GRADE ONE
Sample Sessions

UNITS OF STUDY
in Opinion, Information, *and* Narrative Writing

LUCY CALKINS *with* COLLEAGUES *from the* READING AND WRITING PROJECT

Heinemann
DEDICATED TO TEACHERS™

GRADE ONE Components

Four Units of Study

- The units offer all of the teaching points, minilessons, conferences, and small-group work needed to teach a comprehensive workshop curriculum.
- Each session within the units models Lucy and her colleagues' carefully crafted teaching moves and language.
- The Grade 1 set includes one unit each in opinion, information, and narrative writing, and one additional narrative unit.
- Each unit provides 4-6 weeks of instruction.

If... Then... Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction

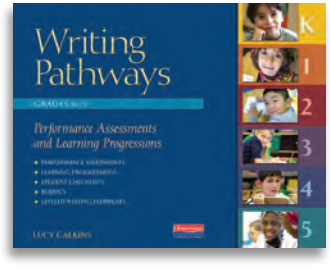
- The *If… Then…* book offers five abbreviated units of study that teachers may choose to teach before, after, or in between the core units to meet specific instructional needs.
- This helpful resource also includes dozens of model conferring scenarios to help teachers master the art of conferring.

A Guide to the Writing Workshop, Primary Grades

- The *Guide* introduces the principles, methods, classroom structures, and instructional frameworks that characterize effective workshop teaching.
- It provides the information teachers need to prepare to teach the units, and offers guidance on how to meet the needs of all students.

Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions

- This practical assessment system includes learning progressions, on-demand writing prompts, student checklists, rubrics, student writing samples, and exemplar pieces of writing.
- The tools in *Writing Pathways* help teachers set all students on trajectories of growth.



Anchor Chart Sticky Notes

- Preprinted, large-format sticky notes feature each key teaching point and help teachers evolve anchor charts across the units.

Online Resources

- This treasure chest of resources includes reproducible checklists, pre- and post assessments, learning progressions and rubrics, videos and web links, Spanish translations for various resources, and more!

Trade Book Pack

- Includes books that are used as demonstration texts for the teacher to model the skills and strategies students will try. Recommended optional purchase.

For complete details, please visit **unitsofstudy.com/K5writing**

"At the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, we have been working for more than three decades to develop, pilot, revise, and implement state-of-the-art curriculum in writing. This series—this treasure chest of experiences, theories, techniques, tried-and-true methods, and questions—brings the results of that work to you."

—LUCY CALKINS

Welcome to the Grade 1 Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing Sampler. This booklet includes sample sessions from each of the four units of study for this grade level, chosen to broadly represent the range of work that students will do and to provide a snapshot view of how instruction develops across the school year.

SAMPLER CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

SAMPLE SESSIONS

Small Moments

Writing with Focus, Detail, and Dialogue

LUCY CALKINS • ABBY OXENHORN SMITH • RACHEL ROTHMAN

You'll open this unit by inviting children to write like professional authors. You'll share a mentor text (perhaps *Night of the Veggie Monster*, from the trade book pack), give children three-page booklets, and invite them to tell and then write the small-moment stories of their lives. The most important words of your first minilesson are the final ones: "Off you go. You can get started drawing and writing your own Small Moments book." Be confident enough that if you reach a child's side and he has drawn pictures but not written words, you say cheerily, "Great. So tell me what is happening on this page." When the child tells you, you can say, "Add that right here. Put that here, on the paper, so other people will know!"

This first bend in the road swings, like a pendulum, between lessons that help children write the stories of their lives and lessons that establish the routines and structures of the workshop so that this writing work can be done independently. Children learn to touch and tell their stories, then sketch and write, so they can move independently through the writing process again and again. They learn to use their word-solving skills, and they learn that when they are finished writing one story, they can begin another. This first bend, then, encourages fearless approximation in ways that support ambitious storytelling and a volume of writing.

In the second bend, you will teach your young writers strategies to bring the people in their stories to life by making them move and talk. Children learn ways writers develop their narratives bit by bit. Partners act out what the people in their stories did and then capture that on the pages of their booklets. In the next bend of the unit, "Studying Other Writers' Craft," you will continue to teach children ways writers elaborate. Children will apply these strategies to their writing as needed, both in the new stories they write and in their previously written stories. Writers will generate a list of techniques the author of a mentor text used that they could try as well.

In the last bend, each child selects a piece he or she wants to publish and revises and edits that piece, using the support of a checklist of expectations for narrative writing. They also "fancy up" their writing by making a cover page, adding details and color to illustrations, and writing a "blurb." With a partner, they rehearse reading their piece aloud. As the culmination of the unit, children read their books in small groups and then add them to a newly created basket in the classroom library.

Welcome to Unit 1

BEND I ✦ Writing Small Moment Stories with Independence

1. Lives Are Full of Stories to Tell
2. Planning for Writing: Writers Touch and Tell, Sketch, Then Write
3. Using Pictures to Add On
4. Stretching Words to Spell Them
5. Zooming In: Focusing on Small Moments
6. Partnerships and Storytelling
7. Reading Our Writing Like We Read Our Books

BEND II ✦ Bringing Small Moment Stories to Life

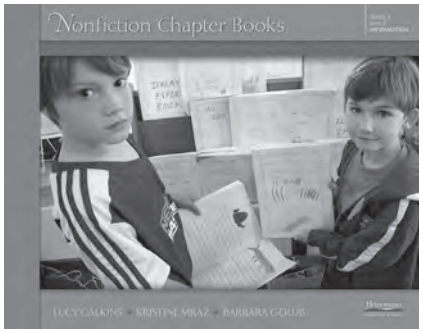
8. Unfreezing Our Characters and Our Writing
9. Telling Stories in Itsy-Bitsy Steps
10. Bringing What's Inside Out: Making Characters Think and Feel
11. Using Drama to Bring Stories to Life
12. Using Familiar Words to Spell New Words
13. Editing: Capital Letters and End Marks Help Readers

BEND III ✦ Studying Other Writers' Craft

14. Studying a Story to Learn Ways the Author Makes It Special
15. Trying Out a Craft Move from a Mentor Text: Writing with Exact Actions
16. Trying Out a Craft Move from a Mentor Text: Writing with Pop-Out Words
17. Turn to Other Mentor Texts

BEND IV ✦ Fixing and Fancying Up Our Best Work

18. Using All We Know to Revise
19. Editing with a Checklist
20. Making Books Ready for the Library
21. A Celebration



Nonfiction Chapter Books

LUCY CALKINS • KRISTINE MRAZ • BARBARA GOLUB

This unit takes children on a writing journey that builds in sophistication. It begins with instruction in how to make a basic type of information book—the picture book. Children then create several information chapter books filled with elaboration, interesting text elements, and pictures that supplement the meaning conveyed by the words.

In the first bend, youngsters create a folder full of information texts, revisit many of these texts repeatedly, and revise them independently. These first books will resemble nonfiction picture books. From day one, this bend will spotlight using a teaching voice and writing a lot. Writers will also learn how to use readers' questions to add and subtract more information. During this first bend, children will revisit some of the skills they learned in *Small Moments*—planning, tackling big words, and drawing—in the context of this new genre. Throughout this first bend children will assess their work against the information writing checklist. Introducing this tool on the first day and revisiting it continually will help children build the habit of reflecting on their work and setting goals.

During the second bend, children write chapter books, which gives them opportunities to structure their texts. It is likely that the pace of your children's writing will slow as the books they produce become longer and more ambitious. During this bend, you will revisit the mentor text *Sharks* to investigate how chapter books are written. You will teach children to include in their books not only all the things they've learned so far but also new elements: how-to pages, stories, introductions, and conclusions. This bend also spotlights new ways to elaborate: comparisons, examples, and elements of persuasion. This means that children may need paper with more lines and plenty of strips and extra sheets to attach. As children write, they will also continue to assess their work, in order to make their books stronger. Partner work will again be important as a way to check for clarity, generate more ideas, and cheer each other on. Once again, you'll celebrate the work in this bend on the last day, giving children one more chance to practice revision and editing before showing off what they have learned.

In the final bend, children will write chapter books with increasing sophistication and independence. Whereas in the previous bend children learned how to structure a chapter book, in this bend they will take all they have learned and set goals to write new (and better!) chapter books. There will also be opportunities to teach six-year-olds simple ways to research their topics by studying photographs and asking questions. Finally, lessons around craft and thoughtful punctuation add flourish to the powerful writing first-graders are now doing in their information books. All of this work will lead to one last celebration, during which children will choose their favorite book to share with an audience.

Welcome to Unit 2

BEND I ✦ Writing Teaching Books with Independence

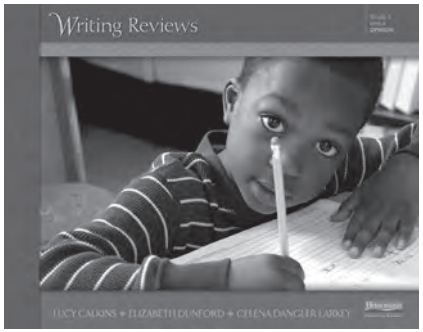
1. Writers Get Ready to Write by Teaching All about a Topic
2. Writers Tell Information across Their Fingers, Sketch, Then Write
3. Writers Keep Readers in Mind, Writing to Answer Their Questions
4. Nonfiction Writers Teach with Pictures as Well as Words
5. Being Brave Enough to Spell Domain-Specific Words (Spelling Fancy Words)
6. Nonfiction Writers Use Readers to Help Them Add and Subtract
7. Taking Stock: Self-Assessing and Setting Goals
8. Editing: Spelling, Capitals, and Punctuation

BEND II ✦ Nonfiction Writers Can Write Chapter Books!

9. Writing Tables of Contents
10. Planning and Writing Chapters While Resolving to Get Better
11. Writers Write with Details and Help Readers Picture the Details by Using Comparisons
12. Different Kinds of Writing in Teaching Books: Chapters Can Contain How-To Writing, Persuasive Writing, and Stories
13. Introductions and Conclusions
14. Fix Up Writing by Pretending to Be a Reader

BEND III ✦ Writing Chapter Books with Greater Independence

15. Writers Use All They Know to Plan for New Chapter Books
16. Writers Do Research, Like Finding Images or Photos, to Help Them Say More
17. Editing "On the Go": Varying End Punctuation to Bring Out a Teaching Book's Meaning
18. Using Craft Moves Learned in *Small Moments*: Pop-Out Words and Speech Bubbles
19. Editing Step by Step
20. A Final Celebration: A Letter to Teachers



Writing Reviews

LUCY CALKINS • ELIZABETH FRANCO • CELENA DANGLER LARKEY

In the first bend in this unit, you will create happy enthusiasm for writing by holding a glorified show-and-tell session—one in which, instead of asking children to bring one robot, one baseball cap, or one Barbie to school, you ask each child to bring a small collection stored neatly in a shoebox. Once children have collections in hand, you will ask them to use writing to think and "talk" about the stuff of their lives. Specifically, they will review their collections and choose which item in that collection is the best, writing defenses for those judgments. This writing is their introduction to developing opinions and insights about all that matters most to them and writing reviews, the subject of this book.

During the second bend, students write review after review, about anything and everything: toys, restaurants, video games—the works. Meanwhile, you will remind students that they already know that writers revise. Because your minilessons will often teach a new quality of good persuasive writing, on any one day some children will be revising previously written reviews to include the new learning, and some will be writing new ones. Toward the end of this bend, students will gather their reviews and begin to create anthologies: a kid miniversion of *Zagat's* guide to restaurants, a collection of book reviews, a collection of another type of review.

Finally, in Bend III, you will teach children ways writers craft book reviews—summarizing, evaluating, judging, and defending their judgments. You will teach children that much like they collected things and judged the items in their collections, they can collect and judge books and then write to tell others their opinions about those books. You'll also return to teaching your children how to write to persuade, using all they've learned about the structure of a review and persuasive writing. You'll ask writers to work on individual projects that convince others to read and be interested in the books the writers are reading and interested in. The unit ends in a big, old-fashioned celebration of the ways people persuade others to read their books (much like PBS's *Reading Rainbow* book reviews of years past).

Welcome to Unit 3

BEND I ✦ Best in Show: Judging Our Collections

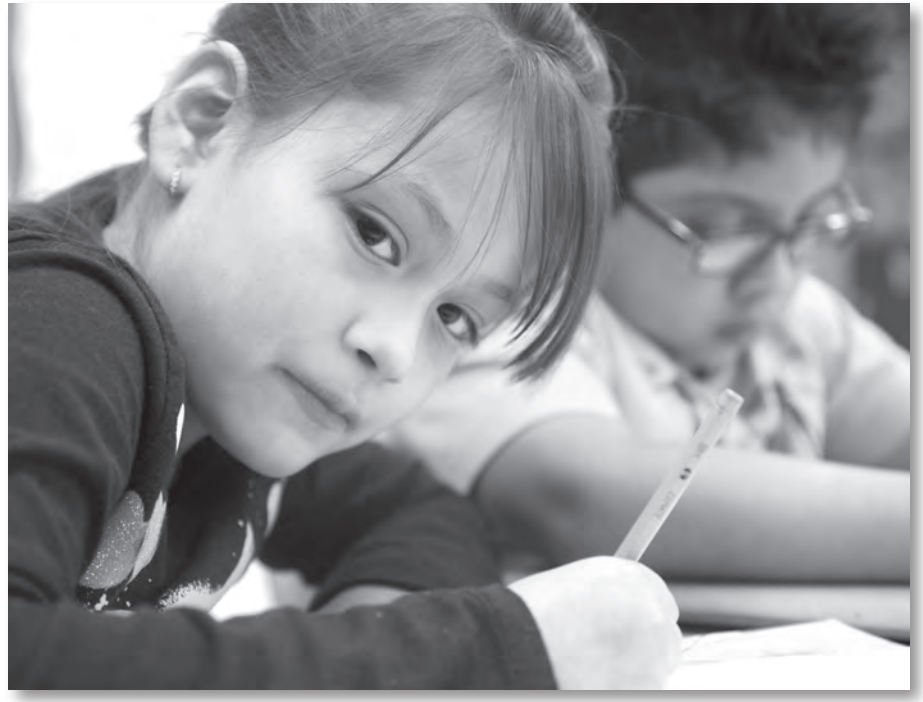
1. People Collect Things and Write Opinions about Their Collections
2. Explaining Judgments in Convincing Ways
3. "How Do I Write This Kind of Writing Well?"
4. Opinion Writers Expect Disagreement
5. Awarding Booby Prizes for More Practice—and More Fun
6. Bolstering Arguments
7. Editing and Publishing: Making Our Pieces "Best in Show"!

BEND II ✦ Writing Persuasive Reviews

8. Writing Reviews to Persuade Others
9. Talking Right to Readers
10. Making Comparisons in Writing
11. Hook Your Reader: Writing Catchy Introductions and Conclusions
12. Partners Work Together to Give Writing Checkups!
13. Making Anthologies: A Celebration

BEND III ✦ Writing Persuasive Book Reviews

14. Using All You Know to Write Book Reviews
15. Don't Spill the Beans!: Giving Sneak Peek Summaries
16. Not Too Long, Not Too Short!: Using Conjunctions
17. Review a Review?: Making Sure Reviews Are Brim Full of the Best Work!
18. Book Review Talks: A *Reading Rainbow*-Style Celebration



From Scenes to Series
Writing Fiction

MARY EHRENWORTH • CHRISTINE HOLLEY

Bend I begins with an invitation to children to do something they already love doing—pretending! On the first day, you'll teach children that fiction writers call on their pretending skills to invent characters and small-moment adventures—and then children will come up with characters of their own, name them, and put them into imagined scenarios. Throughout the bend, you will encourage your students to write lots of realistic fiction quickly and with independence, using all they already know about writing small moments and bringing stories to life. You'll introduce the notion that characters face a bit of trouble—and that writers then get their characters *out* of trouble to give readers a satisfying ending. Toward the end of the bend you'll spotlight courageous word choice and spelling. You'll end by asking your young writers to reflect on their writing and use the narrative checklists to set new goals.

In the second bend, you'll set your young writers on a new path—using all they have learned until now to write a series of books. You'll teach children that series writers put their characters into more than one book and more than one adventure and give special consideration to what to put into the very first book of a series so that readers are set up for the books to follow. As children stay with one or two characters for a few or even half a dozen books, you'll teach them to write with detail and how to make their characters talk for different purposes. You'll use *Henry and Mudge* to model as you teach this bend and the rest of this unit. The bend ends with a minicelebration of children's first series. Children will edit their work in preparation for this celebration and create a boxed set (perhaps a painted-over cereal box with a blurb about the famous young author on the back) to showcase their work.

In Bend III, the focus shifts to turning the children into more powerful writers of realistic fiction, as they study the genre and themselves as writers. The bend begins with a mini-inquiry, in which you'll use *Henry and Mudge* to determine what writers do to make realistic fiction realistic. You'll teach children that writers call on their own experiences to imagine tiny details they can include in a story to let their readers know a story is realistic. Children will then try this themselves, adding little details to their second series to help readers picture the stories in their mind. You'll spotlight how to show not tell and then prompt youngsters to think about the structure of their stories as they write chapters with a clear beginning, middle, and end. They'll learn that writers use patterns to elaborate and then draw on all their skills and knowledge as writers of fiction to create even more powerful stories.

In the final bend, children prepare to publish their second series. They'll work hard to add important details to the illustrations, create a "meet the author" page, and edit and revise in meaningful ways to make their work publication ready. The unit ends with a grand finale, during which an audience will join the class in celebrating their newly published series.

Welcome to Unit 4

BEND I ✦ Fiction Writers Set Out to Write Realistic Fiction!

1. Serious Fiction Writers Do Some Serious Pretending
2. Writers Develop a "Can-Do," Independent Attitude
3. Writers Learn to Get Their Characters Out of Trouble
4. Serious Writers Get Serious about Spelling
5. Taking Stock: Writers Use Checklists to Set Goals

BEND II ✦ Fiction Writers Set Out to Write Series

6. Series Writers Always Have a Lot to Write About
7. Introducing Your Character in Book One of a Series: What Does Your Reader Want to Know?
8. Writers Develop Their Dialogue
9. Saddle Up to the Revision Party—and Bring Your Favorite Writer
10. Celebrating Our First Series

BEND III ✦ Becoming More Powerful at Realistic Fiction: Studying the Genre and Studying Ourselves as Writers

11. Series Writers Investigate What Makes Realistic Fiction Realistic
12. Writers "Show, Not Tell" by Focusing on Tiny, Realistic Details
13. Fiction Writers Include Chapters: Writing a Beginning, Middle, and End
14. Patterns Help Writers Elaborate
15. Writers Use Their Superpowers to Work with Greater Independence

BEND IV ✦ Getting Ready to Publish Our Second Series

16. Punctuation Parties
17. Writers Use Illustrations to Tell Important Details
18. "Meet the Author" Page
19. Getting Ready for the Final Celebration
20. A Celebration of Series Writers: The Grand Finale!

