

WRITING ABOUT READING: PREPARING FOR THE 2014 GED TEST

Activities & Resources for the
Classroom

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Activity 1 – The Task Ahead

What Am I Teaching Now?	My Concerns	Steps I Can Take

Activity 2 – Sentence Combining

- A sports car screamed around the corner.
- The sports car was red.
- It screeched to a stop in front of the doors.
- The doors led into the hospital.

- Meditation can help you relax.
- Meditation is a technique.
- The technique can be learned.

- Nina applied for a job.
- Nina needed to earn money.
- Nina is a hard worker.

- Drunkenness leads to 30 to 50 percent of all arrests made.
- The arrests are on the average.
- The average is national.
- Cirrhosis ranks sixth.
- The ranking is causes of death.
- Cirrhosis is a disease.
- The disease affects the liver.
- Alcohol causes cirrhosis.

I have a unique experience in teaching. I am a driving school instructor. I present life-saving information. I present this information to people who would rather not be taught. This situation provides unique challenges.

In teaching, I have a standardized curriculum. In order to present the material effectively, I must tailor it to the class. I speak to each class member. I do this in an attempt to put them at ease. I have found that the more comfortable the student is, the more willing they are to learn.

The material I present is invaluable. The information can be lifesaving. I present various laws and customs. Most importantly, I show how the violation of the traffic laws can end the driver's life. My goal is not to scare my students. My goal is to educate my students. I show them how a simple traffic citation could prevent disaster.

Finally, I learn a great deal teaching. I learn how to organize and present a lesson plan. I take notice and use students' attitudes and movements. I use this to present the information in a way that the student will be interested. If they are interested, they will learn.

ACTIVITY 3: WRITING ABOUT SOMETHING

What? This is the author's opinion/point-of-view. (What does the author think about the topic?)

Why? This is the author's reasons/rationale for thinking a certain way.	How? This is the author's support, evidence, and/or examples for each reason.

Adapted from Peha, Steve. Teaching That Makes Sense. <http://ttms.org/British Pass Stamp Act – March 22, 1765>

ACTIVITY 4: WRITING ABOUT READING

1920: Women Get the Vote

by Sam Roberts

The 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920, after decades of campaigning by the women's suffrage movement.

When John Adams and his fellow patriots were mulling independence from England in the spring of 1776, Abigail Adams famously urged her husband to "remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors." Otherwise, she warned, "we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation."

That summer, the Declaration of Independence proclaimed that all men are created equal but said nothing of women's equality. It would take another 144 years before the U.S. Constitution was amended, giving women the right to vote in every state.

That 19th Amendment says simply: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." It took effect after a dramatic ratification battle in Tennessee in which a 24-year-old legislator cast the deciding vote.

The amendment was a long time coming. At various times, women could run for public office in some places, but could rarely vote. (As far back as 1776, New Jersey allowed women property owners to vote, but rescinded that right three decades later.)

"WOMANIFESTO"

The campaign for women's rights began in earnest in 1848 at a Women's Rights convention in Seneca Falls, N.Y., organized by 32-year-old Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other advocates. Stanton had drafted a "Womanifesto" patterned on the Declaration of Independence, but the one resolution that shocked even some of her supporters was a demand for equal voting rights, also known as universal suffrage. "I saw clearly," Stanton later recalled, "that the power to make the laws was the right through which all other rights could be secured."

Stanton was joined in her campaign by Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Lucretia Mott, and other crusaders who would become icons of the women's movement. Some were militant. Many were met with verbal abuse and even violence. Already active in the antislavery movement and temperance campaigns (which urged abstinence from alcohol), women often enlisted in the fight for voting rights too.



More than 20,000 marchers took part in this 1915 parade in New York City in support of women's suffrage.

Courtesy of Library of Congress #LC-USZ62-50393

WYOMING IS FIRST

They staged demonstrations, engaged in civil disobedience, began legal challenges, and pressed their case state by state. In 1869, the Wyoming Territory gave women the vote, with the first permanent suffrage law in the nation. ("It made sense that a place like Wyoming would embrace women's rights," Gail Collins of The New York Times wrote in her book *America's Women*. "With very few women around, there was no danger that they could impose their will on the male majority.")

