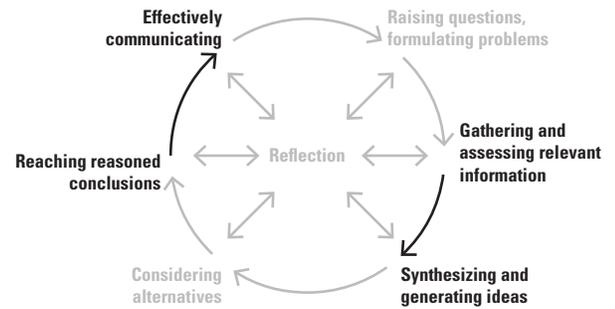


# THINK

Higher-Order Skills in Critical and Creative Thinking  
Resource Sheets for Teaching and Learning

## WRITING TO THINK



### OVERVIEW

Students can be apprehensive about putting words on paper because of the seemingly “final” nature of the written word. Encouraging them to see writing as a process can be accomplished through lower-stakes iterative exercises. Writing to think encourages students to interpret abstract concepts and associations and make them more concrete. It can be a reflective tool, as well as a means by which to support the thinking process, helping students gain more clarity.

### WRITING TO THINK ACTIVITIES

#### SEE-I (State, Elaborate, Explain, Illustrate)

Used either individually or with small groups, SEE-I is a great activity to get students to explain their understanding of concepts and terminology. It can also be a great structure for setting up a peer-review process and as a format for the boards that you might use in the Gallery Walk (see the Peer Review resource sheet.)

**State** the concept or term as briefly, clearly, and precisely as possible by constructing a good definition or a single, well-formulated sentence.

**Elaborate** to explain it in your own words.

**Exemplify** what you mean by using at least one well-chosen, original example.

**Illustrate** by using a metaphor, illustration, or diagram. Make sure that the students create the image themselves.

Have students share results and evaluate the effectiveness of the activity.

#### 3-2-1 Reflection on Learning (15-30 min)

This exercise provides some structure for students that encourages reflection while also encouraging them to extract what is particularly meaningful from a text or reading.

In this exercise, students should write down:

- **3 WORDS** that they think are important/essential to the meaning of the text
- **2 PHRASES** that are important to the argument of the text.
- **1 SENTENCE**, whether the “thesis” or a sentence they found particularly well-written, thought-provoking, or amusing.

Reflective prompts:

- Why do you think those were the most relevant aspects of the lesson and how might they help you in the future?
- How will you apply these ideas to the next project, or how might you have applied them differently to the last one?

### READINGS & RESOURCES

Bean, John. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor’s Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. Jossey-Bass, 2011.

Doyle, Terry. *Learner-Centered Teaching: Putting the Research on Learning into Practice*. Stylus, 2011.

See also: **Reflecting at Every Stage of the Process** and **Synthesis Matrix** at <https://think.dasa.ncsu.edu>

#### Interpretation with Justification (5-10 min)

Students don’t always recognize the previous knowledge that they bring to a class, assignment, or research topic. This technique can help them recognize that previous knowledge, while also encouraging them to justify it.

Pick an image, chart, or diagram and have students examine it individually or in groups. Ask them the following questions.

1. What’s going on? (Interpretation)
2. What do you see that makes you say that? (Justification)

Prompt students to make some judgements about their examinations, using the following structure:

1. Make a claim about the image or topic. **Claim:** An explanation or interpretation of some aspect of the image or topic.
2. Identify support for your claim. **Support:** Things you see, feel, and know that support your claim.
3. Ask a question related to your claim. **Question:** What’s left hanging? What isn’t explained? What new questions does your claim raise?