



GRADE THREE
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 THREE 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 3 grade-level 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, Intermediate 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

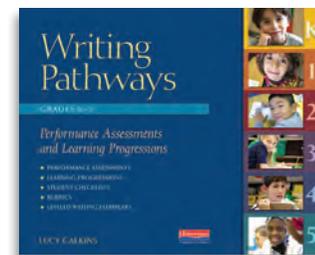
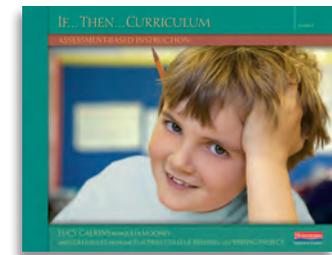
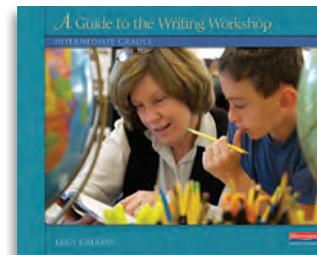
- ◆ This practical assessment system includes learning progressions, on-demand writing prompts, student checklists, rubrics, student writing samples, and exemplar pieces of writing.
- ◆ The tools in *Writing Pathways* help teachers set all students on trajectories of growth.

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.

“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 3 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.

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GRADE 3 ♦ UNIT 1 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Crafting True Stories

LUCY CALKINS • MARJORIE MARTINELLI

In the first section—bend—of this unit, in addition to helping children get accustomed to the routines and expectations of the writing workshop, you will show them examples of third-grade writing notebooks. Then, as children generate personal narrative writing, you'll coach them in setting goals for themselves. For some children this will mean increasing their volume and stamina; for others it will mean writing with more attention to conventions or craft. This first bend provides a vision for the kind of writing third-graders can do and sets clear expectations in a celebratory, can-do way.

Bend II introduces children to keeping a writing notebook. Children will learn to reread their notebooks, to select a seed idea, and then to develop that seed idea by storytelling different ways the story might go (sound, start and end, etc.). Then you will teach them that writers draft by writing fast and furiously, reliving each moment as they go. Next, children will spend time on revision, studying the work of mentor author, Karen Hesse; they'll try her techniques in their own drafts. You'll conclude this bend by introducing paragraphing and discussing how to develop paragraphs by adding step-by-step actions, dialogue, thoughts, and feelings.

The third bend emphasizes independence and initiative. You'll remind children that writers finish one piece and begin the next right away, applying all they've learned and moving to higher levels of expertise and independence. Much of what you teach during this time will depend on what you observe when you compare your students' writing with the narrative writing checklists. In addition to this revision work, you'll teach students the conventions of punctuating dialogue.

During the final bend, after students have selected the draft they will publish, you will rally them to tackle a whole new fast draft on that topic. They'll need to rehearse just as they did for the first draft, envisioning the story bit by bit. Then you'll teach children, once again, to look to professional authors to learn ways writers deliberately craft the endings of their stories. Finally, you'll show students how to use an editing checklist. As a final celebration, you will create a bulletin board that has a space for each child's writing and then invite classroom visitors to read and admire the work put forth by these blossoming third-grade writers.

Welcome to Unit 1

BEND I ♦ Writing Personal Narratives with Independence

1. Starting the Writing Workshop: Visualizing Possibilities
2. Finding Ideas and Writing Up a Storm
3. Drawing on a Repertoire of Strategies: Writing with Independence
4. Writers Use a Storyteller's Voice. They Tell Stories, Not Summaries
5. Taking Stock: Pausing to Ask, "How Am I Doing?"
6. Editing as We Go: Making Sure Others Can Read Our Writing

BEND II ♦ Becoming a Storyteller on the Page

7. Rehearsing: Storytelling and Leads
8. Writing Discovery Drafts
9. Revising by Studying What Other Authors Have Done
10. Storytellers Develop the Heart of a Story
11. Paragraphing to Support Sequencing, Dialogue, and Elaboration

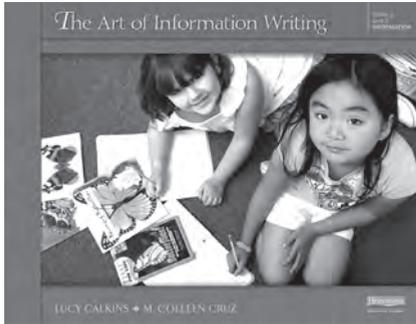
BEND III ♦ Writing with New Independence on a Second Piece

12. Becoming One's Own Captain: Starting a Second Piece, Working with New Independence
13. Revision Happens throughout the Writing Process
14. Drafting: Writing from Inside a Memory
15. Revision: Balancing Kinds of Details
16. Commas and Quotation Marks: Punctuating Dialogue

BEND IV ♦ Fixing Up and Fancying Up Our Best Work: Revision and Editing

17. Writers Revise in Big, Important Ways
18. Revising Endings: Learning from Published Writing
19. Using Editing Checklists
20. Publishing: A Writing Community Celebrates





GRADE 3 ♦ UNIT 2 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

The Art of Information Writing

LUCY CALKINS • M. COLLEEN CRUZ

Before the first day of this unit, students will need to have chosen the general topic they'll be teaching others about through their writing—a topic on which they already have expertise. As they get started writing in this first bend, you will teach them ways to write with authority by inviting them to teach their topic to others and take what they learn from teaching it back to their writing. You will then spend a few lessons teaching students to try out various writing structures before drafting.

Bend II emphasizes both drafting and revising, braiding them together as many professional writers of information books do. Students will learn increasingly complex revision strategies, now involving choosing grammatical structures and using research to feed elaboration. They will continue to use ways to improve their writing learned in the primary grades.

In Bend III, you will help your students prepare for publication, emphasizing the importance of being aware of one's audience. You will also ask students to keep in mind the sorts of things a nonfiction author attends to while preparing for readers: using text features, checking facts, and attending to conventions. These, not incidentally, are skills that third-graders need to practice again and again throughout their year and across the disciplines.

During the final bend, you will push toward independence. Students will learn ways to write informatively, in a variety of genres, about a topic they've been studying in social studies, thus discovering how transferable writing skills can and should be once they are learned. At the end of the unit, students have an opportunity to teach their writing skills to younger students as a celebration of what they've learned and as a way to bring full circle the theme of teaching with which this unit opened. Throughout the entire unit, you will see a renewed commitment to grammar, vocabulary, and conventions, all carefully aligned with state standards.

Welcome to Unit 2

BEND I ♦ Organizing Information

1. Teaching Others as a Way to Prime the Pump
2. The Power of Organizing and Reorganizing
3. New Structures Lead to New Thinking
4. Laying the Bricks of Information
5. Organization Matters in Texts Large and Small

BEND II ♦ Reaching to Write Well

6. Studying Mentor Texts in a Search for Elaboration Strategies
7. Making Connections within and across Chapters
8. Balancing Facts and Ideas from the Start
9. Researching Facts and Ensuring Text Accuracy
10. Reusing and Recycling in the Revision Process
11. Creating Introductions through Researching Mentor Authors

BEND III ♦ Moving Toward Publication, Moving Toward Readers

12. Taking Stock and Setting Goals
13. Putting Oneself in Readers' Shoes to Clear Up Confusion
14. Using Text Features Makes It Easier for Readers to Learn
15. Fact-Checking through Rapid Research
16. Punctuating with Paragraphs

BEND IV ♦ Transferring Learning from Long Projects to Short Ones

17. Plan Content-Area Writing, Drawing on Knowledge from Across the Unit
18. Revising from Self-Assessments
19. Crafting Speeches, Articles, or Brochures Using Information Writing Skills
20. Bringing All You Know to Every Project
21. A Final Celebration: Using Knowledge about Nonfiction Writing to Teach Younger Students





GRADE 3 ♦ UNIT 3 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Changing the World *Persuasive Speeches, Petitions, and Editorials*

LUCY CALKINS • KELLY BOLAND HOHNE

During the first bend in this unit, you will rally your third-graders to support bold, brave opinions as they write persuasive speeches. Children first work together on a shared topic. This allows them to receive lots of help writing structured texts that contain a claim, reasons, and examples. They immerse themselves in the genre by writing this speech, revising it, and delivering it to the school principal. Then students write many more persuasive speeches in their notebook—at least one or two a day. As they do, you coach them to apply and extend the opinion writing skills they learned in previous grades. At the end of this bend students use a checklist to assess their work, set goals, and create action plans for meeting those goals.

The second bend gives writers the opportunity to work for an extended time on one persuasive speech, taking it through the writing process. They gather facts and details and organize them. They “write long” about their topic, categorize the evidence they collect, and decide which evidence belongs in their speech. They then deliver their speech to at least a small group. These speeches may be filmed.

In Bend III, “From Persuasive Speeches to Petitions, Editorials, and Persuasive Letters,” students transfer and apply everything they have

learned about writing persuasive speeches to writing other types of opinion pieces. While working on their new project, students generate ideas, plan, draft, revise, and edit, going through the writing process more quickly and with greater independence, at the same time learning strategies for raising the level of their work. Students then assess their work, revise their draft, and consider how well they are meeting the expectations for third-grade (perhaps fourth-grade) opinion writing. They publish a second piece at the end of this bend.

In the final bend of the unit, “Cause Groups,” students work collaboratively to support causes through writing in various genres. You may have a group of students dedicated to recycling, for example, or another group dedicated to animal rights. Because they will by now be well versed in taking themselves through the writing process, your teaching can focus instead on helping students incorporate research into their writing. To publish their third and final piece, students will consider where in the world the text should go to reach the particular audience the writer had in mind. The culminating celebration of this unit showcases all the pieces students have written as well as the process they have gone through to ensure that others will see and be moved by their work.

Welcome to Unit 3

BEND I ♦ Launching Work on Persuasive Speeches

1. Practicing Persuasion
2. Gathering Brave, Bold Opinions for Persuasive Writing
3. Drawing on a Repertoire of Strategies for Generating Opinion Writing: Writing with Independence
4. Considering Audience to Say More
5. Editing as You Go: Making Sure Your Audience Can Always Read Your Drafts
6. Taking Stock and Setting Goals

BEND II ♦ Raising the Level of Persuasive Writing

7. Gathering All You Know about Your Opinion
8. Organizing and Categorizing
9. For Example: Proving by Showing
10. By Considering Audience, Writers Select and Discard Material
11. Paragraphing to Organize Our Drafts
12. Choosing Words that Sound Right and Evoke Emotion
13. Looking Back and Looking Forward: Assessing and Preparing for Mini-Publication

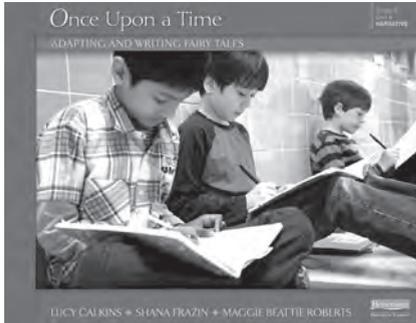
BEND III ♦ From Persuasive Speeches to Petitions, Editorials, and Persuasive Letters

14. Inquiry into Petitions
15. Becoming Your Own Job Captain
16. Gathering a Variety of Evidence: Interviews and Surveys
17. Revising Your Introductions and Conclusions to Get Your Audience to Care
18. Taking Stock Again: Goal Setting with More Independence

BEND IV ♦ Cause Groups

19. Tackling a Cause
20. Becoming Informed about a Cause
21. Yesterday's Revisions Become Today's Drafting Strategies
22. Getting Our Writing Ready for Readers
23. Celebrating Activism





GRADE 3 ♦ UNIT 4 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Once Upon a Time

Adapting and Writing Fairy Tales

LUCY CALKINS • SHANA FRAZIN • MAGGIE BEATTIE ROBERTS

During the first bend in this very special unit, you'll rally each child to adapt a fairy tale—we suggest children choose either *Little Red Riding Hood* or *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. Once writers have chosen a tale, they will first need to reread the classic version, then study and annotate it, noticing the plot as well as the qualities of a fairy tale. Children then plan their adaptations, thinking about significant changes they could make to alter the course of the tale. At first your children are apt to write their stories in a just-the-facts way. Their attention will be on getting the adaptations right. This will probably change midway when you teach storytelling as a way to rehearse and plan their adaptations. Suddenly, in partnerships, children will use gestures, small actions, expressions, and dialogue to act out their adaptations and bring their imagined stories to life. In this first bend, you will also teach children that a narrator can function a bit like Jiminy Cricket once did in old-fashioned movies—coming onstage to tell viewers background information. They, too, can use a narrator to stitch their small-moment scenes together.

The theme of the second bend is independence and transference. During this bend, your children will write their second adaptation of a fairy tale—of any tale they choose! You'll teach a series of lessons that support students in applying what they learned in the previous bend. You will address common pitfalls of third-grade narrative writing—drafts

that are swamped with dialogue, sentences that lack variety, and scenes that are summarized rather than stretched out with detail. An important part of this bend is to help children imagine far more extensive revisions than anything they've previously undertaken. This will set the stage for the message that pervades this bend: "Push yourself. You can do more than you think."

In the final bend, to celebrate your students' growth and ensure that it continues, you will teach them to apply all they've learned in writing an original fairy tale. You will teach children that writers of fairy tales use what they know about narrative writing, creating characters with wants who encounter trouble, and then—ta-da!—there's a resolution. Once your writers have generated possible story ideas, they draft, and more importantly, revise until they exceed even their own expectations. Then you will coach them in editing and finally publishing their favorite tale.

