

WRTG120 3 VIPs + 1 surprise activity

I use this activity throughout the semester when I need to get my students talking — with each other and with me. More often than not, we are either responding (or rereading) to a passage from the reading and/or brainstorming about keywords, topics, and confusing ideas. The process of “3 VIPs + 1 surprise” is as follows:

1. Place your students in groups.
2. Challenge your students within their groups to identify three (3) VIPs (very important points) that they think are especially relevant to the topic at hand.
3. After they've identified 3 VIPs, also have them discuss 1 surprise (or question, concern, etc., depending on the point in the unit) they noticed in the reading or topic.
4. Next, separate the (chalk, dry-erase) board into “strips” in which each group can write their 3 VIPs + 1 surprise.
5. Have one group member write the 3 VIPs + 1 surprise on the board. (Or, if you need more participation or have more group members, have one student write down 3 VIPs and another 1 surprise.)
6. Then, share each groups 3 VIPs and 1 surprise. Have another group member (or more) who *was not* the group member(s) who wrote on the board present and explain the ideas they've shared.
7. Throughout this, prompt discussion, questions, and connections amongst the groups' ideas and questions.

I've used this in a myriad of ways. I've applied it to readings, to confusion, to research process, and even to a derivative of Derek's “what's the word?” activity. This allows students to not only interact with each other, but also with their classmates and with me. This activity fosters the students' verbal rhetorical and communication skills. The first time I really got my students talking — at all, but also to me as if I were a human being — was when we all struggled through writing with chalk for the first time. It serves as an icebreaker within breakout groups as well as amongst the entire class (especially at 8am in the morning!). This is by far my most successful and effective activity used in WRTG120.

See following page for example prompts given to my students.

Review: EW, pp. 56-60

ex. 1

- ▶ In your pod, re-read pp. 56-60 in *EasyWriter*. As a group, develop **three (3) very important points** that seem especially necessary or key to defining genre and convention. Then, choose **one (1) more topic or point that surprised you in some way**.
- ▶ Be prepared to share on the board and with the class!



ex. 2
(step 1)

3 VIPs and 1 surprise

- ▶ Using *UR*, pp. 14-22 with your group of classmates, come up with:
 - ▶ 3 VIPs = very important points
 - ▶ 1 surprise



ex. 2
(step 2)

3 VIPs and 1 surprise

- ▶ Now pick **one VIP** from your group's list.
- ▶ Send up **one member of your group** to share your VIP and your surprise on the board.
- ▶ Prepare for **another member** of your group to present these to the class.

