

## Power Writing: A Writing Fluency Activity

Jamie Lanham, San Diego Area Writing Project

### **Description/Objective**

Power Writing is a fluency activity. It is a structured free-write where the objective is quantity alone (Fearn & Farnan, 2001, p. 501). The idea is for students to write as many words as they can as fast as they can. Power Writing is also an important aspect of building a community of writers beginning with the belief that we all are writers.

### **Introduction, Brainstorming, Oral Language Practice (7 - 10 minutes)**

For this lesson, students should begin by sitting on the rug or at their desks. The educator should be using a document camera, a white board, or chart paper that is visible to the group.

The educator should choose an interesting, low-stakes topic. (Examples: A favorite TV show, animal, or activity, a "Would you rather..." prompt, writing about their likes/dislikes, etc.).

- Introduce the Topic ("Today we are going to write about \_\_\_\_.")
- Brainstorm/co-create a word bank with students on a sheet of paper under document camera, on the white board, or on chart paper. ("What comes to mind when we think of \_\_\_\_?" or "What words/phrases come to mind when you think of \_\_\_\_.")
  - Write down words and phrases students share
- Have students orally rehearse their ideas with a partner ("Turn and tell your partner your ideas/what you are going to write about today.") Make sure each partner has time to share their thoughts.

### **Student Independent Writing Time (5 - 10 minutes)**

- Send students to their desk/tables to take out their writing notebook or a sheet of paper and a pencil.
- Before students write, have them repeat this mantra: *"I am a writer! I am a powerful writer! I will write as much as I can, as well as I can, as fast as I can until the time is through!"*
- Set a timer for 5 - 7 minutes
- As students write, walk around and encourage students to keep writing, prompt them to use the generated list of words if they request help for spelling or ideas, and remind them to keep pencils moving.
- Give students a 1 minute warning to wrap up their writing before the timer goes off.
- When the timer goes off, prompt students to reread their writing using "Magic Headphones". Magic Headphones are when students plug their ears and reread what they have written to themselves. Students can edit/revise as they read but the goal is to have students auditorily process what they have written.
- Younger students can add pictures to go with their writing as they wait for others to finish Magic Headphones and their word count.
- Last, have students count the number of words they wrote and write it on the bottom of the page. This number is a reference for students to use the next time they do this activity. Their goal should be to generate more writing the next time they do this activity.

### **Sharing & Feedback (5 - 10 minutes)**

- Choose a few students to share their writing under the document camera or from the front of the room with the class.
- Everyone cleans up except the students you chose who keep their notebooks/papers or give them to you.
- Sharing students come up one at a time and share their writing.

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- The student sharing calls on a peer to give writerly feedback/ask a question about their writing. (Example: "I like that you included dialogue in your writing." or "I like the part that says \_\_\_ because it's very descriptive." or "I wonder if you would consider adding some information about \_\_\_..")
- Students then give a round of applause for the author.
- The next 2 students share in the same manner.
- Call out any teaching points from the students who shared (any punctuation, labeling, grammatical skills, etc.)