

Author Craft Conversation

I used generative artificial intelligence (AI) to be a thought partner to and give me feedback on an article I wrote: “RAFTing the Writing Rapids”

<https://openingpaths.org/blog/2014/04/rafting-the-writing-rapids/>

The prompt created below is intended to use generative AI as a thought partner for feedback regarding writing pieces. I shaped it so that generative AI will always restate my question into potentially a better form. I get to choose between my original question and the one it proposed. Guidelines are given about the “shape” of the feedback: “Be specific, constructive, and kind.” It must give a rationale for any suggestions through the lens of a reader so that I am mindful of my audience. When all is done, it will prompt for the next question by the user.

Below are three rounds of conversation. It’s important to note that any suggestions it makes should not be viewed as obligatory to follow. It gave many good suggestions that I will consider in future updates of the article. I plan on taking in its “ideas” and using them through my own word choice and style.

Here is the original link to the author craft conversation I had with ChatGPT:

<https://chatgpt.com/share/241a9aa0-d374-4a1d-869c-a153f34d7aa5>

Let’s begin...

Go to [1st Conversation Round](#)

Go to [2nd Conversation Round](#)

Go to [3rd Conversation Round](#)

Go to [Images Inspire Writing](#)

My Entry

I will share something that I wrote. Read it and list the main ideas. Include a short explanation of each. Once you are done, prompt me to ask you author's craft questions about the draft. For each question I ask you to suggest a revised version of the question. Ask me which question do I want to use. Once I choose, answer the question with the purpose of suggesting ideas to improve the draft. Be specific, constructive, and kind in your feedback. Include a rationale for how the suggestion will best help a reader or audience. Then prompt me for my next question.

Author Craft Conversation curated by John McCarthy

ChatGPT

Sure, go ahead and share your writing. I'll read it and list the main ideas with short explanations for each.

My Entry

RAFTing the Writing Rapids by John McCarthy How do you get students engaged into writing? Sometimes this question feels like an exercise in futility, used as for abstract debate for the sake of venting frustration. But there are times when the answer to this question is simple: Make the writing interesting and meaningful. New Paths Some people like to write. Lots of people like to tackle an issue or topic of personal interest. While this concept is simple to focus on, the implementation can feel too complex and frustrating. One solution—I would emphasize this is just one—is using RAFTs as a writing strategy. It creates highly engaging topics, and provides a structure that students can easily understand and teachers can coach writing. RAFTs are also great for differentiating based on diverse skill levels. RAFTs stands for Role, Audience, Format, Topic + strong verb. Here's the meaning of each part: Role: Juliet Provides a perspective or point of view for the writer. Students use the role as way to connect directly with the content focus. Audience: Romeo Gives focus to who the writer is communicating. Being mindful of the audience, teachers can coach students on perspectives to explore that the target audience may be receptive. This leads students to think about word choice and what details will resonate with their audience. Format: Letter responding to marriage proposal Provides the medium through which the writer will communicate. The product, when assigned, is usually how the teacher needs to evaluate the work. Sometimes the format is left blank to allow the students to chose the product that appeals to them, such as a podcast, video, story, poem, or some other medium. So long as the academic criteria is clear, the format can be open-ended. Topic + strong verb: Wedding or Eloping, which could best bring peace to our families? Communicates to the writer the focus of the RAFT assignment. The topic gives the context for the writing based on the academic outcomes. It creates the scenario or approach towards a real world issue that the students will communicate about. Including a strong verb generates engagement by potentially creating a call to action. Unit Anticipatory Set As an opener for a traditional or Project Based Learning (PBL) unit, RAFTs engages students into the big idea and essential learnings to be explored. Crafting a topic that tightly aligns with the learning outcomes gives students context for learning, and opens opportunity for generating students' need to know more. Formative Assessment and Feedback RAFTs make for formative assessment in the middle of a unit. Students demonstrate their understanding that should go beyond the facts to