CONTENTS

If... Then... Curriculum
Assessment-Based Instruction

LUCY CALKINS • WITH COLLEAGUES FROM THE TEACHERS COLLEGE READING AND WRITING PROJECT

The *If... Then... Curriculum* offers additional, abbreviated units teachers can use before, after, or in between the core curriculum based on students' needs. This resource also includes conferring scenarios that help teachers plan individual and small-group instruction.

PART TWO Differentiating Instruction for Individuals and Small Groups: If... Then... Conferring Scenarios

NARRATIVE WRITING

Structure and Cohesion

If the writer is new to this particular genre . . .
If the story is confusing or seems to be missing important information . . .
If there are multiple stories in the booklet . . .
If the story lacks focus . . .

Elaboration

If the writer has created a story that is sparse in pictures and words . . .
If the writer spends more time adding insignificant details to the picture, rather than elaborating with words . . .
If the writer tells action, action, action, and seems not to elaborate on any of those actions. . .
If the writer overuses one kind of detail more than others to elaborate . . .

Language

If the writer has words on the page but they are difficult to read.. . . .
If the writer does not use end punctuation when he writes . . .
If the writer has capital letters scattered throughout sentences, not just at the beginnings of them . . .

The Process of Generating Ideas

If the writer struggles with thinking of an idea for a story . . .
If the writer returns to the same story repeatedly . . .

The Process of Drafting

If the writer starts many new pieces but just gives up on them halfway through . . .
If the writer tends to write short pieces with few words or sentences . . .
If the writer's folder lacks volume of pieces . . .

The Process of Revision

If the writer rarely adds to the writing without prompting and support . . .
If the writer usually adds to his writing rather than taking things away . . .
If the writer tends to revise by elaborating, rather than by narrowing and finding the focus of the piece . . .

The Process of Editing

If the writer does not use what he knows to edit his piece . . .
If the writer does not know what in her piece needs editing . . .

INFORMATION WRITING

Structure and Cohesion

If the writer is new to this particular genre . . .
If the writer has included facts as he thinks about them . . .
If the writer does not have a clear beginning and/or ending to his text . . .

Elaboration

If the writer provides information in vague or broad ways . . .
If the writer uses one way to elaborate in her writing . . .
If the writer writes with lots of good information but it is in helter-skelter order . . .
If the writer invents or makes up information about the topic in order to elaborate . . .

Language

If the writer does not use a variety of ending punctuation in her text . . .
If the writer does not use all that he knows about letter sounds/vowel patterns to write words . . .
If the writer does not use domain-specific vocabulary . . .

The Process of Generating Ideas

If the writer chooses ideas that he likes rather than what he actually knows information about . . .

The Process of Drafting

If the writer has some sections that have more writing and information than others . . .
If the writer spends more time elaborating in his drawing than using the picture to help add and write more information . . .

The Process of Revision

If the writer is unsure about how to revise her writing and does not use the tools available in the classroom . . .
If the writer tends to revise by elaborating, rather than narrowing and finding the focus of the text or chapter . . .

The Process of Editing

If the writer edits quickly and feels done, leaving many errors . . .
If the writer has used an abundance of end punctuation marks throughout the text that do not make sense . . .

OPINION WRITING

Structure and Cohesion

If the writer is new to writing workshop or this particular genre of writing . . .
If the writer dives into his piece without discussing the topic or introducing what the piece is about . . .
If the writer's piece has ideas and information scattered throughout in a disorganized fashion . . .

Elaboration

If the writer is struggling to elaborate . . .
If the writer uses some elaboration strategies some of the time . . .
If the writer's piece lacks voice . . .

Language

If the writer struggles to write longer or "harder" words on the page . . .
If the writer makes lists in her writing without commas . . .
If the writer tends not to use specific and precise language as he writes about his opinions . . .

The Process of Generating Ideas

If the writer is stymied to come up with an idea for writing . . .
If the writer selects topics that she doesn't have a lot to say or write about . . .

The Process of Drafting

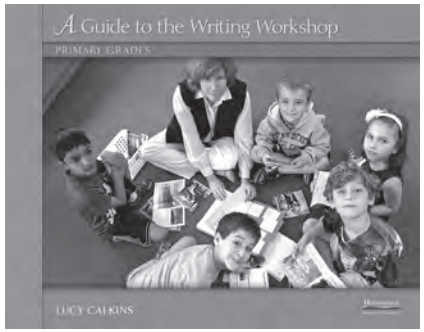
If the writer doesn't have a plan before he begins to write . . .

The Process of Revision

If the writer fills the pages as she drafts and only writes to the bottom of the page when she revises . . .
If the writer tends to have a limited repertoire of elaboration strategies . . .
If the writer tends to give information and reasons that are not always connected to his original opinion . . .

The Process of Editing

If the writer edits for one thing but not for others . . .
If the writer uses or knows only one way to edit her spelling...

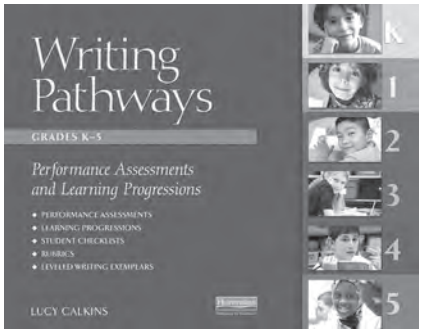


CONTENTS

A Guide to the Writing Workshop
Primary Grades

LUCY CALKINS

This important resource describes the essential principles, methods, and structures of effective writing workshop instruction.

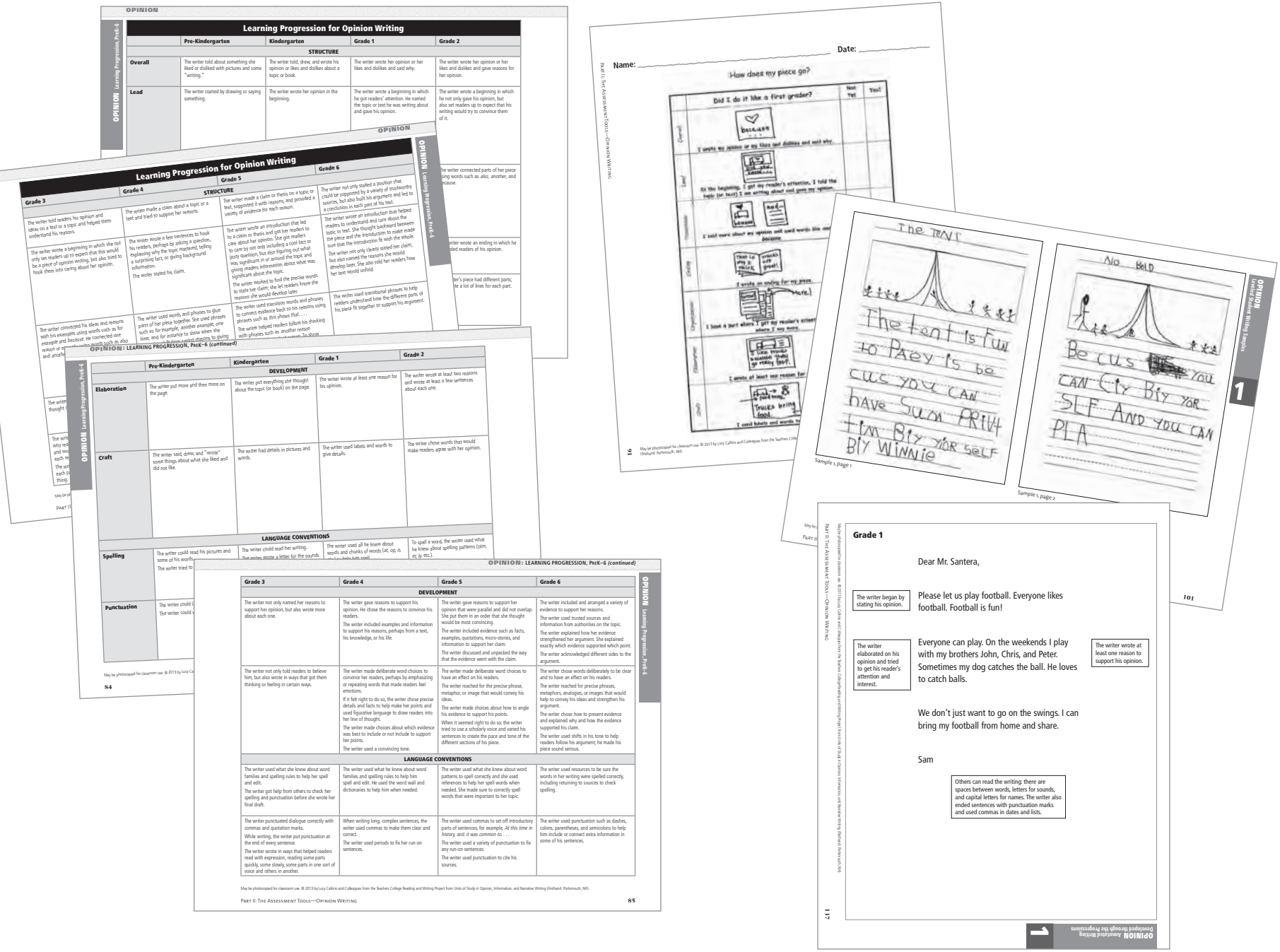


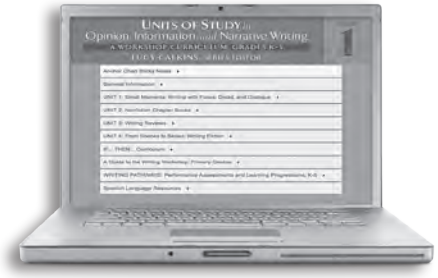
CONTENTS

Writing Pathways
Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, Grades K–5

LUCY CALKINS

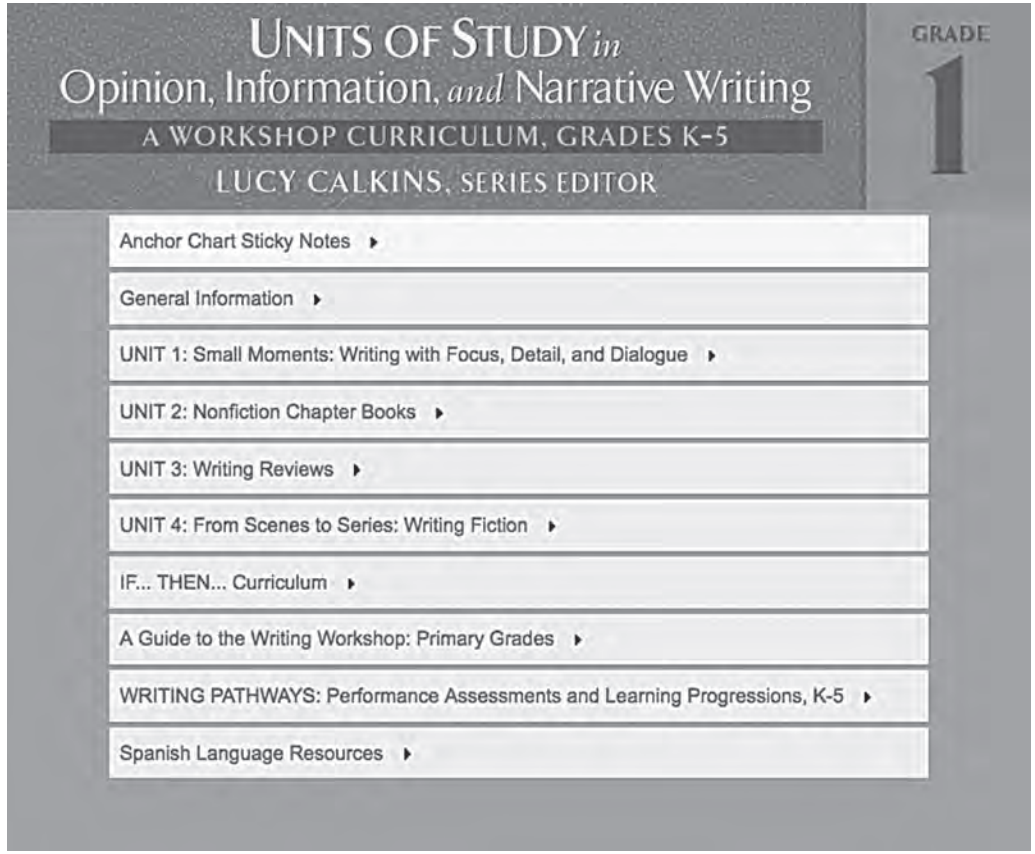
This powerful assessment system offers learning progressions, performance assessments, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing exemplars—everything the teacher needs to provide students with continuous assessment, feedback, and goal setting.

