POW

Best Practices and Adaptations

Understanding the POW Strategy

POW is a **mnemonic** for **planning and drafting informational writing**.

Pick my idea

Organize my notes

Write and say more
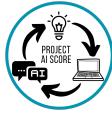
Understanding the POW Strategy

This strategy…

Supports: **Planning, drafting**

Applies To: **Informational writing**, but can be used as a starter strategy for other genres

Grade Levels: **All grades**, most learners
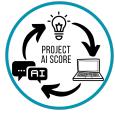
Suggestions for Implementation

- **Explicitly teach each step** of the POW strategy with clear modeling and examples
- **Use visual aids** and anchor charts
- **Model your thinking aloud** as you brainstorm, organize, and expand your writing
- **Provide structured graphic organizers** to help students organize their thoughts with the POW steps
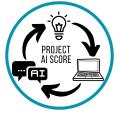
Suggestions for Implementation

- **Encourage elaboration** by teaching students how to "say more"
- **Gradually release responsibility** to students by starting with guided, full-class practice and moving to independent writing
- **Celebrate effort and strategy use**, not just the quality of the final writing
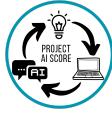
Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Don't assume students understand the steps** without thorough in-class modeling
- **Don't skip the planning phase**; students need time to organize ideas before writing
- **Don't treat POW as a one-time lesson**; revisit and reinforce the strategy often
- **Don't expect immediate mastery**, allow students time to adapt!

Common Pitfalls to Avoid (Part 2)

- **Don't overlook self-regulation**.
- **Don't assume all students can access the strategy in the same way**, especially learners with disabilities
- **Don't use a one-size-fits-all graphic organizer**, make adaptations as needed
- **Don't move on to the next lesson** before checking for understanding

Troubleshooting

Issue/Challenge	What to Do
Student rushes to write without planning	Model the process of slowing down and using the organizer. Provide a checklist for them to check off as they complete each step.
Student's writing is too short or lacks detail	Reteach and model the "W" (Write and say more) step, emphasizing how to add examples, explanations, and descriptive words.
Student struggles to generate ideas	Provide a short list of high-interest topics to choose from (Trains, Ice cream, Summertime, etc.). Use a graphic organizer with pre-labeled categories to guide brainstorming.

Adapting POW for ALL learners

- **Guided Brainstorming for "P":** Instead of a blank page, provide a list of 2-3 high-interest topics or topic starters. Use an "Idea Web with Categories" graphic organizer with pre-labeled branches (e.g., "Appearance," "Where it lives") to help students generate ideas.
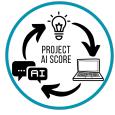
Adapting POW for ALL learners

- **Segmented Graphic Organizers for "O":** Break the organizer into smaller, distinct sections with clear visual cues. Use color-coding and simple icons for each section to help students manage information chunk by chunk and support students who struggle with sequencing.
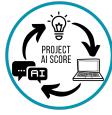
Adapting POW for ALL learners

- **"Sentence Starters + Word Banks" for "W":** Provide a handout with sentence starters (e.g., "My main idea is...", "For example...") and a word bank of topic-specific vocabulary to reduce the burden of sentence construction and support expressive language challenges

Adapting POW for ALL learners

- **"Chunking" the POW Process with Micro-Checklists:** Break the POW process into smaller, sequential "chunks" and provide a mini-checklist for each step. For example, on "P" day, the checklist might say: "I picked my main idea. I brainstormed 3 details. I wrote down my 3 details". This reduces cognitive overload and provides a clearer path to completion for students who struggle with multi-step directions.

Interested in learning more? Check out WritingClassroom.org