Write–pair–share

How?

This activity is often called "Think–pair–share," and the first stage is more effective if students have chance to write, rather than just thinking, so "Write–pair–share" is the more helpful alternative name.

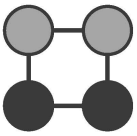
Pose a question to your group that requires higher-order thinking, such as application, analysis, evaluation, or creation.

1–2 minutes

Write: Give your students a little time to write a response on their own.

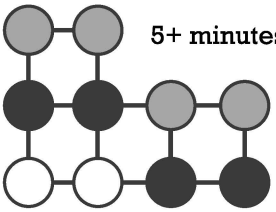
3–5 minutes

Pair: Students turn to a partner to share their responses and test out their ideas "privately." This stage is more effective if you provide a "next step" in the question to push their thinking further.



[5 minutes]

[**Square**: An optional next stage—similar to the pyramid/snowball activity—is to combine pairs into fours. Again they have chance to test out their ideas in relative safety of a smaller group. This is cheesily referred to as a "Write–pair–square–share."]



5+ minutes

Share: In this final stage, students share their responses with the entire class. You don't need to hear from every group, particularly if they have come up with the same kinds of responses.

Instead, elicit alternatives with prompts such as "Did any groups have a different way to address this problem?" This should keep the sharing portion of the activity interesting and worthwhile.

When?

- At any point in class. For instance, you can use Write–pair–share to review material, to apply a theory or model to a new context or case, and to reassure students that they are on the right track, without putting them on the spot (since that can make the learning environment feel less safe for some).

Why?

- The writing portion is especially helpful for more introverted students who need to process ideas internally before they are ready to speak.
- The pairing stage allows testing of views. Studies have found that many misconceptions are corrected at this stage and that students learn better from one another than when hearing a correct or better answer from the instructor.
- Write–pair–share is an excellent back-up activity that you can introduce at virtually any point.
- This activity takes no preparation beyond devising a question.

Source: Vaughn, M. (n.d.). *Think-Pair-Share*. Handout for faculty at Elon University, Elon, NC.