Welcome to Unit 4

BEND I ♦ **Writing in the Footsteps of the Classics**

1. Adapting Classic Tales
2. Writing Story Adaptations that Hold Together
3. Storytelling, Planning, and Drafting Adaptations of Fairy Tales
4. Writers Can Story-Tell and Act Out as They Draft
5. Weaving Narration through Stories
6. Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: Assessment Using Self-Reflection

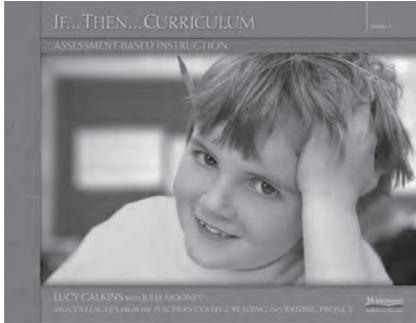
BEND II ♦ **Follow the Path: Adapting Fairy Tales with Independence**

7. Goals and Plans Are a Big Deal
8. Telling Stories that Make Readers Shiver
9. Revising Early and Often
10. When Dialogue Swamps Your Draft, Add Actions
11. Painting a Picture with Words: Revising for Language
12. The Long and Short of It: Editing for Sentence Variety

BEND III ♦ **Blazing Trails: Writing Original Fairy Tales**

13. Collecting Ideas for Original Fairy Tales
14. From “This Is a Fairy Tale About” to “Once upon a Time”
15. Tethering Objects to Characters
16. Using Descriptive Language While Drafting
17. Revising the Magic
18. Revising for Readers
19. Editing with an Eye Out for Broken Patterns
20. Happily Ever After: A Fairy Tale Celebration





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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.

INTRODUCTION **Third-Grade Writers and Planning Your Year**

PART ONE **Alternate and Additional Units**

1. **Writing Gripping Fictional Stories with Meaning and Significance**

If your students are new to the writing workshop, performed at a low level on their narrative on-demand assessment, or have not had experience writing narratives in previous grades, THEN you may want to teach this unit prior to Crafting True Stories.

—or—

If your students would benefit from an additional narrative unit on fiction, THEN you may want to teach this unit after Crafting True Stories and before Once Upon a Time.

2. **Information Writing: Reading, Research, and Writing in the Content Areas**

If you want to extend your students' knowledge of information writing as well as teach them to write across the curriculum, THEN you might want to teach this unit after The Art of Information Writing.

3. **Poetry: Writing, Thinking, and Seeing More**

If you want to teach your students to become more conscious of the crafting and language decisions that writers make, THEN you might want to teach this unit.

4. **The Literary Essay: Equipping Ourselves with the Tools to Write Expository Texts that Advance an Idea about Literature**

If your writers are strong and are ready for more challenging units, THEN you may want to teach this unit after Changing the World to prepare students for the writing they will do in fourth grade and beyond.

5. **Revision**

If you want to present your students with an opportunity to reflect on their growth as writers and return to previous work with a new vigor, THEN you might want to end the school year with this unit.

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

NARRATIVE WRITING

Structure and Cohesion

- If the story lacks focus . . .*
- If the story is confusing or seems to be missing important information . . .*
- If the story has no tension . . .*
- If the story has no real or significant ending . . .*
- If the writer is new to the writing workshop or this particular genre of writing . . .*
- If the writer does not use paragraphs . . .*

Elaboration

- If the writer has created a story that is sparse, with little elaboration . . .*
- If the story is riddled with details . . .*
- If the story is swamped with dialogue . . .*
- If the writer has written the external story but not the internal story . . .*
- If the writer struggles to identify and convey a deeper meaning . . .*
- If the writer is ready to use literary devices . . .*

Language

- If the writer summarizes rather than story-tells . . .*
- If the writer struggles with spelling . . .*
- If the writer struggles with ending punctuation . . .*

The Process of Generating Ideas

- If the writer has “nothing to write about . . .”*
- If the writer’s notebook work does not represent all he can do . . .*

The Process of Drafting

- If the writer has trouble maintaining stamina and volume . . .*

The Process of Revision

- If the writer struggles to work independently (during revision or other parts of the writing process) . . .*
- If the writer does not have personal goals for his writing progress . . .*

The Process of Editing

- If the writer does not use what he knows about editing while writing . . .*

INFORMATION WRITING

Structure and Cohesion

- If the writer has not established a clear organization for his book . . .*
- If information overlaps in various sections . . .*
- If the writer is ready to experiment with alternative structures of organization . . .*
- If the writer has chosen a topic that is too broad . . .*
- If the piece is lacking an introduction and/or conclusion . . .*

Elaboration

- If each section is short and needs to be elaborated upon . . .*
- If the writer elaborates by adding fact upon fact . . .*
- If the writer goes off on tangents when elaborating . . .*
- If the writer does not elaborate on information from outside sources . . .*

Language

- If the writer incorporates quotes, facts, and statistics but does so awkwardly . . .*
- If transitions from section to section sound awkward . . .*
- If the writer does not incorporate domain-specific vocabulary . . .*

The Process of Generating Ideas

- If the writer chooses ideas about which he has little expertise and/or that are difficult to research . . .*
- If the writer simply copies facts into his notebook . . .*

The Process of Drafting

- If the first draft is not organized . . .*

The Process of Revision

- If the writer is “done” while revising . . .*
- If the writer does not have a large repertoire of strategies to draw from . . .*

The Process of Revision

- If the writer is “done” before revising . . .*
- If the writer does not have a large repertoire of strategies to draw from . . .*

The Process of Editing

- If the student has edited but has missed several mistakes or would otherwise benefit from learning to partner-edit . . .*



OPINION WRITING

Structure and Cohesion

If the introduction does not forecast the structure of the essay . . .

If supports are overlapping . . .

If supports are not parallel or equal in weight . . .

If the writer is new to the writing workshop or this particular genre of writing . . .

If the writer has multiple, well-developed reasons, but they all blur together without paragraphs or transitions . . .

If the writer is ready to consider counterarguments . . .

Elaboration

If the writer is struggling to elaborate (1) . . .

If the writer is struggling to elaborate (2) . . .

If the writer's evidence feels free-floating or disconnected from the argument at hand . . .

If the piece is swamped with details . . .

If the writer has provided evidence, but it does not all support the claim . . .

Language

If the writer uses a casual, informal tone when writing . . .

If the writer struggles with spelling . . .

If the writer struggles with comma usage . . .

The Process of Generating Ideas

If the writer struggles to generate meaningful topics worth exploring . . .

If the writer is exploring opinions that are overly simple or without dimension . . .

The Process of Drafting

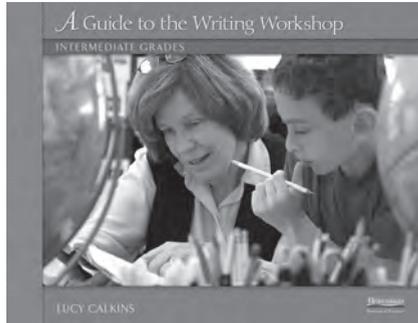
If the writer has a clear plan for her writing but loses focus and organization when drafting . . .

The Process of Revision

If the writer has a limited repertoire of revision strategies . . .

The Process of Editing

If the writer "edits on the run," investing little time or effort in the process . . .



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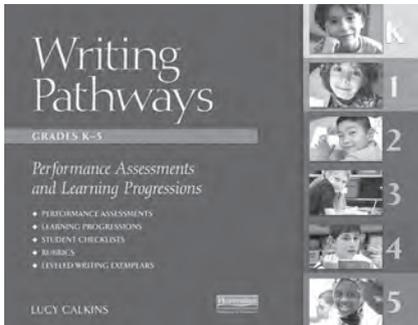
A Guide to the Writing Workshop Intermediate Grades

LUCY CALKINS

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

- A Note to My Readers
- A New Mission for Schools and Educators
- What Do State Standards Say about Writing, and What Does This Mean for Us?
- The Essentials of Writing Instruction
- Upper-Elementary-Grade Writers and the Writing Process
- Provisioning a Writing Workshop
- Management Systems
- Inside the Minilesson
- Differentiated Feedback: Conferring with Individuals and Small Groups
- Supporting English Language Learners
- Building Your Own Units of Study





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.

PART ONE About the Assessment System

- A Brief Overview of the Assessment System
- The First Step: On-Demand Performance Assessments
- The Norming Meeting: Developing Shared Expectations
- Harvesting Information to Differentiate Instruction
- Introducing Students to the Self-Assessment Checklists
- Adapting the Assessment System to Support Students with IEPs
- Teaching Youngsters to Use Checklists to Set Goals for Themselves
- Making Sure Self-Assessment Supports Changes in Practice
- Designing a Record-Keeping System
- Using Leveled Writing Samples
- Conferring and Small-Group Work, Informed by the Learning Progressions
- Supporting Transference of Learning across Content Areas
- Designing Performance Assessments for Writing about Reading

PART TWO The Assessment Tools

Opinion Writing

- Learning Progression, PreK–6*
- On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt*
- Opinion Writing Checklists, Grades K–6*
- Student Writing Samples, Grades K–6*
- Annotated Opinion Writing, K–6*

Information Writing

- Learning Progression, PreK–6*
- On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt*
- Information Writing Checklists, Grades K–6*
- Student Writing Samples, Grades K–6*
- Annotated Information Writing, K–6*

Narrative Writing

- Learning Progression, PreK–6*
- On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt*
- Narrative Writing Checklists, Grades K–6*
- Student Writing Samples, Grades K–6*
- Annotated Narrative Writing, K–6*

Writing Process

- Learning Progression, K–5*

Additional Performance Assessments

- Sample On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt for Writing about Reading, Grade 2*
- Sample On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt for Writing about Reading, Grade 5*
- Suggestions for Conducting, Grading, and Responding to the Performance Assessments*

OPINION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, PRAK 6 (continued)

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, list those 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; she wrote greater and did not overlap. She put them in an order that the thought would be most convincing. The writer included evidence such as facts, examples, quotations, micro-citations, and information to support her claim. The writer discussed and supported 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 related 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 chose words deliberately to be clear and to have an effect on his readers.
Organization			
The writer made deliberate word choices to support her opinion.			

OPINION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, PRAK 6 (continued)

Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
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.
Craft	The writer said, drew, and/or "acted" 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.
Organization			
The writer wrote at least two reasons and wrote at least a few sentences about each one.			

OPINION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, PRAK 6 (continued)

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
STRUCTURE			
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 worked to find the precise words to state her claim; she let readers know the reasons she would develop later.	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 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 example using words such as also and another.	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 wanted to shift from saying reasons to giving evidence and in addition to, also, and another.	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 and the most important reason. To show	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, PRAK 6 (continued)

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.
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.
Transitions	The writer kept on working.	The writer wrote his idea and then said more. He used words such as because.	The writer said more about her opinion and used words such as and and because.
Ending	The writer ended working when he had said, drawn, and "written" all he could about his opinion.	The writer had a last part or page.	The writer wrote an ending for his piece.
Organization	On the writer's paper, there was a place for the drawing and a place where she tried to write words.	The writer told his opinion in one place and in another place he said why.	The writer wrote a part where she got readers' attention and a part where she said more.
Organization			
The writer's piece had different parts; she wrote a lot of lines for each part.			

OPINION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, PRAK 6 (continued)

Grade 3

The writer used his introduction to set readers up to expect that this will be a piece of opinion writing. He tried to hook the reader into caring about his opinion.

The writer explained several reasons and examples for why people should agree with his opinion, and wrote at least a few sentences about each point.

The writer organized his information so that each part of the writing is about mostly the same thing.

The writer didn't just tell the reader to believe him. Instead, he included compelling details (in this case, primarily from his own personal knowledge and experience) to help persuade the reader.

The writer worked on an ending for his piece. It is likely a thought or comment related to the opinion he is writing about.

The writer punctuated quotes correctly, with commas and quotation marks.

The writer punctuated in ways that help the reader read with pauses and expression.

Do you want to know the best sport ever? Football is the best sport. We should be able to play football at recess.

We should be able to play football because it's fun. Everyone likes football. Everyone watches the Superbowl because they love football. When we play football we have fun. If you get the ball everyone runs after you and tries to grab it. We run around screaming and we have fun.

Everyone in our class knows how to play. For example, I can be the quarterback and Jessie can be the receiver. Even our teacher knows how to play. She told us. We wouldn't leave anyone out. Please let us play!

Another reason why we should have football is it is good for us. You get to run, throw, and catch. For example, one time I was playing with my brothers and my dog caught the ball. We had to chase after Rufus to get the ball back. I asked my brother and he said, "I get the best workout when I play football." Football is good exercise.

We would be happy if we could play football. Everyone would love it!!! Please let us play!

Name: _____ Date: _____

Grade 3

Overall	Structure	NOI	YET	STARTING TO	YES!
Lead	I told readers my opinion and ideas on a text or a topic and helped them understand my reasons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transitions	I wrote a beginning in which I 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 my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ending	I connected my ideas and reasons with my examples using words such as for example and because. I connected one reason or example using words such as also and another.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization	I worked on an ending, perhaps a thought or comment related to my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elaboration	I wrote several reasons or examples of why readers should agree with my opinion and wrote at least several sentences about each reason. I organized my information so that each part of my writing was mostly about one thing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Craft	I not only named my reasons to support my opinion, but also wrote more about each one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language Conventions	I not only told readers to believe me, but also wrote in ways that got them thinking or feeling in certain ways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing	I used what I know about word families and spelling rules to help me spell and edit. I got help from others to check my spelling and punctuation before I wrote my final draft.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization	I punctuated dialogue correctly with commas and quotation marks. While writing, I put punctuation at the end of every sentence. I 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

OPINION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, PRAK 6 (continued)

Grade 3

Flora

America is facing a big problem. Soda are making people become overweight. This is very unhealthy. We need to stop!