Author Craft Conversation curated by John McCarthy

analysis or evaluation of concepts. Used as an individual or small group activity, students process their understandings and connections for deeper knowledge. The results will better prepare them for the later work of the unit. Teachers can use the RAFTS products to give formative feedback to the students to firm up content knowledge, and to coach writing skills. At the end of a traditional or PBL unit, RAFTs are useful as the final assessment of content knowledge and answering the driving or essential question regarding the big focus of the entire unit. As the final product, students connect the work towards a real world outcome. The key is crafting a topic that pushes students to address an issue within a scenario or for a real world audience. We could revise the Romeo and Juliet example for this purpose: Focus: Understand how “Romeo and Juliet” by Shakespeare represents the challenges for effective communication and conflict resolution. Role: Concerned Citizen Audience: Facebook Monitors and School Community Stakeholders Format: Letter or recorded multimedia Topic: Advocate for improved support/awareness against cyber bullying Once students experience the RAFTs structure and become familiar with it, they embrace it. After awhile, let the students come up with their own Role, Audience, Format, and/or Topic. Or let them develop a combination of certain parts. This gives them voice as to how they want to construct the writing, which increases their buy-in and engagement. More RAFTs Examples RAFTs template: Word – PDF Stay tuned for part 2 of this 3 part series about RAFTs: Part II: Coaching Writing through RAFTs Part III: Differentiating Writing through RAFTs

ChatGPT

Main Ideas and Explanations

Engaging Students in Writing

The primary challenge is making writing interesting and meaningful to engage students effectively.

Introducing RAFTs as a Strategy

RAFTs (Role, Audience, Format, Topic + strong verb) is a strategy to create engaging and structured writing topics for students.

Explanation of RAFT Components

Role: The perspective from which the student writes.

Audience: The target reader of the student's writing.

Format: The medium or format in which the writing is presented.

Topic + Strong Verb: The focus of the writing assignment, often involving a call to action.

Author Craft Conversation curated by John McCarthy

Application in Unit Anticipatory Set

RAFTs can introduce the big ideas and essential learnings of a unit, providing context and generating student interest.

Formative Assessment and Feedback

RAFTs are useful for formative assessments during a unit, helping students process and deepen their understanding while allowing teachers to give feedback.

Summative Assessment and Real-World Connection

At the end of a unit, RAFTs can serve as a final assessment, helping students connect their work to real-world outcomes.

Student Autonomy and Engagement

Once students are familiar with RAFTs, allowing them to create their own Role, Audience, Format, and/or Topic increases their engagement and ownership of the writing process.

Upcoming Parts in the RAFTs Series

The article is part of a series, with future parts focusing on coaching writing and differentiating writing through RAFTs.

Author Craft Questions Prompt

Please ask me any questions you have about the draft, and I'll suggest a revised version of each question for you to choose from. Once you select a question, I'll provide specific, constructive feedback with a rationale to help improve your draft. Feel free to start with your first question.

My Entry

How could the conclusion be revised or expanded to create a sense take action by the reader?

ChatGPT

Here is a revised version of your question:

Revised Question: How can the conclusion be revised or expanded to effectively motivate readers to take action and implement the RAFTs strategy in their teaching?

Which question would you like to use?

My Entry

Yours.

Author Craft Conversation curated by John McCarthy

ChatGPT

Great choice! Here's some specific, constructive feedback to help improve your conclusion:

Original Conclusion:

More RAFTs Examples RAFTs template: Word – PDF Stay tuned for part 2 of this 3 part series about RAFTs: Part II: Coaching Writing through RAFTs Part III: Differentiating Writing through RAFTs

Suggested Revised Conclusion:

To truly transform your students' writing experiences, it's time to put RAFTs into action. Begin by exploring the examples and templates provided: [Word Template] [PDF Template]. These resources will guide you in crafting assignments that are both engaging and meaningful.

As you experiment with RAFTs, pay attention to the increased student engagement and the quality of their work. Share your successes and challenges with fellow educators to build a supportive community focused on improving student outcomes through innovative writing strategies.

Looking ahead, don't miss the next parts of this series. Part II will delve into coaching writing through RAFTs, providing practical tips and techniques. Part III will focus on differentiating writing to meet diverse student needs. Together, these articles will equip you with the tools to make writing a dynamic and integral part of your curriculum.

Take the first step today and see the positive impact RAFTs can have in your classroom. Let's embark on this journey to foster a love for writing and critical thinking in every student.

Rationale:

Call to Action: The revised conclusion encourages readers to take immediate steps by using provided resources, fostering a proactive approach.

Engagement: By highlighting the positive outcomes and inviting readers to share their experiences, it creates a sense of community and shared purpose.

Teasers for Upcoming Content: Mentioning the next parts of the series with specific focuses builds anticipation and provides a clear path for continued learning and implementation.

