

Teach ELLs to Deconstruct Writing Prompts

Article # 9
Visible Literacy Series



This goal of this infographic is to share a process to help ELLs understand the writing assignment and map out their initial ideas.

Research Suggests



For students to produce work and demonstrate skills, teachers must communicate their ideas and expectations in a way that is comprehensible to ELs .
(Krashen, 1981)

If ELLs don't comprehend the writing prompt, they won't produce writing that aligns with the assignment.

The Process

1

Read Sentence by Sentence

Establish a common understanding of the writing prompt by reading aloud and guiding students to comprehend one sentence at a time.



2

Identify the Thinking Verbs

Locate and point out the “thinking verbs” from the writing prompt.



3

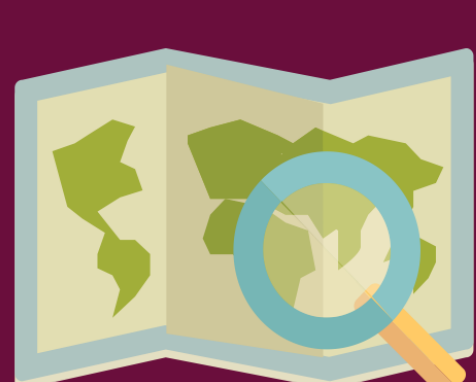
Visualize the Thinking Verbs with Mind Maps

Share a diagram of the identified verbs with the ELs.



4

Mind-Map Ideas



Invite the ELs to use the diagram to generate ideas.

5

Collaborate



ELs present their mind maps in small groups. Presenting ideas orally prepares them to write (Bedi, 2016).

Takeways

1. Writing prompts are loaded with complex academic language.
2. Writing can be scaffolded to support ELs' thinking and communication of ideas.
3. Use diagrams and mind mapping to support ELs generation of ideas.



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Bedi, I. (2016). *Scaffolding Writing Across the Curriculum: An EAL Approach*. Penarth, UK: Dragonfly EAL.

Krashen, S. D. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.