

Quick Writes

Quick Writes is a motivating strategy that can be used to prepare students for reading new material, reviewing previously learned material in preparation for understanding new information to be read, or prepare students to begin the writing process. As a reading strategy, Quick Writes provides the teacher and students with important information about students' prior knowledge and understanding about a topic or identify skills they have. As a writing strategy, Quick Writes allows students to quickly collect data about what they know about a given topic. The focus of Quick Writes is to help students access the information. It is an informal writing so grammar and spelling should not be emphasized by the teachers.

How to implement the strategy:

1. Begin by sharing a topic or prompt with the class and recording it where all the students can see it.
2. Tell the students they have thirty seconds to quickly jot down everything they can think of that is related to the topic.
3. Have the students share what they have recorded one at a time and record those on chart paper.
4. Have the students compare the collective list with their individual list to self-assess and determine their own level of understanding of the material.
5. Prepare the students for new learning by explaining that they may continue to add to their lists as they read and engage in various learning investigations.
6. Have students revisit their lists periodically throughout the unit or have them use the lists to write a summary of their learning.

Examples:

Assess Understanding:

Students record their thoughts about a particular word, idea, topic, text selection, learning activity, etc. Provide a question such as, "Write all the words you think of related to "weather."

Encourage Critical Thinking:

Provide students with two opposing views of an issue or topic related to the content they are studying. Have them select a position and defend their point of view with specific, detailed information and examples.

Make Predictions, Inferences, Hypotheses:

Have students respond to questions such as, "What do you predict will be the outcome of the investigation?" or "What inferences can you make about....?" or "What is your hypothesis?"

Promote Personal Connections with the Content or Learning Activity:

Students record their thoughts to prompts such as, "What was your overall impression of the activity?" or "What stands out for you about...?" or "Do you agree or disagree with the author? Why or why not?"

Promote Reflection:

What was most challenging for you in this unit of study? What do you want to remember the next time you encounter this situation?

Summarize Reading:

Write a one-paragraph summary of the text selection, using evidence from the text to support the summary.

Additional resources:

- Mason, L. H., Benedek-Wood, E., & Valasa, L. (2009). Quick writing for students who struggle with writing. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 53, 313–322.
- Readance, J. E., Moore, D. W. & Rickelman, R. J. (2001) *Prereading Activities for Content Area Reading and Learning*.