One reason people should stop is because soda is so unhealthy. Soda is full of sugar and it makes you gain weight. In 1955, the first Big Mac was made. It was only 1.99. Now it's 4.99. That's a lot of money for a burger. And it's not even that good. It's just a big piece of bread with a little meat and cheese. It's not healthy.

Another reason is because soda is so unhealthy. It makes you gain weight and it's not good for you. You don't want to get sick because getting sick is a big problem and it's not healthy.

No More "Supersize"

I think I think that's the best idea. It's a supersize drink.

Since the ice age, we get smarter. For example, I used to not know about things now. I know what about things. I hope you agree to the argument about getting more non-fattening foods.



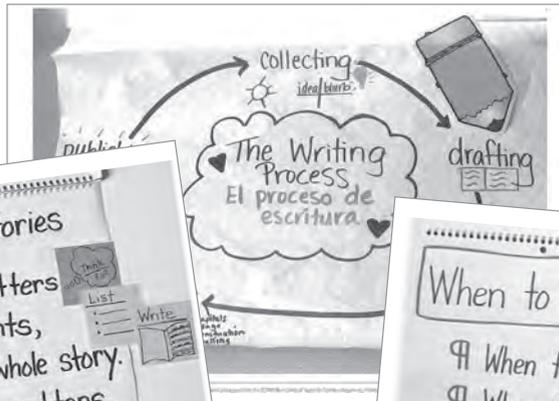
Online Resources for Teaching Writing

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.

UNITS OF STUDY *in*
Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing
A WORKSHOP CURRICULUM, GRADES K-5
LUCY CALKINS, SERIES EDITOR

GRADE
3

- Anchor Chart Sticky Notes ▶
- General Information ▶
- UNIT 1: Crafting True Stories ▶
- UNIT 2: The Art of Information Writing ▶
- UNIT 3: Changing the World: Persuasive Speeches, Petitions, and Editorials ▶
- UNIT 4: Once Upon a Time: Adapting and Writing Fairy Tales ▶
- IF... THEN... Curriculum ▶
- A Guide to the Writing Workshop: Intermediate Grades ▶
- WRITING PATHWAYS: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K-5 ▶
- Spanish Language Resources ▶



Finding Ideas for True Stories

- * Think of a person who matters to you, list small moments, choose one, and write the whole story.
- * Think of a place that matters, map small moments, choose one, write it.

When to Start a New Paragraph

- ¶ When there is a new subtopic.
- ¶ When time has moved forward.
- ¶ When a new person is speaking.

To Write a True Story

- Find story ideas that are **focused** and important to you and **write lots of entries!**
- Make a mental movie of what happened, telling it in small detail, bit by bit.
- Remember your self-assessments of your narrative writing and your goals.
- Rehearse for your writing by **storytelling repeatedly.**

Nombre: _____ Fecha: _____

NARRATIVO (continued)

NARRATIVO		AGN NO	COMEN ZANDO	ISR
Estructura				
En general	Conté mi historia, parte por parte.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inicio	Escribí un comienzo en el que ayudé a los lectores a conocer a los personajes y a saber cuál era el ambiente (tiempo y lugar) de mi historia.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transiciones	Conté la historia en orden usando expresiones como <i>a little later</i> (un poco más tarde) y <i>after that</i> (después de eso).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final	Elegí la acción, las conversaciones, o el sentimiento (emoción) que pudiera proporcionar un buen final para mi historia y me esforcé para escribirla bien.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organización	Utilicé párrafos y me salté líneas para separar lo que sucedía primero, de lo que sucedió después, y al final de mi historia.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Places

- I almost broke my arm and had to have a x-rays.
- The time I got stitches.
- The time I had to go to the ear/throat/dentist.
- The time I got a tooth p...

The time my mom wedding ring

I was at the park with my friend just taking her glove off she screamed her wedding ring was in her hand! She said it was sand. Me and my friend thought we could find it but we couldn't find it. So we went home and my dad bought my mom a new one.

Think of a person

My sister Julia

- The time we broke my mom's favorite ring.
- The first time we went to the Aquarium.
- The time we went to Chelsea Piers bowling alley.
- When we got stuck by a jellyfish at Disney World.
- The time my sister got scared half to death with my sister.

My mom

- The time my mom lost her wedding ring.
- The time me and my mom went ice skating.



Session 3

Drawing on a Repertoire of Strategies

Writing with Independence

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that writers sometimes think of a place, list small moments that happened in that place, and then write about one of these moments.

GETTING READY

- ✓ Students' writer's notebooks and pens or pencils, to be brought to the meeting area
- ✓ Assign table monitors to take out and put away the community writing tools each day
- ✓ "Finding Ideas for True Stories" chart from Session 2, with second bullet prewritten. Fold up chart to cover the bullet until ready to reveal the strategy during the minilesson. ✨
- ✓ A place that is important to you, to demonstrate how to quickly draw a map of the place, with stars and labels showing moments you remember (see Teaching)
- ✓ A developed story from your map, to show children how to quickly start writing a notebook entry (see Active Engagement)
- ✓ "The Hard Parts of Writing" chart, written based on observed challenges during independent writing time (see Share) ✨
- ✓ "When I Run Out of Gas as a Writer, I Can . . ." chart, written with students (see Share) ✨
- ✓ Chart paper and markers

TODAY YOU WILL TEACH STUDENTS a second strategy for finding ideas for personal narratives, and in doing so, you will also teach them that writers carry a toolkit of strategies, choosing the one that makes best sense for them. That is, the most important part of this minilesson may be the ending of it, when you send children off and remind them that they can draw upon *either* this session or the previous session's strategy—or they can invent yet another strategy. In our professional development work with teachers, my colleagues and I often point out that one of the ways workshop instruction is different than traditional instruction is that in workshops, writers have intentions and make choices based on those intentions. Explicit instruction equips writers with a repertoire of strategies to draw upon and with a knowledge of goals—of qualities of good writing—but whenever possible, students are encouraged to pursue goals as writers, to make plans and decisions, and to do so by drawing on the growing repertoire of strategies that are explicitly taught to them. Minilessons rarely channel all students to do whatever the subject of the minilesson has been. Instead, minilessons are more apt to add to students' repertoire of possible strategies and conclude, "Use this strategy when. . ." In this instance, for example, the strategy that is being taught is only useful if the writer struggles to come up with ideas for a story, and even then, there is no reason why today's strategy is better than yesterday's—or than strategies children may have learned in previous years.

In the previous session, you taught writers that they can think of a person who matters to them, list small moments spent with that person, choose one, and write the story of that small moment. Today you teach writers that they can start not with *a person* but with *a place*, collect small moments spent in that place, choose one, and write the story of that one time. However, instead of suggesting students *list* the small moments they recall spending in a place, you suggest they can map those small moments into a quick sketch of their place.

For me, this particular idea for generating stories is a really terrific one. My life is filled with places that brim with memories. What a treat to be able to recall all the stories that are attached with the nooks and crannies of my childhood home! Of course, it will be

important to rein myself in, spending more time listening to children's stories than sharing my own. But I do want to bring the lump in my throat with me to this session and let children know that these aren't just "kid" strategies. Instead, they are ones that will work for any of us.

Students are encouraged to pursue goals as writers, to make plans and decisions, and to do so by drawing on the growing repertoire of strategies that are explicitly taught to them.

It is helpful to keep in mind that any strategy—today's, yesterday's, or a strategy youngsters have brought with them from previous years—can be used in more or less sophisticated ways. For example, a more mature writer will weigh whether a story idea feels like a good one (or not) before adding it to the list, and the more mature writer will also have criteria for assessing a story idea. "Do I have strong feelings about that story? Is it somehow, in some way, important to me?" "Is that a time I remember with crystal-clear clarity?"

Early in the session, writers will need to decide whether they want to find story ideas in the people or in the places of their lives. Later, toward the end of the session, you will help writers know that they have even bigger responsibilities. The problems they encounter during writing time are ones that require problem solving. You'll help youngsters know that they can not only choose strategies from a growing repertoire of options, but they also invent their own solutions to problems rather than waiting for someone else to do this.

SESSION 3: DRAWING ON A REPERTOIRE OF STRATEGIES



23



MINILESSON

Drawing on a Repertoire of Strategies

Writing with Independence

CONNECTION

Establish the systems you will use every day to convene the writing workshop, and then channel children to share their writing and their plans for writing with increasing volume.

Before the children convened, I said, “Please remember to check the section of the board that says ‘Writing Workshop,’ because every day it will tell you what you need to bring to the meeting area. That way we won’t waste one precious minute on logistics. Today it tells you to bring your notebook with a pen tucked inside to the meeting area.”

Once children had convened, I said, “Writers, can I have your eyes and your attention?” I waited for them. “Yesterday was a big day, wasn’t it? For most of you, you started writing in your first writer’s notebook! I wonder if writers like James Howe and Beverly Cleary can remember back to the day they began keeping *their* writer’s notebooks. I bet so. Will you show the person sitting beside you what you wrote yesterday? Show that person your resolutions, too, and talk about whether you worked hard to meet them.

“Writers, you are telling each other about your story ideas, and that is wise. But will you also look at how many lines you wrote? You might even count them. Remember, yesterday we talked about writers being like athletes. They have goals and push themselves to meet those goals. Tell people near you whether you think that today, you might be able to write an even longer story. Talk about tricks you might use to push yourself to write more.” The children talked for a minute about this.

Remind children that writers draw on a repertoire of strategies for generating writing.

“Although we did great work in writing workshop yesterday, it was also hard work. At the start of writing time, some of you sat with the blank page in front of you and thought, ‘Nothing happens to me. I don’t have anything to write.’

“This happens to *every* writer. So today I want to teach you that writers do not have just *one* strategy for coming up with ideas. They have a whole bunch of strategies for finding ideas.” I gestured toward the chart we had started the preceding day.

◆ COACHING

Minilessons generally begin by contextualizing the lesson by referring to the previous day’s lesson, to children’s related work, or to the prior instruction upon which the minilesson builds. You’ll also find that I often get kids engaged from the get-go by asking them to quickly turn and talk or share a bit of their work with a partner.

It is important to teach the kids that first a person has a need for a strategy, then that person reaches for the strategy. Help kids recall times when they have been stuck, unsure of what to write about, and then introduce the idea that writers profit from having a repertoire of strategies for generating personal narratives (or any other kind of writing).

✿ **Name the teaching point.**

"Today I want to teach you that writers sometimes think not of a *person* but of a *place* that matters to them and list story ideas that go with that place, choosing one story to write. Sometimes, instead of *listing* stories that happened in a place, they *map* them, and then they write, write, write." I revealed the next bullet on our chart.

Finding Ideas for True Stories

- Think of a person who matters to you, list small moments, choose one, and write the whole story.
- Think of a place that matters, map small moments, choose one, write it.

TEACHING

Name the context that might lead a writer to use today's strategy and demonstrate reaching for the strategy.

"I'll show you what I mean when I say writers sometimes map story ideas, and then later today some of you might use this strategy to get yourself going on your writing. Others might choose to go back to yesterday's strategy.

"Remember, too, that if an idea for a great story pops into your head right away, you don't need to use this chart ('Finding Ideas') at all. No way. A writer can just start writing. But *if* you are stuck, if you are thinking, 'I just don't know what to write,' then you can look up at this chart and take any strategy from it." I gestured to and read the second bullet.

- Think of a place that matters, map small moments, choose one, write it.

Demonstrate the strategy in a step-by-step fashion, tucking in some tips.

"So first, we need to think of a place. It should be one we know well, because writing is always better if the writer is an expert on the topic. Are you all thinking of a place you know? Hmm, I know. I'll take the backyard at my old house." I started quickly sketching and labeling the place. Soon my map showed a hill. "That's Guts-Smasher Sledding Hill," I said. "One time, when I was sledding there, I got going really fast and smashed into a tree. I'm going to jot a note here on my map reminding me I could write about that time when I was sledding. At the bottom of Guts-Smasher Hill, there is a swamp. I could also write about the day I found frog eggs there."

When you write your own teaching point, be wary of the tendency to merely name the topic you'll be illuminating. A teaching point that says, "Today I'll teach you another strategy for generating stories" doesn't actually teach at all. I urge you to spell out the essence of the mini-lesson. "Out with it," I say. This means that by the end of the connection, kids have a good grasp of what they will be learning. When we have already named the strategy in the teaching point before entering the teaching component of a minilesson, this reminds us that naming the strategy is not teaching it.

Outside of writing time, try to read texts to children that resemble those you hope they will write. It is important to immerse students in the language and sound of texts similar to those they will write. Gasp over writers who put the truth of their lives onto the page. Say things like, "She writes with exact, honest words, just like so many of you did today!"

As I teach particular strategies for finding a topic, I am also conveying some very basic expectations for narrative writing, showing children their stories will probably celebrate everyday life moments.

Debrief. Name exactly what you did and explain that writers often find true stories hiding in places that matter.

“Did you see that I first needed to think of a place, one I know well, and I started quickly mapping the place. Then I jotted notes on my map about the stories that I can locate on the map. Now I have even more small moments I can write about in my notebook.”

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Set children up to try the strategy you’ve just taught. Scaffold them through the first step, teaching them to sketch a map and label it with small moments.

“So let’s try this together. Pretend you are stuck, not sure what to write about. You look up at our list of strategies,” I gestured toward the chart, “and decide to think of a *place* that matters. Right now, think of a place that matters to you.” I was quiet, giving students time to think. “Give me a thumbs up when you have thought of one.

