



14 Power Strategies to Boost Reading & Writing Achievement on Standardized Tests

STRATEGIES TO EMBED READING & WRITING INSTRUCTION INTO YOUR CURRICULUM

Online Workshop Overview

In this era of high-stakes testing, it's never been more important for students to enter into standardized assessments with essential skills and personal confidence. Throughout this online workshop, teachers will learn explicit literacy strategies students need in order to be successful on state and national assessments. (Specific references will be made to the new SAT, ACT, and AP exams, Indiana assessment, PARCC, & Smarter Balanced assessments.)



Three reasons to enroll

1. High-stakes testing affects everyone.

How students perform on standardized reading and writing tests has far-reaching implications for students, teachers, and schools. Insights into the requirements for test success are needed now more than ever before.

2. Success on standardized tests is only part of the goal.

With mastery of academic standards as the ultimate goal, targeted and intentional preparation for the state assessment helps students improve as readers and writers for the test and beyond.

3. Success on the test requires explicit instruction.

Kristina Smekens will share strategies to embed rigorous reading and writing instruction into your yearlong curriculum so that students are equipped with the most essential literacy skills.

"The content was incredibly helpful! Many strategies were simple and easy but precise with a clear target in mind. I will be a better educator because of this training!"

Meagan Joyner •
Teacher at Henderson
County High School,
Henderson, KY

"The workshop was amazing! Kristina provides no-prep activities to take into the classroom and start providing engaging reading/writing instruction immediately."

Kathy Ernst • Teacher
at Peotone Elementary
School, Peotone, IL

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Find more information for each strategy on the next page.

STRATEGIES:

- 1) Juggle multiple texts
- 2) Recognize questions in a variety of formats
- 3) Decode vocabulary within questions & prompts
- 4) Identify the best answers
- 5) Make inferences about complex texts
- 6) Discern evidence versus details
- 7) Explain evidence thoroughly
- 8) Determine main idea & theme
- 9) Recognize new information within text features
- 10) Evaluate author or character perspective
- 11) Draw comparisons across multiple texts
- 12) Respond to texts in argumentative and narrative essays
- 13) Respond to a research-writing task
- 14) Respond to a literary-analysis task & strategy

Total time to complete:

10-11 hours; (allotted time to complete online workshop: 60 days)

Instructor:

Kristina Smekens
President & Lead Consultant
for Smekens Education Solutions, Inc.

When you complete the online workshop, you'll be able to:

- ▶ Identify how today's assessments are different from previous tests.
- ▶ Execute lessons to target Kristina's 14 Power Strategies for succeeding on standardized assessments.
- ▶ Create a sequence of text-dependent questions that keep students rooted in the text and follow the same progression standardized assessments utilize.
- ▶ Tweak your writing-about-reading tasks to mirror the constructed responses on standardized assessments.
- ▶ Hone students' habits for citing specific and relevant evidence.
- ▶ Prioritize the literacy skills that require explicit instruction.

Top questions teachers ask about preparing for standardized assessments

- ▶ What's different about the testing expectations under the new standards than those assessments administered previously?
- ▶ How can I intentionally prepare students for the state assessment without simply "teaching to the test"?
- ▶ How should I prioritize my yearlong planning so that students are adequately prepared for the state assessment?
- ▶ Beyond the English/language arts curriculum, what can be done in the content areas to cultivate critical reading and writing skills?
- ▶ How can I differentiate my instruction to help struggling readers pass the test?
- ▶ For my high-ability students, what unique instruction do they need in order to exceed expectations on state assessments?

Kristina provides the answers to these questions and many more!

14 POWER Strategies

to Boost Reading & Writing Achievement on Standardized Tests

Strategies #1-14

PREPARE FOR A VARIETY OF PASSAGES

- 1 Read multiple texts in one sitting, juggling different author ideas.

ANTICIPATE THE TASKS

- 2 Expect a variety of text-dependent questions that are presented in multiple formats.
- 3 Be familiar with academic vocabulary in order to accurately decode questions and prompts.
- 4 Attack questions with test-taking tips to identify the *best* answers.

ROOT THINKING IN TEXTUAL EVIDENCE

- 5 Distinguish between what counts as evidence versus what are just details from the passage.
- 6 Follow a process for making inferences and answering questions, even when the text is complex.
- 7 Include explanations that demonstrate how evidence supports an inference.

THINK STRATEGICALLY TO INFER AUTHOR IDEAS

- 8 Determine the main idea/theme of a passage and support it with textual evidence.
- 9 Read charts, graphs, and text features to gain information beyond what is stated in the passage.
- 10 Evaluate how an author feels about a topic by determining his viewpoint.
- 11 Draw comparisons across literature and informational texts.

SYNTHESIZE IDEAS WITHIN EXTENDED RESPONSES

- 12 Generate an informative or argumentative response after analyzing the literary qualities of a text.
- 13 Generate an on-demand research writing based on information gleaned from multiple texts.
- 14 Generate a narrative response that maintains the plot details from the original passage.

"I love that these tools don't just teach to the test—they are just good practice, but they have big pay-offs." **Melissa Warner** • Teacher at Center Grove High School, Greenwood, IN

"Your strategies will help me teach smarter, not harder." **Nancy Bontreger** • Teacher at Concord West Side Elementary School, Elkhart, IN

"I'll be able to pump up our K-4 curriculum to enhance inferring."

