



# Strategies to Teach Informative Writing

*Cultivating strong K-12 writers*

THE NEXT BEST THING TO ATTENDING A LIVE SMEKENS WORKSHOP!

## Online Workshop Overview

Writers need to move beyond restating collected facts and details. They have to synthesize ideas in order to demonstrate a deep understanding of a topic or text within informative writing. This online workshop will reveal the essential instruction necessary to produce this type of informative writing.



## Workshop Topics

- Dissect the informative writing standard for the unique skills to be taught at each level.
- Recognize the various genres that fall under the informative umbrella and how they can be integrated into a variety of content-area and ELA writing experiences throughout the year.
- Receive dozens of mini-lesson ideas that target the essential skills in strong informative writing.
- Learn which conventions are most relevant in informative writing.
- Understand how to mirror the simulated research-writing tasks students face on standardized assessments.

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

- ▶ Incorporate frequent research writing experiences into your curriculum.
- ▶ Increase the speed at which students glean information from sources.
- ▶ Navigate the internet more efficiently and support students to do the same.
- ▶ Move students beyond predictable introductions and summary conclusions.
- ▶ Execute a customized calendar of lessons to teach informative writing.

"Anyone who has students write research papers should (enroll in) this workshop. Teaching writing is not just the job of the English teacher."

**Heidi Polizotto** • teacher at Hobart High School, Hobart, IN

## WORKSHOP OUTLINE

### Yearlong Vision

- Teach three major modes of writing
- Compare traditional units to mini-units

### Unit Considerations

- Redefine end products
- Scaffold frequent experiences
- Focus on the "trump" traits

### Unit Foundations

- Cultivate a questioning spirit
- Recognize sources of information
- Discern relevant sources

### Information Gathering

- Track information and sources
- Identify and note important information
- Organize the related information

### Elaboration & Cohesion

- Develop ideas with specifics & expert quotes
- Connect ideas with transitions
- Craft an introduction and conclusion

### Total time to complete:

*5-6 hours; (allotted time to complete the online workshop: 30 days)*

### Instructor:

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

# Rigorous teaching for Standards-Based LITERACY CLASSROOMS

## Who would benefit from this online workshop?

- K-12 English / Language Arts Teachers
- Literacy Coaches / Coordinators
- Grades 6-12 Social Studies & Science Teachers
- Title I Teachers / Directors
- ELL Teachers
- K-12 Gifted & Talented Teachers
- K-12 Principals & Assistant Principals

## Direct Ties to Standards

The strategies shared during this online workshop mirror the K-12 grade-level expectations outlined within the reading and writing

portions of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). For Indiana

teachers, direct correlation will also be illustrated from Indiana's College & Career-Ready Standards.

Additionally, the after-reading writing activities shared during this online workshop are in line with the Indiana Reading Framework requirements for the 90-minute reading block.



## Continuing Education Credit

With prior approval from the registrant's school district, participants may receive credit for 5 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 workshop and the Strategies to Teach Argumentative Writing 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.

## Top reasons to watch & learn from this online workshop

### 1. Just assigning students to do more writing won't improve their writing.

*The secret to writing success is pairing frequent writing opportunities with explicit writing instruction. Students need their teachers to break down the abstract qualities of good writing. More than telling students what to do, our writing curriculum must include a heavy dose of how to do it.*

### 2. Argumentative and informative writing are essential skills for today's students.

*Conveying information clearly and articulating a strong argument are among the more challenging writing skills reflected in today's standards. Kristina will provide dozens of lesson ideas to help teachers address these modes of writing with confidence.*

### 3. Students need to recognize different writing purposes.

*Writing to inform is very different than writing to persuade or share feelings. Students must learn the unique characteristics of the different modes of writing in order to fully accomplish writing tasks.*

## Top questions teachers ask about teaching writing units

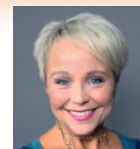
- ▶ How many different types of writing should I plan to teach in a year?
- ▶ There are so many writing skills I *could* teach; which ones are most important?
- ▶ How do the 6 Traits fit into the different writing units?
- ▶ Is argumentative writing really all that different from persuasive writing?
- ▶ What is a "short research project" as stated in the writing standards?
- ▶ How do you teach students to stop plagiarizing in informative writing and omit the words *I* and *you* in argumentative writing?
- ▶ How can my writing instruction prepare students for the skills they need when writing about their reading on standardized assessments?
- ▶ How can I incorporate informative and argumentative writing into my subject-area learning?
- ▶ How do you wean students off dependence on the teacher to hand-hold them through the writing process/unit?

## Interested in Smekens on-site training?

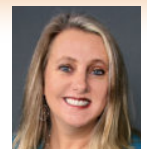
Smekens Education specializes in providing customized, on-site professional development in the areas of reading and writing. Our training team is best known for showing teachers how to apply research-based literacy strategies in ways that are practical and effective. For details on how this online workshop, or others, can be customized to fit your exact needs and presented at your school or district, call toll free **(888) 376-0448** today!



Kristina Smekens



Courtney Gordon



Kristi McCullough

"I leave inspired every time. Everyone should be Smekened!" **Erica Shadley** - Teacher at Ada Elementary School, Ada, OH

## 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*

“I love how you made it abundantly clear the why and how to hone in with intentionality on the issues my kids are having rather than giving skimpy instruction on a plethora of topics just to say ‘we covered that.’ Now, I feel like I can create a road map that will make sense because it will be specifically tailored to their needs.”

**Priscilla Peterson** •  
*Teacher, Westfield Middle*  
*School Westfield, IN*

“I love the way Kristina presents the information with so much enthusiasm. I love how she builds on what she’s taught before.”

**Kristen Smith** •  
*Teacher, Gilmer County*  
*High School, Glenville, WV*

“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*

# Strategies to Teach Informative Writing

## TWO WAYS TO ENROLL:

**1. Online - with a credit card** *(Perfect for individuals!)*

**Visit:** access.SmekensEducation.com

**2. FAX THIS FORM - with a school purchase order to 888-376-0489**

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

School address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

School phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**WEBCADEMY WORKSHOP FEE:** Online workshop sharing not allowed.

One person

**\$140**

Team of 3+

**\$126**  
per person

**More than 10?**

Call us at (888) 376-0448  
for custom pricing.

**PAYMENT:**

Purchase Order attached (# \_\_\_\_\_ )

**TOTAL PURCHASE AMOUNT:**

TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTRANTS: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE YOU WOULD LIKE TO START? \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

FLEXIBLE VIEW

VERIFIED VIEW

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHOOSE A VIEWING OPTION



### Flexible View

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



### Verified View

A completion certificate is available for download at the end of the online workshop video, but you do not have the flexibility to jump ahead.

## 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.