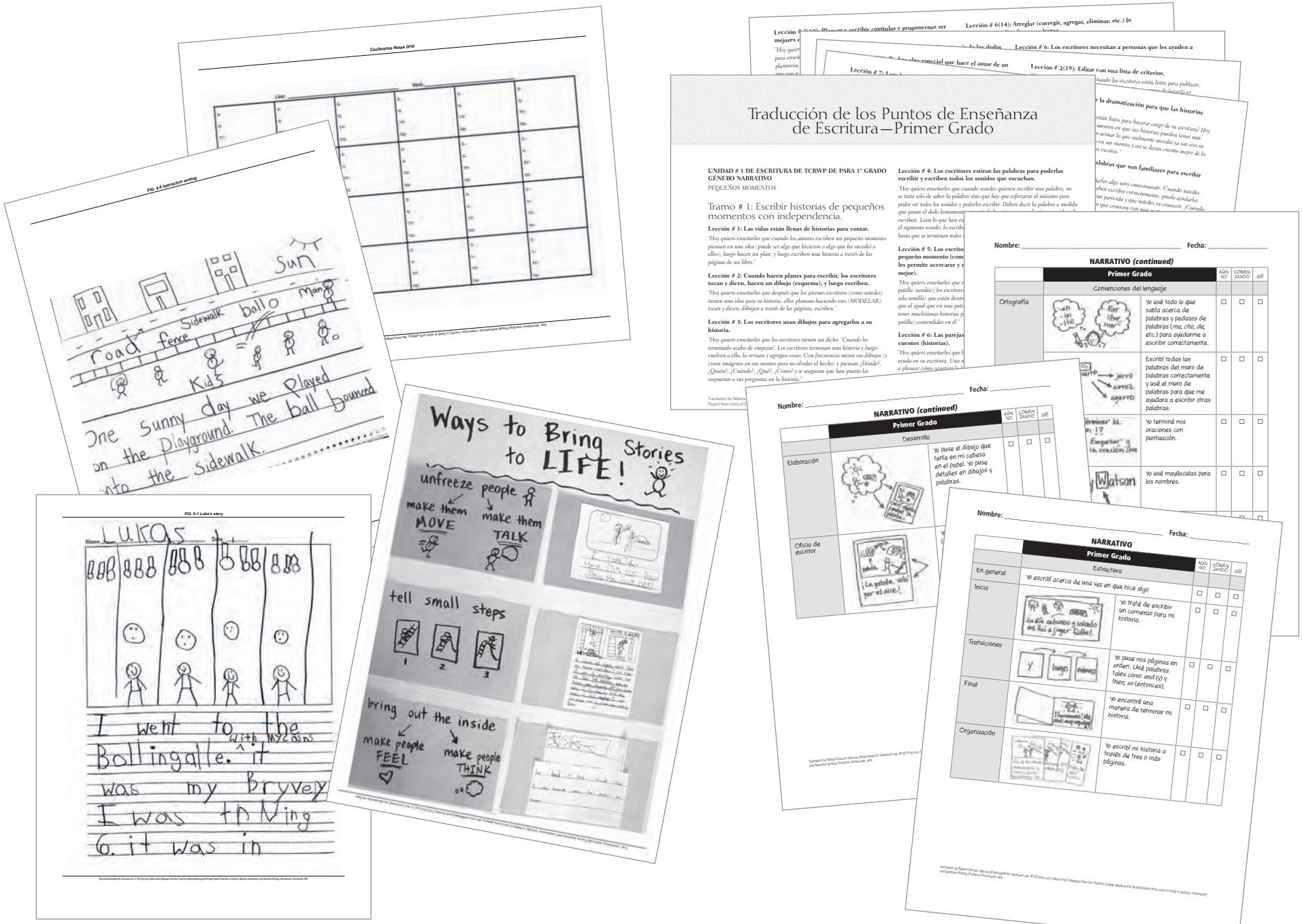

OPINION
Learning Progression, PreK–6
Learning Progression for Opinion Writing
Pre-Kindergarten
Kindergarten
Grade 1
Grade 2
STRUCTURE
Overall
The writer told about something she liked or disliked with pictures and some "writing."
The writer told, drew, and wrote his opinion or likes and dislikes about a topic or book.
The writer wrote her opinion or her likes and dislikes and said why.
The writer wrote her opinion or her likes and dislikes and gave reasons for her opinion.
Lead
The writer started by drawing or saying something.
The writer wrote her opinion in the beginning.
The writer wrote a beginning in which he got readers' attention. He named the topic or text he was writing about and gave his opinion.
The writer wrote a beginning in which he not only gave his opinion, but also set readers up to expect that his writing would try to convince them of it.
Grade 3
Grade 4
Grade 5
Grade 6
The writer told readers his opinion and ideas on a text or a topic and helped them understand his reasons.
The writer made a claim about a topic or a text and tried to support her reasons.
The writer made a claim or thesis on a topic or text, supported it with reasons, and provided a variety of evidence for each reason.
The writer not only stated a position that could be supported by a variety of trustworthy sources, but also built his argument and led to a conclusion in each part of his text.
The writer wrote a beginning in which she not only set readers up to expect that this would be a piece of opinion writing, but also tried to hook them into caring about her opinion.
The writer wrote a few sentences to hook his readers, perhaps by asking a question, explaining why the topic mattered, telling a surprising fact, or giving background information.
The writer stated his claim.
The writer wrote an introduction that led to a claim or thesis and got her readers to care about her opinion. She got readers to care by not only including a cool fact or juicy question, but also figuring out what was significant in or around the topic and giving readers information about what was significant about the topic.
The writer wrote an introduction that helped readers to understand and care about the topic or text. She thought backward between the piece and the introduction to make made sure that the introduction fit with the whole.
The writer not only clearly stated her claim, but also named the reasons she would develop later. She also told her readers how her text would unfold.
The writer connected his ideas and reasons with his examples using words such as for example and because. He connected one reason or
The writer used words and phrases to glue parts of her piece together. She used phrases such as for example, another example, one time, and for instance to show when she
The writer used transition words and phrases to connect evidence back to his reasons using phrases such as this shows that . . .
The writer helped readers follow his thinking with phrases such as another reason
The writer used transitional phrases to help readers understand how the different parts of his piece fit together to support his argument.
OPINION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, PreK–6 (continued)
DEVELOPMENT
Elaboration
The writer put more and then more on the page.
The writer put everything she thought about the topic (or book) on the page.
The writer wrote at least one reason for his opinion.
The writer wrote at least two reasons and wrote at least a few sentences about each one.
Craft
The writer said, drew, and "wrote" some things about what she liked and did not like.
The writer had details in pictures and words.
The writer used labels and words to give details.
The writer chose words that would make readers agree with her opinion.
LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS
Spelling
The writer could read his pictures and some of his words.
The writer could read her writing.
The writer used all he knew about words and chunks of words (at, op, is
To spell a word, the writer used what he knew about spelling patterns (sion, ey, ly, etc.).
Punctuation
The writer could
The writer could
Grade 3
Grade 4
Grade 5
Grade 6
DEVELOPMENT
The writer not only named her reasons to support her opinion, but also wrote more about each one.
The writer gave reasons to support his opinion. He chose the reasons to convince his readers.
The writer included examples and information to support his reasons, perhaps from a text, his knowledge, or his life.
The writer gave reasons to support her opinion that were parallel and did not overlap. She put them in an order that she thought would be most convincing.
The writer included evidence such as facts, examples, quotations, micro-stories, and information to support her claim.
The writer discussed and unpacked the way that the evidence went with the claim.
The writer included and arranged a variety of evidence to support her reasons.
The writer used trusted sources and information from authorities on the topic.
The writer explained how her evidence strengthened her argument. She explained exactly which evidence supported which point.
The writer acknowledged different sides to the argument.
The writer not only told readers to believe him, but also wrote in ways that got them thinking or feeling in certain ways.
The writer made deliberate word choices to convince her readers, perhaps by emphasizing or repeating words that made readers feel emotions.
If it felt right to do so, the writer chose precise details and facts to help make her points and used figurative language to draw readers into her line of thought.
The writer made choices about which evidence was best to include or not include to support her points.
The writer used a convincing tone.
The writer made deliberate word choices to have an effect on his readers.
The writer reached for the precise phrase, metaphor, or image that would convey his ideas.
The writer made choices about how to angle his evidence to support his points.
When it seemed right to do so, the writer tried to use a scholarly voice and varied his sentences to create the pace and tone of the different sections of his piece.
The writer chose words deliberately to be clear and to have an effect on his readers.
The writer reached for precise phrases, metaphors, analogies, or images that would help to convey his ideas and strengthen his argument.
The writer chose how to present evidence and explained why and how the evidence supported his claim.
The writer used shifts in his tone to help readers follow his argument; he made his piece sound serious.
LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS
The writer used what she knew about word families and spelling rules to help her spell and edit.
The writer got help from others to check her spelling and punctuation before she wrote her final draft.
The writer used what he knew about word families and spelling rules to help him spell and edit. He used the word wall and dictionaries to help him when needed.
The writer used what she knew about word patterns to spell correctly and she used references to help her spell words when needed. She made sure to correctly spell words that were important to her topic.
The writer used resources to be sure the words in her writing were spelled correctly, including returning to sources to check spelling.
The writer punctuated dialogue correctly with commas and quotation marks.
While writing, the writer put punctuation at the end of every sentence.
The writer wrote in ways that helped readers read with expression, reading some parts quickly, some slowly, some parts in one sort of voice and others in another.
When writing long, complex sentences, the writer used commas to make them clear and correct.
The writer used periods to fix her run-on sentences.
The writer used commas to set off introductory parts of sentences, for example, At this time in history, and it was common to . . .
The writer used a variety of punctuation to fix any run-on sentences.
The writer used punctuation to cite his sources.
The writer used punctuation such as dashes, colons, parentheses, and semicolons to help him include or connect extra information in some of his sentences.
May be photocopied for classroom use. © 2013 by Lucy Calkins and Colleagues from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project from Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing (Firsthand: Portsmouth, NH).
Part II: The Assessment Tools—Opinion Writing
84
85
Name:
Date:
How does my piece go?
Did I do it like a first grader?
Not Yet
Yes!
Sample 1, page 1
Sample 1, page 2
Grade 1
Dear Mr. Santera,
The writer began by stating his opinion.
Please let us play football. Everyone likes football. Football is fun!
The writer elaborated on his opinion and tried to get his reader's attention and interest.
Everyone can play. On the weekends I play with my brothers John, Chris, and Peter. Sometimes my dog catches the ball. He loves to catch balls.
The writer wrote at least one reason to support his opinion.
We don't just want to go on the swings. I can bring my football from home and share.
Sam
Others can read the writing: there are spaces between words, letters for sounds, and capital letters for names. The writer also ended sentences with punctuation marks and used commas in dates and lists.
OPINION Learning Progressions Developed through the Progressions
Part II: The Assessment Tools—Opinion Writing
101
117



Online Resources for Teaching Writing

Grade-specific online resources support teaching throughout the school year. This rich assortment of instructional tools includes downloadable, printable files for anchor charts, figures, student exemplars, checklists, Spanish translations of many resources, and more.




Conference Notes Grid
Traducción de los Puntos de Enseñanza de Escritura—Primer Grado
UNIDAD # 1 DE ESCRITURA DE TCRWP DE PARA 1º GRADO GÉNERO NARRATIVO
PEQUEÑOS MOMENTOS
Tramo # 1: Escribir historias de pequeños momentos con independencia.
Lección # 1: Las vidas están llenas de historias para contar.
Lección # 2: Cuando hacen planes para escribir, los escritores tocan y dicen, hacen un dibujo (esquema), y luego escriben.
Lección # 3: Los escritores usan dibujos para agregarlos a su historia.
Lección # 4: Los escritores estiran las palabras para poderlas escribir y escriben todos los sonidos que escuchan.
Lección # 5: Los escritores
Lección # 6: Los parejas
cuentos (historias).
Nombre:
Fecha:
NARRATIVO (continued)
Primer Grado
Convenciones del lenguaje
Ortografía
Yo usé todo lo que sabía acerca de palabras y pedazos de palabras (ma, cho, de, etc.) para ayudarme a escribir correctamente.
Escribí todas las palabras del muro de palabras correctamente y usé el muro de palabras para que me ayudara a escribir otras palabras.
Yo terminé mis oraciones con puntuación.
Yo usé mayúsculas para los nombres.
Desarrollo
Elaboración
Yo puse el dibujo que tenía en mi cabeza en el papel. Yo puse detalles en dibujos y palabras.
Oficio de escritor
NARRATIVO
Primer Grado
Estructura
En general
Yo escribí acerca de una vez en que hice algo
Inicio
Yo traté de escribir un comienzo para mi historia.
Transiciones
Yo puse mis páginas en orden. Usé palabras tales como and (y) y then, so (entonces).
Final
Yo encontré una manera de terminar mi historia.
Organización
Yo escribí mi historia a través de tres o más páginas.
AÚN NO
COMENZANDO
¡SÍ!
Ways to Bring Stories to LIFE!
unfreeze people
make them MOVE
make them TALK
tell small steps
bring out the inside
make people FEEL
make people THINK
FIG. 4-8 Interactive writing
FIG. 6-1 Luka's story
I went to the Ballingate. It was my bryvey I was thNing 6. it was in

Session 5

Zooming In

Focusing on Small Moments

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach children that writers write with focus.

GETTING READY

- ✔ Construction paper cut out in the shape of a watermelon with Velcro dots as seeds, so that they can be easily removed when showing how you can pick just one seed to write a story (or other visual) (see Connection)
- ✔ Mentor text, *Night of the Veggie Monster*
- ✔ Your own Small Moment story (see Teaching)
- ✔ A blank booklet to use in the teaching part of the lesson
- ✔ Published books you have read to your class and that your children are familiar with that exemplify small moments with details (e.g., *The Relatives Came* [Rylant 1993], *The Kissing Hand* [Penn 2007], *Shortcut* [Crews 1996], *A Chair for My Mother* [Williams 1982]) (see Share)

YOU'LL SEE that often in our units of study for the primary grades, you will run from one side of the boat to another, teaching first an emphasis on phonics and spelling and then an emphasis on content and craft. Both matter, and to young writers, very little is automatic yet.

From yesterday's focus on spelling, this session shifts to an examination of craft and specifically invites children to focus their narratives so that the stories they write live up to the name Small Moment stories. There are many reasons why I emphasize focus, but a word of caution: This unit has been piloted in tens of thousands of classrooms, and the results have been remarkable, with many teachers and parents saying in amazement, "I had absolutely no idea my kids could write like that!" However, many teachers interpreted our emphasis on writing focused narratives as the letter of the law and have insisted that every story every child write be absolutely focused. An account of looking for and finding a lost dog becomes a zoomed-in account of the moment when Mom returns home with the dog.

But your children are still just learning about how stories go, and although their writing will be far more charming and probably more effective when they focus in on a tighter narrative, the truth is that it is just fine for a child to write on page 1 about the lost dog, on page 2 about the search, and on page 3 about the reunion. It would even be fine if the story ended with a party celebrating the dog's return! Also, keep in mind that focus and detail are important—but not more important than writers writing a lot, with fluency and voice.

Having backed away a bit from what has sometimes turned out to be an overemphasis on the importance of focus, I do want to say that if the goal is to improve children's writing, I know of no easier way to accomplish this than to teach youngsters how to focus in on smaller moments, writing the story of single events. By limiting the size—the scope—of a subject, details emerge that make all the difference. In this session, you will teach your students to write about one small time instead of writing "about everything" stories.

MINILESSON

Zooming In

Focusing on Small Moments

CONNECTION

Name the work that children have been doing that calls for them to learn a new strategy.

"Writers, when you think about true stories that you could write, some of you are coming up with great big giant topics like, 'I could write about my life' or 'I could write about school.'" I gestured to show these topics are so huge that I staggered under the weight of them. "You may have heard this in kindergarten, but sometimes we call those 'watermelon topics' because they are so big. They are so big, in fact, that just like they are hard to carry, they are hard to write! Jessica has been writing and writing and she has only gotten to the very beginning of what she wants to say because she is trying to write everything. She's trying to write the whole watermelon! Stop and think for a moment. Does your story feel like you are carrying a watermelon? Does it feel like you will have to write and write and write and that you have to tell *everything*? Thumbs up if you know what I mean."

Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to teach you that instead of writing about big (watermelon) topics, writers write about teeny tiny (seed) stories—little stories inside the one big topic. And the cool thing is that inside a watermelon topic there are a zillion teeny tiny seed stories!"

TEACHING

Tell children that the mentor author probably first thought of a big, general watermelon topic and then decided to focus on a tiny seed story.

"I'm pretty sure that when George McClements sat down to write (like we'll do soon) he probably had a few big, huge topics on his mind. I think of them as watermelon topics." I used my hands to illustrate the size of a watermelon story. "He probably thought, 'I *could* write about my vacation,'" my hands showed this would be a watermelon topic, "or about eating food with my family." Again, my hands showed this would be another watermelon topic.

"But here is the thing. George knows that great story writers don't usually write about big huge watermelon topics. Instead, great story writers know that inside any one of those topics there are a zillion little seed stories. Like inside the

◆ COACHING

You might want to use yourself as an example in this connection. You could describe how you realized your writing is going for a whole page and you haven't even hinted at the important part yet!

You will want to decide how the author you have selected can help children with beginning their writing process. You won't want to say "George Clements wrote about his son putting on veggie monster performances and you can write about veggies too," because you are hoping children learn strategies (not topics) from authors they admire.

topic 'eating with my family' George could have written about taking his son to the pancake house or about how he makes these fantastic meatballs and his son can eat five at a time, or about when his son learned to eat with chopsticks. His writing would have gone on and on and on, with just one sentence about each of those things: we went to the pancake house *and* my son learned to eat with chopsticks *and* he ate the fantastic meatballs I made *and*. . . .

"But George decided not to write all about a watermelon topic—like all about eating with his family—and instead he chose just one tiny seed, one tiny story. So he wrote just about *one* time when his son, who can't stand vegetables, put his parents through one of his 'veggie monster performances' while facing a plate of peas."

This metaphor has been helpful in lots of K–1 classrooms, but a few children interpret the term watermelon topic *literally and write about watermelons and seeds! Be mindful that metaphors can be confusing to children who are English language learners. Don't bypass metaphor, but do explicitly tell them what you mean. "You know how watermelons are big? Well, when I say 'watermelon topic' I mean a big topic such as. . . ."*

Use a shared class experience to demonstrate picking just one small story from a big watermelon topic.

"When you write, you'll want to take lessons from what George has done, and to ask yourself, 'Wait. Is this a watermelon topic?' Let's say you decided to write about today in school. Think to yourself, 'Is that a teeny tiny seed story,'" and I gestured to show picking up a watermelon seed, "'or a giant watermelon topic?'" Again I gestured. The children gestured that it would be a watermelon topic.

"If I wrote a story about a big huge topic like that, my story wouldn't have any details. It might go, 'We had morning meeting,'" I touched one seed on the watermelon slice, "*and* we went to art class." I touched another. "*And* our rabbit, Magic, jumped out of the crate." I touched another seed. "*And* Josh's dad came to talk to us about recycling." I touched another seed. "Wow! That is a *gigantic* watermelon story with a lot of seed stories.

"But we can learn from George that good story writers pick a teeny tiny seed story. I think I'm going to write about just one of those seeds that was in my big topic! I'll write about Magic jumping out of the crate." I picked up a booklet, and touched the first page. "Hmm, how did *that* story begin? Shall I start with all of us walking back from art?" I shook my head. "That is from another seed. Not the one story about Magic. Art class doesn't fit with our Rabbit Escape story. Shall I begin right before we noticed that he had escaped from his cage? Let's think for a moment about how a seed story could start." I paused to let everyone think. "It could go like this."

Remember you can use your mentor text to support different aspects of writing. Often teachers use the mentor text to highlight small craft moves. Keep in mind that a mentor text can be used as an example of other aspects of writing, including structure.

> I heard a strange shuffling noise. I looked over at Magic's cage and the door was open and Magic was jumping off the counter!

I turned the page.

Debrief, reminding children to pick just one small story (seed), from a big topic (watermelon) they might be inclined to tell.

"Writers, did you see how I had this big watermelon topic filled with all the stories of what we did today, but then I picked just one seed, one small story? And now we would tell, sketch, and write it across the pages. You can do this, too."

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Ask the children to try to think of another seed story, using the same shared watermelon topic that you used in your demonstration.

"Right now, think back to our big watermelon topic of what happened so far today, but this time, *you* pick just one seed story that you want to tell. Take a minute and when you get the seed story in your head, give me a thumbs up."

Channel children to rehearse for this story by touching and telling across the pages of an imaginary booklet.

"Think about how your story went. What happened first? Make sure the first thing that happened really fits with the story instead of being a part of another seed. Then think about what happened next and at the end. Now pretend you have a booklet with three pages in your hand. Say the words you will write on each page aloud to the person next to you."

After listening in for a few moments, I redirected the students to stop and look at me while I shared what I noticed. "I heard Ronald say he was going to write *just* about the time in art class when he splattered paint all over his shirt! And I heard Rachel say, 'I am *not* going to write about everything. I am *only* going to write about Josh's dad showing us those recycled plastic bottles.'"

Give students repeated practice at identifying seed stories inside big watermelon topics.

"Let's practice finding other seed stories inside big watermelon topics. Here is a big watermelon topic: playing with a friend. Thumbs up if you have one friend in mind and you are thinking of the things you have done when you play together. Now, is playing with a friend a watermelon topic or a seed story?" The children agreed it was a watermelon topic. "Think of one particular thing you did when you played with your friend, one fun—or bad—time you had. Thumbs up if you thought of that!" The children put their thumbs up.

"Okay, you've got that one. Here's another. Is this a watermelon topic or a seed story? Things you like to do in winter." I paused to give them time to think. The children agreed it was a watermelon topic, and with coaching, they selected one particular thing they did one winter as a potential seed story.

LINK

Remind writers that when they write narratives, it always helps to pause and ask, "Is this a watermelon topic?" in which case it is important to focus it more.

"Writers, today and every day when you go to write a story, remember to pause and to ask, 'Is this a watermelon topic or a seed story?' If you have a great big watermelon topic, you can ask, 'What is one specific thing I did that could make a good story?' You'll find there are a zillion seed stories inside each watermelon topic."

CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Supporting Students as They Write More Focused Narratives

TODAY IS AN EXCITING DAY for you and the students because it is the day you will begin to see your students' stories take more of the shape you've been hoping for. Today they may realize that they have so many more stories to tell—the stories they have inside their watermelon topics. While many of your students will *begin* to focus their writing on one time they did something, you will have writers who will need support with this—writers who write about everything they did in a day or on a trip and who continued to do this during today's active engagement. If you plan to help these writers today, the following transcript might be helpful. In it, you'll see how I tend to help students who need support writing more focus.

Shariff flipped through his multiple-page story, beginning to sketch on his last page. "What are you working on as a writer today, Shariff?" I asked as I knelt down next to him. As a response, Shariff turned to the first page and began reading his writing aloud.

"This is me playing baseball. I am getting strawberry ice cream. I am climbing the stairs. I am getting into bed. I am reading a story."

"Wow. What a busy evening! Shariff, you seem to be the kind of writer who really loves to share a lot about your life, and you include details. For example, here where you told me the kind of ice cream you had. And then how you told me that you climbed the stairs because you were going to bed. That really helps the reader picture what happened!" I was naming for Shariff what he was doing as a writer to help him develop a writing identity, to help him get to know the kind of writer he is. I can build on this once I begin teaching. Shariff smiled as he looked back at his story.

I knew I wanted to teach Shariff to focus on one event at a time. I decided to begin the teaching by helping Shariff discover that he had written multiple stories in his booklet. "So, Shariff, I have a question about your story. Did you take that ice cream with you into bed?" He laughed and shook his head. "Oh, so the ice cream and going to bed don't fit together in the same story. Are they two different stories?" He looked at me

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

Writers Stay in the Moment—Even at the End

"Writers, eyes up here for one minute please. Wow! Look at the small, seed stories you have been writing! Before you finish your stories, I want to tell you a very special trick for ending small moment stories. If you end your story with 'and then I went home,' or 'and then I went to sleep,'" I said in a fast, flat tone, "there is a problem. Both endings are not part of your moment, are not part of *this* seed. So many of your stories start in the moment with that first thing that happened. Your ending needs to do that too. It is important for the ending to stay in the moment so your reader doesn't get confused and think you are starting to tell a new story. Here is the trick. To write a good ending that connects to what your story is about, writers can think, 'What is the *very* next thing that happened?' and write that, especially if it is sort of an ending thing."

"For example, Heather was just about to write the ending to her story about her brother's graduation. She thought to herself, 'Now, what happened next?' She reread the part about more and more people coming and thought, 'Well, after that, we went home.' But then she said, 'Wait, no. That didn't happen right after.' Then, she thought, 'What is the *very* next thing that happened?' And she said, 'Oh, yeah! My brother gave me a hug and I said congratulations. Let me write that.' Writers, did you see how Heather ended her Small Moment story about her brother's graduation by writing the *very* next thing that happened, not about stuff that happened much later? If your writing needs an ending soon, you might try this out. Add this strategy to all the things you can try as you write!" (See Figure 5–1.)