“Okay, writers, you saw how quickly I sketched my map. (It took about one minute.) In your notebook, quick, quick, make yourself a map, too, and then jot story ideas onto your map.” As children worked, I said, “It will be like a treasure map, only instead of mapping hidden treasures, map hidden stories.” I moved among the children.

“Writers, can I have your eyes and your attention?” I waited for silence. “What treasures you are digging up in these places! Abraham sketched his parents’ jewelry shop. Danielle sketched her grandmother’s house. These are places that hold not only lots of powerful stories but also lots of powerful feelings. You are bringing such heart to this work, it gives me goose bumps!”

Remind writers that listing or mapping story ideas is merely a way to warm up for the important part—the actual writing of one of those ideas.

“Writers, do you think it would make sense to spend a whole writing workshop mapping stories? No? You are exactly right! Listing or mapping story ideas takes five minutes and is a way to warm yourself up for the stories you are going to write. Then comes the important part: writing, writing, writing. Right now, mark the story idea you’ll write today.” They did. “Now, remember what you do to start writing a story? You think, ‘Where was I at the start of this?’ Do that now.” I left students in a pool of silence to sit beside a partnership, coaching them to think, “What did I say or do at the very start of this? Now, writers, start your entry. Write what you are remembering you did or said.” I turned and started my own story on chart paper as they began scribbling away in their notebooks.

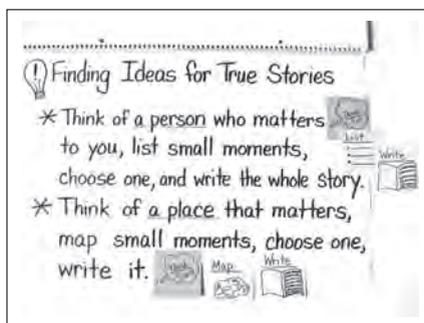


FIG. 3-1 Finding Ideas for true stories with steps added on Post-its for emphasis

When you shift from the demonstration to debriefing, students should feel the different moves you are making just by the way your intonation and posture changes. After most demonstrations, there will be a time for you to debrief, and that’s a time when you are no longer acting like a writer. You are the teacher who has been watching the demonstration and now turns to talk, eye to eye with kids, asking if they noticed this or that during the previous portion of the minilesson.

In the active engagement, I could have suggested each member of the class think of a place that matters to him or her and jot that down. Then I could have prompted each child to list a couple of small moments connected to that topic. I could even have asked children to star the one Small Moment story that they particularly care about and tell this story to a classmate. That active engagement would have started each child on that day’s writing. Try this if many children are staring at blank pages during writing time, or if you are teaching a class full of struggling and reluctant writers.

Notice the predictability of workshop instruction. Day after day, we use the same attention-getting device to ask for children’s attention.

Sometimes when children list small moments, they try to use a single word to represent an episode, writing “soccer” instead of “the day my dad embarrassed me at the soccer game.”

"Look out below!" I called as I jumped belly-down onto the sled. In an instant, I was careening down the hill, my face inches above the snow, my hands gripping the toboggan's sideboards, I . . .

I paused and looked back over the class to observe who was writing, who was thinking, and who appeared stuck, making a mental note of who might need more support.

LINK

Restate today's teaching point, setting it alongside the previous session's teaching.

"Writers, from this day forward and for the rest of your lives, remember that whenever you are sitting in front of an empty page, feeling stuck over what to write about, you can use either strategy that is on our list, or you can use a whole different strategy. Today, how many of you don't need these strategies because you already have a story to tell?"

Remind children that whenever they want help thinking of a true story, they can draw from their growing repertoire of strategies. Send them off to write.

"Let's watch how quickly and quietly the writers in the back row get started writing," I said, and gestured for those writers to move to their seats and get started.

In a stage whisper, so the entire class heard me, I said, "Oh, look, Joe is rereading what he wrote yesterday. That's smart. . . . Look, Danielle is writing—fast and furious. . . . Do you think the rest of you can zoom to your places and write up a storm? Remember, you're going to be writing fast and furiously, more than yesterday! Go!"

Notice that I start the story with dialogue and run with a very precise action. If you channel children to do likewise you may prevent them from starting a story with summary statements such as, "I remember one time when I crashed into a tree when sledding. It was scary."

A fiction writer once said, "The hardest thing about writing fiction is getting a character from here to there." The same could be said for teaching. It is very important that, at the start of the year, we purposefully teach kids how to use every minute of the writing workshop productively. This sendoff is one way to do so. Even with very young children, transitions do not need to be full of dillydallying!



CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Listen in Ways that Help Writers Know They Have Stories to Tell

TODAY, YOU WILL NO DOUBT WANT TO START by doing all that I discussed in the previous conferring and small-group write-up. Move about the room, settling the children into their writing. Then use quickly fashioned, urgent small groups (and table compliments, see Session 4) to address the biggest challenges you see.

But meanwhile, you will also want to begin making time for the deep listening that is absolutely essential in any writing workshop.

Donald Murray, the Pulitzer Prize–winning author who is regarded as the father of the writing process, describes teaching writing this way:

I am tired but it is a good tired, for my students have generated energy as well as absorbed it. I've learned something of what it is to be a childhood diabetic, to raise oxen, to work across from your father at 115 degrees in a steel drum factory, to be a welfare mother with three children, to build a bluebird trail . . . to bring your father home to die of cancer. I have been instructed in other lives, heard the voices of my students they had not heard before, shared their satisfaction in solving the problems of writing with clarity and grace.

I feel guilty when I do nothing but listen. I confess my fear that I'm too easy, that I have too low standards, to a colleague, Don Graves. He assures me I am a demanding teacher, for I see more in my students than they do—to their surprise, not mine.

I hear voices from my students they have never heard from themselves. I find they are authorities on subjects they think ordinary. . . . Teaching writing is a matter of faith, faith that my students have something to say and a language in which to say it. (Learning by Teaching, 1982)

I was one of Murray's students, and I can still recall the great hope that welled up in me when he leaned toward me, listening with spellbound attention to my stories of growing up on a farm, struggling to find my place among the brood of nine Calkins children. Could it really be that I had stories to tell and lessons to teach that might

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

When You're Done, You've Just Begun

"Writers, can I have your eyes and your attention? Some of you are telling me that you are done. Writers have a saying: 'When you're done, you've just begun.' That means that when you think you are done, there is a lot more to do. One thing writers do when they're done is think, 'What's another true story that I've experienced—another story that happened in the same place, or in a different place, or with the same person, or with a different person?'

"They think, 'How did it start? What happened first?' and they write another story.

"How many of you think you are done, or almost done, with today's entry? Thumbs up. Okay. If you are done—today or any day—remember the saying, 'When I'm done, I've just begun.' Right now, tell the person sitting near you what you are going to write next. Don't just tell the topic, but actually write the story in the air. Dictate how it is going to go." As the writers told their stories to each other, I coached the listeners to listen with absorption, showing, by the way they listened, that the details matter.

I regathered students to leave them with a final thing to think about.

"Writers, when we listen to our partners with rapt attention, we also are doing some work for ourselves. That is to say, when writers get together, they are often inspired and reminded of their own stories by listening to what others say. Let's always listen in a way that helps our partners but also uncovers our own stories as well."

matter to someone? If you can give your children just one thing right now, it must be this: your unconditional faith that each one has a story to tell, a lesson to teach, and your rapt attention to what it is that your children know.

Because the one-to-one conference is at the heart of teaching writing and because listening is at the heart of those conferences, you may want to begin now to protect some time during the hurry of your workshop to really, truly listen. To do this, start by noticing ways even your body language can convey that you are listening. Sit alongside the writer, eye-level, and insist that the writer literally maintain control of the paper. The writer, not the teacher, holds the text. This is easier said than done.

It helps to listen first to where the student is in his or her writing process, to how the student is feeling about an entry, to what help the student feels he or she needs. I am apt to begin a conference with research, setting the writer up to tell me about his or her work. I might, for example, start a conference by saying, "I want to help you with your writing. Can you give me a tour of your writer's notebook and fill me in on what you have been trying to do as a writer, on how it's going, and on the sorts of help you are needing?" Listening to each writer's intentions and self-assessments and plans will be important. Charlotte Danielson reminds us that we can collect data that helps

us reflect on our own teaching. You might then note how much of the talking you do, and how much the child does in a conference. Aim to be the kind of listener who leads the youngster to elaborate, to say more. To grasp the importance of this, imagine your principal coming to observe your teaching, and think about the pre-conversations you hope will occur. You probably hope that before the observation, your principal will ask, "What have you been trying to do in your teaching? What have the hard parts been? What do you want help with?" You probably hope your principal listens with such attentiveness that you find yourself saying more, thinking more, than you'd expected.

As this unit and this year unfold, I'll help you begin your conferences by researching what the writer has already been doing and what he or she is trying to do. You'll learn to tailor your teaching in response to what you learn. But this week, as you try to recruit your children to love writing and to feel safe enough to put their stories onto the page, I want to stress the importance of simply listening. Listen deeply and responsively to the stories your children tell, and to their reports on their writing goals and plans.



FIG. 3-2 One student starred her favorite true story ideas.

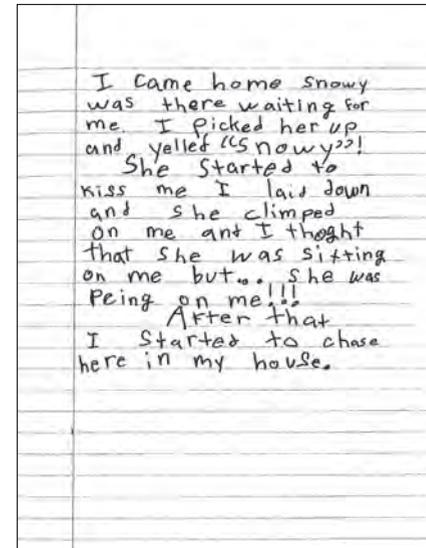


FIG. 3-3 This student filled his Small Moment story with details.



SHARE

Supporting Problem Solving

Brainstorm problems and organize clusters of kids to meet in corners of the carpet to problem solve those writing problems.

“Writers, can I have your eyes and your attention?” I said, waiting an extra-long time and sweeping the room with my eyes to convene children. “Writers, I need us to gather now in the meeting area because we need to have a serious conversation.” Once children had gathered, I said, “Lately you’ve been restless and distracted. I’m wondering if I could ask you to shift from being writers, for a minute, to being writing teachers. I think that underneath your restlessness, there are a bunch of problems—challenges—that many of you are running into in your writing. I have been trying to rush from one of you to another, helping you solve those problems, but I don’t always know how to solve them. I am wondering if maybe you would be willing to try coming to some solutions. Let me list for you a few of the problems that I’ve been seeing and then see if some of you would be willing to think about how to solve each of those problems.”

I revealed this list:

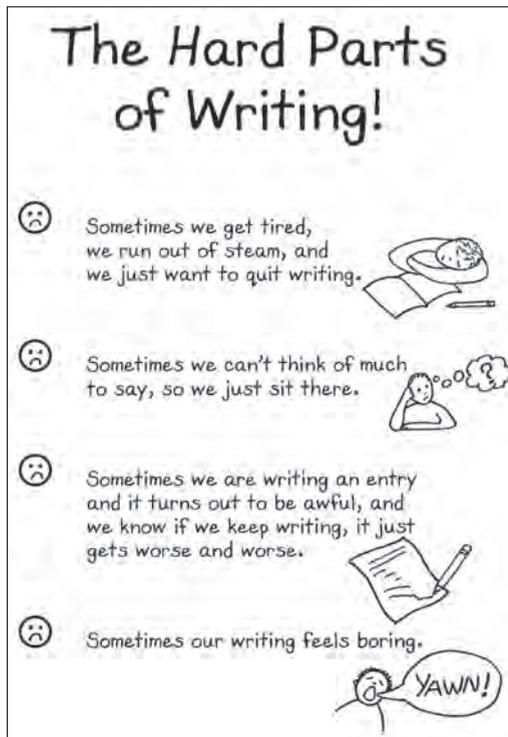


FIG. 3-4 “The Hard Parts of Writing” chart is based on teacher observations of students during writing workshops.

At the start of the year, you need to induct children into the norms and mores of a writing community. Unless your children are accustomed to a writing workshop, you’ll find they want to do a bit of writing, then stop for the day. You need to explicitly teach them to keep going. It is crucial for them to learn that when they finish one entry, they start the next one, which removes any incentive to finish entries quickly by writing in a cursory fashion. When you push for volume, you push for making the workshop a place for productive work, and this helps with classroom management.

Pointing to each of these problems, I asked, "How many of you feel like your main problem is that you kind of run out of gas halfway through writing time? How many of you think your main problem is that you can't think of more stuff to say in a story?" And so forth.

"How about if we form problem-solving think tanks?" I divided the carpet into quarters and convened a small group in each quarter. I assigned facilitators and distributed clipboards to each group so they could record their solutions. The children talked, problem solving, and I charted what I heard. "You have chart paper and markers in front of you, and you'll have just five quick minutes to come up with some suggestions, which we'll then share with each other."

Reconvene the children, sharing a chart you made of solutions one group generated and suggesting similar charts be made showing other groups' ideas.

"Let's meet as a group," I said. "While you were talking, I listened in, and these are solutions I heard to the first problem, the fact that you sometimes run out of gas. Later today, I'll help a member of each of the other groups make a similar solution chart."

When I Run Out of Gas as a Writer, I Can . . .

- Draw a quick sketch to help get my mind going.
- Reread good writing that others have written to warm myself up.
- Set a goal for myself, like writing to the end of the page without stopping.
- Look at the charts in the room and see if they give me an idea.

