

Writing Activity Guide

How to use the guide:

This guide contains 26 activities adaptable for a variety of disciplines, class sizes, etc. Review the “I want to” column and select a statement describing a goal for a course you teach. Then, review corresponding items in the “Activity Examples” column. Note that many of the activities contain a hyperlink leading to more information and/or example(s). Determine if there is an example that is a good fit for your course.

For assistance with selecting, modifying, or implementing an activity, please contact the Center at cte@tamu.edu.

I want to:	Activity Examples
Enhance student’s foundational knowledge	1. Quick Write : Students write a quick response to a teacher created, open-ended prompt.
	2. Best Summary : Students write a summary at the end of a unit, lecture, or other assignment. They then work in groups to compare their summaries, choosing the best one.
Integrate student knowledge	3. Concept Map : Students draw a diagram to demonstrate their ideas or understandings of a specific concept. These diagrams show relationships between concepts. This can be done individually or in teams.
	4. Contemporary Issues Journal : Students analyze current real world events or developments pertinent to their course material and write a journal entry that identifies the connections.
	5. Synthesis Paper : Students analyze several related readings and write a paper about them highlighting their commonalities



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Use writing to learn	<p>6. Editorial Review: Students act as editors, evaluating a set of works and selecting which ones to include in an upcoming publication. They then write a letter to the authors with a decision and rationale as to why their piece was included.</p>
	<p>7. Ethical Dilemma: Students are presented with a scenario that is both ethics-based and content related. The students think about the scenario, and then choose an option based upon how they believe they would respond to the scenario. They then write an essay explaining the steps they took to reach their decision.</p>
	<p>8. What? So What? Now What? Journal: Students create journal entries, reflecting on recent course experiences, asking questions for analysis.</p>
	<p>9. <u>Double Entry Journals:</u> Journal pages are divided into half lengthwise. In left-hand column, student records ideas, assertions, and arguments raised in assigned readings; in the right-hand column they record their opinions about the readings, their concerns, and their unanswered questions. Journals are handed in at regular intervals.</p>
Activate prior knowledge, recall, and understand	<p>10. <u>Minute Paper:</u> During last 5 minutes of class, instructor asks students to answer one or two questions on an index card or half sheet of paper. Questions can include: "What was the most important thing you learned during the class?" "What important questions remain unanswered?" Cards/papers are handed in as students leave classroom.</p>
	<p>11. <u>Muddiest Point:</u> Can be used at any time during a class session. Students are asked to write down on an index card or half sheet of paper what they found least clear or most confusing in a teaching presentation or activity: "What was the muddiest point in the (lecture, assignment, discussion, play, film, video etc.)?"</p>



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Increase analysis and critical thinking	<p>12. Analytic Memos: Students write a one- or two-page analysis of a specific problem or issue using discipline-specific methods and techniques. Assesses students' skills at communicating their analyses in a clear, concise manner. Can be used to help students prepare for later, graded, written assignments.</p>
	<p>13. Letters: Students assume the identity of an important person in the discipline and write a letter explaining their thoughts on an issue after researching that person.</p>
Enhance course-related learning and study skills	<p>14. Writing Logs: Brief records kept by students on how much time they spend writing at various times of the day or night and in various places. Logs are handed in periodically.</p>
	<p>15. Process Analysis: Students focus on how they carry out academic work. They keep records of the actual steps they take in carrying out a representative assignment and then draw conclusions about the strategies they used in completing the assignment. Students provide a written summary of their records and conclusions.</p>
	<p>16. <u>RSOC2 (Recall, Summarize, Question, Comment, and Connect):</u> The protocol guides students through five steps that provide anonymous feedback about their learning and about the previous class. Provide a one-page form. Let the students know how you plan to use the feedback. Maximum time = 15 minutes. Instructions for students are: 1) Recall: a list of words or phrases that you think were important from the last class (1-2 minutes). 2) Summarize: combine/integrate as many of the most important points as you can into one summary sentence that captures the essence of the previous class (1-2 minutes). 3) Question: Jot down one or two questions that remain unanswered from the previous class (1-2 minutes). 4) Connect: explain, in one or two sentences, the connections you have made between the main points of the previous class and the major goals of the entire course (1-2 minutes). 5) Comment: write an evaluative comment or two about the class – Such as "What I enjoyed most/least in this course" or "What I found most/least useful in this course" (2-3 minutes).</p>



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Help students organize their thoughts and ideas	<p>17. Word Webs: Students are given a word or phrase related to the concept they are studying. This word is placed in the center of a piece of paper and serves as the starting point. The students then generate a list of ideas, organizing them into a graphic in order to identify relationships with the given word by connecting the ideas with lines or arrows.</p>
	<p>18. Dialogue Journal: Students keep their own journal where they write down their thoughts, questions, and ideas on a topic, assignment, or lesson. They then trade journals with a partner to reflect on and respond to what their partner wrote.</p>
Increase synthesis and creative thinking	<p>19. Word Journal: Student summarizes a short text (e.g., article, reading) in a single word; then writes a paragraph or two explaining why he or she chose that particular word to summarize the text. Completed response is an abstract or synopsis of the text.</p>
	<p>20. <u>Annotated and E-Portfolios</u>: Students collect samples of their work throughout the course and assemble them together, highlighting their significance, can be in digital form.</p>
Increase application of knowledge	<p>21. Quotation Commentaries: Students are given a handout with a set of related questions. They comment on these questions using the process: paraphrase, interpret, comment, and cite.</p>
	<p>22. <u>Insights-Resources-Application (IRA)</u>: Students complete an assignment based upon a given reading. This assignment includes their perceptions of the reading (insights), resources they have found that support the reading (resources), and an example of their own that relates to the reading (application).</p>



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Enhance students writing abilities	23. Round Table: Students are given a prompt. They then take turns responding to that prompt by writing down a few words or phrases and then passing the paper on to the next person at their table. Generally, there are more than one prompt being circulated at a time.
	24. Peer Editing: Student's work in pairs to review and provide feedback on their partner's written work.
	25. Collaborative Writing: Students work together to write a formal paper, with each student contributing at each stage of the writing process.
	26. Paper Seminar: One student makes a presentation of their original paper to their small group. The group members respond to the paper, engaging in a discussion of the paper's content. This provides feedback to the author.



References

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