In 1878, a constitutional amendment was introduced in Congress. The legislation languished for nine years. In 1887, the full Senate considered the amendment for the first time and defeated it by about 2-to-1.

But the suffrage movement was slowly gaining support. With more and more women graduating from high school, going to college, and working outside the home, many Americans began asking: Why couldn't women vote too?

Plenty of opposition existed, according to Collins: Democrats feared women would vote for more socially progressive Republicans. The liquor industry, afraid of prohibition, also opposed women's suffrage, as did many people in the South, where blacks had been largely disenfranchised since Reconstruction.

In 1918, after much cajoling and picketing by suffragists, President Woodrow Wilson changed his mind and backed the amendment. The next year, both houses of Congress voted to amend the Constitution. Suffrage advocates predicted quick ratification by the states. (By 1919, 28 states permitted women to vote, at least for President.) Within a little more than a year, 35 of the required 36 states had voted for ratification.

The last stand for anti-suffragists was in Tennessee in the summer of 1920. Their showdown in the State Legislature became known as the "War of the Roses." (Pro-amendment forces sported yellow roses; the antis wore red.)

After two roll calls, the vote was still tied, 48-48. On the third, Harry T. Burn, a Republican and, at 24, the youngest member of the legislature, switched sides. He was wearing a red rose but voted for ratification because he had received a letter from his mother that read, in part: "Hurrah and vote for suffrage! Don't keep them in doubt!"

Burn said later: "I know that a mother's advice is always safest for her boy to follow and my mother wanted me to vote for ratification. I appreciated the fact that an opportunity such as seldom comes to mortal man-to free 17,000,000 women from political slavery-was mine."

GRADUAL CHANGE

In 1920, women across America had the right to vote in a presidential election. (In the South, black women and men would be kept off voter rolls in large numbers until 1965, after passage of the Voting Rights Act.)

But newly enfranchised women voted in much smaller numbers than men. "Women who were adults at that time had been socialized to believe that voting was socially inappropriate for women," says Susan J. Carroll, senior scholar at the Center for American Women and Politics.

The political and social change sought by suffragists came gradually and not without fits and starts. An Equal Rights Amendment, stipulating equal treatment of the sexes under the law, was passed by Congress and sent to the states in 1972, but later failed after being ratified by only 35 of the necessary 38 states.

In 1980, however, women surpassed men for the first time in turnout for a presidential election. Since then, there has also been a substantial rise in the number of women running for and holding political office.

NAEPD Questions Tool. Retrieved from the World Wide Web at:
<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrlsx/landing.aspx>

ACTIVITY 4: WRITING ABOUT READING

Question: According to the article, what is one way that women fought for equal rights in the 1800s? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

What? This is the author's opinion/point-of-view. (What does the author think about the topic?)

Why? This is the author's reasons/rationale for thinking a certain way.	How? This is the author's support, evidence, and/or examples for each reason.

Adapted from Peha, Steve. Teaching That Makes Sense. <http://ttms.org/>

ACTIVITY 5: WRITING ABOUT READING

Clarence Gideon was accused of breaking into a poolroom in Florida. Police said he had stolen a pint of wine and some coins from a cigarette machine. Gideon was a poor, uneducated man who was fifty years old. He did not know much about the law. However, he believed he could not get a fair trial without a lawyer to help him.

When Gideon appeared in court, he asked the judge to appoint a lawyer for him because he was too poor to hire one himself. The judge told him that he did not have the right to have a lawyer appointed for him unless he was charged with murder.

Gideon was tried before a jury, and he tried to defend himself. He made an opening speech to the jury and cross-examined the witnesses against him. He then called witnesses to testify for him and made a final speech to the jury. The jury decided he was guilty. Gideon was sent to the state prison to serve five years.