Name the bigger principle: Children can be problem solvers, not relying on the teacher to help at every turn.

"Writers, the bigger lesson I hope you learn is that you can solve your own problems. Like let's say your pencil broke, and you feel totally stuck. What could you do?"

Children chimed in: "Sharpen it!" "Get another!" "Get a pen!"

"And what if you want my help and I am busy? What could you do?"

Again, children chimed in some answers. I nodded. "And the bigger point is—this is *your* writing workshop. When you run into problems, you can solve them."

We continued this work for the other "Hard Parts of Writing" categories, adding to our chart.

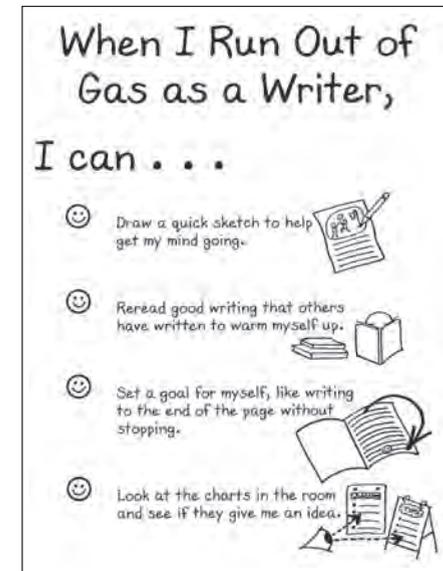


FIG. 3-5 The suggestions generated by one of the focus groups

Be sure that children date each day's writing, and that one entry follows the next, gradually filling the notebook. If they jump hither and yon, you'll have a hard time keeping track of their progress and their volume. (Perhaps they are onto this and this explains their propensity to jump around!)

“If . . . Then . . .”

This page will help you diagnose and address underlying problems of your writing workshop. Based on your assessment of how things are going, use this chart to help differentiate your instruction or make revisions to your unit as needed.

If . . .	Then . . .
If your room is too noisy during writing workshop . . .	THEN try to get at the root of the problem. The noise is probably a symptom of another issue.
If your students need more strategies for coming up with ideas to write about . . .	THEN perhaps being given five minutes for everyone to talk to someone, coming up with story ideas together, would channel the need to talk into the accepted time, while also helping kids get past resistance to writing.
If the noise comes after twenty minutes of writing time, and the issue is that your children don’t have stamina as writers yet or the expectation that they’ll produce much . . .	THEN perhaps for a while your students need a shorter writing workshop until you can build their stamina gradually, or perhaps instituting a regular ritual of a turn-and-talk partner share, maybe embedded into the mid-workshop teaching, would give kids a chance to refuel.
If the congestion seems to revolve around a small number of students, and you decide the issue is that those students aren’t clear about how to get themselves started working with independence . . .	THEN you might regularly ask a cluster of children to stay behind at the end of the minilesson so you can help those youngsters get themselves started on their work before you release them from the meeting area. With these children, resist the temptation to deliver each child his or her own personalized pep talk and instead help the group of children think of a strategy or two for getting started, and then voice over to the group while they do that.
If the writing workshop has just started, and within a few minutes it is like popcorn with children springing up to say, ‘I’m done!’ . . .	THEN teach students that during the writing workshop, there is no such thing as finishing early and then doing something else—drawing, reading, or just waiting. When a writer finishes one entry or one draft, he or she starts the next. Of course, it is also possible for a writer to shift from writing to revising, but it is easier for students to write several underdeveloped stories than to write one good one, and for now, the important thing is for children to work productively, putting their lives onto paper.
If you notice your students growing careless with their writer’s notebooks . . .	THEN you might spend a minilesson or a share session teaching your students how you expect them to take care of their writer’s notebooks. “Writers, yesterday at lunch time I was reading through your writer’s notebooks. I can’t think of a better way to spend my lunch hour than reading your stories. But you know what? Some of them are beginning to look messy. There were pages with missing dates, some pages were skipped, some notebooks even had pages that were ripped out or crumpled up! I was so surprised, because a writer’s notebook is this amazing tool for writers. So today, I want to teach you that we treat a writer’s notebook like we treat a book from the library.”

If . . .	Then . . .
<p>IF your students are having trouble thinking of stories from their lives . . .</p>	<p>THEN you may decide to weave storytelling into your days so that each child is simply bursting with stories. Perhaps you'll want to begin or end each school day (at least for a while) by suggesting children story-tell to a partner. You might start storytelling time by simply letting the children know that you are dying to hear their stories. "Let's tell stories from times in our lives that for some reason are very clear in our memories," you could say, and then choose your own story to tell.</p>
<p>IF you find that a cluster of children writes incredibly slowly, producing only half a page or so in a day . . .</p>	<p>THEN gather these youngsters together and tell them you're going to help them double the amount of writing they can do in a day. First, these writers need to be clear about what they intend to write. Make sure each child has a story to tell and is proceeding chronologically through that story. Don't worry about the quality of writing just now. To focus on fluency and speed, these children need permission to lower their standards (temporarily). Now help children dictate a full sentence to themselves and write that whole sentence without pausing. These children are apt to pause at the ends of words or phrases. That won't do! Then help children dictate the next sentence to themselves and write it quickly, too, without rereading in the midst of writing.</p>





Session 3

New Structures Lead
to New Thinking

YOU WILL PROBABLY BE SURPRISED TO SEE that although the previous session was a brimful session on writing a table of contents and planning the structure of one's book, this session dives right into that same arena. You'll probably think, "My kids already have reasonable plans for their writing," and you'll probably be itching for them to get a volume of writing done to make up for Session 2's paltry haul. If you are thinking in these ways, know we shared all these feelings coming into this session.

And yet you'll see that we have written another session on writing a table of contents as a way to plan a book. Let me first say that of course you have the option to skip this session. You always have that option. And the work ahead is intellectually challenging work, so there might be a good rationale for some of you to bypass it. But I also want to explain the rationale for an added session on planning.

We came to realize that when people have expertise on a topic, they tend to think about the topic in a particular, set way. The topic comes with labeled categories. For example, if I was to write about my home, I have a way I tend to approach that topic. Perhaps I tend to talk and think about my home in a chronological way, starting by thinking about when we moved in, when we remodeled five years later, when we refinanced ten years later, and so on.

Readers, pause here. Try this for yourself. Think of a topic you know so well that you take that topic for granted: your car, baking, your son. Now review what you know about the topics. Do categories come to mind? We suspect so. If your topic was a well-worn rug, you would no doubt see places your metaphorical feet landed most often. Those places would be mashed down and faded, with other areas pristine and almost new.

We found that when thinking about our topics, we do tend to have categories that we go to almost automatically. Take the topic of conferring. I tend to talk about kinds of conferences or about the architecture of conferring. If someone nudged me to think of conferring in terms of comparing and contrasting or in terms of problems and solutions, I'd not only have new *structures* into which to organize my content, but I'd also generate new *content*.

Try it with your topic. Think of it in a compare-and-contrast way. To what would you compare and contrast your topic? As you mull that over, you may notice pieces of your

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that by considering different organizational structures, writers can allow themselves to think about a topic in new ways. You will guide them through a process of trying to structure their writing in various ways instead of settling immediately on one way.

GETTING READY

- ✓ Your own metaphor to describe how writers can use the same material in many different ways (see Connection)
- ✓ Your topic from Session 1, organized in a variety of structures: boxes and bullets, causes and effects, pros and cons, compare-and-contrast (see Teaching and Active Engagement)
- ✓ Chart paper and markers, or a means of enlarging text to display the different structures
- ✓ Students' writer's notebooks and pens or pencils
- ✓ The title of one of your chapters, with jotted notes for information to include in it, written in your writer's notebook (see Mid-Workshop Teaching)

topic you never noticed before. For example, if your topic is your home and you generally think of it chronologically, you might now compare and contrast it with the homes of your friends. Does your home have junk everywhere, while your friends' homes tend to be sparser? What if I asked you to consider problems and solutions? You might think of problems you have with your home and ways you do or do not have for solving those problems. Or you might think of life problems you used to have but that have gone away now that you have your home.

“I believe that the truly revolutionary work in this exploration of structure is that students learn to outgrow their own best thinking very early in the writing process.”

When writers do this work, when writers explore possible structures for texts, the payoff is that they end up thinking about aspects of topics that feel fresh because those aren't the topics that usually rise to the surface.

The structure work we ask third-graders to tackle in this session and in this unit is significantly above most state standards for third-graders. Most standards simply call for third-graders to write information texts that have some sort of a structure. However, as mentioned earlier, we know from years of working with students on informational writing that third-graders are capable of much more than that.

The truly revolutionary work in this exploration of structure is that students learn to outgrow their own best thinking and to do that very early in the writing process. Additionally, students begin to train their minds to look at things, especially familiar things, in new ways.

Today's lesson will take longer than a typical minilesson. It is a guided practice minilesson, designed to give students many opportunities to practice a variety of structures before they go off to work with independence. The active engagement is interwoven into teaching.



MINILESSON

New Structures Lead to New Thinking

CONNECTION

Tell a short story about people using one material—perhaps sand—and shaping that material into unique, different things.

"Have you watched a kid playing in a sandbox? Walking past the park the other day, I paused to watch kids in the sand box. I expected they'd have buckets that they fill and dump, fill and dump, and I expected they'd use those buckets to make sand castles. But what I saw blew me away! There were three different kids, all in the same sandbox, each doing something completely different from the others. And none of them were making sand castles.

"One of the boys packed sand into a square mold and then used this method to make bricks that he stacked into a brick wall made out of sand. One of the girls had created these hills and valleys, and was running her toy car over a mountainous road. The third kid was creating a sand person—you know, like a snow angel, but made out of sand. Although they were all using the same material, each child was structuring the material in an absolutely unique way."

Tell students that their topics are material and that it is wise to explore alternative ways to structure the material.

"That made me think immediately of the writing you are planning to do on your information books. For the past couple of days, you've been playing in the sand of your topic, filling buckets and building castles. You've tried out one or two familiar ways to think about your topic. But you might want to take a lesson from those kids in the sandbox. Instead of just filling and dumping buckets of sand to make the castles you've made a millions times, you might want to work with really new structures, structures you might not have thought to use before now."

✿ Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to teach you that writers try different organizational structures on for size. They explore a few different structures, noting how those structures affect the way they think about a topic."

◆ COACHING

This connection moves away from writing to bring home a point about writing. You'll want to cull from these books a set of transferable techniques that you can use when you write your own minilessons. One of the challenges you'll face is that you'll need to help children grasp big concepts that underlie the discipline you are teaching—which in these units is the discipline of writing. It is often helpful to use a familiar topic to teach a less familiar one. That's what this use of a metaphor does.

TEACHING AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Explain that you will model this, and then guide students to try several structures on for size.

“To do this, we’re going to try something different from our usual minilesson. I’m going to tell you a structure I’d like us to try. I’ll try that structure on with my topic, and then you’ll give it a quick go, trying the structure on with your topic. Not every structure will work for every topic. But give each structure a quick try, jotting in your notebook how your table of contents might go if you were writing in that structure. If a structure doesn’t work for you, when others are planning a new table of contents, you can go back to whichever structure *does* work for you, or you can come up with your own possible structure.

“We’re going to move fast, so be sure you’re ready.”

Introduce the first structure: boxes and bullets.

“First, let’s try boxes and bullets. I’m going to try boxes and bullets this way. I’ll jot down a big topic.” I jotted, “getting rid of cockroaches.” “Now I’m going to jot supporting subtopics. We’ve done the organizational structure of boxes and bullets before, so this is really just to warm up our brains.” I wrote my first attempt on chart paper.

Getting Rid of Cockroaches

- Traps
- Poison
- Green methods
- Prevention

Ask students to try a boxes-and-bullets structure for their own topics.

“Now, you try it with your topics—just a quick boxes and bullets.” I moved quickly through the meeting area, scanning to see what students were doing. I expected what they’d plan would be similar to the organizational plans they’d been making over the last couple of days. I gave them just a minute or two.

I didn’t say this, but could have: “Keep in mind that a new structure might replace the table of contents you planned earlier, or it might become a subsection of that original plan. You could use one of the structures I suggest for just a chapter or two or for your whole book.”

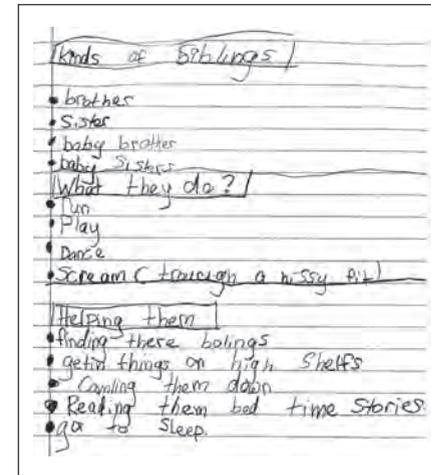


FIG. 3-1 A student tries out a boxes-and-bullets table of contents.

Introduce your next structure: cause and effect.

"Great! Now let's try another way of looking at it—cause and effect. For some writers, it might be easier to look at this as problem and solution." Unveiling chart paper on which I'd already explored causes and effects, and problems and solutions, I said, "For me it might look like this."

Causes	Effects
If I trap cockroaches . . .	Then I will get rid of a few cockroaches temporarily. But I won't get rid of all of them or of the eggs.
If I poison cockroaches . . .	Then I will kill most of the cockroaches, but if I have pets or small children, I could poison them, too. Some cockroaches build up a resistance to poisons over time that they pass on to their offspring.

