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# Foreword

*Franki Sibberson*

Inviting students to write and to explore their world through writing is one of the most important things we can do as teachers, and *Deeper Writing: Quick Writes and Mentor Texts to Illuminate New Possibilities* is a gift to teachers of writing. No matter the age of your students, Robin Holland's book will help you support them in their growth as writers.

When I think of prompts, I think of the prompts of the past in which we asked children to respond to a fantastical situation or to fill in the page about an imaginary experience. But that is not what these quick writes are about. In *Deeper Writing*, Robin invites students to try new things as writers. The quick writes are not intended to inspire a final draft of writing. Instead, they are intended to stretch the writer in new directions.

The ideas in this book are based on sound theory about writing. As the codirector in the Columbus Area Writing Project (affiliate of the National Writing Project), Robin Holland is perfectly poised to share her insights and strategies for helping students of all ages to engage in deeper writing. Not only is she codirector of the project, but she has many years of classroom experience. The combination of the work she has done with students and adults has allowed her to develop quick writes that support students across various ages and levels.

There are no scripts or have-tos in this book. Instead, the book provides *possibilities*. In addition to an abundance of excellent quick writes, Robin Holland further supports our teaching efforts with booklists and mentor texts for each quick write that help reinforce and strengthen these important writing occasions. She understands the classroom setting and how writing workshops work. She knows the kinds of things that will help teachers move students forward. She gives us solid thinking along with resources that will help us support our students.

This book is organized around quick writes, but throughout the reading, we learn much more about being a teacher of writing. Robin

doesn't just share ideas. Instead, she shares ways to make these ideas your own—she shares her thinking, the reasons behind the ideas, and allows her thinking to act as a mentor; it is an invitation to think about how to best use them with your own students.

Robin places a high value on teachers as writers. This is demonstrated over and over again as she shares her own writing inspired by the quick writes. At one point, early in the book, she explicitly talks about the importance of this:

I rarely give a quick write to which I have not written except for the first time a prompt is ever used, and I write along beside my students or fellow writers. I have written to many of the quick writes numerous times—always producing something new and different from my previous writing to the same prompt. p. 9

The brilliant message of this book is that quick writes invite possibilities. Robin helps us see each of these invitations in a way that is not based on an end product but instead begins a new conversation. As she says, "These prompts are for playing with and practicing writing. For putting the pen on the paper and just going for it."