From prison, he wrote a petition to the Supreme Court. It was handwritten in pencil. He argued that all citizens have a right to a lawyer in cases where they might be sent to prison.

ACTIVITY 5: WRITING ABOUT READING

What do you think? Main idea or thesis. _____

Why do you think it? Reasons	How do you know? Examples, explanations, evidence

Adapted from Peha, Steve. Teaching That Makes Sense. <http://ttms.org/>

Activity 6 – Reading with WWH

Read the following text all the way through first. Then, identify the main idea or thesis statement for the entire argument. Fill in the “why” and “how” details after that. Some statements may not have complete support. Is that OK?

Cancel that gymnastics class, mom and dad. And think twice about those evening karate lessons. Signing your kids up for everything under the sun may seem like a smart move. But chances are that little Johnny and Janey are over-scheduled.

In a recent study, researchers at the University of Minnesota analyzed how kids spend their time and discovered that today’s youngsters are significantly busier—as much as 57% busier in some cases— than their parents were at the same age a generation ago. Of course, there’s nothing wrong with getting kids out of the house to burn off energy. It’s also great for kids to try new activities and learn new skills. However, today’s parents tend to overdo it.

Raising an active and engaged child may seem like good parenting. But many parents put too much structure on kids’ activities. And kids miss out on unstructured play as a result. “Play is a key element in how children learn about themselves and the world,” said Dr. Martin Applebaum, noted child psychologist, in his recent book entitled *The Health of America’s Children*.

Play helps children grow intellectually and socially. But kids today are so busy, many have only a few hours a week to partake of this essential activity. More importantly, Applebaum says, “If we don’t restore some balance to our children’s lives, we may see future increases in mental health issues like depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder.” There’s no doubt that children benefit from structured activities. But when we fill every hour of their lives with an endless string of commitments, we may be taking something from them they’ll never get back: their childhood.

ACTIVITY 6: READING WITH WWH

What do you think? Main idea or thesis. _____

Why do you think it? Reasons	How do you know? Examples, explanations, evidence

Adapted from Peha, Steve. Teaching That Makes Sense. <http://ttms.org/>

Handouts for the Classroom

Writing About Reading - A What-Why-How Chart

What? This is the author's opinion/point-of-view. (What does the author think about the topic?)

Why? This is the author's reasons/rationale for thinking a certain way.	How? This is the author's support, evidence, and/or examples for each reason.

Adapted from Peha, Steve. Teaching That Makes Sense. <http://ttms.org/>

What-Why-How for Reading

What do you think? Main idea or thesis. _____

Why do you think it? Reasons	How do you know? Examples, explanations, evidence

Adapted from Peha, Steve. Teaching That Makes Sense. <http://ttms.org/>

A Few More Articles for the Classroom

Sample Constructed Response Question:

This passage is about Rick Gunn and his travels.

- Name the main reason Rick Gunn gives for traveling the world on his bicycle;
- Identify three hardships that Rick has encountered in his travels;
- Use details from the passage to support your answer.

Make-a-Wish, the Story of Rick Gunn

By Sheila Stone Dill

While he pedals his Haverty hand-built steel-lugged touring bike around the world for Make-A-Wish, Rick Gunn has his own wishes: He appreciates every moment of the incredible gift called life no matter what it brings and he believes in living one's dreams despite one's fears. His goal is to cover 20,000 miles in dozens of countries in two years.

Rick is taking this trip to honor his mom, Carol Ann Gunn, who died when he was only eighteen. They had traveled to Europe—because she wanted to see the world before she died. She had degenerative kidney disease and Rick had spent much of his youth with her in hospitals. When the family finally reached their destination, they had to turn around and return home because she became very ill. She died right after that.

Rick became a news photographer for the *Tahoe Tribune*, and later, the *Nevada Appeal*. Along the way his passion grew for bike riding. He took trips around the United States to document our cities, our citizens, and our countryside. He said that when he turned forty, he realized he wanted to spend the second half of his life touring the world. He needed financial support to do this for two years. He also wanted a way for people to contribute not just to him but to a charity to help others. Rick chose Make-A-Wish, partly because of his mom, and partly because they grant wishes to kids with life-threatening medical conditions. In El Dorado county alone—home to Tahoe-- thirty kids have had their wishes granted.