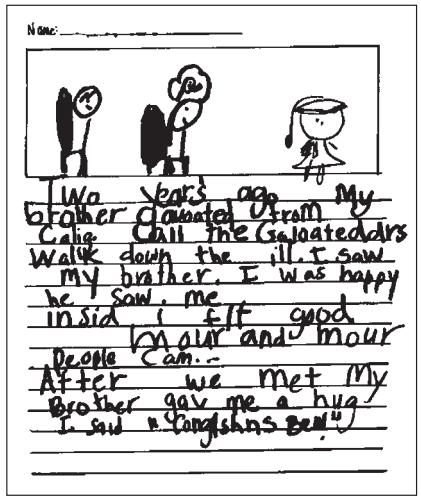


FIG. 5–1 Heather's story about her brother's graduation in which she ends in the moment

curiously, telling me that he hadn't thought about this possibility. "Shariff, remember today how I was thinking about how I could write about something that happened at school and I thought about how I could write about so many things that happened? Each page would have been a different thing, like a giant watermelon story filled with smaller stories like seeds. It would be hard to give this book a title because you've got the baseball story, the ice cream cone story, the going to bed story! All of these are great ideas, and I want to teach you today how writers choose just one story to stretch out. Instead of jamming a whole lot of stories into one book, writers choose one seed story and focus on that. So what will you choose? The baseball game? The ice cream cone?"

"The ice cream one was funny. I loved making the strawberry ice cream cone. It was a big cone with two scoops! It was dripping down my arm." Reaching into the air, Shariff said, "The cone was like *this* big!"

Duly impressed both with the ice cream cone and with his ability to retell the incident, I said, "I have never heard of a cone that big. Wow! And I can picture it dripping down your arm. How could you even begin to eat it fast enough, right? You could write another book about just the ice cream part! I'll show you."

I took hold of a new booklet. Turning the pages, I said, "You can get another booklet like this, and on all these pages, you can stretch out just that small moment of getting the big ice cream cone. You can tell about the two scoops, and you can tell us how it dripped down your arm."

Shariff was thrilled. "Yes, I want to do that!"

"Let's plan it out first. Will it start with you telling your mom you wanted two scoops? Or with you coming into the kitchen for ice cream? Or what?"

"I want to start with the two scoops!"

At this point I wanted to name what Shariff had done as a writer and remind him to do this often in future writing. "Shariff, instead of telling about everything you did—the baseball game, the ice cream cone, the going upstairs, the big watermelon topic—you picked just one seed, one tiny story from that big watermelon topic, and now you're planning to stretch it across three pages, writing about just that moment! Writers do that! And you can do that whenever you write."

You can do this same work in a strategy lesson with a slightly different strategy. You can convene a group of writers who have separate stories on each page or who have a page that doesn't fit. You can ask the writers to reread their stories and decide what one thing their story is about and to give the book a title. Then have them reread and ask, "Does this page fit with my title?" If it does, the page stays. If it doesn't, you could teach the writers to take the page out and use it to write another story. You will need to have the paper and the stapler close by so you can give students blank pages to add to their stories. By physically rearranging pages, you are giving children a concrete experience with revising. If students seem hesitant, you may need to demonstrate with a piece of your own first, because this will give them the confidence to do the same work of tearing off pages with their own stories.

Once they have their new booklets ready to go, you may need to coach them to think about where the story starts, because it is important that they learn to begin and end their stories in ways that connect to the important part. Once they've done that, they can sketch and write, so you could send them off to continue working, reminding them that as they plan future stories, they will want to think about that one thing, that one seed idea, from inside their watermelon topics.

SHARE

Looking to Mentor Texts to Add Detail to Our Writing

Set the stage for cherishing details in stories. Read aloud excerpts from a few published stories that are filled with details, sharing with children the parts you love and letting them have a chance to find parts they love.

"Writers, have you ever been someplace—like at the beach or walking down a city sidewalk—and suddenly, you spot some tiny little thing that is so cool that it stops you in your tracks and you get down on your knees to see it, and you call to others, 'Hey, look, there is this really cool thing you almost walked right past!'? I've always felt that little kids are the best at spotting those tiny little details that others would just walk right past—like a buttercup flower growing in the crack between two squares of the sidewalk or a tiny little fossil imprinted into a beach stone.

"Here's the thing. There are tiny jewels like one precious buttercup in good stories, too. Some people read right past them. But kids and authors, both, notice those tiny little gems and say to everyone else, 'Wait, slow down. Did you see this?!'

"I'm going to read you just a bit of a famous story by a writer like you who writes about small moments from her life. It's Cynthia Rylant's *The Relatives Came*. You've heard it before, so it should sound familiar. Here's a tiny little detail that other people might miss if they weren't paying attention. It's part of a description of the relatives gathering in her house and going to sleep. Remember when they all went to sleep without an extra bed?"

> *So a few squeezed in with us and the rest slept on the floor, some with their arms thrown over the closest person, or some with an arm across one person and a leg across another. It was different, going to sleep with all that new breathing in the house.*

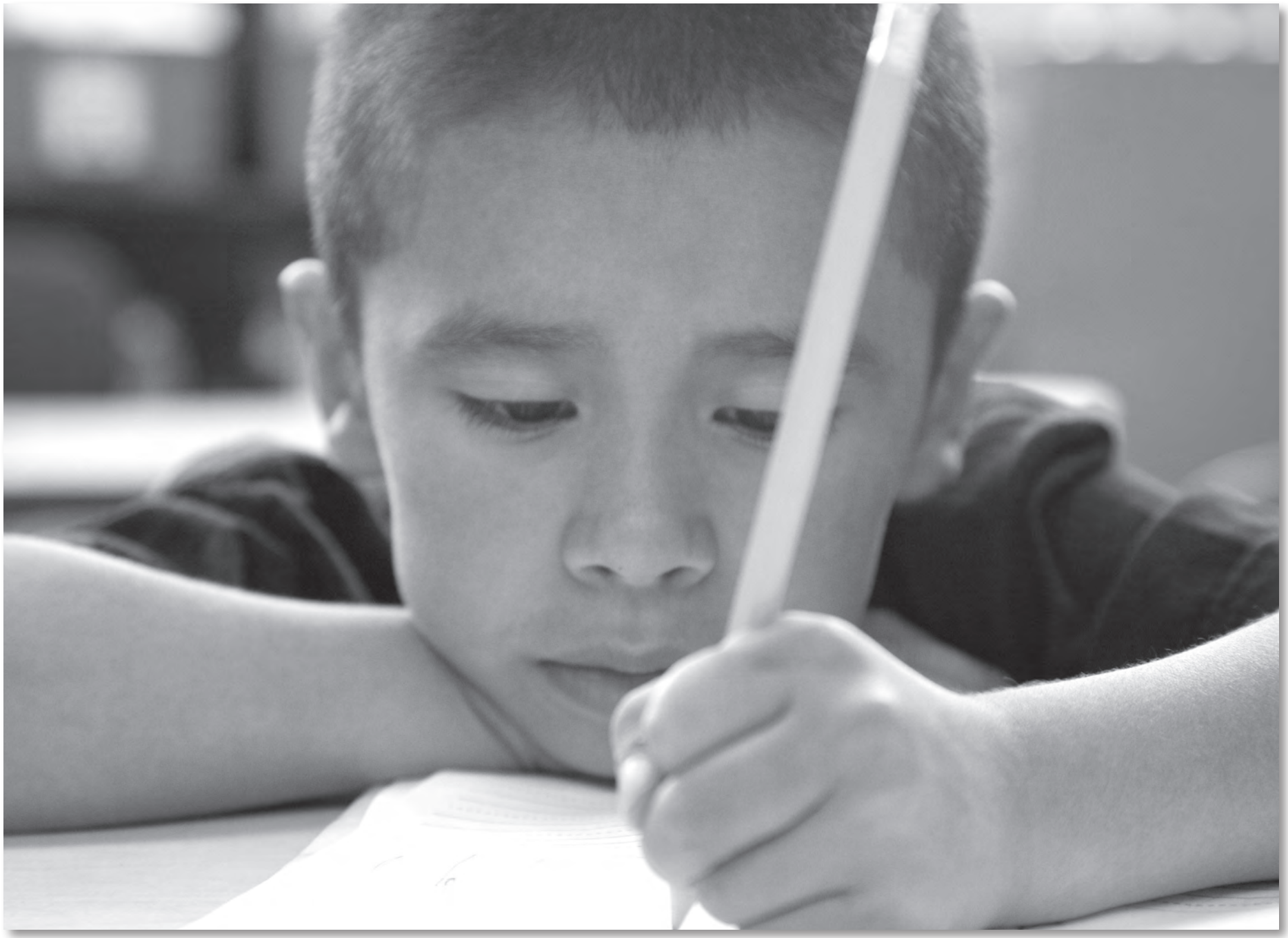
"Did you notice how Cynthia talked about all those people in the house by telling about 'all that new breathing' and by telling us about the ten hugs that take place just between the kitchen and the living room? Can't you just see that house packed full of aunts and uncles and cousins?

"Now listen to the tiny details in *The Kissing Hand*, of how Chester kisses his mother's hand."

> *Chester took his mother's hand in his own and unfolded her large, familiar fingers into a fan. Next, he leaned forward and kissed the center of her hand. "Now you have a Kissing Hand, too" he told her.*

"Isn't it fun to share parts of writing that we love? Writers, turn and tell the person sitting next to you the details you liked in that description, and tell each other what these details make you want to try or add in your own writing."

Here, we choose Cynthia Rylant's The Relatives Came *and Audrey Penn's* The Kissing Hand *because our children are familiar with these stories from our daily read-alouds. You will of course want to choose stories that are familiar to your children, ones they've heard before, so the focus is on the strategy at hand and not the content of the story.*



Session 2

Writers Tell Information across Their Fingers, Sketch, then Write

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach children that writers plan what they are going to say before they write. They do this by telling information across their fingers, sketching, and then writing.

GETTING READY

- ✔ An example of a keepsake: a decorated folder, backpack, or key chain (see Connection)
- ✔ Information Writing Checklist, Grade K, on a large chart (see Connection and Share)
- ✔ Anchor chart titled "How to Write a Teaching Book" (see Connection)
- ✔ Small copies of the "How to Write a Teaching Book" chart, one for each partnership
- ✔ A giant-sized book of your own demonstration writing made out of chart paper, which you will use to demonstrate today's strategy (see Teaching)
- ✔ Student writing to assess against the Information Writing Checklist (see Share)

I REMEMBER LEARNING TO PLAY TENNIS. My mother would holler at me, day after day, calling, "Keep your eye on the ball." I would think, "What do you think I am looking at? Birds? Of course I'm keeping my eye on the ball." Then one day I saw the ball as it hung, suspended at the top of a bounce, and saw my racket hit the ball, too, and I realized that prior to that day, I had never actually kept my eye on the ball.

I say this because when teaching writing, we, like my mother, will need to call out a handful of instructions, over and over. Kids will think they are doing exactly as we say, until one day, they actually *do* what we've supported all along, and it will come to them that, Holy moly, it really makes a difference when I do that.

Today's session contains very little new content. Instead, you return to work that you taught earlier this year and to content you touched on lightly yesterday. Today you essentially say to kids, "The work that you did yesterday, and also earlier this year, is still important today." You'll recall that you ended yesterday by reading through the Information Writing Checklist that you hope your children encountered during kindergarten. You begin today by returning to that checklist and to the important idea that even though this is children's very first unit this year in which they are writing informational books, they bring prior knowledge to this unit and need to use all they know, right from the start.

Then, you'll remind children that yesterday's lesson emphasized that writers of information books are teachers and often prepare for writing by teaching others. More specifically, you channeled students to use a teaching voice and to use their fingers as graphic organizers, helping them divide their content into different pages of information (each represented by a finger). Today you remind students to prepare for their writing by thinking and saying what they might write, and more specifically, you spotlight the notion, mentioned in passing yesterday, that writers can use their fingers as tools to support organization. This is a slightly different planning technique than what children learned for writing small moments. Rather than touch the exact page they will write on, children use their fingers to represent each page. This will become important later on as children construct booklets with different kinds of paper. Rather than touching a preconstructed booklet, children

will plan their teaching book on their fingers and select the type of paper (out of several choices) that will best teach that information.

"Transference is something we can never take for granted. Experienced teachers know that instead, it is wise to explicitly teach for transference."

The simplest version of this is for children to say one thing they know about a topic while touching one finger and another thing they know about that topic while touching another finger. This might sound something like, "One thing that I know about recess is that kids get exercise during it." Then, next finger, "Another thing that I know is that a lot of kids play games like tag during recess." After you remind children that it helps to tap fingers as they ramble off information about their topics, you can build on this by teaching children that, actually, they can say a few sentences about each fact before moving to the next fact. This rehearsal doesn't take more than a few minutes, so children can engage in rehearsal and still have time to write a second book during today's workshop.

To help aid with transference from the *Small Moments* unit, you will want to create a new version of the "How to Write a Story" chart, altering the wording slightly to match this new type of writing students will be doing. You will title this chart "How to Write a Teaching Book." And under "Plan," rather than "Touch and tell," you will write, "Say it across your fingers."

This session, then, revisits the planning session from the *Small Moments* unit and teaches the broader concept that much of what children learned to do during their previous unit of study will apply now to this new unit. Transference is something we never can take for granted. Experienced teachers know that instead, it is wise to explicitly teach for transference.

There are about a score of other things that you taught children to do during the previous unit that you'll want them to transfer into this unit. Make this explicit. For example, come right out and say something to the effect of, "I am so proud of you all because last month, you learned to. . . . So, did you forget all about that now that you are writing informational books? No way! That is totally cool. Let me list other things that you learned to do during our first unit, and for each of these things, will you and your partner give yourself a thumbs up or a thumbs down, depending on if you are still doing it?"

MINILESSON

Writers Tell Information across Their Fingers, Sketch, then Write

CONNECTION

Share an example of a keepsake—perhaps a sticker on a notebook or a key chain on a jacket zipper—that jogs memories, just as anchor charts do.

"Writers, I was looking at Charlie's backpack this morning. Look at it!" I held it up. "You see how it has badges that remind him of things he's done? Charlie, this badge says, 'Red Jacket Ski Hill.' When you look at that badge, what do you remember?"

Charlie stopped bobbing back and forth long enough to say, "Skiing." I nodded, accepting that underdeveloped answer with enthusiasm. "And I bet that just looking at the badge helps you remember all about the Red Jacket Ski Hill, right?"

Then I spoke to the whole class. "It is important that people have ways to remind them of things they never want to forget. Some people use their backpacks to remind them of stuff. In our classroom, we use teaching charts to remind us of stuff, don't we? And yesterday we studied a chart—a checklist, really—that shows stuff many of you learned in kindergarten. We want to make sure that we are doing *all* these things so that we can learn new and harder things about writing teaching books."

Read aloud the checklist on information writing from kindergarten, asking writers to consider, then talk about, how many of the things on the checklist they have already done in their writing.

"So before you start writing today, I'm going to read this kindergarten checklist that we looked at yesterday one more time. Will you and your partner talk about things on this checklist that you aren't yet doing—things you want to try hard to do today? You ready?" I read aloud from the checklist we'd studied yesterday. The Information Writing Checklist, Grade K is available in the online resources.

"Writers, turn and tell your partner the items on our checklist that you are going to work hard to do today. Go!"

I listened as Alfred told his partner he was going to add labels on his pictures. Annie said she would check that her book had a good ending. Then I reconvened the class. "Writers, your goal is not just to write teaching books, like we discussed yesterday. Your goal is to write books that are better and better every day. Will you look at yesterday's book and think

◆ COACHING

In an instance like this, you will want to be mindful that Charlie's badges are not the point. Don't let the discussion of the backpack and skiing become more than a passing reference. You don't want the kids to be confused over whether you are teaching about backpacks and skiing or about anchor charts and the writing process. Always remember that you need to be clear about what you are emphasizing. Streamline things, make your point, and then let kids write!

Teachers, you may decide that instead of reading the whole checklist and then popping this all-important question, you may read just three items, then ask this question, then read another few items, and again ask children to weigh whether one of the items might become a personal goal.

not just about the things you are going to fix up in that book, but also about what you will do to make the new book you start today *even better*?" I left a little pool of silence for the children to do this thinking.

Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to remind you that before you write a teaching book, you plan how your book will go. And guess what? You *already know* how to plan your teaching books! You plan your teaching books by saying your information across your fingers and then quickly sketching something you'll write on each of the pages."

TEACHING

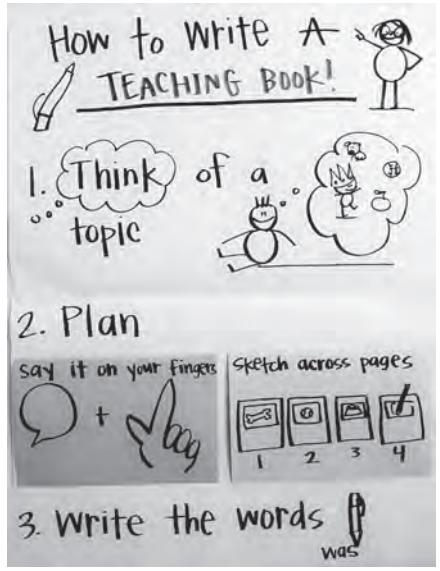
Point out that just as teachers plan for our teaching, writers, too, must plan. Illustrate this by suggesting your minilesson would be chaotic had you not planned.

"Writers, last night, I was sitting at home, *planning* what I would teach in today's minilesson, when all of a sudden I realized, 'Wow. I know what I better tell the kids. I better tell them that teachers *plan*!' Remember, nonfiction writers are a kind of teacher. That means that you are teachers, too. Wouldn't it be *crazy* if I can up here to do a minilesson and it went like this?"

> *Hi, mathematicians. No, uh, wait, Hi, um, whoever you are. Ah! Yes! Hi, writers. Today we're gonna, um, well, we'll learn about* something. *(I'm not sure what.) One thing is that writers use colons before a list. But no, colons aren't that important. We should talk about About the Author sections. No, wait.*

Point out that some writers of teaching books neglect to plan, resulting in chaotic books. Stress that planning for teaching books resembles planning for narratives. Model planning.

"It would be really crazy if my minilessons went like that, wouldn't it be? I'm telling you this because some people actually *forget* to plan their teaching books, so their writing just jumps from one topic to the next to the next, like I just did: 'I'm going to teach about . . . no wait . . . no, not that, but. . . .'"



"I've given you and your partner a small copy of a chart that is similar to the one we made together during our *Small Moments* unit. The "How to Write a Teaching Book" chart can be found in the online resources.] Do you remember how we learned that when writers are writing Small Moment stories, it helps to think of an idea, then plan, then write? Well, now that you are writing teaching books, I made a few little changes to match this new type of writing you are doing. Writers of teaching books think of a topic they want to teach others about, plan their information across their fingers, sketch, then write.

Make sure you play up the confused nature of your teaching so it sounds completely and totally chaotic. I've tried to write it so that the kids will be laughing at how silly this kind of teaching (or writing) would be. This lesson actually revisits the topic from yesterday, emphasizing that writers structure their writing and address one thing at a time, but the minilesson gets at the same content from a different avenue.

