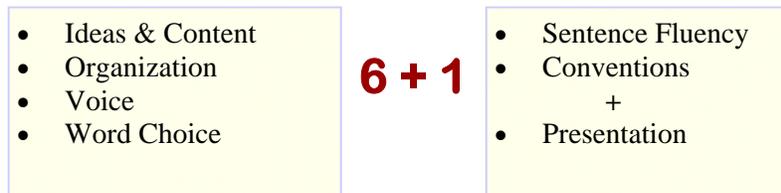


# Project CRISS Connections with 6 + 1 Trait™ Writing Instruction

By Marilyn Siess

Our local school district has adopted 6 + 1 Trait Writing Instruction, developed by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), for use throughout the entire district in all content areas with a particular emphasis in the language arts curriculum. All of our teachers are trained in Project CRISS, and most use CRISS extensively within their classrooms. Although CRISS is not a writing program, the principles and philosophy of CRISS and many of the specific strategies used in CRISS can be used to enhance the teaching of writing using 6 + 1 Trait Writing.

NWREL identifies the six plus one traits of writing as:



All of these traits have some connections with CRISS. Following is an overview of how CRISS and 6 + 1 Trait Writing Instruction can be used in combination to enhance the teaching of writing.

**1. Ideas and Content** focus on the heart of the message and the content of the piece, the main theme, together with the details that enrich and develop that theme.

Students are reminded to:

- Connect it to your own experience.
- Keep it small.
- Surprise your readers with what you know.
- Make your ideas crystal clear.

### ***CRISS Connections***

- Various CRISS strategies, including Think-Pair-Share, Mind Streaming, K-W-L, Concept Mapping, and Carousel Brainstorming, bring out background information and help students connect their writing to their own experience.
- Power Thinking and Power Notes assist students in limiting their topics.
- Power Notes with 4s and 5x give more specific details
- Work with Powers to change generic verbs into active verbs.

2. **Organization** is the internal structure, the thread of central meaning and pattern of ideas within a piece of writing.

Students are reminded to:

- Begin with a strong lead.
- Build to the most important moment or point.
- Avoid getting bogged down in trivial details.

### ***CRISS Connections***

- Categories of Leads (CRISS manual, p. 291)
  - ✓ Typical
  - ✓ Action
  - ✓ Dialogue
  - ✓ Setting the mood
  - ✓ Amazing facts
  - ✓ Spoken words
  - ✓ Presenting a question
- Spool Paper
- Power Notes
- Graphic Organizers
- Sequence Map
- Conclusion-Support or Problem-Solution
- Chapter 5: Active Strategies for Learning (CRISS manual)
- Chapter 6: Organizing for Learning: Two-Column Notes, Frames, and Story Plans (CRISS manual)

3. **Voice** is the heart and soul, the feeling and conviction of the individual writer.

Students are reminded to:

- Write with honesty.
- Think about your reader.
- Write with confidence.

### ***CRISS Connections***

- RAFT
- Conclusion-Support (Opinion-Proof)

4. **Word choice** is the use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader.

Students are reminded to:

- Use precise and colorful words.
- Develop a critical eye toward verbs.
- Keep vocabulary natural.
- Use specific words, carefully chosen to create a vivid picture.

### ***CRISS Connections***

- Sentence and Word Expansion
- Create a picture map and then write.
- Word Elaboration (or Capsule Vocabulary)
- Word Mapping
- Word Combining (or Sentence Synthesis)

5. **Sentence fluency** is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns.

Students are reminded to:

- Listen to the rhythm of the language.
- Cut the deadwood.
- Notice how sentences begin.
- Don't let sentences drift on too long.
- Read work aloud and listen to the rhythm and flow of the words.

### ***CRISS Connections***

- Sentence Expansion
- Edit by creating a Pattern Puzzle of the piece.
- Create a template or frame where not all sentences start the same way.

6. **Conventions** are the mechanical correctness of the piece.

Students are reminded to:

- Edit for spelling, punctuation, grammar/usage, paragraphing, and capitalization.
- Develop a proofreader's eye.
- Edit through Pattern Puzzles for sequencing and paragraphing.
- Edit paragraphs with Powers.

***CRISS Connections***

**Plus 1: Presentation** zeros in on the form and layout of the text.

Students are reminded to:

- Make the piece inviting to the reader.
- Use lots of white space.
- Ask if the reader will want to read this, because the presentation attracts the eye.
- Considerate Text (CRISS manual, Chapter 2: Identifying the Author's Craft and Design)

***CRISS Connections***

The principles and philosophy of Project CRISS, as well as specific strategies, are a good fit with 6 + 1 Trait Writing Instruction. A teacher who uses the two programs in conjunction with one another will help students become more able writers.

**Resource:** *Linking 6+1 Trait Writing to Classroom Instruction: A Handbook for Teachers*, developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. [www.nwrel.org/assessment](http://www.nwrel.org/assessment)

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