



# Strategies to Teach Informative Writing

*Cultivating strong K-12 writers*

SIMPLE & EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACHIEVEMENT IN WRITING

## 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 benefits?

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

## Direct Ties to Standards

The strategies shared during this webAcademy online workshop target the reading and writing standards outlined within the College & Career-Ready Standards.



## What others say about Kristina's workshops

*"I love the energy and the examples of students in the classroom were realistic and relatable which made the material seem plausible in my own classroom."*

**Brittany Sylvia**, teacher at Anderson High School, Anderson, IN

*"I will be sharing several takeaways with not only the reading teachers—but the science and social studies teachers. Kristina was so entertaining. She spoke to all levels of learning. Her knowledge of the material and the standards was spot on. I will be recommending her workshops to fellow educators."* **Julie Wandrie**, teacher at Saint Paul Lutheran School, Westlake, OH

## 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?
- ▶ What read alouds/mentor texts would enhance my writing mini-lessons?

**Kristina provides the answers to these questions and many more!**

## 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" option may download a completion certificate after completing the online workshop. For possible Illinois-approved credit, please contact our office, [support@smekenseducation.com](mailto:support@smekenseducation.com) or call (888) 376-0448.

## Graduate-Level Units

Thanks to a partnership with the University of the Pacific, educators who complete a webAcademy workshop are eligible to pursue 1, 2, or 3 nationally-accredited graduate-level semester units. To earn graduate-level units, participants must select the "Verified View" enrollment option. The cost of graduate-level units (\$62 per unit) is separate from the cost of the online workshop.

Graduate-level units offered through the University of the Pacific are non-degree units which are designed for professional certification renewals and salary step increases. (The units are post-baccalaureate professional development semester units of non-degree graduate level and are not applicable to a degree at University of the Pacific.) To learn more, contact our office—[support@smekenseducation.com](mailto:support@smekenseducation.com) or call (888) 376-0448.



## 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 associates share those strategies with teachers across the United States and beyond through on-site professional development, 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 the motivation and encouragement they need to return to their classrooms with confidence and excitement to execute change. To stay connected, Kristina sends out a weekly newsletter, "Big Ideas." Thousands of teachers watch their email each Tuesday for it to arrive.

### 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 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 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

*"Oh. My. Goodness. Kristina is an amazing and entertaining presenter! Her energy is SO motivating and inspirational! Loved it ALL!"*

**Staci Rooze**, teacher at Wea Ridge Middle School, Lafayette, IN

*"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

*"Kristina covered every topic I needed to bring back with me. I will be sharing several takeaways with not only the reading teachers—but the science and social studies teachers. She spoke to all levels of learning. Her knowledge of the material and the standards was spot on."*

**Julie Wandrie**, teacher at Saint Paul Lutheran School, Westlake, OH

*"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

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

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

District/Diocese: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

One person **\$140**

Team of 3+ **\$126** per person

**More than 15?**  
Call us at (888) 376-0448 for custom pricing.

**PAYMENT:**

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

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

**TOTAL PURCHASE AMOUNT:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**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.

**WHO'S VIEWING THIS WORKSHOP?** To register more than 5, please submit this form with an Excel file that contains a list of the registrants' names and email addresses to [webacademy@smekenseducation.com](mailto:webacademy@smekenseducation.com).

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**TO ENROLL:**

FAX THIS FORM – with a school purchase order to **888-376-0489**  
or EMAIL THIS FORM – with a school purchase order to [webacademy@smekenseducation.com](mailto:webacademy@smekenseducation.com)

## 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.

## Satisfaction Guarantee

Every online workshop comes with a 100% money-back guarantee. If you aren't satisfied, contact Brady Smekens within the first 10 days of your purchase.

## Secret Site Digital Resources

Registrants receive lifetime access to a password-protected web page that contains a treasure trove of lessons, videos, and other resources for implementation.