Notice that I am teaching what to do by accentuating what not to do. I want writers to be able to monitor their own work and realize when they are doing something that is not working. I want them to realize that teaching, or writing, in a fashion that lurches from one subtopic to another is far from ideal, and I'm hoping to accentuate the problems of doing that.

"Try to notice whether I do each of those things as I plan my teaching book, okay?" I shifted into the role of writer, holding a giant chart-sized book. "Let's see, first I need to think of a topic. Well, I can use places I go. I go to yoga every day, so I will write about that." I looked up and thought.

"Now let me plan." I held one finger up and dictated. "I'm going to tell you all about yoga. In yoga, you do lots of stretches. Also," I held up my next finger, "to do yoga, you need a mat." I held up one last finger, smiling. "Yoga helps people to feel better." In an aside to the children, I said, "Are you noticing what I have done so far to plan?" and I gestured toward the bullet for saying the text across your fingers.

Pointing to the phrase "Sketch across pages," I sketched. Pantomiming, I stuck my tongue out and quickly sketched a page and then in a stage-whispered aside told the children that I would do that on every page. "Let's read the list together to make sure I am ready to write the words." The class read together as if this was a shared reading.

Debrief by stressing the way this lesson is transferable to other days and other topics.

"That was easy. I'm ready to write my teaching book! Remember, writers, whenever you want to plan your teaching book, you do this in almost the exact same way that you planned your Small Moments books: think of an idea, say your information across your fingers, sketch, then write."

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Channel children to locate topics for today's informational writing, then to plan with partners.

"Will you do the same kind of planning for the book you'll write today? I know a few of you will first finish up yesterday's book. Before you can plan today's writing, each of you needs to come up with a topic, so I'll give you a minute to think."

After a minute, I said, "How many of you have a topic in mind for your next book? Thumbs up." When many children signaled, I said, "Turn to your partners now, and will one of you, whoever has a topic and is ready, plan the book you are going to write today? Say your information across your fingers, remembering to teach your partner something interesting on each page, on each finger. If there is time, partners can switch roles and hear a second book."

The room erupted with talk. The children couldn't wait to teach their new topics. I circulated among them, noticing their work. After a minute, I stopped them. "Hattie," I started, "you were saying your information across your fingers and adding details when something wasn't clear. Wow! And Anessa, you were saying your information across your fingers using a teaching voice. Most of you have a topic, and said what you will write, using the same teaching voice that Anessa used. That means that when you go back to sketch and then write, you will be thinking about your readers the whole, entire time. Well done!"

It is not common to demonstrate so many steps or to rehearse the entire process of choosing a topic and planning a book during a teaching component of a minilesson. This is more steps and more content than you will usually demonstrate. But today, you want to give kids a sense of the flow of the whole process, so isolating just a part of it wouldn't work. The essential thing is that you need to be quick, confident, and economical in all you say or do. Don't get feeling so comfortable that you become chatty and start embellishing things!

During those thirty seconds of silence, if you actually sit in the chair and think of a topic you *could write—even though, yes, you already have a book started—the fact that you are mentally doing what you want the kids to do has a magical power, and kids are far more apt to do what you want them to do. Try this. You'll be amazed at the power.*

Teachers, it is okay that children get started and do not completely finish this, and certainly it is okay that there often is not time for the partners to exchange roles. Your point is to teach writers that this sort of planning helps, not necessarily to make sure that every writer has completed his or her planning during the minilesson.

LINK

Coach writers to use their best teaching voice when they touch and tell and then to quickly bring their voice to print.

"Writers, you are using beautiful teaching voices when you touch your fingers and say what you will write, but sometimes when you turn to write those great words and sentences in your books, that beautiful teaching voice disappears. Hold onto it!

"You are doing some good work when you take the time to get ready to write your teaching book. Will you look at our Information Writing Checklist and remind yourself that you will also want to remember all those items on that list?"

Channel writers to get started saying information across their fingers, sketching, and writing—and then send them off to continue writing.

"Can we try something together, writers? I want you to turn to your first page and make a quick sketch. As you sketch, *say in your mind* the words you are going to be writing on that page." After a minute, I said, "In a second I am going to suggest you get started writing the words you are saying on that page. But before you write, say the words you are going to write aloud to yourself one more time. Then start to write."

As I saw writers working with absorption, I signaled for one, then another and another, to move to his or her writing place and continue working.

CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Rally Kids to Get Started on the Big Work of the Unit—and Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

AT THE START OF ANY UNIT OF STUDY, you will want to use small groups and, to a lesser extent, conferring to issue a generous invitation into the unit, helping all your children feel at home doing the new work. For today, then, it will be important for you to keep your priorities straight and to use your time in ways that generate enthusiastic participation in the new work of the unit.

You'll want to lead lots of informal small groups during conferring time, so it helps to think in advance about some of the teaching methods you'll use and about some of the content you'll teach.

If you could watch teachers doing small-group instruction in a writing workshop, you'd notice right away that youngsters don't start and finish a piece of writing within a small group. Instead, the small groups give a teacher a chance to "teach into" kids' ongoing work. There are two main kinds of groups. Sometimes, the teacher arrives at a table full of writers, watches long enough to sense what many of the kids need, and then teaches that group, perhaps by using one child as an example. Other times, the teacher gestures for a few youngsters who need similar help to pull together and then teaches a common topic to those children.

Let's for today imagine that you arrive at one table, then another, and then another, watch for a bit, and then teach into the work the children are doing. Start by planning your time frame. You'll be at a table no more than, say, four minutes and sometimes, half that time. During that time, you watch what kids are doing, and this clues you in to what you will teach. Then you ask for and get everyone's attention. You teach kids what to do, perhaps helping them get started doing that. Then—and this is the hardest part—you leave. You don't stay to watch them work, to perfect what they are doing, or to prop up the level of their work. Instead, you circle to a new table, knowing that in so doing you are giving the original group time to approximate. After working with two or three more groups, you circle back to the first group and ramp up the instruction you gave earlier.

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Remind Writers that Once They're Done, They've Just Begun**

"Writers, today I reminded you that when writing teaching books, you can touch and tell, sketch, then write, just as you did when writing Small Moment stories. There are *lots* of things you already know, as writers, that you need to remember to do still. Watch me get stuck and see if you can draw on things you already know to help me."

I shifted into role-playing a six-year-old writer. Holding up a booklet, I said, "I'm all done. I finished my teaching book. All done!" Then I put my feet up on the table and leaned back in an exaggerated "I'm done" pose.

Children clamored to talk. Hattie said, in her best teacher-imitation voice, "When you're done, you've just begun. Do another book!" Others added. "Put it in the Done folder." "First add on." "You gotta put more details in."

Nodding, I said, "I'm totally impressed. You know that when writers are done, they've just begun. Today I'm going to watch all the totally cool things you can do once you're done. Because Hattie is right. Once you're done, you've just begun. You can make your book even better."

All of this will require thinking on your feet and making snap decisions, and frankly, the only way to do that is by being prepared. If you come to a group of kids and you already anticipate that you'll teach one of four possible things, it is not hard to decide which of those four possible topics will be most useful to that group. Don't allow yourself to become deeply invested in helping any one child write a terrific text or even do well whatever it is that you teach. Deep work with one child will be at the expense of bringing half a dozen other youngsters into the gist of this unit.

So what are some of the things you can anticipate teaching? For one thing, writers tend to tackle gigantic topics: a five-page booklet is titled "The Whole Wide World of Dogs." You will want to coach writers to focus their topics somewhat so that, for example, the writer tackles one breed of dog or one dog show rather than writing all about every kind of dog. Then, too, young writers tend to put one or two pieces of information related to a subtopic on a page and then they jump to another subtopic. More development will help. For youngsters, this means literally writing more about each subtopic before moving to the next. Since young writers tend to add in everything but the kitchen sink, rereading to take out stuff that "doesn't go" can be important. Also, writers don't always realize that the drawing stage of writing can be generative. They draw and then write and then turn the page. If the writer began to habitually return to the picture, adding more to it, this could fuel a second round of writing work on that page.

SHARE

Writers Learn to Assess Their Own Writing by Assessing Shared Texts

Set one writer up to read his information book aloud while the class evaluates that text to see ways he does (and does not yet) show that he is meeting the criteria for good informational writing.

"Marco has finished his teaching book, and he wondered if I could help him check that he has done everything on the Information Writing Checklist that we brought up from your kindergarten classrooms. I thought maybe we could *all* help Marco check that he has done all those things that he knows how to do. Marco, in a minute I am going to ask you to read your book aloud to us and we'll talk about places where we saw you doing all the things you guys already learned." (This checklist can be found in the online resources.)

"Let's all take jobs. Who wants to see if Marco seems interested in his topic?" Some children volunteered. "And who will listen to see if he teaches the reader about his topic? Who can check for that?" Soon we had listeners checking that the pictures teach, that the writer ended his book with a final thought, that he put spaces between words *and* did his best to spell each word, and so forth.

Marco read his piece aloud (see Figure 2–1).

The class agreed Marco had done some of the items on the checklist and still needed to add a final thought about his topic.

Channel all members of the class to transfer this work to their own books, rereading their own writing to self-evaluate it against the same criteria that the class used to assess Marco's writing.

"Now, writers, here is the big job. Can you apply what you just did to your own book? Read your own book and self-evaluate it, then decide what to do—and do it!" The children began doing this work. "And remember, anytime you are writing a teaching book, you can refer to our Information Writing Checklist to see if you can add anything to your book."

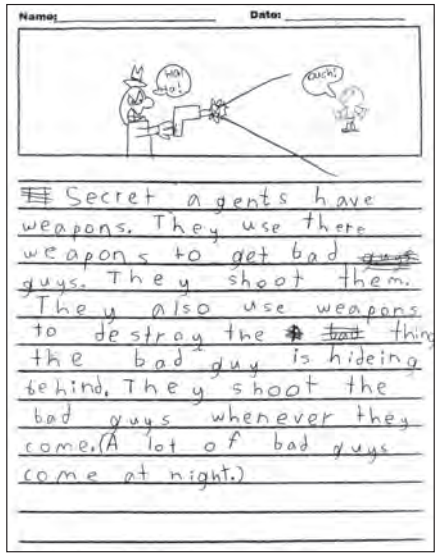


FIG. 2–1 The class used Marco's draft with the checklist.

Session 10

Making Comparisons in Writing

RAY BRADBURY ONCE SAID, "Quantity produces quality. If you only write a few things, you're doomed" (*Writer's Digest* interview February 1976). We hope you'll carry these words with you as you hold expectations high, encouraging your writers to produce review after review, so that in just a few days' time, a healthy stack of reviews will fill each folder. Today's session suggests teaching writers to take all they know about opinion writing and lift the level of their work across all the reviews in their folders.

In today's session, you make students aware that when the quality of their work is uneven, this can be an invitation to roll up their sleeves. You'll probably use your mid-workshop voiceovers to exclaim and challenge writers to look again at reviews on the "done" side of their folders and ask themselves some serious questions: "Are these reviews *truly* done?" "Have I done all that I can to each and every one of my reviews?" Kids will be quick to admit, "No, I haven't revised *every* review in my folder," and with your encouragement, they'll move drafts from the "done" side of their folders to the "still working" side.

The teaching you'll do during today's minilesson will also add to students' growing repertoire, reminding them that they can use comparisons in their review writing, much as they did when ranking items in their collections. It's important that students are given opportunities to transfer strategies they've already learned into new work, exploring ways to apply these skills from various angles.

In this session, specifically, you'll help your children connect the writing they did at the start of this unit with the review writing they're doing now. Earlier, they studied their collections, studying individual attributes to select their "Best in Show" choice. Now, you'll teach writers to consider the attributes of their subject, comparing their restaurant or their movie or their game to those in other restaurants, movies, or games. These comparisons add credibility to claims students make.

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that persuasive writers make comparisons. They include ways that their topic is better (or worse) than others.

GETTING READY

- ✔ A copy of student writing from the first bend of the unit (see Connection)
- ✔ Your own unrevised review from the previous session (see Teaching)
- ✔ Student writing folders (see Active Engagement)
- ✔ "Check Out This Review!" chart (see Mid-Workshop Teaching)

MINILESSON

Making Comparisons in Writing

CONNECTION

Tell a story of a student who wrote using comparisons during the first bend of the unit.

I called students to the meeting area with their writing folders. Once everyone had settled into their spots, tucking their folders beneath them, I began, "Writers, when you began opinion writing, the first thing you did was line up each item of your collection in a row; then you looked at each very carefully, comparing an attribute from one item to the next, and deciding which was your favorite. When Roselyn wrote about her favorite Tech Deck skateboard toy, she lined up each and every one of her skateboards, and first she looked closely at all the wheels. She decided, 'The wheels on this Tech Deck are *better* than the wheels on this other Tech Deck because these are much smoother. Also, the wheels are yellow, and the other Tech Decks have plain black wheels.' The way Roselyn compared the wheels of each Tech Deck and then wrote how the Plan B Tech Deck was better because the wheels are smoother and because they are yellow." Roselyn beamed proudly from her rug spot.

I continued, linking students' earlier work to the current pursuit of review writing. "The work you did when writing about your collections is the work you'll need to bring with you as you write reviews. Taking one attribute or one subtopic—like wheels—and looking at that across many competing things (in this case, skateboards) is one way that review writers make their reviews more persuasive. They think about what makes their topics better (or, if you are writing a review telling people to stay away, what makes it worse) than others. They make comparisons."

Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to remind you to use all you already know about writing to convince others. You can think about a way that your subject is better (or worse) than others. You compare your subject with others, thinking only about that one way, that attribute. Then, you can write to include this information in your review."

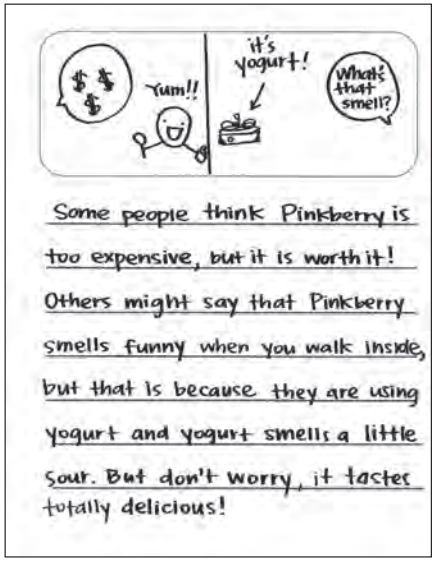
TEACHING

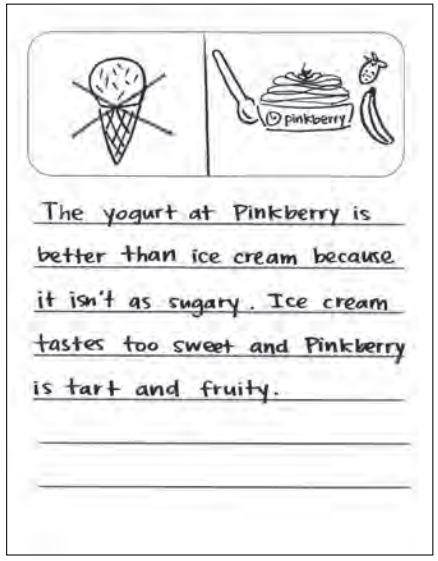
Model revising your own writing by coming up with comparisons.

"Watch how I do this in the review of Pinkberry. First, I'll need to reread and think about how to compare it to others.

◆ COACHING

Naming what the children did previously when they wrote about their collections—in this case, writing comparisons—serves as a scaffold for the work of today. It's important to remember that while you expect a higher level of comparison writing this time around, many of your children have experience with comparisons, and you'll want to call on that knowledge as you set forth today's teaching.





"Okay," I sighed, glancing toward the writers on the rug. "I bet I can make a comparison that suggests Pinkberry is better than other ice cream places. I'm not sure how to start. Hmmm. . . ."

Paula rocked forward and offered, "You should figure out what you want to compare. Like, you could compare the flavors they have or the toppings they have."

After just a moment, Boone's hand crept into the air. I nodded. "You could tell about how it tastes better."

"Both of you are absolutely right! That is the first thing we need to do when making a comparison. We can't just say it's better because, because, because. I need to think about *one way* to compare Pinkberry to other treat shops. I think I'll take Boone's advice and compare the *taste* of Pinkberry frozen yogurt to other ice creams. I could compare it by writing, 'The yogurt at Pinkberry is better than ice cream because it isn't as sugary. Ice cream tastes too sweet, and Pinkberry is tart and fruity.'" I leaned forward and revised my writing.

"Next, I could give more reasons why Pinkberry yogurt tastes better than ice cream. Or, I could make a different comparison—maybe writing about how Pinkberry offers better toppings than other ice cream shops. Either way, I'd be picking a subtopic—the taste, the topping—and comparing them at Pinkberry and at other places."

Notice that I call on just a very few children. The goal is to keep the minilesson moving along quickly so children have time to write.

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Give students an opportunity to come up with comparisons for their own persuasive reviews.

"Review writers, take one of the reviews you've written, and try this work right now. Reread what you've written, and then think of a way to compare your topic to another. Give me a thumbs up when you've done a little rereading and thinking."

A few moments passed, and then I moved to the second part of the active engagement. "Okay, now, turn and tell your partner what you would write to make your writing more persuasive by making a comparison. Explain how it is better (or worse) than a competitor. Partner 1, will you start today?"

LINK

Send students off, reminding them of the various tools and options they have available today.

After partners shared their revision plans, I added, "Some of you may need to use revision strips because you may not have enough space where you'll want to add these comparisons. Revision strips show your readers how careful you are being when you take time to make your writing the best it can be."

Then, I moved on to restate the teaching point in a way to make it transferable to students' ongoing work as writers. "Remember, writers, whenever you are writing to convince people to agree with your opinion, persuading them to follow the recommendations you make in your reviews, it helps to not just claim that your subject is good (or bad), but also to claim that it is better or worse. To do that, think of a trait that you can compare—with my dog show, we compared eyes, fur, personality—and then look at the same trait in your subject, and in others. Compare.

I bet many of you will be busy working to strengthen your reviews today. And not only can you also make revisions to the reviews you are working on right now, but you can also make revisions to every review in your folder. This will make your writing stronger and more persuasive, and it will make *you* a stronger and more persuasive writer!"

Persuasive Writers Include Suggestions and Warnings

ONE OF THE BEST PARTS OF WORKSHOP TEACHING is the flexibility and responsiveness it offers us as teachers. Truly, what other methods of teaching allow you to move from the needs of the whole, to the needs of a group, to the needs of an individual and back again? Today, you might find yourself balancing the work of both small-group instruction and individualized conferring. Since the goal is for writers to work hard to revise across their reviews, you may find that your best course of action is to pull up to a table, admire a writer's work for just a moment, then stop the entire table and teach the others at the table to do the same work as that of the student you observed. For example, if you see a student dividing her attention between a classroom chart and her review, stop the table and call attention to the work that that writer is doing.

(continues)

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Adding Supporting Details to Make Your Writing More Convincing**

During today's mid-workshop teaching, I chose to spotlight the work that one child had done, adding supporting details to his persuasive writing. I had copied his original review onto chart paper so that everyone in the class could see.

