* **Free writing > story buds**. Free writing helps students develop their ability to let their right brain direct the writing process. (Why write with half a brain?) It’s fun, and, once the class gets it, you have a new tool.
  + Tell students “We’re going to write without thinking.” Let them know you won’t grade their free-writes.
  + If needed, talk a bit about the functions of the left and right brains. When we free write, we’re exercising our right brains.
  + **Activity 1**. Most free-writing exercises start with a prompt, to get the students started. It can be an object, a photo, a sentence, such as “Mary walked into the school cafeteria and …”
    - A tip: Ask students to start their first free-write sentence with an imaginary person’s name (or animal’s name). Example: “Mary.” Why? If they start with a name, it throws them into storytelling (so opposed to left-brain discussion).
  + If the prompt is an object, hold it up, then tell them “This object will appear somewhere in your story. Go! Start writing! Start your first sentence with somebody’s name.” (The object may or may not appear before the time’s up. Not important.)
  + After the promt, they write whatever comes into their minds. Keep them writing – constantly - for about three minutes. Repeatedly remind them to “keep your hand moving, keep writing” or “If you don’t know what to write, write “I don’t know what to write” till it occurs to you what happens next.
  + Once they get the hang of it, they will surprise themselves (and you). Tell them to keep those pencils moving, don’t stop as they write, no matter what thoughts come up (e.g. “This is stupid. Why are we doing this?”)
  + The goal is to create story buds (story starters). Flower buds can open up later into a flower. Story buds can be built up later into a story. If a student writes five story buds, have them keep the ones they think are promising.
* Do maybe three free writes, till most students get used to it.
  + **Activity 2**: Ask students to choose the story buds that might bloom into a story. Which do you think could become a story? Are there parts of your free-write that you like, but not others? Cross out the parts you don’t like.
    - Give each student a “story buds” folder. They may want to save none or maybe all three. Their choice. This will be greatmaterial for future writing sessions in which they can build on the buds.
      * Idea: When first starting, just ask them to put all their buds into the folder and take up the folders, telling them you will check in with them to see which they liked, etc. This is worth the time at first, to ID any problems.
* **Activity 3**: Ask students to choose a story bud they like and add to it for 10 – 15 minutes. Ask them to look at it like a movie. What happens next? Your choice. Jump back in time, come in close on one of the characters … whatever. You don’t have to finish the story.

**More about freewriting: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free\_writing**