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DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

PERSONAL-EXPRESSIVE WRITING

Introduction

What is a Smart Starter?

A Smart Starter changes “extra” moments in a classroom setting into teachable moments. They are designed to take short amounts of time. However, Smart Starters are NOT short on substance. The Smart Starters in this book are packed full of great writing ideas to encourage students to practise and polish different writing modes.

When are Smart Starters used?

As their name suggests, they are good for igniting learning. Instead of the slow move into a class period, lesson or school day, a Smart Starter quick-starts the action. Each one warms up the brain with a sparkling challenge. Students also need this kind of spark at times other than the beginning of the day or class period. Use a Smart Starter anytime there is a lull, or anytime students need a break from a longer activity. They work effectively to stimulate thinking at the beginning, end or middle of a class period, or any other time you can squeeze in an extra ten minutes.

Why use Smart Starters?

They’re energising! They’re stimulating! They’re fun! They nudge students to focus on a specific type of writing while “waking up” tired minds. They require students to make use of previously acquired knowledge and skills. Because of their short length, they ensure quick success and quick rewards – thus inspiring confidence and satisfaction for the learners.



How to Use This Book ...

Kick Off a New Unit

The starters are grouped by writing modes. As you introduce a new type of writing, have students practise that mode as they journal. For instance, start off your unit on expository writing with *Who Has the Right?* or *Now, That Is Deep*.

Spark a Longer Lesson

Any of these short activities can be expanded. A starter may inspire your students to develop questions or examples along the same lines – expanding the quick write into a full-blown writing project.

Review a Concept

Dust off those rusty skills with a Smart Starter. For instance: Have your students been away from persuasive writing for a while? Have them review what they know about persuasive techniques with *It's My Right!* or *I Believe*.









Charge-Up Thinking Skills & Ignite Creativity

The Smart Starters are not only for English class. Use them anytime to stimulate minds. Doing a Smart Starter will sharpen thinking processes and challenge brains. In addition, Smart Starters work well as starting points for students to create other similar questions and problems.



Now, That Is Deep!

Everyone has serious inner thoughts just waiting for a chance to escape. Have students complete a quick write on one of these serious questions and share their writing with the class or with a partner.





-  Is knowledge power? Explain your answer.
-  Does every action have a consequence? Explain your answer.
-  Are men and women treated equally? Give examples and explain your answer.
-  Has technology helped society or hurt society? Explain your response.
-  If a child commits a crime, who is responsible for the act –the child or the parent?
-  Is it all right to seek revenge on someone? Explain your response.
-  Is everyone capable of doing something bad? Explain your response.
-  Does society put people in categories (or cliques)?
Explain your answer and give an example.

Writing Mode: Expository



Who Has the Right?




Sometimes our world has inconsistencies. Allow students the opportunity to discuss inconsistencies in their experiences by addressing one of the writing prompts. Have them share with the class or with each other.

-  Do all people truly have “freedom of speech”? Support your answer with examples.
-  The types of snacks at many schools are being limited. Does the government have a right to determine which snacks you can have? Support your answer with examples.
-  Does society discriminate against the uneducated? Support your answer with examples.
-  Do criminals have rights? Explain your answer.



I Believe

Students at any age like to see someone look at things the way they do. Pair or group students and have them create a T-shirt design to show school spirit, promote a new homework schedule or advocate a more extensive break schedule. Have students write a persuasive essay convincing their audience (principal, vice principal or teacher) of why their new designs should be chosen. Help students get started with their essay by providing a prompt.




-  We think you should choose our T-shirt design because ...
-  We are presenting this new homework schedule to ...
-  We feel there should be more breaks throughout the day because ...

Once students have completed the design and writing, have them present their arguments in front of their audience.



It's My Right!

The prompts below will lead to great discussions. Have students complete a quick write on one of the prompts and then initiate a classroom discussion.

-  Many schools do not allow students to have mobile phones. Should they be allowed? Explain your response.
-  A commonly held belief is that boys are better at maths, while girls are better at English. Do you agree? Explain your answer.
-  Violent sports encourage kids to be violent. Do you think this is true? Explain your answer.