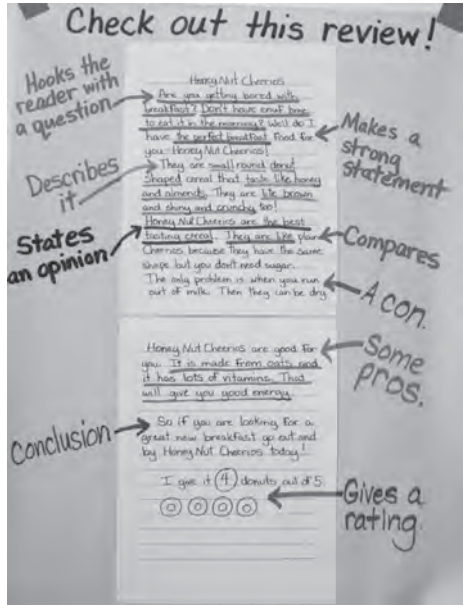
"Writers, please put your pens down, and your eyes on Alejandro," I said, and gestured toward the front of the room, where Alejandro was standing holding his revised review. I walked over to stand beside him and said, "Alejandro is working hard to make his review as persuasive as he can by writing comparisons. I want to share his writing with you. Take a look at what Alejandro's review originally said." I pointed to the chart paper and read aloud.

> The Pirates is a great movie because of the adventure. The Captain is really funny and he makes a lot of mistakes but not on purpose. He is not a bad pirate but he acts like he is a tough guy.

"But, today I notice that Alejandro revised his writing to include more supporting details to back up his claim that the Captain acted like a tough guy. Listen for the new additions as Alejandro reads you his revised review."

> The Pirates is a great movie because of the adventure. The Captain is really funny and he makes a lot of mistakes but not on purpose. He is not a bad pirate but he acts like he is a tough guy. One way he tries to be tough is he tries to defeat Bellamy the other pirate in a pirate duel but they never have a real duel. Bellamy thinks he is a tough guy, too, but he is not tough. He is funny too but not as funny as the Captain.

"You can try that in your reviews, too. You can reread your reviews to find places where you can say even more to prove your thinking, adding more details that support your reasons. This will make your reviews even more persuasive."



These table conferences help you keep one finger on the pulse of your classroom, as you move quickly from table to table, assessing skills and strategies. You may choose to gather three or four children who demonstrate a similar need, convening a small group in the meeting area.

I recently said to one such group, "I've been noticing that each of you has been working hard to make your reviews convincing, including lots of reasons and details. I want to teach you that review writers also give suggestions or warnings to help their readers. You can also add helpful advice.

"If I were to include a suggestion in this review of Pinkberry, I might add, 'You should get a Pinkberry loyalty card to earn a free cup of frozen yogurt!' Or, I might even add a warning, like, 'Pinkberry can get very busy after school is dismissed, so make sure to get there before 3:00 to avoid the crowds!'"

I made sure to keep my demonstration short, turning the work over to the students as quickly as possible. This way, I could devote the majority of the time to supporting each child with this strategy in their own writing. "Now, take out one of the pieces you've been working to revise, and think about how you might give suggestions or warnings to help your readers. What advice might you give?"

I gestured for the group to get started and I coached in with lean prompts to get each writer thinking. "Is there something I should watch out for?" "Should I bring something with me if I go there?" Once the students had begun to write, I pulled in to work with a writer who seemed to require some additional support.

"So, Amelia, this review is about Dolly's, one of our local restaurants. It looks like it's a 'stay away' review. You want to make sure people don't go there, huh?" I began.

"Yeah, it's so yucky!" Amelia remarked, sticking her tongue out in disgust.

"Wow, it seems you have a very clear opinion about that! Well, then, is there a warning that you might give about Dolly's?" I prompted.

Amelia looked up, tapping her chin in thought. "If they eat the fries, they should make sure to drink a lot, a lot, a lot of water because it is soooo salty."

"That's a big warning that you can write in your review. Decide where you'll add that tip into your writing." I gave Amelia time to reread and decide on this revision, moving on to check in with another writer. In a few moments, I glanced back at Amelia, who had finished recording her warning (see Figure 10–1).

I reconvened the group to celebrate their revisions and restate the teaching point in a way that encouraged the children to carry this work into all their work as review writers, sending them off to continue this practice across their whole folder.

Amelia's Review

Do not go to Dolly's because you will be sorry.
It is not good because it is salty.
It is not good because it does not have good food.
It is not good because it is dirty.
The french fries at Dolly's have too much salt on them and they stick in your throat.
You will need to drink a hundred drinks of water to get the taste out of your mouth.
Reason 2: The food is yuck!!!!!!! Yuck!
The salad bar was too messy and there was stuff in the wrong spots.
The carrot bowl had pieces of onions in it! GROSS!
If you try to get a carrot you got onion instead.
Someone clean it up! Put those carrots back!
Someone should clean it up.
It was dirty on the salad bar and on the floor and on the table.
It was dirty everywhere!
My mom said, "Let's leave. This is nasty" so we left and did not take our food!

FIG. 10–1 Amelia's review includes warnings to help readers.

SHARE

Adding Small Moment Stories as a Means of Persuasion

Explain to writers that including Small Moment stories in their persuasive reviews can make their writing even more convincing.

"Writers, today you have done all kinds of remembering, using strategies you already know to find ways to make your reviews even better. Writers do this all the time. Whenever you write, it's important to make sure you carry along a whole suitcase of smart skills and strategies. That way, you'll be prepared for *any* journey you go on as a writer, ready to make *all* your writing the very best it can be." I spoke with exaggerated gestures, as if physically carrying an armload of baggage.

"I know that one kind of writing you have become very smart at in first grade is Small Moment writing. Did you know that review writers can use the smart strategies they know for writing *stories* to convince people when writing *reviews*? Many of you noticed this in the review we read closely together." I gestured toward the anchor chart.

"You can tell a little story about a time you went to, or played with, or tried what you are reviewing. You can tuck in a Small Moment story and tell it in your review. You can imagine exactly what happened and tell it bit by bit, explaining what made your topic so great, or so terrible! These Small Moments make your reasons even stronger and more convincing. By sharing your own experiences, you can help convince your readers."

Give students an opportunity to reread one of their reviews and think of a Small Moment story that could be added to it.

"Right now, reread one of the reviews you have been working hard to revise. Let's keep going to revise even more! As you reread your writing, think about a moment when you went to that place, or saw that movie or show, or played with that toy."

As students reread quietly, I voiced over, "If you're writing a review to convince people to try it, too, think about a Small Moment story that shows what exactly made it so great. But, if you're writing a stay-away review, think about a Small Moment that explains why it's totally awful."

After a moment, I prompted students to turn and plan with partners, reminding students of a familiar strategy. "Zoom into the most important part, tell your story across your fingers, saying what happened first, next, last." I moved in to coach students as they planned their anecdotes aloud.

These books are written by different combinations of authors, so we are not as apt to maintain the same metaphor across the school year as you will be. Here, a repertoire of skills is a suitcase of skills. In another unit, it's a toolkit. The important thing, however, is that minilessons often start by reminding children of their growing repertoire of skills and strategies and they end, often, by sending writers off to draw on all of this.

It is important to allow writers opportunities to plan. Oral rehearsal supports focus and structure while developing students' writing fluency. You may coach in with prompts to support their oral storytelling, such as, "One time . . . ," "Then . . . ," "Finally . . . "

Session 11

Hook Your Reader

Writing Catchy Introductions and Conclusions

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that writers write introductions to grab their readers' attention right from the very start. One way to do this is to talk directly to readers.

GETTING READY

- ✔ "Say Hello with a Catchy Introduction!" chart (see Teaching and Active Engagement)
- ✔ An easel and your own writing, enlarged (see Teaching, Active Engagement, and Share)
- ✔ Clipboards, student writing, pens (see Share)
- ✔ Restocked revision flaps in writing center (see Mid-Workshop Teaching)
- ✔ "Don't Forget to Say Goodbye!" chart, added to the bottom of the "Say Hello with a Catchy Introduction!" chart (see Share)

ACROSS THIS UNIT, you've taught your children to write in persuasive ways, using words to compel their audience, convincing them to try a new restaurant, visit a local playground, buy the latest video game, or see a new movie. Today, you'll channel your students to use their powers of persuasion to captivate their audience from the very start, writing introductions that urge readers to read on! You'll also teach students to write conclusions.

Most state standards don't emphasize introductions for first-graders but do expect them to compose opinion pieces that provide some sense of closure. Today, you'll teach your students to do this and more, working toward standards expected of second-grade writers. Of course, there are many ways to write introductions. Today's minilesson lays out one strategy writers can use to introduce their topic, providing a possible procedure for grabbing readers' attention from the start of a review. You'll collaborate with your students to compose a catchy introduction for a class piece, guiding writers to plan aloud to rehearse. It is likely that your students will recall this work from the work they did writing beginnings and endings to information books. You'll coach writers that one way to introduce a review is to start with a question, and you'll suggest that conclusions often restate the opinion and then send readers off to do something.

As you confer with writers, you may gather a group to study how a variety of reviews begin, closely reading each to discover different moves reviewers make. You may want to add to the chart you started during the minilesson, so that the class develops some alternate ways to write introductions. For example, you might begin with some of the same ideas students used to write Small Moments—sound words, action words, pop-out words, and so on. You can do a similar study of closings. A group can gather around some reviews to study how they conclude, developing a repertoire of methods for ending their reviews.

You may also decide to devote some of today's conferences and small groups to coach students to compose introductions. Remind writers to carry this work across their folders, working to write not just one introduction, but to revise introductions on all the reviews they will have written thus far in the unit. This will give them added practice.

Today's teaching share will shift writers' focus to conclusions. Just as you helped children understand how introductions are a way for writers to say, "Hi!" to their audience and to pull their readers in, conclusions are a way to say, "Bye!" and to send readers off. You'll teach students that conclusions leave the reader with a clear understanding of what the reviewer thinks about the topic. Children can do the same work with endings that they have done with their beginnings.

"Today, you'll channel your students to use their powers of persuasion to captivate their audience from the very start."

MINILESSON

Hook Your Reader

Writing Catchy Introductions and Conclusions

CONNECTION

Tell the story of a time when a student in your class introduced himself to another student, and compare that interaction to the introductions writers make at the start of a review.

"I remember a month ago when Pete moved to our school all the way from Texas. Pete was sitting at his desk, and Gabe went over and said, 'My name is Gabe. Did you play math games on Fridays at your old school? We play math games every Friday. We love Snap the most of all. It's really fun. I'm good at Snap, and I could teach you to play if you don't know how. Do you want to play?'

Then, in a lackluster way, I impersonated the contrary. "You know, Gabe didn't just say, 'Do you know how to play Snap? I love to play it every Friday.'" I added, "No way! Gabe has better manners than that! Instead, he told Pete his name and asked him a friendly question. He *introduced* himself and told a little bit about our classroom and how it works.

"That same work that Gabe did when he *introduced* himself to Pete is what review writers do when they write reviews. Before they jump into their opinions and reasons, they introduce their topics. Introductions help grab readers' attention and get them to read on. There isn't just one way to do it, either. Writers write introductions in all sorts of ways. But today, I'm going to teach some ways you can write introductions to start your reviews."

Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to teach you that writers write introductions to grab their readers' attention right from the very start. One way to do this is to talk to your reader."

◆ COACHING

Your children will love it if you mine the everyday moments of classroom life as sources for lessons about how to write. You won't, of course, tell this little story, but will instead substitute your own version of it. Keep your story brief, as the point is a simple one.

TEACHING AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Show students a chart you made that lists the steps to writing a catchy introduction.

"So, what kinds of things can you say to your readers in an introduction? How can you grab your readers' attention? One possible way to start a review is to ask questions to make your reader wonder. Then you can answer the question in a way that names the topic. Of course, your introduction also gives you time to say your opinion."

I tacked up the steps of the process to form a procedural chart to support independent practice of this strategy.

Teach through guided practice: take children through multiple cycles, channeling them to plan with a partner, write in the air while you coach, then elicit their work while you add comments.

"Let's return to the review of Pinkberry and work together to write a catchy introduction, one that will really grab people's attention and make them want to read on! Will you help me do that?" The class nodded as I clipped the enlarged demonstration piece to the easel. I reread the start of the review aloud to refamiliarize students with the text:

> If you love ice cream, then I know you'll love the frozen yogurt at Pinkberry! It is super healthy and delicious. Pinkberry is a popular place to get frozen yogurt. You can find a Pinkberry in almost every neighborhood from here to Peru! There is probably one close to you, too. Did you know that Pinkberry is open all day long? You can go anytime you want a frozen treat! Some people think Pinkberry is too expensive, but it is worth it!

Remind children of the strategy, and prompt students to plan possible introductions with a partner.

"So one way to grab people's attention is to start with questions that get readers wondering. You might say, 'Have you ever . . . ?' or 'Did you know . . . '" I offered, allowing my voice to trail off. "But you'll also want to name the topic so readers will know what the review is about."

For a minute, the room was quiet. "Thumbs up if you have ideas about what *you'd* say in an introduction about Pinkberry." I prompted partners to turn and plan together.

When we developed the opinion checklist and began reviewing on-demand opinion writing from hundreds of classrooms, it became clear that there were a few characteristics of opinion writing that we'd neglected to teach, and one was the introduction. Many of our students had grown accustomed to starting a piece by diving right in to the claim. We saw this trend throughout the grades. So this minilesson becomes an especially important one to us.

Naming three strategies in quick succession helps children to understand that while even one strategy (such as "Ask a Question") can introduce their topic, it isn't one tiny thing alone that makes a strong introduction, but several steps. This supports children with strategic thinking, so that you don't end up with twenty-five reviews all being introduced in the same ho-hum manner.

Coach with lean prompts that raise the level of what students do independently. Then convene the class to collect suggestions, writing in the air to compose an introduction collectively.

As the room erupted into talk, I moved across the meeting area to listen in and coach, as needed. "Pretend your partner is the reader. Use words that talk right to him." "Add your opinion to the end!" I nudged.

After a bit, I reconvened the class. "Let's come back together to collect our ideas and use all that we can to write the catchiest of catchy introductions! How shall we start it? What questions might we ask readers?"

"Did you know Pinkberry is the best place to get dessert?" Monique began.

"Did you know that it's good for you?" Tucker tagged on.

"Have you ever wanted something instead of ice cream for dessert?" Henry added.

"Wow, what compelling questions! Those are all great ways to begin our introduction." I echoed students' suggestions back. Then, turning back toward the students, I paused, as if to say, "Tell me! What is this review about?"

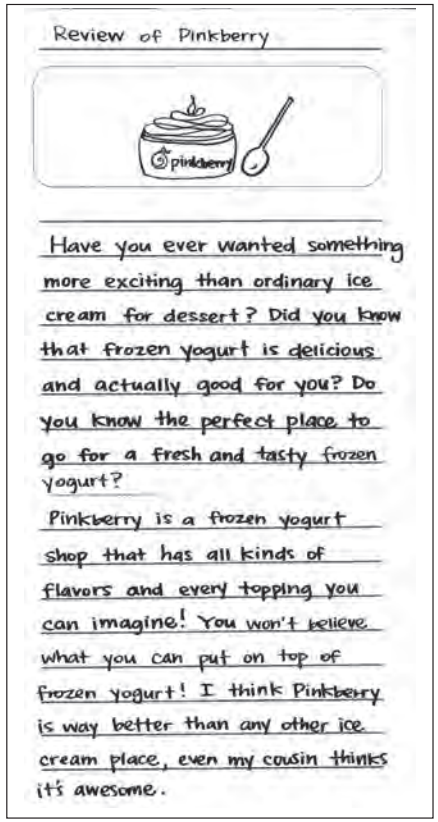
"Pinkberry!" the children all shouted.

"Remember to name the topic, and to state the claim," I instructed.

Soon we'd written this lead:

> Have you ever wanted something more exciting than ordinary ice cream for dessert? Did you know that frozen yogurt is delicious and actually good for you? Do you know the perfect place to go for fresh and tasty frozen yogurt?
>
> Pinkberry is a frozen yogurt shop that has all kinds of flavors and every topping you can imagine! You won't believe what you can put on top of frozen yogurt! I think Pinkberry is way better than any other ice cream place, even my cousin thinks it's awesome.

The interactive part of this teach offers children the opportunity to play and engage with language structure. Often children choose a sentence and stick with it, without thinking of other possible ways the writing could go. Engaging through play, and, even better, on your *piece of writing, supports children in understanding that before we commit words to paper, writers often choose and rechoose sentences, letting the sound and flow of language dance across their tongues so that when they finally choose the words they want, it is with thoughtfulness and intent.*


Review of Pinkberry

Have you ever wanted something more exciting than ordinary ice cream for dessert? Did you know that frozen yogurt is delicious and actually good for you? Do you know the perfect place to go for a fresh and tasty frozen yogurt?

Pinkberry is a frozen yogurt shop that has all kinds of flavors and every topping you can imagine! You won't believe what you can put on top of frozen yogurt! I think Pinkberry is way better than any other ice cream place, even my cousin thinks it's awesome.

LINK

Restate the teaching point in a way that makes this process transferable to students' independent work.

Today you've learned to write a catchy introduction that grabs people's attention. Remember that whenever you want to write an introduction, one possible way to do this is to ask a question, name your topic, and tell your opinion.

"I bet that many of you are itching to go off and get started on writing. You might want to look back at every review you've written so far and see if you can invent a great introduction. Today we studied just one way reviewers can make great introductions. I bet you could invent other ways as well!

"Of course, will you spend all day on introductions? No way! I'm pretty sure many of you will start new reviews today. Your Tiny Topics notepad can help you think of ideas."

CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Letting Student Intentions Guide Your Conferring

I SETTLED BESIDE MARCO, who had returned to a movie review that he had written earlier in the week. As he reread his piece out loud, I researched to ascertain Marco's strengths as a writer, as well as get a sense of his own intentions for the piece.

"Hey, Marco! How's it going?" I began.

"Good. I'm reading my review about the movie, *Chimpanzee*. It's really, really good. You should go see it!" he recommended.

"I bet that's why you decided to write a whole review about it—to convince people. What are you planning to do next with your review?" I inquired.

When Marco explained he wanted to make an introduction to make people want to see it, I echoed back what I heard. "So you plan to add an introduction to your review to grab your readers' attention and convince them to read your whole review and then go see the movie?"

"Yeah, but I can't give the whole thing away, because then the movie won't be as cool. Once my brother did that, and then it made the movie boring because I knew everything that was gonna happen."

"You're right. It'll be much more convincing to give a sneak peek, just like in a commercial, only telling a little bit," I added. Then, I continued with a compliment. "Marco, I must compliment you about something that impresses me so much. You're the kind of writer who really thinks about his writing and makes decisions about what to do next to make it even better. You could have just kept going with your review, or started a new piece, but instead, you went back to a piece that was already on the red-dot side of your folder and you reread it and found a way to make it better. That's a pretty grown-up thing to do," I praised.