Problem	Solution
cockroaches on my kitchen counter	clean up the food in the kitchen, even the crumbs
cockroaches in my bathroom	clean the bathroom and make sure there are no drips so that there is no food or water available

Ask students to try fitting their topics into a cause-and-effect template.

"Now it's your turn to try."

When I saw the students were struggling a bit, I called out sentence prompts and jotted some of them onto chart paper.

"Try 'If _____, then _____,'" I said. "Or 'When _____, then _____ happens.'" I jotted those onto chart paper, then gave another few alternatives.

"'(Blankety blank) happens because some other (blankety blank) happens.' Or 'If the problem is _____, one solution is _____.'"

After a few minutes, I moved on to the next structure.

SESSION 3: NEW STRUCTURES LEAD TO NEW THINKING

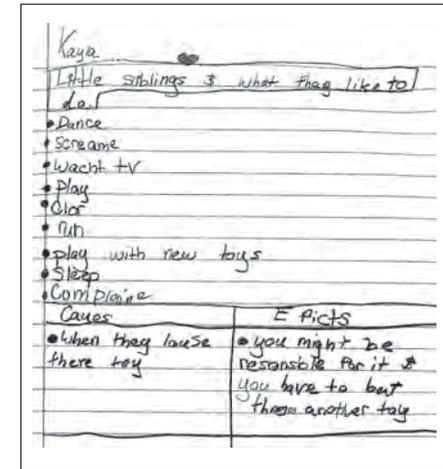


FIG. 3-2 Kayla experiments with cause and effect.

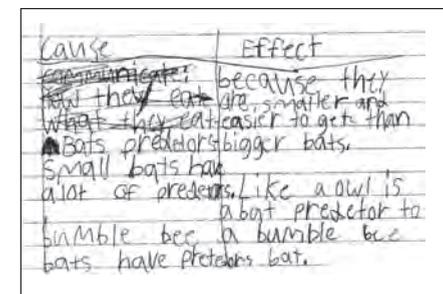


FIG. 3-3 Marquis tries out his topic, bats, with a cause-and-effect lens.

Introduce the next structure: pros and cons.

“We can also consider pros and cons. I may not be able to think of pros and cons of cockroaches as a whole topic, so I need to think, ‘The pros and cons about *what part* of my topic?’ So, let me think. Do I want to do pros and cons of different methods of killing cockroaches? Or of killing them in general? Once I’ve decided which pros and cons I want to explore, I can start thinking how this would shape a plan.”

Pros of Killing Cockroaches

- *You get rid of them!*
- *They won’t eat your food.*
- *You won’t be embarrassed when people come to your house.*

Cons of Killing Cockroaches

- *Cockroaches are living creatures.*
- *Cockroaches are part of the food chain.*
- *Cockroaches take care of crumbs and other leftover food and garbage that would go to waste otherwise.*

Encourage students to try pros and cons.

“You can see how considering pros and cons can give you a whole new perspective on your topic, can’t you? Why don’t you try out the pros and cons of your topic, really fast.”

I crouched in the meeting area, leaning over to take a peak at what the students were doing. Many students naturally seemed to place their pros and cons in a T-chart format, and others made them list-like. I encouraged students who were struggling to go ahead and move back to an earlier structure with which they had found success.

Let students know you are going to show them one more structure: compare-and-contrast.

“Let’s try one last one: comparing and contrasting. We need to start by thinking, ‘What will I compare and contrast?’ I could compare and contrast my whole book—so that I’m writing in every chapter about how cockroaches are and are not like other animals. Or I could take a subtopic and compare and contrast just that subtopic. So, for example, I could compare and contrast ways to get rid of cockroaches versus ways to get rid of mice.” I revealed a page on which I’d scrawled some thoughts.

Getting Rid of Cockroaches and Mice

Similarities: *Getting rid of cockroaches is similar to getting rid of mice because both cockroaches and mice live in people’s homes, and are unwanted. Both creatures are killed by similar methods: traps, poison . . .*

Differences: *Getting rid of cockroaches is different than getting rid of mice because not everyone wants to kill mice. In fact, there are humane traps that allow humans to catch mice without*

As students worked, I looked from one student’s try to the next, noticing the ways that students were exploring all the nooks and crannies of their topics. When I saw one that I thought might turn out to be particularly fruitful I made sure to give the student a thumbs up or another indication that I thought the student was on to something.

killing them so that the mice can be set free in a field or someplace else. No one really wants a humane trap for a cockroach. Also, there are people who do not want to get rid of mice, or at least don't care about getting rid of mice because they think mice are cute. However, hardly anyone thinks cockroaches are cute, and almost everyone wants to get rid of them.

Ask students to try compare-and-contrast with their topics.

"How can you compare and contrast your topic? What are the similarities and differences? Think for a few seconds. When you have an idea or two, jot it down as fast as you can so you don't lose the idea. If you don't feel like doing this work at all for your topic, after you give this a quick try, go back to the work you began earlier today."

LINK

Send students off to choose between revising their tables of contents, writing long about an unexplored aspect of their topic, or picking up where they last left off in their pieces.

"Wow! This room feels electric. Thumbs up if you're surprised at some of the new thinking you did on your topic." Many so indicated. "Writers, do you see that you only came up with these fresh new plans because you did what those kids in the sandbox were doing? You took the risk to try new ways of approaching the entire project. Lots of times you have waited to revise *at the end of* your writing process, but front-end revision actually helps much more. The first step is to resist what people call 'premature closure' or 'early settling on one set way.' From this day forward, always remember to push yourself to imagine new possibilities.

"Will you star the structures you might want to use for your book? Once you've done that, you have a few choices you might make. You may want to go back to your original table of contents and revise it by including some of the new ideas and structures you just explored. Remember to use the chart 'Strong Tables of Contents.' Or you might decide you want to go back and write long about an aspect of your topic you haven't yet explored. Or maybe you were in the midst of working on something yesterday that you're dying to go back to today, or you feel ready to begin collecting information that you'll put into each chapter. Doing that is a way to check if your plan is going to work."

"Whatever you do today, try to carry with you the idea that by looking at something in a new way, you can get fresh ideas. Off you go!"

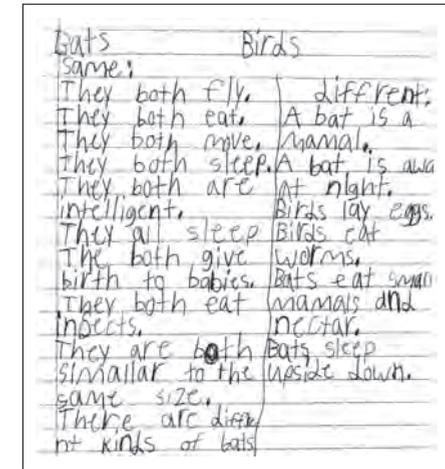


FIG. 3-4 Marquis then explores similarities and differences between bats and birds.

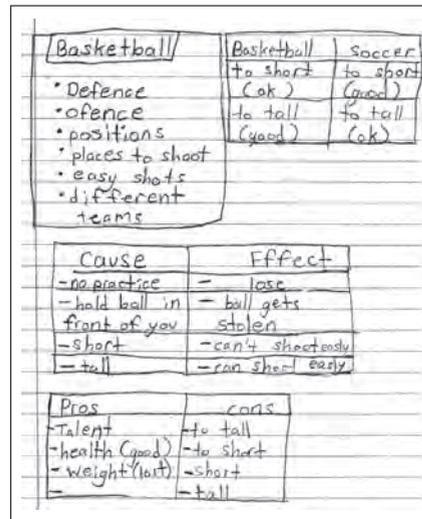


FIG. 3-5 This student explores his topic, basketball, by trying out different structures.

Contrast the number of options you present to your students today with the number you could offer just a day ago. Expect that in your teaching, there will be some instances when you don't have as many choices available to kids as you might ideally like.



CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Keeping Individual Students' Needs and Goals in Mind

THE WORK YOUR STUDENTS WILL BE DOING TODAY WILL BE VARIED. The minilesson you just taught ended with you suggesting lots of options, and by today, some students will be at the vanguard, working at a pace that pushes you to keep moving forward with your teaching, while others will be lingerers. This is a good thing. Resist any temptation to wrangle everybody back in line so that the entire class moves forward at the same pace. Writers do work at different paces, and *should* do so.

It would, of course, be much simpler to have all students working on the same strategies at the same time. During work time, you could just move from seat to seat, prodding students to finish the work that the minilesson highlighted. Carl Anderson, author of *How's It Going?* (2000) and many other texts about the art of conferring, emphasizes, "Let the student set the agenda." Carl does not mean that literally, you should expect students to know exactly what they want taught. Rather, he means that when you confer, your intention is to learn the goals and needs of the unique writer and to teach in response to that writer. The goals for a writer include that child's particular intentions for that day and also the long-term goals that you and the writer have co-constructed. These long-term goals come, in large part, from the data you gather and from your observations. Of course, nothing is simple in life, and so although it is true that during your conferring and small-group work you'll want to help students develop purpose and agendas for themselves, it is also the case that you'll want to weigh whether you can get behind the choices they make.

In today's session you may see students trying their hands at one structure or another. You would do well to identify what the student is attempting to do and then teach into that. For example, if the student is working on comparing and contrasting, you will first want to see what it means for her to try comparing and contrasting. You might notice whether this student seems to believe that to engage in comparing and contrasting, she is expected to suggest that the two items are equally similar and different. In other words, students often think that they'll need to generate two similarities and two differences. You might let the writer know that it's not only okay, but very likely that she'll want to suggest that two things are "mostly alike but partly different," or just the opposite.

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MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

Helping Students File Information into Chapter Files

"So many of you have revised your table of contents. That is fantastic! Some of you have been gathering information that might go in each of your chapters, too. No matter where you are in the process of planning your chapters, you'll need to move toward collecting the information you will include in each of your planned chapters.

"Nonfiction writers think of chapters as files. You might want to make a section or page in your notebook for each chapter of your book. Once you've done that, it would be smart to jot information you'll want to include in each chapter. You might discover as you do this that some chapters have plenty of information, but other chapters need a little research to fill them out. You might decide some chapters can become part of another chapter or be deleted entirely. You might even decide to break one chapter into two smaller ones.

"For example, under my chapter called 'Using Poisons' I've jotted down a few things I knew I wanted to include about using poisons on cockroaches: aerosol, powder, liquid, gas. And as I wrote those down, I started putting question marks next to ones I feel like I have to jump online to research. As you move from one chapter to the next, make sure that each bit really matches, really fits into, its file."

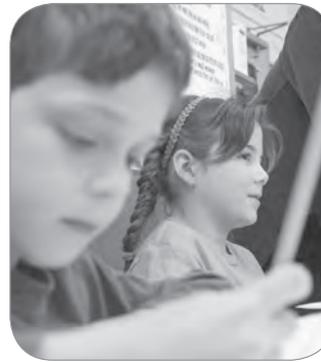
If a writer is considering structuring his text chronologically—say "birth to death"—then you may want to suggest that this would be a time where equal categories are probably the norm.

GRADE 3: THE ART OF INFORMATION WRITING

Each structure that a writer attempts will pose predictable challenges. As you become more experienced with conferring, you'll find that you develop a repertoire of tips you can give, based on your assessment of what a student is trying to do, and this makes you more able to be flexible and responsive.

Although the minilesson focused on structure, and topics haven't been the focal point for your instruction, it is likely that you will have a handful of students whose topics are a bit challenging. Some topics will seem to you to require more research than you believe the student will be able to do during the writing workshop. Other topics will deal with imaginary things, such as fairies, monsters, and aliens. Some topics will come from pop culture, and perhaps these will lead you to worry that writing about the topics could lead a student to write about violence that isn't what you regard as age-appropriate.

Our advice to you is to be ready to talk with students about their topics today. You won't want to wait too much longer to question their choices. And yes, sometimes it may seem necessary for you to redirect a student to change a topic, and it is okay to nudge a writer into a topic you think will be a better match. ("You play soccer. Why not write a book on that?") However, this can also work against you. If you recruit a student to write about a topic you think would be a good one and the student is begrudgingly appeasing you, sometimes the resulting piece can lack spirit. So keep in mind that a student could take a topic that he is fascinated by—say, video games—and end up using a whole host of writing techniques to do a very admirable, even scholarly, job with that topic.





SHARE

Preparing to Draft

Let students know that they will be moving to drafting tomorrow, and channel them to spend time before tomorrow collecting stuff to help them be ready to draft. Ask partners to discuss.

“Writers, while some of you are still organizing your information into chapter files or figuring out what to do if you don’t have much for some chapters, most of you are ready to move on to the next step—drafting!

“Can I tell you a little secret about drafting? The more you get your mind ready for it by planning and thinking and dreaming, the better the draft, and the process of drafting, will be. I’m going to ask you to spend some time this afternoon and this evening preparing for tomorrow’s drafting. You’ve done that before for other writing projects. But today will be different, because today I want you to get not just your mind ready for drafting, but also to get your hand ready. Can you collect things you see, hear, read, feel—really, anything that you can imagine fitting into your book—and jot them down in your notebook? Live the life of a writer, getting ready to draft. Max, when you go to baseball practice after school, don’t just go to practice as a baseball player. Go to practice also as a baseball writer. Notice anything that might go well into one of your chapters—and especially notice information that might go into the chapter you’ll tackle first.

“Right now, tell your partner how you can live differently tonight because you are preparing to draft. Tell your partner also what you’ll put into your notebook tonight that will help you.”





Session 2

Gathering Brave, Bold Opinions for Persuasive Writing

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach your children that writers of persuasive speeches take time thinking about their message. They gather, choose between, and try out different ideas for changes they'd like to see in the world. They draw on all they know about opinion writing as they write these entries.