So Rick packed his oversized bike bags with a tent, sleeping bag, a bare-bones wardrobe, extra bike parts, a Canon digital camera with 3 lenses and 4 media cards, a laptop, and a tiny stove. He also included a Snowpeak titanium French press and Fast Freddie Turbo Blend coffee. There were 240 Clifbars and an Ipod with Spanish, Russian, German, and French lessons stuffed in those bags, too.

Rick's itinerary includes Europe, Turkey, China, Tibet, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and Thailand. He traveled across Uzbekistan, Borneo, Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand. He has photographed people, places, marketplaces, shrines, temples, and hospitals. Many of the photos are posted on the *NevadaAppeal.com* website, and the link, *Where in the World is Rick Gunn?*

You'll see people dying from AIDS; kids playing soccer, and the Gunn Clan Museum and castle ruins in Scotland. Rick photographed the removal of mines and bombs from former war zones in Vietnam. He pictured the people who were severely injured and later fitted with new limbs. Everywhere he shows people living with poverty, illness, or death. He shows how 63% of the rest of the world feeds themselves from the earth. His journals cover the profound day-to-day existence and people he met along the way. It reads like a great history book.

Rick had arranged very few places to stay before he made the trip. He sometimes slept in fields or hostels, or with hospitable people he met along the way. These were places he could eat and rest, repair his equipment, or just spread the word about Make-a-Wish to others. Friends would occasionally join him for a few days. Once he met up with his father.

He has had plenty of adventures along the way to write about. Once he was rescued by Muslim clerics in China. Yaks charged him in Nepal. A monkey bit him in Indonesia. He was attacked by leeches in Malaysia, and robbed at gunpoint in Sri Lanka.

Rick reflects, "I think stability is really a state of mind. I have my 14 years of work experience and 2 years on the road won't take that away. I still have my house. But I'll gain something most people will never see."

Sample Constructed Response Question: Based on the passage describe three categories of clouds. Then, using details from the passage name and describe your favorite type of cloud and why you like it.

Clouds Forecast the Weather

by Sheila Stone Dill

When I look up at the big Nevada sky, I would rather see clouds than blue skies. Blue skies are beautiful and usually mean a nice sunshiny day without much wind. With blue skies, I can use my skateboard, or go to the playground, or play soccer. Maybe I can even wear shorts and sandals.

But on a cloudy day, the sky is like a story I can read to myself. White fluffy clouds may become polar bears, or snowpersons, or angels, depending on the weather or my mood. Other formations may make the sky look like it's covered with feathers or lacy curtains. Clouds make my imagination come alive. Most clouds that float across the sky are filled with tiny droplets of water, called vapor, and tiny ice crystals. Weather forecasters watch the clouds to predict the day's weather.

Clouds form at different heights in the air—low, middle, and high. The highest clouds of all are cirrus and there are about ten different types. They are always composed of ice crystals and often produce solar or lunar haloes around the sun or moon. When you see cirrus clouds, it probably means a rainstorm or snow is on the way.

Middle level clouds are altostratus and altocumulus. Altostratus clouds are gray and can be thick enough to mask the sun. Altocumulus clouds are full of water droplets but rarely cause rain that reaches the ground.

Among the lowest clouds we can see are the cumulus. Of these, billowing cumulus clouds that look like marshmallows or vanilla ice cream or mashed potatoes are commonly seen. Or sometimes they look like whatever you decide them to be. One time I saw a cloud that looked like the Sleeping Beauty castle at Disneyland.

Stratus clouds also hang lower in the sky. Stratus clouds are full of water droplets and are common along the coastlines and bay areas. Fog is actually a type of stratus cloud reaching to or forming on the ground.