I phrased my compliment in a way that highlighted a behavior that Marco may not have realized was important. By naming positive behaviors, you reinforce them. Then, I reminded Marco of what he'd learned about writing introductions. "So, now that you've decided to add an introduction to your review, you can use our class chart to help you plan it."

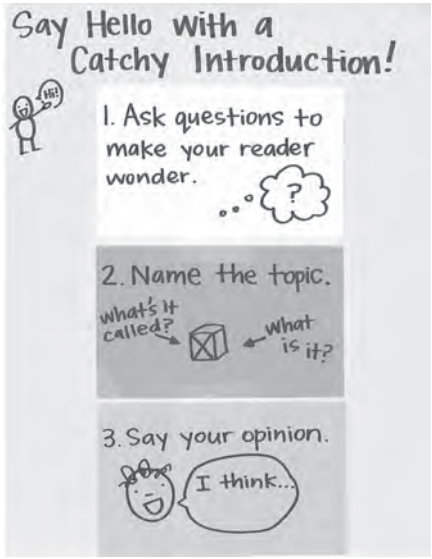
"I could say that if somebody says, 'Do you want to go see a movie?' you should say, 'Yes!'" Marco planned aloud. He reached for a revision flap to insert a new beginning:

> If someone says, "Do you want to go see a movie?" then you should say "Yes! Lets go see Chimpanzee!"

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Using Revision Tools**

I called for students to take a brief pause in their writing. Once all eyes were on me, I began. "Writers, I want to remind you to use revision tools to help you as you work today. Since introductions are meant to help readers get to know the topic and convince them to keep reading, it'll be important to add it to the very beginning of your review. You may need to use a revision flap to add your ideas," I explained, knowing this would be an important reminder for writers who set off to do this work independently today." So, I've restocked our writing center with plenty of flaps if you need to add space to the top of your piece. You might choose to write two introductions, trying out different ways it might go. Read it aloud to decide which version you like best, then tape it to the top of your review."

I pointed back toward the chart, reminding Marco of the second and third steps. "You'll want to tell a little bit about the movie and say your opinion."



"I think it's great!"

"Because . . ." I nudged.

"Because it has funny parts and sad parts. Oh, and also because it teaches you a lot about chimpanzees," Marco filled in. I tapped the next line of his paper, prompting him to add his ideas to his writing. He proceeded to write:

> It is a great movie because it has funny parts and sad parts. And it teaches a lot about chimpanzees and what they do.

"I like how you gave readers an idea about the movie without telling them everything that happens. That way, you can leave your readers wanting to know more. Is there something else you might want to say at the end of your introduction to get people to read on?"

"I can say that everyone will like this movie. It's not just a kids' movie," Marco said, quickly tagging on:

> Grown ups will like this movie and so will kids.

I asked Marco to read his introduction from the top (see Figure 11–1).

Marco's Review Revisions

If someone says, "Do you want to go see a movie?" you should say 'Yes! Let's go see Chimpanzee!' It is a great movie because it has funny parts and sad parts. And it teaches a lot about chimpanzees and what they do. Grown ups will like this movie and so will kids.

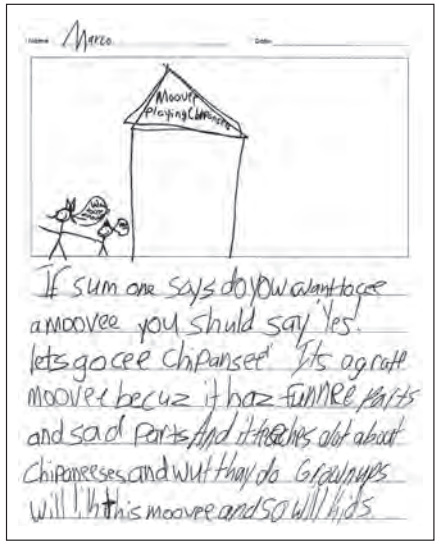


FIG. 11–1 Marco's review revisions

Then, I restated what he'd done, and encouraged him to revise all his reviews. "So, Marco, when you sat down to write this introduction, you began by asking a question to make your readers wonder. Then, you named your topic and told your readers your opinion about it. You can do this whenever you write an introduction to grab people's attention."

SHARE

Crafting Catchy Conclusions

Explain the steps to writing a strong closing and model with your own writing.

I gathered the students back to the meeting area, asking that they each bring along a clipboard, their review, and a pen. Once the children had settled in their spots, I began, "Many of you spent today working on introductions to start your reviews. These introductions are a way for writers to say to readers, 'Hello! You should read this!' I want to teach you that writers also make sure to include a closing as a way to say, 'Bye! Thanks for reading!'

One way to write a conclusion is to restate your opinion, reminding readers of what you think or feel. Then, you can send your readers off to go do something! I unveiled a chart.

"If I were to add a closing to this review of Pinkberry, I'd want to make sure that readers remember exactly what I think. I might add a closing to say:

> I think Pinkberry is the best place for dessert because the frozen yogurt is tasty, healthy, and there are so many great toppings to put on top. Next time you are in the mood for a delicious treat, make sure you go to Pinkberry!

"So right now, take out the review you've been working on and think about how your closing might go. Whisper your closing into your hand to make a plan," I prompted, as students began composing, softly.

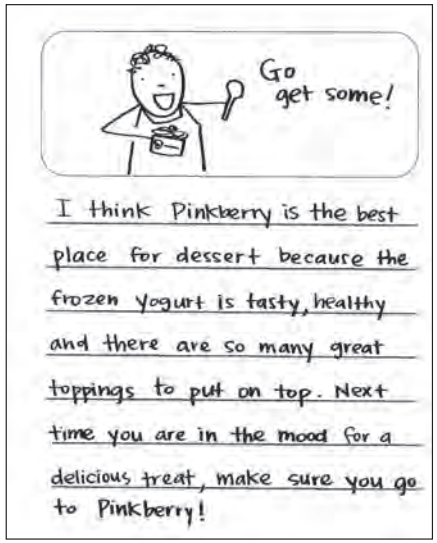
"Be sure to suggest what you think readers should go do," I voiced over.

After a few moments, I gathered the attention of the class. "Before you write those words down on your paper, turn and tell your partner how your closing might sound. Practice the words aloud together." I gestured for students to turn and share, rehearsing their closings before recording them.

"Now, quickly add your closing to the end of your review. And whenever you are writing to convince others, it is important to end with a closing. This way, your reader will be sure to remember your opinion and follow your recommendation."

Providing a sense of closure is one of the major standards held for first-grade writers. You may decide to remind writers of the work they did to include introductions and conclusions in their nonfiction books to help students transfer those skills to opinion writing.

You may choose to compose this conclusion aloud, writing in the air, and later add it to your demonstration piece as a means of keeping your teaching brief and allowing students more time to plan and draft their own conclusions.



Session 11

Series Writers Investigate What Makes Realistic Fiction Realistic

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that writers call on their own experiences to imagine the tiny, authentic details that make realistic fiction seem so real.

GETTING READY

- ✔ A few fiction books from two different series written by the same author (for example, Henry and Mudge and Mr. Putter and Tabby) to show students that when authors finish one series, they set out to write another one
- ✔ Mentor text, in our case *Henry and Mudge and the Happy Cat.* You will need pages identified that demonstrate realistic qualities to use in the teaching part of the minilesson.
- ✔ Charts you have been using throughout the unit to highlight in the link ("How to Write a Realistic Fiction Book" from Session 1; "How to Write Series Books" from Session 6; "Ways to Bring Stories to Life" from Unit 1, *Small Moments*; "Our Favorite Series Authors . . . " from Session 9)
- ✔ Writing center stocked with various paper choices to match your writers. You may have some with more lines and some with all lines and no picture box.
- ✔ Post-its for students to write down their work goals

WHENEVER WE ARE TEACHING WRITING, we are alert for moments when we can clearly demarcate opportunities for transference; that is, we look for opportunities to raise the level of work to what Norman Webb describes in his research as Depth of Knowledge (DOK), Level 4—when kids carry what they've learned into fresh situations, applying what they've learned with more agency. This is one of those moments. Your children have completed one whole cycle of the writing process, developing several stories from start to finish, with you teaching them some new moves as writers and reinforcing some essentials. Now they'll have the opportunity to launch the whole cycle again, so that they have a chance to internalize those strategies and to put them into play with more efficiency as well as more independence. This means that some strategies that you taught over more than one session you'll now expect your writers to do automatically, converging several strategies at once to get started powerfully.

In this first session of the bend, your children will have a chance to show off their prowess as series writers by using what they know to come up with a pretend character and some trouble for that character, rehearse their story using a method of their choice, and start writing on paper that will stretch them as writers. All those skills, you'll suggest, are now a given. Across all the sessions of this bend, as you teach the students *new* strategies as series writers, it's helpful to demarcate what is *not* new. One way to do that is to develop an attitude of "use all that you know," and "I'm going to admire you as . . . " High expectations matter.

Today, then, you'll want to set the bar high. Just as a soccer coach expects her players to know what to do on the second day of practice and to understand more about team rituals after a couple of games, you need to visibly show your faith in your students and your high expectations for them. This time, therefore, you will not teach them how to get started as writers. What you will do is narrow their focus to realistic fiction—to that particular kind of fiction that feels true to life. This is large-scale work that focuses on putting aside the aliens and monsters. In the next session, you'll focus more attentively to the piling up of tiny, realistic details.

One could question, of course, whether it really matters what kind of fiction children write, as long as they are doing a lot of writing and working on structure, craft, convention, and process. For students who seem disengaged except when they can write about aliens, of course you can bypass this focus on realistic versus other kinds of fiction. For most of your writers, though, this gives you a chance to introduce two important skills related to writing within a genre. The first is that writers think not just about the type of writing they are pursuing, but the specific genre, and they study what makes that genre powerful. The second skill is that writers decide what to include and not include in their writing based on their knowledge of the genre, and when you decide to leave some stuff (like aliens) out, it leaves you more energy to develop what you leave in (realistic characters).

"Schoolyard stories, playground stories, family adventures—children can write about these with great authenticity and detail, as well as true meaning."

Some of this focus on realistic fiction arises from long experience that young writers may write more when writing about aliens, but they rarely write better. Schoolyard stories, playground stories, family adventures—children can write about these with great authenticity and detail, as well as true meaning. The real emotions that underlie so many of their daily interactions seep through their childish drawings and rough spelling, with many moments of true unhappiness, fear, joy, and love—the truly great stuff of stories.

MINILESSON

Series Writers Investigate What Makes Realistic Fiction Realistic

CONNECTION

Celebrate the series work students have done so far as a means of extolling their new powers that they'll put into play soon.

"Writers, this is such an exciting morning. I look around at your first published series in boxed sets, and I realize that I am in the company of true authors. In fact, just for a moment, go ahead and shake hands with someone near you, and give an author introduction. Make it sound like Cynthia Rylant might if she were introducing herself." I put out my hand, saying, "Hi, I'm Cynthia. I'm the author of the Henry and Mudge series."

The kids did this. There was a chorus of "I'm Mohammad. I'm the author of the Pablo series," and "I wrote a series about a boy named Joshua."

I held up some of Cynthia Rylant's Henry and Mudge books and a few Mr. Putter and Tabby books. "Writers, you know what Cynthia Rylant did right after finishing her first series?" I waited a moment for the children to whisper, "She wrote another one!"

"That's right, children, Cynthia wrote another series! Because she knew her readers wanted more! And because she was getting so good at it! It's kind of like riding a bike, or playing an instrument, or learning baseball. Once you learn how, you want to keep doing it! When you learn to throw a baseball, you want to throw, and throw, and throw. When you become a fiction writer, you want to write, and write and write.

"So we're going to get a chance to do that. Today you'll have a chance to show off everything you know about getting started with a fiction series, because you've written a lot of series books now. Before we start, though, I'm going to invite you to really think about what makes realistic fiction . . . realistic. We already know that fiction means the writer gets to pretend, but what about the realistic part?"

Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to teach you that realistic fiction writers often study what makes realistic fiction seem so realistic. Then they call on their own experiences to write stories that seem this real."

◆ COACHING

Be sure to take opportunities along the way to commemorate hard work. Also, by naming the children as series authors, you role-play them into the role of writers. Alfred Tatum and Pedro Noguera, who both research the struggle between peer culture and academic culture, note how important it is that all *children take up roles that are academic.*

Every time you make comparisons to activities that children work hard at, such as baseball, or music, or bike-riding, you explicitly suggest that children want *to get better at things, including writing. In* Outliers *(2011), Malcolm Gladwell speaks of the famous 10,000 hours that differentiate high achievers. Seize every opportunity to reinforce the joy of working at becoming better at something.*

TEACHING

Return to your mentor text, in our case, *Henry and Mudge and the Happy Cat*. Initiate a mini-inquiry into what makes some fiction feel so real. Later, you'll debrief in ways that young writers can copy.

"Writers, to figure out what authors do to make stories seem real—to make them 'realistic fiction,' let's take a look back at one of our favorites, *Henry and Mudge and the Happy Cat*. Watch me as I turn the pages and read a little. As I read, ask yourself this question: 'What feels real about this story?' I'll think about that question as well."

I picked up the book and read the first few pages, showing the students the pictures as I did so. "What feels real about this story? Well, right away, one thing that feels real is the place—the way this story starts in Henry's house. It's not on a spaceship or inside a volcano." The children giggled. "And I guess another thing that feels very realistic is that the characters are ordinary people who do ordinary things. Look at this picture. It's a boy, his dad, and his dog. Henry and his father are wearing ordinary clothes, and they are watching TV on the couch. This feels very real to me as a reader. And then, of course, the TV doesn't turn into an alien and try to kill them! Instead, Mudge hears a noise at the door and starts barking. Henry's like a real dog!"

I turned to the children. "Do you see how I'm asking myself that question, 'What feels real about this story?' I'm noticing the choices that Cynthia Rylant made. The family, the way they are on the couch, and the TV, and the dog barking at the door. Were you noticing those details too? Already, in my mind, Cynthia Rylant's choices are giving me ideas for making my fiction books more realistic."

Once again, the technique of compare and contrast will help children to clarify their task. In this case, you'll contrast the realistic quality of fiction by giving an example of what feels real (watching TV on the couch) with what wouldn't feel real (aliens and volcanoes). Imagining what your mentor author could have written, or didn't write, can be an effective technique for focusing children's attention on the author's decisions.

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Give students a chance to revisit a few more pages, listening in as they notice realistic details, and voicing over to help name them.

"Let's give you a chance to try this. I'm going to read a few more pages and show you some of the pictures. As I read, try to notice the details that are realistic. Start with your hand in a fist. Whenever you notice one, put up a thumb, and when I pause, you and your partner can compare what you noticed. I'm going to read from the next chapter, after Henry and his dad have taken the cat in."

I read a few pages, starting with Chapter 2, "A Good Mother." As I did so, children began to put thumbs up in the air. "Go ahead, partners, turn and talk." I listened in and nodded, making comparisons to what was *not* in the story for emphasis. "Yes, the next thing that happens is the cat loves living with them, and the things the cat loves are so real—the towel closet, the bath tub, and Mudge! It's not like the cat turns into a ninja or leaves in a spaceship and everyone cries. There's a realistic, happy part, when the cat just loves the house!" I turned to another partnership and listened in. "Oh yes, you're right, the cat does real cat things. Cats do lick other animals! So the cat doesn't turn into a monster—she does cat things."

The ninjas and spaceships will have your kids giggling—and will also help them ponder if they have these elements in their realistic fiction.

Debrief, summarizing what students have noticed, transforming their details into broader generalizations.

"Writers, I love how you really thought about this question, 'What feels real about this story?' and that let you zoom in on the author's choices. Like you noticed the way there are *real animals*, and the animals do animal things, like the cat licks everyone, and lies in the towels. Now we can really see why Cynthia Rylant's stories are *realistic* fiction. Everything is realistic, from the cat who licks, to the family snuggled up to the TV, to the way Henry has to lie down when he's sad. Every part of the story feels so real."

LINK

Recall some of the steps fiction writers follow, and remind students of tools that are in the room to help them, telling them that they can and need to apply what they know to get started independently.

"Writers, you know how to get started with a new series. There are some charts here that you can study with your partner to help you get started if you want. And you know stuff we don't even have charts for anymore, like finding your own paper and a place to write, and getting a lot of work done. I'm going to admire you as you do the thinking and writing work of beginning a new series about a new character. As you do this work, add in what you learned today from Cynthia Rylant, about making every part of the story feel real."

Once again, this unit of study leads your students to be analytic readers as well as prolific writers. Here, your students sharpen their awareness of genre characteristics.

Rehearsing Leads as a Way to Practice Authorial Choices

AS YOUR STUDENTS settle in to rehearse a new series and a new story, you might consider conferring with some students around leads. Your first graders already know something about different ways to start a story—what you'll really want to work on then is that they make an authorial choice, to move beyond "whatever I thought of." Just as authors make choices about making a story realistic, they also make choices about how to start a story, and some of your writers will be ready for that work. Izzy, for instance, was planning out her story as I settled in beside her. "I'm glad to see you've chosen paper with so many lines on it, Izzy," I said, noting the small picture box and lots of lines. Izzy was a prolific writer. She often wrote fast and furious, and I was eager to help her begin to think harder about making choices as a writer. "Izzy," I continued. "I see you're about to start writing. You have your sketches filled in, and you're just about to put your pencil to paper. Have you thought yet about how your story will begin?" Izzy immediately began to tell me about what would happen in her story. "Izzy," I stopped her. "I'm not asking what will happen in your story, I'm asking about *how* your story will start. What choice are you making as a writer? Is this Book One, and are you going to introduce your character with lots of details? Is this a later book, and you'll start with action? What choice will you make as a writer?" Izzy pondered for a moment, and I suggested she do a little more thinking.

A few moments later I heard Izzy tell her partner that she had decided to make this story Book One, and that she would start by introducing "Katie, who was ten years old, who lived in Mexico, who had no dad, and who never lied." "That sounds like a

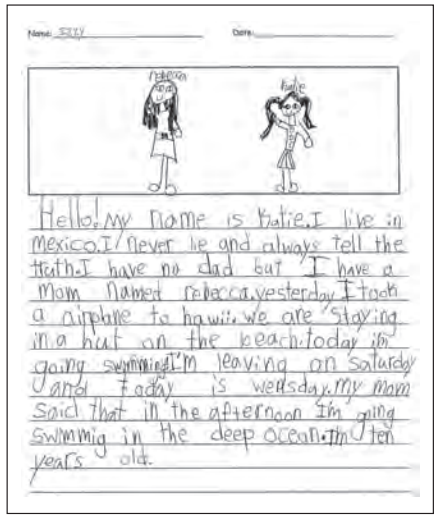

Hello! My name is Katie. I live in Mexico. I never lie and always tell the teeth. I have no dad but I have a Mom named rebecca. yesterday I took a airplane to hawii. we are staying in a hut on the beach. today im going swimming. I'm leaving on Saturday and today is wednsday. My mom said that in the afternoon Im going swimming in the deep ocean. Im ten years old.

FIG. 11–1 Izzy recalls the strategy of introducing a character in Book One of a series, and deploys it here, independently.