Kristen Hankins • Instructional Coach at Fielser Elementary School, Merrillville, IN

Continuing Education Credit

With prior approval from the registrant's school district, participants may receive credit for 10 hours of professional development for this webAcademy online workshop. Attendees who choose the "Verified View" viewing option may download a completion certificate after finishing the online workshop.

Graduate Credit

Thanks to a partnership with the Midwest Teachers Institute, registrants may elect to pursue three university-level graduate credits after completing this online workshop. These are non-degree credits designed for professional certification renewals and salary step increases. (Check with your district or employers to determine their policies for pay increases.) The cost of graduate credit is \$375 and is separate from the cost of each online workshop.

ABOUT THE PRESENTER

Kristina Smekens

Kristina Smekens is a full-time literacy consultant who has built a reputation for using enthusiasm, humor, and common sense to equip K-12 educators with practical, demystifying strategies for teaching reading and writing.

As president and lead consultant for Smekens Education, Kristina is constantly developing new strategies for helping teachers to meet the demands of today's College and Career-Ready Standards. She and her two full-time associates share those strategies with teachers across the United States and beyond through on-site school trainings, regional seminars, and an always-growing pool of print, digital, and video resources.

A PRESENTER

Kristina has a gift for making the complex seem simple—for showing teachers how to meet the needs of readers and writers by bridging the gap between education research and practical, classroom-tested strategies that work. When she presents at state and national conferences, teachers flock to her sessions because they know Kristina will share strategies they can use in their own classrooms the very next day.

But beyond providing teachers with practical classroom techniques, Kristina is also a master at giving educators an injection of motivation and encouragement to help them return to their classrooms with the confidence and excitement they need to execute change. In fact, more than 17,000 educators rely on a monthly “shot in the arm” from Kristina as subscribers to her monthly email newsletter, “Big Ideas.”

AN AUTHOR

Well known for offering innovative ideas, Kristina has created more than 50 “Smekens Originals,” a compilation of books, guides, and classroom tools designed to help teachers implement best-practice literacy strategies. Among the most popular of these resources are her best-selling books, *Launching the Writer's Workshop: Grades K-2* and *Grades 3-12*. Other popular publications include *The Trait Mate: 6-Traits Starter Lessons*, *Connecting Comprehension & Composition*, *Sing & Comprehend*, *Close Reading Questions for Literature*, *Close Reading Questions for Informational Text*, *Trait Trackers*, and *Serving Up Synthesis*. Additionally, Kristina is the author of *Trait-Based Writing: Lessons and Activities* (Scholastic, 2009).



A CRAFTER

Beyond books and physical teacher tools, Kristina has also created a library of more than 50 on-demand professional learning videos that are utilized by teachers around the world. With topics ranging from “Building Kid-Friendly Writing Rubrics” to “Achieving a Close Reading,” each of Kristina’s “webPD” videos uses a seminar-style format to capture her energy and enthusiasm while conveying her teacher-friendly ideas.

BACKGROUND

Kristina earned her BA in English and education at Michigan State University. Prior to her full-time consulting career, she was an accomplished high school English and journalism teacher in Michigan and Indiana. A leader in state and national scholastic journalism endeavors, Kristina authored a journalism textbook and teachers’ guide for Walsworth Publishing in 2002.

Over the past 12 years, she has been blessed to work and learn with hundreds of schools and thousands of teachers throughout the Midwest. She was awarded the Excellence in Reading Award by the Indiana State Reading Association in 2013 for her contributions to literacy in Indiana.

Kristina lives in Warren, Indiana with her husband and business partner Brady, their three teenage children, and a rambunctious family dog named Buddy.

“Kristina just takes the guess work out of everything to make it ALL make sense!”

Nicki King • Teacher,
Union Furnace
Elementary, Logan, OH

“Kristina was fantastic! I learned new and exciting strategies to improve student writing.”

Jenae McKnight •
Instructional Coach, Lake
Ridge New Tech Schools,
Gary, IN

“I feel more prepared to dig deeper into skills that will help my students perform better on state testing. These skills will also help my students become better reading and writers.”

Megan Joseph • Teacher
at Warren Middle School,
Vincent, OH

Gretchen Burdan
• teacher at Lincoln
Elementary School, Cedar
Lake, IN

“After 33 years of teaching, I still am drawn back into Kristina’s workshops because they are research-based, standards-focused, and very interactive.”

Katie Cadle • Teacher,
Paoli Community Schools,
Paoli, IN

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No completion certificates are awarded, but you have the flexibility to jump ahead in the video.



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TERMS OF USE

We encourage enrolled participants to take advantage of all the features webAcademy has to offer. In doing so, participants agree to the following terms of use:

- 1 Login information and video access may NOT be shared with any individual who is not enrolled in the online workshop.
- 2 Unauthorized sharing of login access will result in a non-refundable cancellation of any and all active online workshops.
- 3 Subscribers are not permitted to reprint, republish, repost or otherwise distribute any content or images from an online workshop.

MUST AGREE & SIGN

By checking & signing, you agree with the **Terms of Use**.

Group Registration Process

To register a group of teachers, complete the form on this page and fax it with a purchase order to webAcademy at 888-376-0489. After a purchase order is received, a professional development specialist will email each registrant with instructions for accessing the online workshop.