

ROUND ROBIN WRITING

Round Robin Writing is a fun and unthreatening way to encourage your students to write. This strategy was originally created to help students become more fluent in writing by having them write about anything at all for a specific period of time. Students are placed in groups of three or four, depending on the size of your group and your purpose. Initially, a kitchen timer is set for three minutes, and when it goes off, students pass their writing on to another group member who continues developing the passage for four minutes (each time the students exchange papers, the time should be increased by a minute to allow for reading time). This continues until everyone in the group has had an opportunity to read and add to everyone else's paper. The students then read their group writings and choose the best one to read to the class. The beauty of this type of writing is it helps students overcome worries about grammar and spelling and simply focus on the composing stage of the writing process. It helps to promote fluency in writing.

This activity can be adapted to emphasize any number of objectives. Here are a few suggestions to get you started.

1. Students can be given, or they can choose vocabulary words or words from a unit or text chapter and write them at the top of their paper (usually 5 –7 words work well). They then use these words in their writing paying close attention to context definitions. Their objective is to have all the words used by the end of the Round Robin session; your objective is to give students an opportunity to use words you want them to remember.
2. Another variation is based on the three stages of a story. Students are first taught the three parts to a simple story: 1. the setting and character; 2. the problem or conflict; 3. the resolution. Each student starts with #1, after they switch, they continue with #2, and on the last switch, each write the resolution. This is an excellent way to teach the basic structure of a story.
3. Give students each a quote and have them use the quote somewhere in their writing. Each addition to the story should contain their quote, so that they will have incorporated their quote in each of the parts of the writing that is passed on to them. Finally, read the best pieces out loud and have the class try to guess the original lines. The trick is to try and incorporate your line in so well with the story that the others can't figure it out.
4. Have students rewrite fairy tales as modern stories (twisted fairy tales). You can also combine the twisted fairy tale idea with the story frame activity.
5. Give the groups a story starter line and have them continue from there. Lines that are suspenseful work very well.
6. Students can also write one-line poems using the Round Robin Writing activity.
7. Use this as an extension of the R.A.F.T. activity presented in *Literacy Connects IV*, October 2002, by having each student in the group choose a different RAFT sequence.