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

Writers Get Started Writing in Different Ways

"Writers, can I stop you and tell you what I have been noticing about you all as writers? I think you will find this really interesting! Eyes on me." I waited until I had everyone's attention. "You have become such independent writers, and I noticed that many of you do different things to get started writing."

I pointed to various writers as I described their processes. "Listen to this. I noticed ways you tell your story to get ready. Nora tells it across her fingers, Avery tells it across pages, and Annabel likes to tell it to her partner. Then I noticed a few things some of you do to help you remember your story. Miles likes to sketch a little picture first, Serenity writes an important word on each page, and Robert prefers to write an entire sentence on each page saying what will happen in each part. I even saw Mohammad and Sophia ready to just start writing without a picture box! So, next time you get started writing, think about which way works for you. It's great that you are figuring out how to get your best work done!"

fascinating character, Izzy!" I said as I listened in. "I like the way you told all those details about her across your fingers. I can't wait to meet Katie in Book One, and follow her adventures in all your stories."

Syanna, on the other hand, was definitely *not* writing Book One. When I asked her about her plan for how to start her story, she said that this was a story about the time her new pretend character, Jennifer, had a tooth taken out. Syanna, who had just lost a tooth herself, clearly wanted to get right to describing the anguish of this moment. As she rehearsed her story by touching and telling across pages, I heard her saying just what the characters might say about how much a pulled tooth could hurt. Syanna often had speech bubbles in her writing, which made me think she might be ready to try exciting dialogue as a story lead. "Syanna," I said, "One thing I notice about you as a writer is how often your stories have speech bubbles in them, and how you make the characters talk. You make sure your characters come alive that way, and that's great. But that got me thinking that you could bring that same work to the beginning of the story. Sometimes writers try leads—that's the very first part of the story—that start with dialogue. When they do this, they make the dialogue very exciting, to really put the reader smack into the middle of the story. If you were going to try that, what might it sound like? Give it a go and then I can give you some tips."

This technique, of getting a writer started, and then giving him or her a tip based on data in hand, can help you calibrate your instruction. Syanna, for instance, immediately launched her story with "I do not want the dentist to take out my teeth!" Seeing that she grasped the exciting aspect of such dialogue, and that she indeed knew how to launch her reader into the heart of the story, I gave her a tip about how writers often explain *why* characters say the things they do or feel the way they do. "She was crying because she did not want the dentist to take out her teeth," Syanna was writing as I left her. I hoped she would try various leads to her stories now, and mostly, I wanted her to begin to take her authorial choices more seriously.

FIG. 11–2 Syanna's fiction story echoes events in her own life, a pattern you'll notice often among your young realistic fiction authors, and one that gives their writing great authenticity.

SHARE

Taking Just-Right Paper Choices More Seriously

Introduce the notion that writers often move right to writing many sentences, which will change their paper choice.

"Writers, way to go starting your new realistic fiction series! Before we do anything else, tell your partner a few things you did to get started writing a new series. Point to your work to show what you did.

"I imagined a pretend character, and then I thought of calling him up and asking him questions," Robert called out.

Miles told his partner, "I told my story across my fingers, stretching the trouble out."

I gathered their attention. "Eyes on me, please. Nice work, writers. You don't need anyone to start your engine! I was especially pleased to see you not just starting a story, but trying to do your best writing. I love that you were thinking about introducing your character, and making the story realistic. I love that some of you were already working on spelling! I love that you were rehearsing to stretch out the trouble in your story. I can tell that this next series is going to be even better than your first.

"As you become stronger as writers, you might need different paper. It could be you need booklets with more pages. It could be that you need paper with more lines. It could be . . . that you have to make your own booklets now. For instance, Alejandra and I noticed she didn't really need to make so many sketches. So, I showed her this paper with a smaller picture box so there would be room for more lines and more sentences. Now she can write more on each page. Thumbs up if you think you may need paper like this too!"

I waited until a lot of thumbs were up. "Wow! Lots of you. Okay. I will stock the writing center with this kind of paper.

"Wait, there is more. I noticed some of you didn't bother to put a picture on each page. So you might choose paper with all lines and no picture box so some pages can be all sentences. I know this feels like second-grade work, but I see you are ready to make choices like this. So let's add that paper choice to the writing center as well! Don't worry. We will also keep plain blank paper in case you want a full-page picture and our picture box and lined paper too.

"The important thing is that you don't just reach for paper, you think about what paper will help you get a lot of writing done. That might even mean that you make your own booklet, with the paper you need as a writer."

Professional Development Options from TCRWP

The Units of Study books are a curriculum—and more. Lucy Calkins has embedded professional development into the curriculum, teaching teachers the "why" and "how" of effective reading and writing instruction. The professional development embedded in this series can be further enhanced through the following opportunities.

IN YOUR SCHOOL OR DISTRICT

Units of Study "Quick Start" Days

Through a one-day intensive session, teachers can get started unpacking the series' components, grasping the big picture of effective workshop teaching, and gaining an understanding of how to integrate assessment into the curriculum.

Contact **Judith Chin, Coordinator of Strategic Development**
Judith.Chin@readingandwritingproject.com
Phone: (212) 678-3327

Multi-Day Institute (40–300 educators)

Invite a Reading and Writing Project Staff Developer to work in your school or district, helping a cohort of educators teach reading and/or writing well. Host a "Homegrown Institute" for writing or reading instruction, usually during the summer months for four or five days. Tailored to your district's needs, the instruction and materials are specialized for K–2, 3–5, or 6–8 sections.

Contact **Kathy Neville, Executive Administrator**
kathy@readingandwritingproject.com
Phone: (917) 484-1482

Extended On-Site Professional Development

For deeper, more intensive professional development, schools and districts can work with TCRWP to plan on-site professional development that includes a sequence of 10–25 school-based staff development days, spaced throughout the year.

Contact **Laurie Pessah, Senior Deputy Director**
Laurie@readingandwritingproject.com
Phone: (212) 678-8226

ONLINE FROM TCRWP

Facebook Discussion Groups

Join the Units of Study community on Facebook to learn from educators across the country, including Lucy Calkins and TCRWP Staff Developers, and to share your own experience.

Search Units of Study in Writing TCRWP and Units of Study in Reading TCRWP.

Classroom Videos

These live-from-the classroom videos model the minilessons, conferences, and shares you will engage in as you teach the Units of Study.

View these videos at:
readingandwritingproject.org/resources/units-of-study

Resources

The Project posts important and useful resources throughout the year, including examples of student work.

Visit **readingandwritingproject.org/resources**

Office Hours

In these live webinar sessions, Lucy and her TCRWP colleagues respond to questions from educators on a wide range of topics.

Sign up to receive invitations at:
samplers.heinemann.com/lucycalkins-updates

Twitter Chats

On Wednesdays from 7:30–8:30 PM EST join TCRWP for live chat sessions on topics supporting literacy instruction.

Follow them at **@TCRWP** *or search* **#TCRWP Twitter.com/tcrwp**

AT TEACHERS COLLEGE

Multi-Day Institutes

TCRWP offers institutes across the year led by teacher-educators from the project and world-renowned experts.

For registration and application information go to:
readingandwritingproject.org/services/institutes

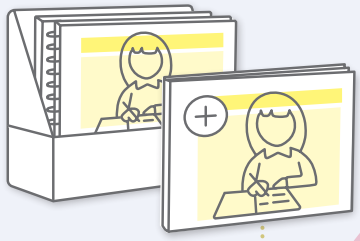
ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Units of Study "Quick Start" Days

TCRWP and Heinemann offer several one-day workshops for teachers and administrators.

For dates, locations, and registration information go to:
readingandwritingproject.org/services/one-day-events/conferences *and* **Heinemann.com/PD/workshops**

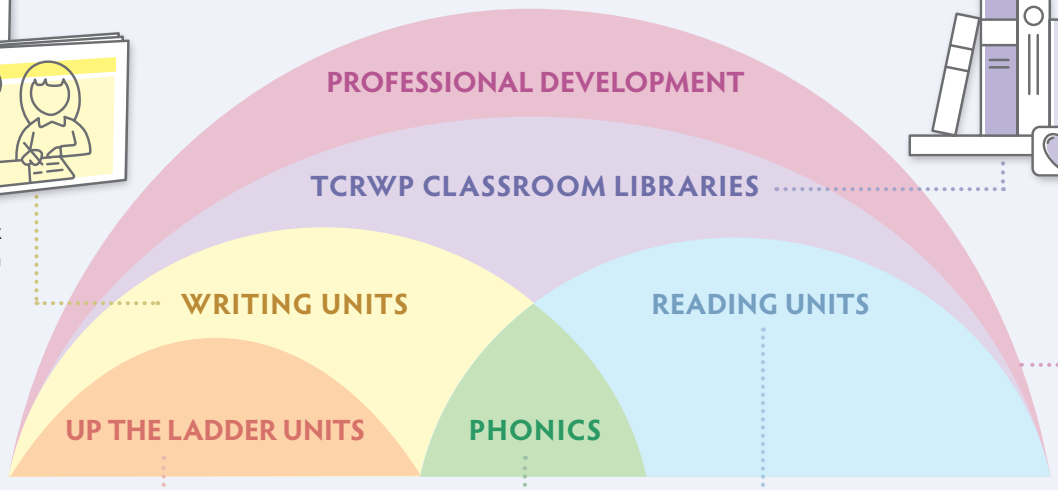
State-of-the-Art Units, Tools, and Methods for Teaching Reading and Writing Workshop

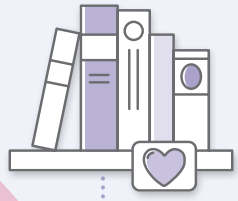


Writing Units

Built on best practices and a proven framework developed over decades of work, the Units of Study in Opinion/Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing:

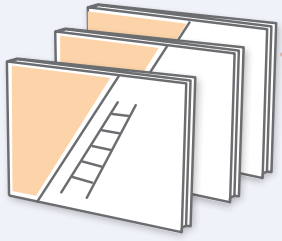
- support explicit instruction in opinion/argument, information, and narrative writing and provide rich opportunities for practice
- help teachers use learning progressions to observe and assess students' writing, to develop students' use of self-monitoring strategies, and to set students on trajectories of growth
- give teachers crystal-clear advice and on-the-job support for teaching efficient and effective writing workshops





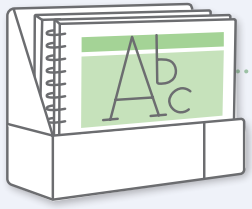
TCRWP Classroom Libraries

Each of the TCRWP Classroom Libraries is a miniature version of a great bookstore—if you can imagine a bookstore run by the country's greatest readers and the country's greatest teachers—and where every collection has been carefully and thoughtfully designed to lure kids into reading and to move them up levels of complexity.



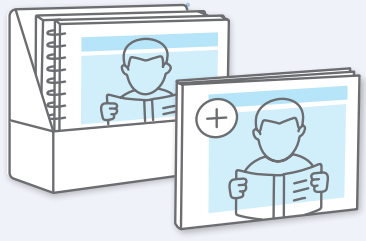
Up the Ladder Units

The *Up the Ladder* units give less experienced writers opportunities to engage in repeated successful practice and to move rapidly along a gradually increasing progression of challenges. Although designed to ramp kids up to the work they will do in the grades 3–6 writing Units of Study, these units can be helpful in any setting where students need a boost in foundational elements of writing workshop.



Units of Study in Phonics

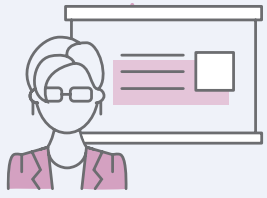
These lean, engaging phonics units are deeply grounded in best-practice research—and are also kid-friendly and fun. Lessons synchronize instruction across the reading and writing Units of Study, allowing opportunities to revisit high-leverage phonics skills across the day in ways that help students become stronger readers and writers.



Reading Units

The Units of Study for Teaching Reading offer a framework for teaching that:

- provides a comprehensive, cross-grade curriculum in which skills are introduced, developed, and deepened
- supports explicit instruction in reading skills and strategies and offers extended time for reading
- provides strategic performance assessments to help teachers monitor progress, provide feedback, and help students set clear goals for their reading work
- gives teachers on-the-job guidance in powerful reading workshop teaching



Professional Development & Professional Books

The Project provides a wide range of professional development services to keep teachers, literacy coaches, and building leaders current on best practices to support literacy instruction. Options include in-school staff development devoted to implementation of reading and writing workshops and content-area literacy instruction, day-long workshops, week-long institutes, and year-long study groups.

In addition, Lucy and her TCRWP colleagues have written many professional books to support study groups and individual learning. For a complete list of titles, visit **UnitsofStudy.com**.

@HeinemannPub

UnitsofStudy.com | P 800.225.5800 | F 877.231.6980

Heinemann
Dedicated to Teachers

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lucy Calkins is the Founding Director of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. In that role, Lucy's greatest accomplishment has been to develop a learning community of teacher educators whose brilliance and dedication shine through in the Units of Study books, which have become an essential part of classroom life in tens of thousands of schools around the world. Take in the sheer excellence of their work, and you will understand why Lucy tells everyone that the Project is as dear to her as her own two sons, Miles and Evan Skorpen.

Lucy is the Robinson Professor of Children's Literature at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she co-directs the Literacy Specialist Program. She is the author, coauthor, or series editor of the Units of Study in Opinion/Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing, Grades K–8; Up the Ladder: Accessing Grades 3–6 Writing Units of Study; Units of Study for Teaching Reading, Grades K–8 series; and Units of Study in Phonics, Grades K–2; as well the lead curator of the TCRWP Classroom Libraries, Grades K–8 (all published by Heinemann); and has authored scores of other professional books and articles.

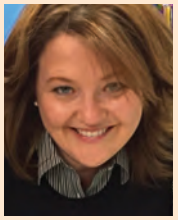
Elizabeth Franco is a Staff Developer, Researcher, and Writer-in-Residence at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University. Her passion is for finding ways to make reading and writing both playful and rigorous. Liz is an author or coauthor, as well as illustrator, of five books in the Units of Study for Teaching Reading series, including *Word Detectives: Strategies for Using High-Frequency Words and for Decoding* (which she coauthored with Havilah Jespersen), and three books in the Units of Study in Opinion/Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing series (all published by Heinemann). Liz is known especially for her state-of-the-art work making tools that help youngsters work with more independence. She supports lead teachers in their own professional development work and teaches advanced sections at TCRWP summer institutes.

Mary Ehrenworth (EdD) is Deputy Director of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Through that role, she supports literacy-based school reform in schools across New York City and the nation and in a handful of other countries, and is a frequent keynote speaker at Project events and national and international conferences. Mary's interest in critical literacy, interpretation, and close reading all informed the books she has authored or coauthored in the Units of Study series (both reading and writing), as well as her many articles and other books, including *The Power of Grammar* and *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement*.

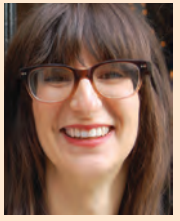
Barbara Golub, currently an independent literacy consultant, was a Staff Developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project for four years, and before that, a teacher at PS 158 in Manhattan. While at the Project, Barb led work that revolved around both vocabulary instruction and the tools that support student independence. Barb has provided professional support to schools in New York City, across the country, and around the world, including in Sweden and India.

GRAHAM HOLLEY

Christine Holley is a Senior Lead Staff Developer at TCRWP. In this role, she works with teachers and school leaders in a score of schools across New York City and beyond, including Sweden, Shanghai, and Tokyo. Christine is especially known for helping teachers lead assessment-based instruction, including small-group work, and for using drama, storytelling, and the arts to bring literature to life. She leads advanced sections at the TCRWP's renowned summer institutes, and courses for literacy coaches. She is coauthor of *Becoming Avid Readers*, in the Units of Study for Teaching Reading series, and *From Scenes to Series*, in the Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing series. Before joining the Project, Christine taught PreK and Grade 1 at PS 126 in New York City and in Santa Monica, CA. She earned her MA in education from Fordham University through the Ennis William Cosby Scholarship Program. Her work with lead professor Joanna Uhry helped her gain skills needed to support children struggling with literacy.

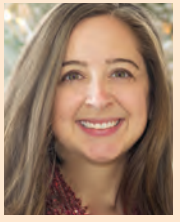


Celena Dangler Larkey is a Senior Lead Staff Developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project at Columbia University. During the school year, you'll find her working with students, teachers, and principals in NY, NJ, and around the world. In addition to degrees in Elementary Education and Psychology, she holds MA degrees as a Literacy Specialist and in Educational Leadership. She is the coauthor of *Becoming Experts: Reading Nonfiction* in the Units of Study for Teaching Reading series, *Writing Reviews* in the Units of Study in Opinion/Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing series, and the Opinion book in the Up the Ladder: Accessing Grades 3–6 Writing Units of Study series (all published by Heinemann). When not inside a classroom, you'll find Celena hanging out with her husband Jason, son Gabe, and her three dogs.



Kristine Mraz brings years as a Staff Developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project to her current position as a kindergarten teacher at PS 59 in Manhattan. She is coauthor (with Marjorie Martinelli) of *Smarter Charts: Optimizing an Instructional Staple to Create Independent Readers and Writers* (Heinemann 2012) and of the blog *Chartchums*. In addition to writing and teaching, she consults in schools across the country and as far away as Taiwan. She primarily supports teachers in early literacy, play, and inquiry based learning. On the off chance she has free time, you'll find Kristi reading on a couch in Brooklyn with her dog, her husband, and baby Harry.

Abby Oxenhorn Smith worked as a K–2 teacher at PS 116 in Manhattan for seven years. In that capacity, she was a teacher-researcher with the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Many teachers and principals visited Abby's classroom, and her teaching was videotaped for the DVD *Big Lessons from Small Writers: Teaching Primary Writing* (Heinemann 2005). She also has worked as a literacy coach, and has led sections at the TCRWP summer institutes. Abby also can lead reading and writing workshops at home as well as at school, as she is the mother of second-grade triplets.



Rachel Rothman-Perkins teaches and coaches in elementary classrooms nationally and internationally as part of her work with TCRWP, where she is known for her leadership in phonics, spelling, and assessment-based instruction in the primary grades. Rachel is coauthor of the Grade 1 *Small Moments: Writing with Focus, Detail, and Dialogue* in the Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing series. Rachel's passion for teaching and school leadership began when she was a classroom teacher at Glider Elementary School in San Jose, CA, and in her studies in San Jose State University's MA program in Literacy Education. She is an ardent student, tackling inquiry topics and developing deep knowledge through a succession of apprenticeships that have allowed her to push back the frontiers of her thinking.

Heinemann
DEDICATED TO TEACHERS™

For more than thirty years the **Teachers College Reading and Writing Project** (*readingandwritingproject.org*) has been both a provider of professional development to hundreds of thousands of educators and a think tank, developing state-of-the-art teaching methods and working closely with policy makers, school principals, and teachers to initiate and support school-wide and system-wide reform in the teaching of reading and writing.

The Teachers College Reading & Writing Project

ISBN 978-0-325-10509-3
90000 >
9 780325 105093
07.2018