review and collectively discuss characters from multiple works of literature.
- To get students to think beyond using words to convey meaning and include objects and items.
- When you want students to take part in an oral presentation component in addition to writing.

Why It Works

- Because this strategy includes an oral sharing component, having objects to hold or refer to can help students remember the details of the character since the object serves as a reminder.
- It utilizes collaborative learning and discussion.
- There is an element of student choice involved because students are able to decide which character they want to explore.

Modifications

- Instead of focusing on characters from a specific novel, have students develop a character based on objects you provide. For example, I often use my prom dress as a character starter warmup. I bring the dress into class and show it to students. While I walk around and let them see and feel the sequins and beads on the dress, I ask questions like:
    - Who might wear this dress?
    - Where would you wear this?
    - If this dress could talk, what would it say?
- Choose one character from a novel and have the class focus on the same character for the activity.
- Set the class up initially like a museum exhibit and have students travel to each teacher-created exhibit and record their character choices on the template on the companion website.

Extensions

- Once students have collected all their objects, instead of having them share aloud, have them set up their objects on display like an exhibit. Then have the entire class rotate through each exhibit and examine the artifacts chosen. Students can then guess which exhibit is for which character.
- Have students use these objects as idea starters when they begin drafting a character analysis.

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Digital Direction

- Have students create virtual exhibits using online programs such as Art.Spaces or Artsteps.
- Present this lesson using Nearpod, an online interactive lesson program.

Lesson Lead-Ins

- Use this as a lead-in for character analysis engagements.
- Provide this as a warmup for the Character Evolution strategy on page 62.
- Connect this to culminating writings at the completion of a literary work.
- Use this strategy in tandem with the Most Valuable Character on page 74.

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