But my favorite cloud of all is the thunderhead. It is a giant nimbus-type cloud that extends for miles into the atmosphere. Thunderheads announce that a thunderstorm is brewing. They also lead to lightning strikes, hail, or tornadoes. They can be spectacular.

2008 Northern Nevada Writing Project and WritingFix. <http://nnwp.org>. Teachers may reprint freely for their classrooms.

Research and Articles

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR TEACHING WRITING

Amy Gillespie and Steve Graham reveal the techniques that have been proven to work when teaching students to write

Retrieved from the World Wide Web at:

<http://education.jhu.edu/newhorizons/Better/articles/Winter2011.html>

WRITING IS A MULTIFACETED TASK THAT involves the use and coordination of many cognitive processes. Due to its complexities, many students find writing challenging and many teachers struggle to find methods to effectively teach the skill.

Gathering evidence for effectively teaching writing

Advice from professional writers and the experiences of successful writing teachers offer some guidance in developing sound writing practices. However, these accounts are frequently based on testimonials involving the writing development of an individual or a single classroom. This makes it difficult to understand how or why a writing strategy was effective and what elements of the strategy would be essential to make it work in new situations.



Scientific studies of writing interventions provide a more trustworthy approach for identifying effective methods for teaching writing; they supply evidence of the magnitude of the effect of a writing intervention, how confident one can be in the study's results, and how replicable the writing strategy is in new settings with new populations of students.

What does the research show?

The list of recommendations presented below is based on scientific studies of students in grades 4–12. The strategies for teaching writing are listed according to the magnitude of their effects. Practices with the strongest effects are listed first. However, the effects of some writing interventions differ minimally from the effects of others. Therefore, one should not assume that only the first several strategies should be implemented. All of the strategies are potentially useful, and we encourage teachers to use a combination of strategies to best meet the needs of their students.

Evidence of the effectiveness of each strategy or technique was compiled from research studies that met several criteria. First, a recommendation was not made unless there was a minimum of four studies that showed the effectiveness of a writing intervention. Second, in each study reviewed, the performance of one group of students was compared to the performance of another group of students receiving a different writing intervention or no intervention at all. This permitted conclusions that each intervention listed below resulted in better writing performance than other writing strategies or typical writing teaching in the classroom. Third, each study was reviewed to ensure it met standards for research quality and that study results were reliable (reducing the chance that error in assessment

contributed to the results). Fourth, studies were only included if students' overall writing quality was assessed post-intervention. This criterion was used to identify strategies that had a broad impact on writing performance, as opposed to those with a more limited impact on a specific aspect of writing such as spelling or vocabulary.

Effective writing practices

- **Writing strategies:** Explicitly teach students strategies for planning, revising, and editing their written products. This may involve teaching general processes (e.g., brainstorming or editing) or more specific elements, such as steps for writing a persuasive essay. In either case, we recommend that teachers model the strategy, provide assistance as students practice using the strategy on their own, and allow for independent practice with the strategy once they have learned it.
- **Summarizing text:** Explicitly teach students procedures for summarizing what they read. Summarization allows students to practice concise, clear writing to convey an accurate message of the main ideas in a text. Teaching summary writing can involve explicit strategies for producing effective summaries or gradual fading of models of a good summary as students become more proficient with the skill.
- **Collaborative writing:** Allow students to work together to plan, write, edit, and revise their writing. We recommend that teachers provide a structure for cooperative writing and explicit expectations for individual performance within their cooperative groups or partnerships. For example, if the class is working on using descriptive adjectives in their compositions, one student could be assigned to review another's writing. He or she could provide positive feedback, noting several instances of using descriptive vocabulary, and provide constructive feedback, identifying several sentences that could be enhanced with additional adjectives. After this, the students could switch roles and repeat the process.
- **Goals:** Set specific goals for the writing assignments that students are to complete. The goals can be established by the teacher or created by the class themselves, with review from the teacher to ensure they are appropriate and attainable. Goals can include (but are not limited to) adding more ideas to a paper or including specific elements of a writing genre (e.g., in an opinion essay include at least three reasons supporting your belief). Setting specific product goals can foster motivation, and teachers can continue to motivate students by providing reinforcement when they reach their goals.
- **Word processing:** Allow students to use a computer for completing written tasks. With a computer, text can be added, deleted, and moved easily. Furthermore, students can access tools, such as spell check, to enhance their written compositions. As with any technology, teachers should provide guidance on proper use of the computer and any relevant software before students use the computer to compose independently.
- **Sentence combining:** Explicitly teach students to write more complex and sophisticated sentences. Sentence combining involves teacher modeling of how to combine two or more related sentences to create a more complex one. Students should be encouraged to apply the sentence construction skills as they write or revise.
- **Process writing:** Implement flexible, but practical classroom routines that provide students with extended opportunities for practicing the cycle of planning, writing, and reviewing their compositions. The process approach also involves: writing for authentic audiences, personal responsibility for written work, student-to-student interactions throughout the writing process, and self-evaluation of writing.

