

READING WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

Power Writing for Science Video Transcript

Amy Miles:

For your power write, the topic: I know so much about rocks.

We started with a power write just to get the juices flowing.

You are going to have two minutes.

Just to get their brains warmed up.

I want you guys to think about all of the language frames you've been using. I want you to think about what you've been working on in your writing strategies notebook. Remember, just continuously writing. Even if it means you have to repeat yourself. Those ideas are going to start flowing eventually. Ready, and begin. Just write as much as you can.

A power write is wonderful because it could be used to address content that we had covered the day before. Today it was used to pull up any background knowledge that they might have about rocks because this is the first time we've covered this.

Good job.

They get to practice writing skills and they get to think about, "Well, I may not know so much right now, but I wonder what we're going to learn about."

Pencils down. Okay, count your words. Raise your hand if you got somewhere between zero and 15 words.

For the power writes, we just want that pencil moving because sometimes you'll get a student that stops and anxiety with the writing comes up. And so the word count motivates them to write as much as they can. They don't want to stop.

Turn to the person next to you. And remember, you're going to share word for word exactly what you've written. Remember what we do when we share. I love that Julia has already turned her body. Okay, make sure you're... eye contact. A

smile never hurt anybody, okay? Show them that you're an active and engaged listener.

Student:

I know so much about rocks because our teachers taught it to us. They're formed differently and they are different.

Student:

I already know that rocks are solid. I already know that they are made up of minerals. Some rocks can be made by volcanoes or dirt and they can be made in different things. When I think about rocks, I think about...

Miles:

Okay, ladies and gentleman, through the sharing you might have gotten some more ideas. You might now have some things you didn't think about before. You're going to pick up right where you left off. Remember to write the entire time. Ready, begin.

When we do our pair share in the middle of our power writes, they get to pull information from their partner's background knowledge, which may have just then sparked something else that they didn't even think about to begin with. And so it's this wonderful collaboration that gets them pumped up and excited, and it's just a wonderful way for them to build themselves as writers. It creates confident writers.

Mid-sentence, go ahead and stop, count your words. Raise your hand if you increased your number the second time around. Wow, impressive. Now take a moment, share with your partner what you wrote. Remember, just the second portion.

Student:

Some rocks can be identified by streak, luster, and hardness. There are so many ways you can identify a rock or a mineral.

Student:

Even the rocks have to have five characteristics to be a rock, and...

Student:

Volcanoes and rocks, and under the oceans, lakes, and islands.

Student:

But islands, we aren't talking about islands. Rocks are made up from two minerals. Rocks are, like, mostly around us. So, yeah, that's all I had.

Student:

So, like, we're kind of talking about how rocks relate to minerals. But are all rocks minerals?

Miles:

The more we incorporate all of this writing and oral conversation, it's just one more strategy that helps them to understand what they're doing in that class.

We are going to move on to -- which you guys have been waiting for -- we are going to create our RAFTS. Please open up your notebooks.

We try to incorporate lots of different closing activities that lets us know what they got from the lesson, but kind of gives them that chance to sum it up themselves, because that's really what it does, too. It sums the lesson up for them, as well.

Hang on to your articles. You might want to keep them in front of you to reference for your RAFT role. You get to choose which type of rock you would like to be. Who is our audience? A scientist. Letter format. Topic is, "What makes me unique." You're writing to the scientist and you're telling that scientist what makes you unique.

Student:

Can I be a granite rock?

Miles:

What type of rock would that be? Can you look in your article? See if it mentions. That seems like it's a type of example. What would it be an example of? Go back in and...

Student:

Igneous rock.

Miles:

Where did you find that?

Student:

Right here.

Miles:

And what does it say? Well, how are igneous connected with granite? Right here, we have "Igneous rocks are volcanic and formed from molten material. They

include not only..." So yes, they include lava spewed, but that's not it, not only. Also, rocks like granite.

It's an activity that really can give the teacher an idea who understood what that lesson was about.

Have you decided on which type of rock you're going to be?

Student:

No.

Miles:

What are the three? Igneous... let's say that one.

Student:

Igneous rocks.

Miles:

There we go.

Student:

Sedimentary rocks. Metamorphic rocks.

Miles:

Which one of those do you think you would like to be?

Student:

Metamorphic rocks.

Miles:

And why would you choose metamorphic? What makes that one unique or special to you?

Student:

Because... It has been transferred by pressure, heat...

Miles:

It's not just any sedimentary or igneous, it has been transformed. You want to use metamorphic?

Student:

Yeah.

Miles:

Okay.

The idea of knowing the difference between the rocks, I think, was the key for the role. So when they choose a rock, explaining why they're unique and important, this will tell us, did they truly understand what a rock was, how it was formed, and why they're important?

Student:

I am a rock, that is your first hint. I used to be an igneous rock. Did you guess it yet? Okay, I'm a metamorphic rock. Remember when you discovered me? Well, I wanted to write you to share a few...

Miles:

And what are you thinking? What else are you going to put?

Student:

Like, "A few new facts about me that you didn't know when you discovered me."

Miles:

And what facts?

Student:

Like, maybe, when I was an igneous rock, I changed because I was under pressure or heat, and then I transformed to a metamorphic rock.

Miles:

Love it. I love it, keep going, you're doing a great job.