

Dialogic Journal: One student responds to a reading by writing notes on the left side of a folded notebook page as she reads and then another student responds to both the reading and the journal entry on the right side of the page.

Dialectic Journal: Student creates writing down the left side of a page in response to some prompt/question prior to some instruction and returns to write reflections of how her thinking has changed down the right side of the page after instruction/discussion.

Short Creative Burst: Give the students a term or topic you've been discussing and have them write a quick, short, imaginative response by asking them to rethink the term (or topic) as a strange metaphor (“If *term* were a dessert, it would be a __, because _____.” Replace “dessert” with any odd idea such as “dog,” “movie star,” or “item of clothes.” Use anything the requires imaginative thinking as long as the students can give a reason it would be an apple pie instead of an ice cream cone or a poodle instead of a bulldog. Alternatively, have the students use the term in a haiku. Or have the students use the term in a pun, a silly joke, or a rhyming couplet.

Fab-Colab Composing: Put students into small groups of 3 or 4. Each group needs to select their writer/reporter to record what the group comes up with and to share with the class later. Give each group a different topic/term to explain and ask them to write two explanations modifying what they say for two different audiences (for example, “grandparents and younger siblings” as two different audiences or “someone from the future and someone from the Middle Ages.”)

Analog Discussion Board: Students write a brief response to a reading or they write a question about something they are writing/working on/thinking about. Then the students rotate the papers around the classroom adding comments about what the original writer wrote and the other comments that have been added.

Loop Writing: Guide the students into creating a list concerning a subject or topic. Have the students choose an item on the list and write a paragraph about it. Have them rewrite the paragraph from the perspective of another person who was involved. Have them rewrite the paragraph from the perspective of a “third person” (outsider or, perhaps, “fly on the wall”). Have them rewrite the paragraph a fourth time using the material generated so far with a “central metaphor” – tell them to use a simile if it’s easier to get started (“This situation was like a _____” or “This situation was as _____ as a _____”) and then rewrite it as a metaphor by simply saying “This was that.”

Pick a Sentence: Have students pick a sentence out of an assigned reading and write a paragraph (or more) about the significance that sentence has for them. Use their sentence choices as a springboard for discussing the reading.

Writing Template: Review a short reading passage (anywhere from a single paragraph to a couple of pages). Ask the students to identify some of the elements of the writing. List on the board such features of the reading passage as organization, dialogue, figures of speech, methods of description, or any other writing elements that you want to include (setting, conflict, point of view, etc.). After you have identified the elements of writing that you want to focus on, ask the students to create a new piece of writing that uses the reading passage as a “model” or “template” featuring all new elements from the student.

Micro-theme at the Art Museum: Give the students a sticky note about the size of an index card and have them answer a prompt that they can answer in no more than the space provided on the sticky note. After they have written their responses, have them post their *micro-themes* on the walls around the room, and tell them to take a notebook with them and pretend that the micro-themes are “works of art” and they are to review and comment in their own notebooks about the “art” they see on the wall. Which micro-themes are most engaging? Which ones do they have questions or concerns about what their creators have written? How does it change their thinking about their own answer?

Guided Private Writing: Give the students a prompt and tell them to write for 10 minutes or more (adjust the time to suit your own needs) and let them know they will have the opportunity to destroy their work if they want to. Afterwards, invite them to shred or otherwise tear up what they have written. Then, discuss with them if the act of writing has informed or changed their thinking on the topic of the prompt.

Argue Your Point: Tell your students they are to write as if they are trying to convince someone that their ideas on a particular topic are valid and valuable. Afterwards, ask them to reread their writing to see how it might be used as an introduction to another piece of writing.

Letter to Friend: Tell your students to take a topic or idea that you’ve been discussing in class and have them write a letter to a friend explaining the idea and how it might be useful to putting this idea into a larger context.

One Minute Summary: At the end of the class period, have your students take one minute and have them write what they think was the most important idea/information of the period and to write a quick question or comment about something they might still need cleared up.