- **Inquiry:** Set writing assignments that require use of inquiry skills. Successful inquiry activities include establishing a clear goal for writing (e.g., write a story about conflict in the playground), examination of concrete data using specific strategies (e.g., observation of students arguing in the playground and recording their reactions), and translation of what was learned into one or more compositions.
- **Prewriting:** Engage students in activities prior to writing that help them produce and organize their ideas. Prewriting can involve tasks that encourage students to access what they already know, do research about a topic they are not familiar with, or arrange their ideas visually (e.g., graphic organizer) before writing.
- **Models:** Provide students with good models of the type of writing they are expected to produce. Teachers should analyze the models with their class, encouraging students to imitate in their own writing the critical and effective elements shown in the models.

What we know

Evidence-based practices for teaching writing include:

- Teaching strategies for planning, revising, and editing
- Having students write summaries of texts
- Permitting students to write collaboratively with peers
- Setting goals for student writing
- Allowing students to use a word processor
- Teaching sentence combining skills
- Using the process writing approach
- Having students participate in inquiry activities for writing
- Involving students in prewriting activities
- Providing models of good writing

Additional suggestions

With any combination of teaching strategies a teacher chooses to use, students must be given ample time to write. Writing cannot be a subject that is short-changed or glossed over due to time constraints. Moreover, for weaker writers, additional time, individualized support, and explicit teaching of transcription skills (i.e., handwriting, spelling, typing) may be necessary. For all students, teachers should promote the development of self-regulation skills. Having students set goals for their writing and learning, monitoring and evaluating their success in meeting these goals, and self-reinforcing their learning and writing efforts puts them in charge, increasing independence and efficacy.

Teachers should supplement their current writing practices and curricula with a combination of evidence-based practices that best meets the needs of their students.

A combination of effective writing practices

No single strategy for teaching writing will prove effective for all students. Furthermore, the above strategies do not constitute a writing curriculum. Teachers should aim to supplement their current writing practices and curricula with a mix of the aforementioned evidence-based writing practices. The optimal mixture of practices should be tailored to best meet the writing needs of the class, as well as the

needs of individual students. It is especially important to monitor the success of each technique implemented to be sure that it is working as intended, and to make adjustments as needed.

About the authors

Steve Graham is the Curry Ingram Professor of Literacy at Vanderbilt University. His research focuses on writing and writing instruction. Steve is the author of *Writing Next* and *Writing to Read*, meta-analyses conducted for the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Amy Gillespie is a doctoral student in the Department of Special Education at Peabody College of Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt University. She is in the Experimental Education Research Training Program (ExpERT) at Vanderbilt, supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences (IES). Her primary research interests include writing activities that support reading and interventions for struggling writers.

