

Don't Ask Them to Write Cold

Prepare ideas and reasoning before independent writing.

5 min preparation | Science, Maths and Humanities

Before the lesson

Identify what learners need to think, discuss and organise before writing.

Teach it in four steps

1. Give a concrete stimulus or retrieve relevant knowledge.
2. Let learners rehearse ideas orally and test evidence.
3. Organise the response using a light planning structure.
4. Write independently, then check the reasoning rather than only length.

Worked classroom example

History: before a paragraph on a protest, sort evidence by reason, discuss a claim and plan claim → evidence → explanation.

Teacher prompt: "Which detail supports your explanation? Show me how you know."

Check understanding

Does the independent paragraph connect evidence to its claim?

Fade the support

Move from a completed plan to headings, then to learner-selected planning.

Adapt it across subjects

Science: discuss and organise observations before writing a conclusion.

Maths: rehearse the justification before a written solution.

Adjust the language support

A1-A2 access: keep the subject goal; use visuals, a small word bank, pointing or drawing and partner rehearsal. Use a home language to establish meaning where helpful.

B1-B2 extension: ask for fuller explanations, precise subject vocabulary and qualifications. Reduce sentence openings when learners can organise the response independently.

These are starting points, not placement rules. Judge support from the learner's response to this task; proficiency can differ across skills.