



# Maple Shade High School

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Dear Maple Shade High School Parents & Guardians:

Maple Shade High School has adopted a whole school writing program to allow for a common language among disciplines and increase student writing proficiency. This program, The Collins Writing Program, which involves giving five different types of writing assignments. Some assignments are designed simply to help students get their ideas on paper or to discover what they already know about a topic. These assignments are called **Type One** assignments and are evaluated very simply—did the student do it or not? Type One assignments are not designed to be compositions or essays. They are simply ways to guarantee that your son or daughter is thinking about a topic.

**Type Two** assignments require that students provide the correct information in response to a specific question. In Type Two writing, the quality of the writing is not judged—just the content. Type One and Type Two writing assignments are designed to be completed quickly and to promote thought.

**Type Three** and **Type Four** writing assignments are designed to produce ideas and to develop writing skills. Type Three and Type Four writing assignments use a concept called focus correcting. Focus correcting is based on the belief that student writing improves more quickly when the student works to improve a few writing skills at a time. These areas, called FCA's or Focus Correction Areas, will be explained and announced in advance so that students can focus their energies on them. The focus correction areas will be listed on the top left-hand side of each Type Three or Type Four writing assignment.

**Type Five** writing assignments are the most difficult because they require the student to produce publishable work, that is, work that is as free as possible from all errors. In some cases students will do a Type Three assignment, edit and revise it so that it becomes a Type Four, and finally polish it so that it becomes a Type Five. The Collins Writing Program encourages students to think, take chances, formulate ideas, and polish their ideas into finished compositions.

Parents often ask, "How can I help?" Here are a few suggestions: First, be aware of the five types of writing assignments and realize that sometimes writing assignments will not have to be perfect. Be a helper and an encourager, not a critic. Provide a quiet place to write with good lighting and a dictionary. Talk about the assignments and help your daughter or son generate ideas. And, if you are asked to review a composition, read it out loud. Ask if it sounds right. You'll be surprised at how many of their own mistakes they will be able to hear.

If you have any questions or comments about this program or about anything else we are doing, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Scott Arnauer

# Five Types of Writing

## Type 1: Capture Ideas

Type One writing gets ideas on paper—brainstorming. Type One is timed and requires a minimum number of items or lines. Questions and/or guesses are permitted. Evaluated with a check (✓) or minus (-).

## Type 2: Respond Correctly

Type Two writing shows that the writer knows something about a topic or has thought about the topic. It is a correct answer to a specific question, graded as a quiz. *One draft.*

## Type 3: Edit for FCAs

Type Three has substantive content and meets up to three specific standards called focus correction areas. It is *read out loud* and reviewed to see if the draft meets the following criteria: completes the assignment, is easy to read, and meets standards set by the focus correction areas. Revision and editing are done on the original. *One draft.*

## Type 4: Peer Edit for FCAs

Type Four writing is Type Three writing that is *read out loud* and critiqued by another. *Two drafts.*

## Type 5: Publish

Type Five writing is of publishable quality. *Multiple drafts.*

## For All Types

For all types, skip lines. For Types One and Two, label the type on top left-hand side of paper. For Types Three and Four, list focus correction areas on top left-hand side. Type Three and Four papers should be saved and used to practice editing skills.