Further reading

Graham S (2010), *Teaching Writing*. P Hogan (Ed), *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language Sciences* (pp. 848–851). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. Graham S & Perin D (2007),

Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools – A Report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education. www.all4ed.org/?les/WritingNext.pdf

Key Concepts for Sentence Combining Retrieved from the World Wide Web at:

<http://penningtonpublishing.com/writing/teaching-essay-strategies.html>

1. **Sentence construction ability is a critical skill for a writer to master.** Sentences are the structures that words are placed into in writing in order to convey meaning. While there are no set rules for what type of sentence works best in a particular situation, well-crafted sentences can improve writing, make it more enjoyable to read, and lead to higher grading of written products.
2. **Sentence combining is an effective method to directly teach sentence construction skills.** Sentence combining instruction generally begins with combining kernel, or irreducible, sentences into effective longer sentences. Students can combine the kernels in any grammatically acceptable way, and begin to explore adding or removing details, and rearranging words or phrases. This method has been found to be effective with students from elementary age to college age. Sentence combining teaches students a method of manipulating sentences that results in more mindful writing practice. Sentence combining teaches sentence structure, sentence editing, punctuation, and paragraph organization. It also provides students with practice controlling syntax, which may improve students' ability to create variety in their writing.
3. **Sentence combining has benefits on the physical demands of writing.** The activities involved in sentence combining often increase student motivation, and reduce the use of choppy or run-on sentences. Sentence combining may also increase students' willingness to experiment with syntactical variations in their writing. Sentence combining activities may also improve students' understanding and use of punctuation, and foster an increased awareness of how readers might respond to their writing, thereby prompting students to consider revision.
4. **Revision is often a sentence-combining act.** Revision is the process of taking already written sentences and transforming or manipulating them to improve them. Sentence combining gives students experience and confidence in the act of revision, and area that is often difficult.
5. **Sentence combining has benefits on the cognitive demands of writing.** Students become more familiar with the syntactic structures used in writing by experimenting with sentence combining, and can free mental energy. Students can also experiment with word order and sentence construction without focusing on generating content.

Implications for Teachers:

1. Organize lessons to include teacher modeling, supported practices, and independent practice.
Introduce: Explain to students that sentence combining is an activity that will help them write more interesting sentences that sound better to readers. Explain that good writers often work with their sentences to make them sound better. Let students know that there can and most often will be more than one right answer, and explain that when there are "mistakes" it's okay. Model: Display clusters of kernel sentences and model or collaboratively model with students how to combine: (The students are happy. The students are smart.) Be sure to explain that many combinations are possible. Discuss the different features of the different sentences. (The smart students are happy. The happy students are smart. The students are smart and happy. Happy and smart are the students.) Supported Practice: Work with students collaboratively, or have students work alone or in groups to practice. Teachers can also provide cues, such as underlining the word that should be combined, providing a cue word in parenthesis, or giving a specific direction as to what types of words to add or remove. (The girl fell over the log. She lost her balance. (because) = The girl fell over the log because she lost her balance. The cake was delicious. The cake was chocolate. = The chocolate cake was delicious.) Independent Practice: Assign activities and have students complete. Share several options at the end, and have students discuss which are the best options, and why.

2. Teach students techniques to use in their sentence combining. Suggest that students try some of the following when combining sentences. (a) Combine the kernels in any grammatically acceptable way. (b) Change the form of words (“threw” to “was throwing”). (c) Add appropriate function words (because). (d) Rearrange by moving words, phrases, and clauses around to produce the best effect. (e) Add or eliminate details.
3. Make sentence-combining activities meaningful. Sentence combining activities can be organized in set sequence, but can also be taught depending on areas of need in student writing. These activities can also be organized around content areas, or used with classroom books or literature. Reduce these passages down to kernel sentence levels, and have students combine into new sentences. Compare to the author’s original work, discuss the differences, and reinforce content.
4. Sentence-combining activities must be without risk. Students should be encouraged to experiment in sentence-combining activities. If a combined sentence is grammatically acceptable, there should not be a “right” or “wrong” answer. Rather encourage students to explore and discuss what makes sentences more or less effective for different purposes.
5. Build activities and instruction that will help students’ transfer sentence combining into their own writing. Sentence combining activities must not be stand-alone skill building exercises, but rather transfer to students’ actual writing. Use student-writing examples for sentence combining and include sentence combining as a key element on rubrics for student writing pieces.