

**Six Traits Writing Workshop**  
WNY School Support Center UB Buffalo Public Schools

*Jim Collins*

**Teaching  
Sentence Rhythms**

# Sentence Fluency

Sentence Fluency is the rhythm and beat of the language you hear in your head. Writing that's fluent is graceful, varied, rhythmic—almost musical. It's easy to read aloud. Sentences are well built. They move. They vary in structure and length. Each seems to flow right out of the one before.

# High Scoring Response

Martha Washington's role as first lady was different from that of Eleanor Roosevelt. Martha was called "hostess for the nation" because she was with her husband during social occasions. But she didn't do anything to help her husband or the U.S. greatly. Eleanor Roosevelt did help a lot. She held the first press conference ever given by a presidential wife. She was always there with suggestions, proposals, and ideas. After Franklin Roosevelt contracted polio, she traveled for him and helped him out. Martha and Eleanor had very different ways of being "First Lady."

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From Claude M. Steele, "Race and the Schooling of Black Americans," *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 1992, p, 77.

**But if wise schooling is so obtainable, why is racial vulnerability the rule, not the exception, in American schooling?**

**One factor is the basic assimilationist offer that schools make to blacks: You can be valued and rewarded in school (and society), the schools say to these students, but you must first master the culture and ways of the American mainstream, and since that mainstream (as it is represented) is essentially white, this means you must give up many particulars of being black—styles of speech and appearance, value priorities, preferences—at least in mainstream settings. This is asking a lot. But it has been the “color-blind” offer to every immigrant and minority group in our nation’s history, the core of the melting pot ideal, and so I think it strikes most of us as fair. Yet non-immigrant minorities like blacks and Native Americans have always been here, and thus are entitled, more than new immigrants, to participate in the defining images of the society projected in school. More important, their exclusion from these images denies their contributive history and presence in society. Thus, whereas immigrants can tilt toward assimilation in pursuit of the opportunities for which they came, American blacks may find it harder to assimilate. For them, the offer of acceptance in return for assimilation carries a primal insult: it asks them to join in something that has made them invisible.**

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**Lower may be better, perhaps even stopping heart disease in its tracks, they say. A new study looking at the growth of plaque in arteries of heart disease patients came to that conclusion. And while medical experts are awaiting the results of studies asking if lower levels also lead to fewer heart attacks and deaths, many are saying they are betting that the answer will be yes.**

**But there is just one problem. While it has become increasingly easier and more feasible to lower cholesterol levels, most people whose levels are dangerously high either do not know it or are not doing much about it.**

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**Recent national data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention illustrate the problem. ...**

# Information Writing

An MP3 player is different from a CD player in many ways, but it is also more expensive. The MP3 player is small and works with your computer to store and organize songs. Depending on the model, it can hold between 1,000 and 10,000 songs. You first load songs into your computer and then load them into your MP3 player. A CD player costs a lot less. It doesn't need a computer because you use compact discs to insert music into the CD player. It is larger than the MP3 player, but it can hold only as many songs as will fit on the CD's it holds. I'd rather have a CD player because it only costs \$50, and an MP3 player can cost between \$200 and \$500.

# Story Writing

**Jimmy Collins was nine years old and playing second base for the first time in his life. The score was tied in the last inning of the biggest game of the year—the Amherst Red Sox against the Alexander Yankees for the Little League championship. There were two outs, the Yankees had runners on first and second, and their next batter hit a fast ground ball to Jimmy, who had been silently praying the ball wouldn't come to him. But it did. Jimmy bent down, reached for his courage and the ball, and scooped it up. He stood up smiling, proud as can be, expecting cheers from the crowd as he started to throw the ball to first. But everyone was yelling at him to touch second for the last out. He stepped on the bag just in time to beat the runner. Jimmy Collins was nine years old and a hero for the first time in his life.**