



Introduction to Freewriting

Lesson Plan



Learning Objective

Students will be able to freewrite in response to a prompt.

Note: Use this lesson to build students' confidence and fluency in writing and reduce self-censorship. It can also serve as an introduction to Bursts, where students can freewrite independently.

Suggested Time

30 minutes

Supporting Materials

- Freewrite Anchor Chart
- *Optional:* Freewrite Sample



Technology Used

Students: TenMarks Bursts (Freewrite)

Teacher: Demo Student account

Name the Focus (1 minute)

Tell students that they will learn a strategy called freewrite, which writers use to generate ideas or begin writing again when they are stuck.

Connection (3 minutes)

Pose the following questions to the class. Have students cheer if their answer is yes.

- Have you ever struggled to start writing?
- Have you ever gotten stuck in the middle of writing something?
- Have you ever erased or crossed out huge blocks of your writing?
- Have you ever gotten side-tracked or distracted while you write?

Instruction (5 minutes)

Explain

Tell students that these roadblocks are common to all writers, even professionals. One way to overcome these roadblocks is by freewriting or writing whatever comes into their mind without thinking too much about it. Emphasize that freewriting isn't evaluated or graded by anyone, not even teachers.

Model

Log in to TenMarks Writing and go to the Demo Student account. Click on the Burst Topics tab. Select a Freewrite prompt from the menu, such as "Do you like breakfast or dinner better? Explain."

Tell students that you will freewrite for two minutes. You will write whatever comes into your head about the prompt without worrying about the best answer or the right words. You're ignoring your self-censor.

Set a timer and think out loud about the topic, writing down everything you are saying. Make sure to model several dos and don'ts listed on the Freewrite Anchor Chart, such as:

- Getting stuck or writing nonsense, and then getting back to your topic
- Deleting and writing down that you are not supposed to delete
- Misspelling and writing down that you want to fix the spelling, but it's okay—you're writing fast

When the timer goes off, write one sentence that brings your ideas back to your topic.

Note: Students benefit from seeing you make mistakes and keep going. See the Freewrite Sample for how the writing may look after you are done.

Application (17 minutes)

Practice

Have students log in to TenMarks Writing and go to the Bursts prompts menu. Have them go to the Bursts Topic tab and choose the same prompt, such as "Are you a morning person or a night person?" Set a timer and have students write for five minutes. Circulate and encourage students to follow the norms of freewriting.

Note: If you do not have enough computers, have students write in a freewriting notebook.

Discuss (Partners)

Have students read their freewriting aloud to a partner. Have the partner share a compliment and then have them switch roles.

Note: At first, students may be uncomfortable sharing writing that has mistakes. It is important to build their comfort soliciting peer feedback on their writing projects at all stages.

Practice

Have students choose another prompt, such as "What superpower would you most like to have? Why?" Have them again write for five minutes and then share with a partner. Circulate and conference.

If Students	Then
Stop writing or hesitate	Remind them to keep going and that, if they can't think of anything, they can write a word from the prompt several times and try to free associate to help themselves get started again.
Focus on spelling or grammar, asking how to spell words or trying to fix them	Remind them that spelling and grammar don't matter. They should keep going.
Delete or backspace a lot	Suggest that they pretend that the Delete or Backspace buttons don't exist, or give students a piece of tape to put on their Delete and Backspace keys as a physical reminder not to use that key.
Finish early	Tell them there's no such thing as finishing early with freewriting; the idea is to write as many ideas as possible. Give them a sentence starter based on the prompt.

Closure (4 minutes)

Discuss (Group)

Ask the class to popcorn their ideas about how it felt to freewrite:

- What did you like about it?
- What was tricky?
- When might you want to use freewriting?

Encourage the observation that freewriting can get your thoughts flowing if you're stuck and don't know what to write. Let them know they can freewrite anytime they like using Bursts or in a notebook.

Freewrite Anchor Chart

DOs	DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Write for at least five minutes. Set a timer or use a clock to keep track.● Just start! Write as much as you can, as fast as you can.● KEEP GOING! If you get stuck, use a word from the prompt to get started again.● Let your thoughts flow. Write whatever comes into your head, even if it is off topic.● At the end, write one last sentence that brings your thoughts back to the topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Don't stop writing!● Don't try to fix spelling or grammar.● Don't judge your ideas or worry whether they are "good."● Don't delete or cross out.

Prompt: *Do you like breakfast or dinner better? Explain.*

I like dinner, because I don't have a lot of time to eat in the morning. It is hard to get up and make fod that without now I lost my train of thought because I wanted to fix my spelling mistake. But I'm supposed to keep going. So I will talk about dinner angain. That - ah, this is hard. Not supposed to delete. I like dinner because more of the food I really like to eat is dinner food. Breakfast food is more limited, like cereal or toast or oatmeal I guess that's a kn kind of cereal. Too. Dinner. Dinner. Dinner. Dinner. Dinner is good because there is italian food or chinese food or sushi or lots of different things to eat. And I like to cookf or people and it is hard to have people over for breakfast. It is better to eat dinner with friends than sit around eating bowls of cereal toge4ther. At least that's what I think. And now I'm stuck again. Dinner. Dinner is my favoirate meal of the day. I also don't really love lunch, except at work because by lunchtime I'm pretty hungry and want to eat. When I get home, then I get to relax and eat and cook, well, really cook, then eat. It is fun to make a meal together with my family and then sometimes we sit around the table and have it or we might eat in the living room. DINNER IS THE MEAL I LIKE BEST IN THE DAY.