**Writing Strategy**

**The “I was late to class” Game**

**Purpose**

* To help students learn to elaborate when writing essays using details to support their arguments or points of view. Students are experts at elaborating already! When asked, “Why are you late to class?” they offer a long, drawn out, and detailed excuse or story.
* To help students transfer that skill as they practice writing supporting details for a thematic essay, laboratory report, book review or any other content-area writing activities.

**Directions**

1. When introducing essay writing and the importance of supporting details, have students share out all the reasons they have given over the years for being late to class.
2. Point out how many details they were able to include and how easy it was for them to do this.
3. Now introduce a topic or issue that they are to write about and have them again share out everything they know about it.
4. Building confidence through the success they experience with “I was late to class…” and continuing to practice this skill in class discussions will help students become better writers.

**Extenders:**

* “Close your eyes”

Ask students to close their eyes and imagine the subject they are writing about. What do they see? What do they hear? What do they smell?

* “I’m an Alien”

Ask students to pretend that you, as the teacher, are an Alien, and that you have no clue what the topic even is! When did it happen? Where? Why? Who was involved? Why is it a big deal?