



**More Writing to Learn Activities:
Keeping them engaged and gauging their learning**

- Think-Write-Pair-Share
- Quick-Writes
- Sentence Synthesis
- Exit or entrance statements
- Quick-Draws: Select a “big idea” or major concept within your lesson. Ask students to reflect on the meaning of the concept and create a visual image that represents that concept (about 3 minutes). Have students share and explain their image with a partner, in a small group (Numbered Heads), or in a Chalkboard Splash.
- Chalkboard Splash: This is a variation of the Pair-Share, Quick-Write or Quick-Draw. Once students have recorded their individual thoughts, have them write their responses (or group responses) randomly on the whiteboard or chart/butcher paper. After recording their responses, ask students to create a 3-column chart with the headings: similarities, differences, and surprises. Students read and analyze the other responses and record what they noticed under the columns. Students then get into small groups and share what they noticed. Have groups share with the whole class.
- Similes: Create similes using some of the topics you are studying. Ask students to formulate an explanation for how the simile might be true. Ask students to share with their partners, in small groups, or in a Chalkboard Splash their responses. After similes have been modeled a few times, ask students to create their own similes based on the topics they are learning.
- Ranking: Select items, concepts, steps, events, descriptive paragraphs, or other relevant content information that can be analyzed and ranked within your unit or lesson. Ask students to rank them according to specified criteria. Ask them to provide justification for the way they chose to rank the concepts.
- Numbered Heads: Allows students to be held accountable for being able to relay information that was learned during a group activity. Begin by asking students to count off from one to four. Confirm numbers by asking ones to stand, then twos, etc. Inform students that all group members will need to be able to present their group’s information. During the debriefing portion of the activity, call out the number for the team member who will be presenting for the group. Because they don’t know which number will be called until the end, all group members are held responsible for the information.

Ensuring Higher-Order Thinking

- Always ask students to explain why and justify or defend their thinking
- Use open questions: In what ways...How might things be different if....Why is this important....How does this relate to our lives? So what? Why is this important?
- Use a word bank to ensure that content vocabulary is used.