GETTING READY

- ✓ Student notebooks with pens tucked inside, to be brought to the meeting area
- ✓ "How to Write a Persuasive Speech" chart, prewritten (see Connection)
- ✓ Areas around the school or in the community to take your students to observe; or use the windows in your classroom to have students observe what they see (see Teaching)
- ✓ A thesis statement about a change you'd like to see at school, reasons that support that thesis statement, and an idea for how to start an entry (see Teaching)
- ✓ Chart paper and markers
- ✓ A typed copy of yesterday's class speech taped in each child's notebook (see Mid-Workshop Teaching)
- ✓ An example of a thesis statement, which is not bold or direct, written on chart paper, and a way to revise that thesis statement to make it bolder (see Mid-Workshop Teaching)
- ✓ Reasons that support your thesis and an idea for how to start an entry with one of your reasons

THIS SECOND SESSION IN THE UNIT should feel to you as if it resembles sessions that are early in other units. When teaching personal narrative writing, for example, you began by saying, "Let me teach you strategies that people use when they want to generate ideas for true stories." Now you essentially say the same thing, only instead of teaching strategies for generating *narrative* writing, you are teaching strategies for generating *persuasive* entries. It is important for you to notice the similarity between this session and sessions that occur early in other units because students need to be reminded that they've done similar work earlier in the year. Your hope is that by repeatedly supporting students in a process of living like writers, generating a bunch of possible writing projects, selecting one that feels especially worthy, then setting forth to fast-draft an entry, you help this early part of the writing process become second nature to them so they initiate this process of generating, reviewing, and selecting between possibilities even when you are not there to scaffold their work.

Of course, the strategies you teach for generating possible topics will differ now that your goal is to support persuasive writing. During the narrative unit, you taught students that it can help to think of a person (place or thing) and list small moments they have spent with that person (place or thing), taking one of those small moments and writing it long and strong. In this session, you teach students that persuasive writers sometimes note problems in the world, or in school or the community, and then imagine solutions (and write to help other people notice the problems and imagine the solutions as well).

Notice that when teaching narrative writing, the strategy involved thinking about a person, a place, or a thing, and now the strategy involves thinking about a problem and a solution. In both instances, the strategy is described to kids in ways that are a bit catchy. The reasons for that are obvious. What may not be so obvious is the fact that it is a bit of a trick to think up strategies for generating a kind of writing that feels authentic enough that you can feel that yes, indeed, this is what writers of this kind of text actually do. The truth is that topic generation in real life is more complicated. But hopefully, there is a ring of rightness and authenticity to the strategies that you teach.

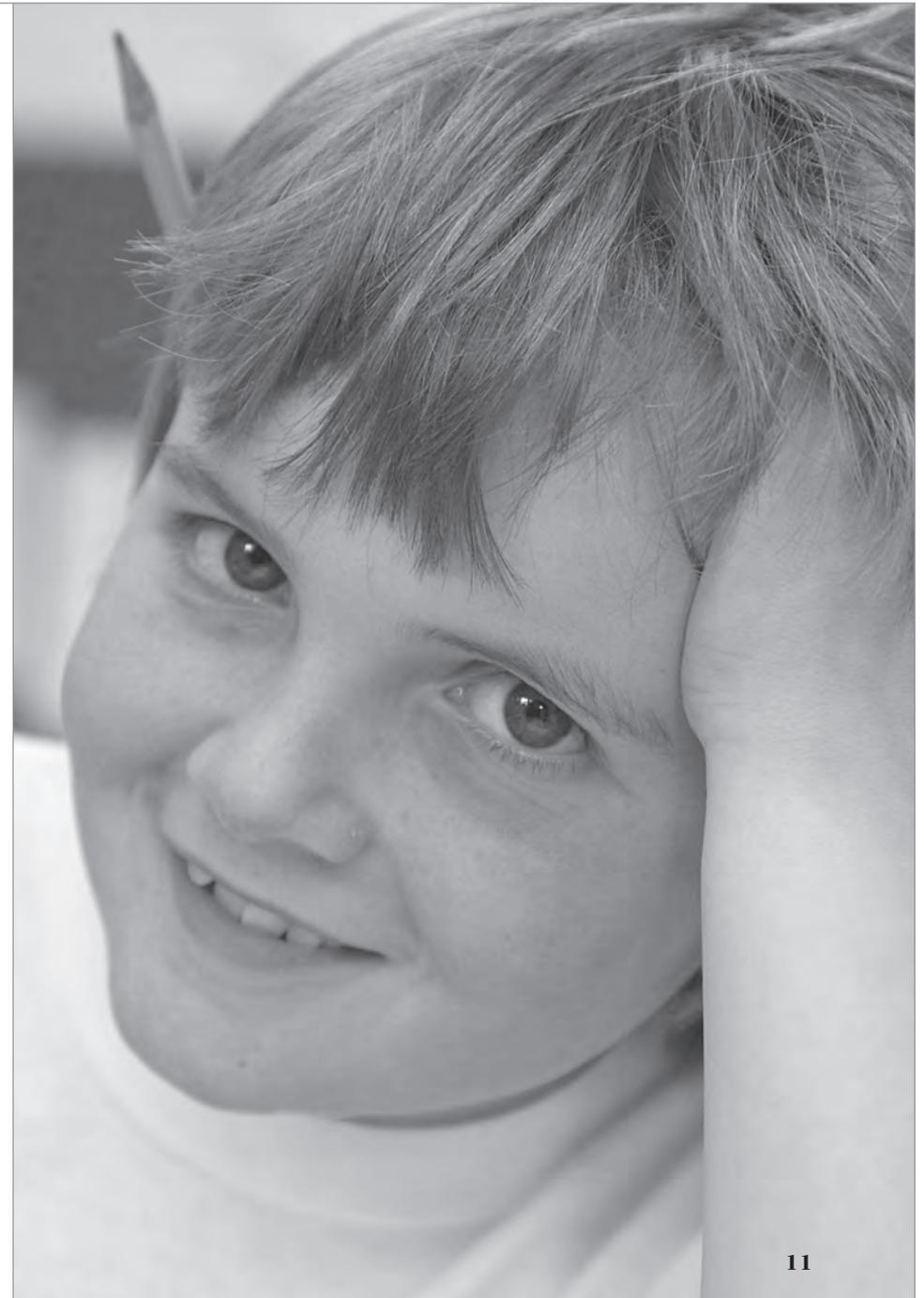
The similarities between today and those early sessions in the narrative book extend beyond the fact that in both instances you teach kids a strategy or two for generating writing. Then, and now, the teaching immerses kids in examples of the kind of thing they will be making. Then and now, your writing will serve as a model.

“Your hope is that by repeatedly supporting students in a process of living like writers, . . . you help this early part of the writing process become second nature to them.”

Notice that the minilesson ends with writers working on the rug, writing alongside each other while you do voiceovers that coach into their work. You will teach the mid-workshop at an especially early point in the workshop, timing this instruction so that you deliver it just after your faster writers have written their opening sentences. That’s a perfect moment to invite them to revise those opening sentences to make their theses bolder, cleaner, and more decisive.

This session, like the last, has a lot of content. You teach a strategy for generating essay writing, you convey an image of this sort of writing, and you help students write effective leads. But if the session works—and we think it does—it conveys not just content but also a spirit. “Welcome, come in,” the session says. “This will be wonderful work. And it is work that is important to the world.”

SESSION 2: GATHERING BRAVE, BOLD OPINIONS FOR PERSUASIVE WRITING





MINILESSON

Gathering Brave, Bold Opinions for Persuasive Writing

CONNECTION

Update the writers on the results of yesterday’s shared speech and use this to rally students’ investment in the big plan for the unit and especially this first part of it.

“Writers, this morning our principal asked if you could send her a list of magazines that kids will want to read. I think that is pretty amazing. One day of writing has already made this school different. Years from now, kids will probably still talk about you. They’ll say, ‘Oh yes, it was that one class, years ago, that started this school’s tradition of providing magazines in the library.’

“This has given me an idea. I am starting to think that you shouldn’t just write pieces that go in notebooks and folders, that you should do more of what you did yesterday—write to make changes in the world—in your community or school or neighborhood.

“Although yesterday you made a persuasive speech in one day, usually people take time to work on a speech, just like they take time to write any important text. So I’m going to suggest that you collect entries this week that are like the speech that you wrote yesterday. Do you remember how, earlier, you wrote a lot of personal narrative entries and then chose one as your seed idea and developed it into a story you published? In the same way, after collecting many entries that are fast-draft speeches, you’ll choose one that you can make into a terrific speech.”

Explain that today students will gather essay entries in their notebooks in which they say their opinion about a change they’d like to see in the school or community and give reasons to support that claim.

“So today and every day this week, you’ll have time to write an opinion of your own. You might be wondering, ‘How do I come up with ideas for this sort of writing?’ I know each of you already has opinions about how this class, this school, this town, could be better, and those opinions will be the substance of your writing.”

❁ **Name the teaching point.**

“Today I want to teach you that one way writers of persuasive speeches come up with their ideas is by seeing problems and imagining solutions.”

◆ COACHING

There are a few things to notice about this connection. First, you are letting kids know that you watch and listen and tailor your teaching to them. Be sure that you not only talk about doing this, but that you actually do it. The written text of these minilessons is the story of how this teaching unfolded for us, and it goes without saying that it will unfold differently for you.

We also want you to notice that early on, we are letting kids in on the plan of the unit, doing so by referencing prior units. We want kids to have, in their bones, a sense for the progression of the work that goes into developing a speech—an essay. And we will, eventually, want them to realize that all the moves they make when they work for two weeks on a piece of writing can be consolidated and done within two hours, when necessary.

As I said this, I unveiled an anchor chart, to be built on throughout the unit, listing this strategy.

How to Write a Persuasive Speech

- Develop an idea.
- See a problem and imagine a solution.

TEACHING

Recruit students to join you in looking out at part of the world to see not only what is but what could be there.

"If you are a photographer, you go through life seeing possible pictures that you could take, if only you had your camera with you. You see a butterfly on a bit of forsythia, and you think, 'That'd make a good picture.' Persuasive writers are sort of the same. But instead of going through life seeing potential pictures, they see ways they could write to make a difference. This means that instead of seeing beautiful pictures everywhere, they see problems everywhere. For persuasive writers, these problems are not a cause for whining. They are a reason to write."

"Today, you are going to start wearing the special glasses that persuasive writers wear. You're going to see problems that are invitations to write, to make a difference. Let's try this together, okay?"

"Will all of you come quickly to the window? And let's look out at our school's playground through the eyes of persuasive speech writers." I waited until everyone was there, staring out at the empty playground. I stared out at the playground, modeling looking, letting the silence become a bit prolonged. I knew students would be thinking, "What's there to see?" Then I said, "This kind of writing is tricky because you need to see what is there *and what could be there.*"

Demonstrate that you see a problem and generate a possible solution, writing both to name the problem and to tell about your imagined solution.

I left a bit of silence for students to do that sort of seeing, then I said, "Let's go back to the meeting area to talk about this." Once we had resumed our seats, I said, "I'm thinking that there isn't a lot for kids to play with on our playground: it's mostly just bare tarmac. I could whine and complain about that." I grouched, "It's not fair, it's not fair. I want more, more, more . . ." in a way that made fun of complaining as an option. "But maybe, instead, I could imagine a solution. Try to think of one yourself, and think what you would say in an entry about what is there and what could be there." As children thought, I picked up a marker pen and started to scrawl my own thoughts on chart paper.

In a minilesson, aim to say something memorable. It helps to use stylistic techniques and figurative language. That may seem odd, because in minilessons, you look young people in the eyes and teach with directness, as if off-the-cuff. But notice the use of metaphor, repetition, parallel structure. In this instance, you liken writers to photographers. Just as photographers see potential pictures everywhere, writers see potential pieces everywhere.

You might at some point want to collect a list of ways to teach, because a method for teaching can be used again and again. In this instance, you call children together to look out the window, teaching them to look at the world with a specific lens. Another day, you could use this same method to teach children that they can read with specific lenses. One reader might be reading to notice who has power and who does not; another to notice writerly craft moves. As researcher Denny Taylor has said, "We do not see with our eyes or hear with our ears but with our beliefs."

Our playground doesn't have a lot of things for kids to do. It is just a field of tar. Maybe we could raise money for picnic tables and then there could be a place for playing cards or chess. Also, maybe kids could bring in sports equipment that they hardly use anymore. I have an old pogo stick . . .

Debrief in ways that show how to apply the strategy you just demonstrated to the work students will do today and often throughout the unit.

"You see that we just came up with an idea for a persuasive speech by looking at what is right there outside our window. We saw a problem: 'Our playground doesn't have . . .' 'It is just . . .' I underlined those phrases in the writing I'd just scrawled. "Then we came up with possible solutions. 'Maybe we could . . .' 'Also, maybe . . ." I underlined those phrases, too.

"We could have looked at the cafeteria, at our family dinner table, at the boys' bathrooms. The important thing is to let what you see spark an idea and then write about the problem," I pointed to the sentence starters ("Our playground doesn't have" and "It is just . . .") "and about the solution." I pointed to "Maybe we could . . ."

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Galvanize students to get started, seeing something that is and imagining what could be. Teach them that by envisioning, one can travel to other times and places, writing in response to those situations.

"So, my friends, reporters who work for newspapers often need to get a news story in just a tiny bit of time. That is how today will go for you. After this minilesson, you'll have just over half an hour to jot some ideas for how your classroom or school could be different *and* to write an entry that could be a speech about that idea, just like you did yesterday about the magazines.