Please let me know your next question about the draft.

[Return to Top](#)

My Entry

Are there any sections of the draft where the word choice is too formal? If so, how can word choice be used that gives clear and concrete direction and/or suggestions?

ChatGPT

Here is a revised version of your question:

Revised Question: Are there sections of the draft where the word choice is too formal? If so, how can the word choice be adjusted to provide clear and concrete directions or suggestions?

Which question would you like to use?

My Entry

Yours.

ChatGPT

Excellent choice! Here are specific sections where the word choice might be too formal, along with suggestions for making the language clearer and more concrete:

Original Section:

"While this concept is simple to focus on, the implementation can feel too complex and frustrating. One solution—I would emphasize this is just one—is using RAFTs as a writing strategy. It creates highly engaging topics, and provides a structure that students can easily understand and teachers can coach writing. RAFTs are also great for differentiating based on diverse skill levels."

Suggested Revision:

"Although the idea is simple, putting it into practice can be tough and frustrating. One way to tackle this challenge is by using RAFTs as a writing strategy. RAFTs create engaging topics and give a clear structure that both students and teachers can follow. They also help to meet the needs of students at different skill levels."

Original Section:

"RAFTs make for formative assessment in the middle of a unit. Students demonstrate their understanding that should go beyond the facts to analysis or evaluation of concepts. Used as an individual or small group activity, students process their understandings and connections for deeper knowledge. The results will better prepare them for the later work of the unit."

Suggested Revision:

"RAFTs are great for checking students' understanding in the middle of a unit. They show not just what students know, but how they analyze and evaluate ideas. Whether done alone or in small groups, RAFTs help students think deeply and connect their learning. This prepares them well for future work in the unit."

Original Section:

"Once students experience the RAFTs structure and become familiar with it, they embrace it. After awhile, let the students come up with their own Role, Audience, Format, and/or Topic. Or let them develop a combination of certain parts. This gives them voice as to how they want to construct the writing, which increases their buy-in and engagement."

Suggested Revision:

"Once students get used to the RAFTs structure, they really start to enjoy it. After some practice, let them choose their own Role, Audience, Format, and/or Topic. Or let them mix and match parts. This gives them a say in their writing, which makes them more interested and engaged."

Rationale:

Simplified Language: Using simpler language makes the instructions more accessible and easier to follow.

Concrete Directions: Clear and direct suggestions help readers understand exactly what actions to take.

Engagement: Less formal language can be more engaging for readers, making them more likely to implement the strategies.

Please let me know your next question about the draft.

[Return to Top](#)

My Entry

Based on the first two paragraphs of the draft, how could the second paragraph become the lead, with little to no use of the original first paragraph?

ChatGPT

Here is a revised version of your question:

Revised Question: How can the second paragraph be restructured to become the lead, minimizing the use of the original first paragraph?

Which question would you like to use?

My Entry

Yours.

ChatGPT

Great choice! Here's how the second paragraph can be restructured to become the lead, with minimal use of the original first paragraph:

Original Second Paragraph:

"Some people like to write. Lots of people like to tackle an issue or topic of personal interest. While this concept is simple to focus on, the implementation can feel too complex and frustrating. One solution—I would emphasize this is just one—is using RAFTs as a writing strategy. It creates highly engaging topics, and provides a structure that students can easily understand and teachers can coach writing. RAFTs are also great for differentiating based on diverse skill levels."

Restructured Lead Paragraph:

"Lots of people enjoy tackling issues or topics that interest them, but implementing this in writing can feel complex and frustrating. One effective solution is using RAFTs as a writing strategy. RAFTs create engaging topics and provide a clear structure that students can easily follow and teachers can use to coach writing. Additionally, RAFTs are excellent for differentiating instruction based on diverse skill levels."

Rationale:

Engaging Opening: Starting with the idea that people enjoy tackling interesting topics grabs attention.

Direct Transition to Solution: Quickly introducing RAFTs as a solution maintains the reader's interest and provides a clear direction.

