Writing encourages writing. Because it reduces anxiety about writing, quickwriting is an excellent tool for prompting the thought and focus central to the entire writing process. Create quickwrite prompts to fit the specific needs of your students' writing assignment. (See examples below.)

Examples

Writing Task: *Biography*

Quickwrite Prompt: *(Use after a guided visualization where students have closed their eyes and imagined the person about whom they are writing.)* Write down all the traits you can think of about your person and explain why this person is important to you.

Writing Task: *Argument*

Quickwrite Prompt: *(Use after students have identified their position on a topic*.) Imagine that you are someone who does NOT agree with the position you've just identified. Why do you not agree with it? What makes you disagree? What experiences have you had that make you disagree?

Writing Task: *Autobiography*
Quickwrite Prompt: How would your parents or other family members describe you to another person? Why would they give these descriptions?

Reading and Research

Often a writing task is related to a reading or research task with the reading or research serving as a spring- board for the writing. For example, a literary analysis paper is rooted in a novel, short story, poem, etc. A controversial issue paper would have to take into account multiple perspectives on an issue and would require some research. The research and reading processes must be fully supported with time and instruction in order for students to be able to ultimately use their experiences for writing. Students should know what the writing task is before they embark on their reading or research. They must also learn how to read closely for details they might use in their writing and how to research effectively to generate appropriate material for their writing. These experiences are best done in collaboration with other students so they have the opportunity to share processes and ideas and support one another's developing understanding of the text or a topic. Depending on the writing task, reading and research can take a significant amount of time.

Stage 2: Drafting (Individual and Collaborative)

Drafting involves producing a cohesive piece of writing that is ready for response and revision. Whether individual or collaborative, the drafting stage of the writing process focuses on content, logic of presentation, audience, purpose, and form, and allows for experimentation. Students who are accustomed to thinking of writing as a one-draft experience often need coaching to help them let go of concerns about mechanics and evaluation at this stage. Drafting is about preliminary blueprints, rather than finished skyscrapers. Students should be provided sufficient time to create more than one blueprint and share their various ideas with peers to arrive at the best design for the purpose.

Once students have completed significant prewriting and have a plan for organization, you might use one of the following processes to help them develop a first draft.

Whole Class Draft

As a class, choose a topic and organizational scheme and develop a draft together. (This can be done on an overhead transparency or projected computer screen.) As you model how to write a draft, elicit ideas from the students, asking questions such as:

- How should we begin?
- (If appropriate) What's our thesis statement? Where does our thesis belong in the introduction?
- How should we transition to the next paragraph?
- What's our main idea in this paragraph?
- How should we word our idea?
- What evidence do we have?
- How should we explain our evidence?

Continue until the class has a significant piece of the draft completed. Debrief with students by asking them to recap what they did to write this draft collaboratively-how they started, what they did when they got stuck, etc. Have students follow this same process to work on their individual drafts, collaborating with one another, as needed. Circulate in the room; as you see students using particularly useful strategies for drafting, stop and show the class.

Small Group Draft

Arrange students in groups of 3-4, with each group working on a different topic and/or organizational plan. Have students work together to develop a rough draft on a large sheet of butcher paper. Be prepared; this process is noisy as students discuss and negotiate how to articulate their ideas on paper. Noise is a necessary part of the thinking process, however, so try to manage it rather than quell it. Circulate in the room; as you see students using particularly useful strategies for drafting, stop and show the class.

Pass the Draft

As a class, focus on one topic and organizational plan. Arrange students in groups of 4-6 and provide each group with a blank sheet of paper. Have one student in each group generate a sentence or two of the rough draft and write it on the paper. The paper is then passed to the next student who adds one or two sentences. This process continues until the introduction is complete. Have one student read the introduction aloud; group members can then discuss what to change, add, or delete. Once these changes have been made, the group develops a transition sentence. The paper is then passed to a student who adds the next sentence or two. This process continues until a body paragraph is completed, and, once again, this is shared and reviewed by the group. This "pass-the-draft" activity can continue for as long as you want groups to work. Since the student groups have all focused on the same topic, it works well to collect the group drafts, and then copy and share them with the whole class. Students will have an opportunity to discuss similarities and differences and look at how different groups approached the drafting process.

Stage 3: Reader Response (Individual and Group)

Sharing one's writing—no matter how terrifying—legitimizes writing as a process and, put simply, completes its purpose. Having students respond to each other's work helps them develop a sense of audience. They begin to think of themselves as writers whose work must communicate ideas to others. As students read each other's writing and analyze strengths and weaknesses, they develop critical abilities that can be transferred to their own work.