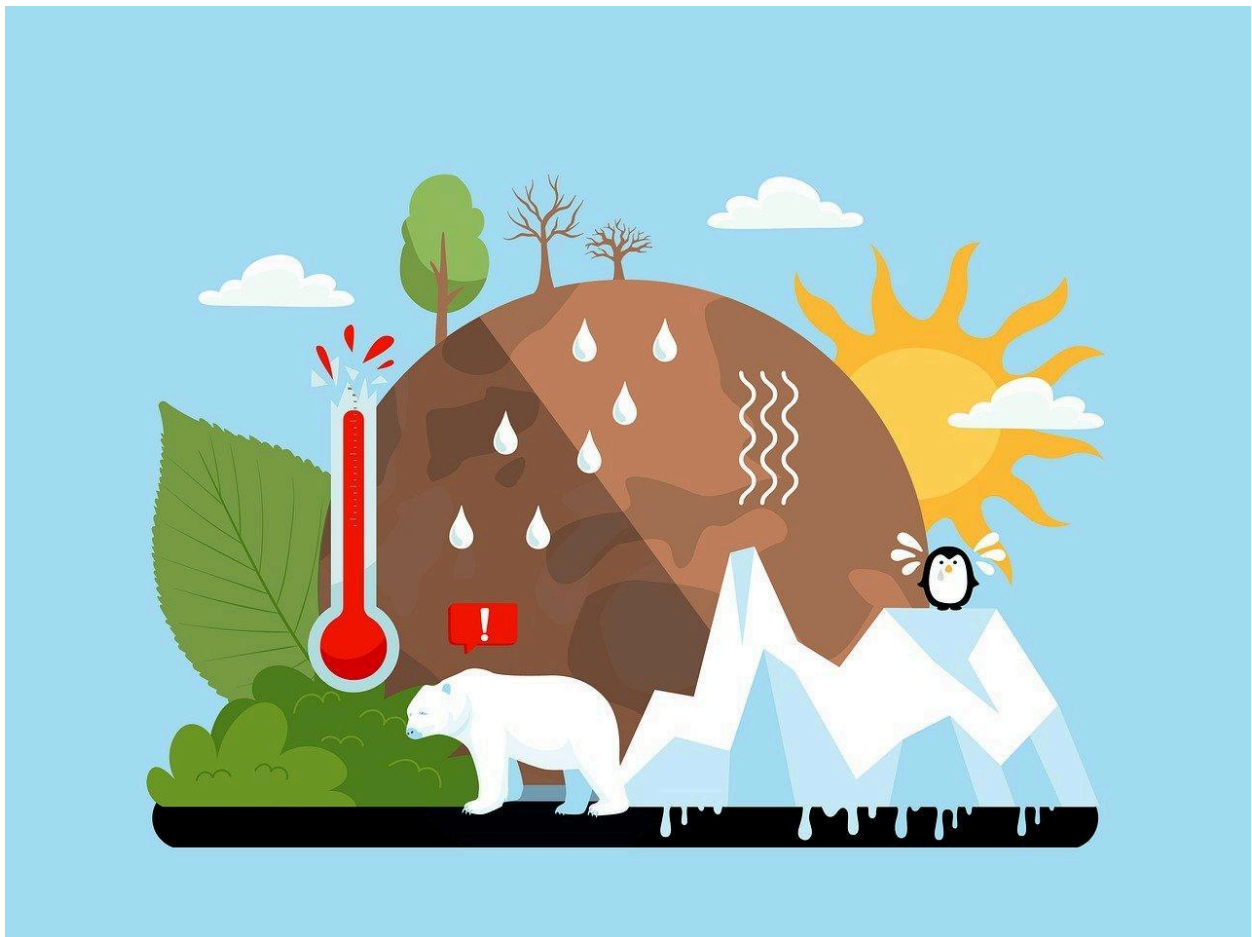
Clarity and Simplicity: The revised paragraph is straightforward and highlights the benefits of RAFTs without unnecessary complexity.

Would you like to continue with another question about the draft? If so, please ask your next question.

[Return to Top](#)

Images Used to Inspire Writing

What ideas and issues about Climate Change can you infer from this image?



Source: Pixabay (open licenced)

Keywords used: [climate change](#)

Choose a picture and explore peaceful protest.



"a detailed image of a protest in a city square"

 Designer

Powered by DALL-E 3

Source: Microsoft Copilot

“I followed the music into the woods. A voice sang in my head, ‘What took you so long?’”



Source: ChatGPT

Inspired by the creativity of [The Mysteries of Harris Burdick](#) by Chris Van Allsburg

[Return to Top](#)

Author Craft Conversation curated by John McCarthy