"You needn't stand at the window to get ideas for problems you see and solutions you imagine. You can stand at your Little League game or at the cafeteria when people are lined up for lunch. You can stand in the front office at our school. Right now, pick a place where you can go, in your mind's eye. Make it a place, or a time and a place, where you find yourself often feeling, 'This is wrong' or 'This could be more fair' or 'This could be better.'

After a minute, I said, "Can some of you call out the places you are thinking of going, in your mind's eye?"

After several students had called out the library, yard, and cafeteria, I said, "Writers, pretend you are at that place, in that time. Look at what you see—and think of what you wish you saw." I left a bit of silence. "Instead of thinking of Small Moment stories that happen in that place, at that time, think of problems you see and (if you can) of solutions you imagine." I left a pool of silence. "Give me a thumbs up if you have thought of one problem."

You'll see that this first bend in the minilesson channels students to write to address problems in their own school. In an earlier iteration of the unit, the children had instead addressed problems in the world—the need to recycle, for example—but the problem was that helping them to both write an essay and find evidence on a somewhat remote topic overloaded the teaching. We made the decision to postpone the writing that requires lots of library research until later in the unit.

In some schools, the teachers took the students on an actual inquiry walk around the school. The class stopped together at different places in the school—the playground, the cafeteria, the library, the art room, and so on—and the students took notes about what changes they would want to see at each of those places. This helped galvanize their writing, letting them see ways they could better the school, and also helped them to write on topics on which they were experts. You will decide if this inquiry walk is right for your students or if you want them to take a "mental inquiry walk" instead.

Whenever you want children to do some quiet thinking work, remember that for some magical reasons, it is deeply influential if you sit there at the front of the meeting area and do the thinking, totally silently, that you hope they are doing as well. We have not figured out why silent models are as powerful as they are, but we encourage you to try this. Think of your own time and place and of the problems you see in that time, that place.

Students signaled with thumbs up, and once a third of the class seemed to have an idea, I said, “Those of you who have an idea, talk to the people near you about it and help them come up with ideas as well.”

“I wish there were more *Goosebumps* books in the library,” AJ said to Sahar.

“And dragon books,” Sahar said. “Also, I was thinking about the front of the school. We need a ramp for people in wheelchairs.”

Meanwhile, Emily was telling Zoë, “We need to plant more trees. And we need less litter everywhere.”

LINK

Have students generate ideas for speech entries they can write, and then ask them to begin writing.

“You ready? List a few problems and solutions you feel passionate about, choose one, and get started on writing an entry about it. Do that writing right now, right here.” As children wrote, I voiced over. “I’m glad to see that many of you are jotting a few different opinions, then choosing one that especially matters to you.” I let children work another minute. “Don’t forget that you will be writing your opinion—your claim—about a problem you see in the world or in the school or your community—like we did about the magazines—and then you will probably write reasons why that’s a problem.” I kept children writing on the rug, not sending them off to write until after the mid-workshop teaching.

In the latest classroom that piloted this work, the unit began by asking children to think about changes they’d want to see in the world. As we said, the teachers found that the students’ ideas for changes required an excessive amount of outside research. Thus, the unit has been revised to begin by asking students to think of local changes which could make a difference and only later moves to channeling the students toward topics requiring outside research. You will note, however, that some of the student work featured in this book are from that classroom and so address larger, world concerns.

Notice that this is not a usual send-off. You are keeping the writers with you on the rug through the mid-workshop teaching, which comes sooner than usual.

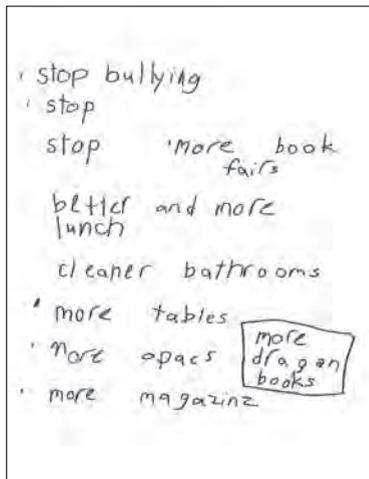


FIG. 2-1 Sahar lists problems and solutions.

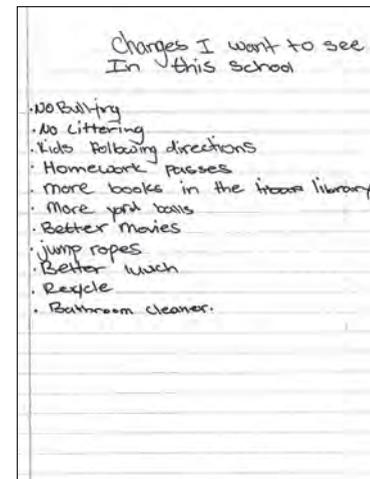
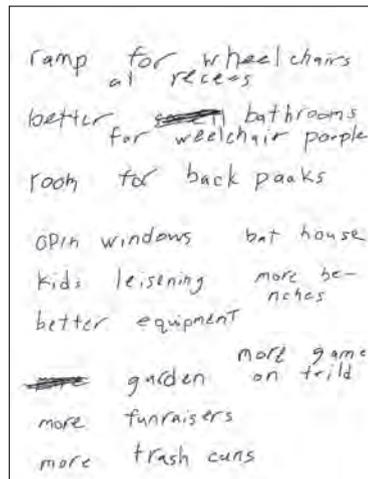
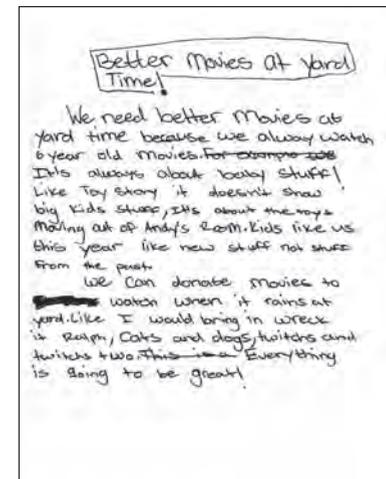


FIG. 2-2 This student lists changes she wants to see in the school and begins an entry.





CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Help Writers Get Started and Get Going

AFTER LOOKING OVER YOUR WRITERS' FLASH-DRAFTS, you will note who is still having difficulty grasping a sense of the genre. One way to support writers who may be crafting entries that feel more narrative or informational is to provide some sentence starters that immediately require the writers to form an opinion. When I pulled up next to Logan, he was writing an entry about a time he watched the show *Doctor Who*. "Logan," I said to him. "What do you want your reader to think about *Doctor Who*?"

"That it's awesome," he said. "And that you should watch it."

"When we write opinion pieces, we write to persuade people to act and think in certain ways. It helps to say things like 'People should . . .' or 'Everyone should . . .' and then fill in your opinion. Try that right now with your topic."

"Everyone should watch *Doctor Who*," Logan said. "It's awesome."

"Okay, so now why don't you try writing your entry again, and this time, try to convince your reader to watch the show? Remember, whenever you write an opinion piece, you want to persuade your reader. Get started on your entry, and I'll come back and check." Yes, convincing readers to watch a television show will likely not change the world, but at this early point in the unit, getting a sense of how to write in this genre is key. Later, you can channel writers to write about topics which feel more weighty.

Other writers will grasp how to write an opinion but have difficulty expanding on that opinion. I pulled a small group of these writers to do some shared writing, hoping this would help strengthen their sense of how to write this genre. This work looks much like the work of the day before. Students co-construct a shared speech with you as you tuck in tips for how to do so. The value of repeated practice cannot be overstated. Anything that is hard must be practiced. Thus, for writers having difficulty, shared writing can be enormously helpful.

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

Writing with Strong, Bold Thesis Statements

After another minute, while children still worked alongside each other in the meeting area, I said, "Writers, can I stop you?" I waited until I had all the children's attention. "Many of you have stated your opinions and are starting to write your reasons. Do you remember how earlier this year, you often tried starting a true story one way, another way, and another way? Well, sometimes persuasive writers do the same thing, so before you get too far into your writing, can I suggest you find the place in your writing where you wrote your opinion—your thesis—and then consider other ways to word that thesis?"

"For example, let me show you another thesis of mine. When I first wrote my thesis, I wrote it this way," and I gestured to where I had written a sentence on chart paper.

I think it is kind of a problem that sometimes some kids and maybe teachers drop garbage, and I think it would be nice if we could help keep the school cleaner.

"But what I have learned as an opinion writer is that it is important to write with bold, brave opinions. Some people say that writers, like sculptors, cut away the stone to reveal the lion that has been hiding in the stone. That means that writers, like sculptors, take away everything extra so their thesis stands there, clear as can be. So what I do is, I reread my writing and I take away any of the 'kind of,' 'sort of,' 'sometimes' words."

I think it is kind of a problem that sometimes some kids and maybe teachers drop garbage, and I think it would be nice if we could help keep the school cleaner.

"I also try to say one thing, not two things, and to say that one thing loud and clear."

~~I think it is kind of a problem that sometimes some kids and maybe teachers drop garbage and I think it would be nice if we could help keep the school cleaner.~~

"Then, I make sure what remains makes sense and reads right."

Everyone should help keep the school cleaner.

"Next, I write about my reasons, and I have to explain and prove each of my reasons. I think I am going to write:

One reason everyone should help keep the school cleaner is because then people will see how much we care about and love our school.

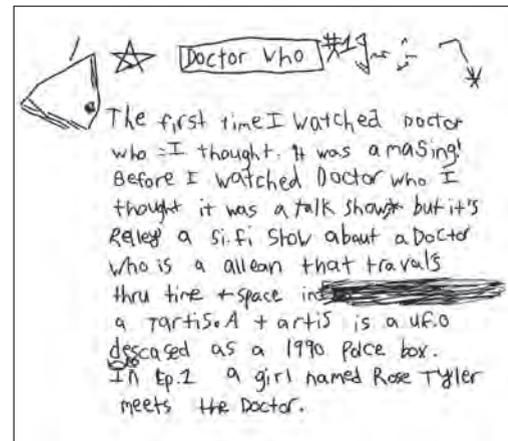
When our school looks great, people will know that this is a place that is important and special.

"Writers, do you notice how I am writing about another problem I see and why we need to fix it?

"To help you do this, I've taped a copy of our class speech about magazines to the front of your notebooks. You can turn to it whenever you need to see an example of how to do this kind of writing. Now, let's get to writing! Remember, you want to be sure you have big, bold thesis statements and strong, convincing reasons!"

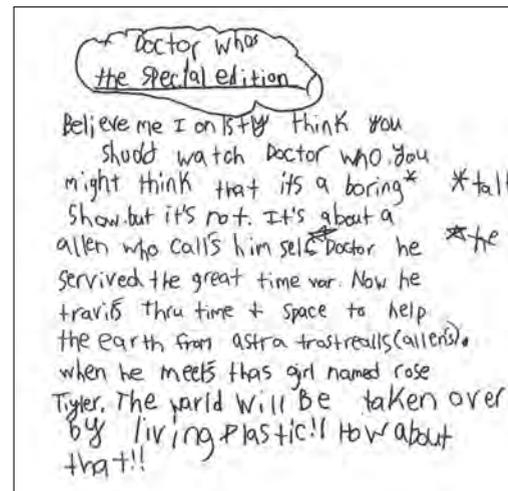
I gathered a group of writers to my side and let them know I needed their help. I told them that my friend had a young son who had fallen off his bike and was now thinking of quitting. "Writers, I was hoping that you could help me. I want to say something to get him to keep trying, but I'm not exactly sure what to say. I thought that since you know a lot about kids riding bikes, you might help me write a speech. Will you, right now, think of what you would say to my friend's son to encourage him to keep trying? How might you start?" I left them to work for a few moments while I circled the classroom, checking in on the progress of the other writers and coaching in with quick compliments and voiceovers to keep writers writing. Then I returned to the small group and asked them how to start.

SESSION 2: GATHERING BRAVE, BOLD OPINIONS FOR PERSUASIVE WRITING



Doctor Who #19

The first time I watched doctor who I thought it was a MASING! Before I watched Doctor who I thought it was a talk show* but it's really a sci-fi show about a Doctor who is a alien that travels thru time + space in a TARDIS. A TARDIS is a UFO disguised as a 1990 police box. In ep. 2 a girl named Rose Tyler meets the Doctor.



Doctor Who the Special Edition

Believe me I on 15th think you should watch doctor who. You might think that its a boring* talk show but its not. Its about a alien who calls him self Doctor he survived the great time war. Now he travels thru time + space to help the earth from astra trash (alien). when he meets this girl named rose Tyler. The world will be taken over by living plastic! How about that!!

FIG. 2-3 Logan drafts, then revises.

Amelia raised her hand, and I nodded at her. "You could start by saying that you heard he was thinking of quitting."

"Can you say that exactly the way you think I should say it, and I'll write it down?" I asked.

"I heard you want to quit bike riding," Amelia dictated. I gestured to the other hands that were up, indicating she should call on someone else while jotting her words on chart paper.

Amelia pointed to Mike. "You shouldn't quit. You can do it if you keep trying."

We continued in this way until we had written the first few sentences of the speech. "Hmm." I stopped. The kids and I looked at what we had so far.

I heard you want to quit bike riding. You shouldn't quit. You can do it if you keep trying. I know it's hard. It's hard for everyone. But if you keep trying, you'll get it. If you stop now, you'll never get to ride a bike. And riding a bike is great! It's really fun and you will love it!

"I think maybe we need to say more about how riding a bike is great," I said. "Can you think right now of how that part could go?" In this way I continued to elicit ideas until we had constructed the entire speech.

I heard you want to quit bike riding. You shouldn't quit. You can do it if you keep trying. I know it's hard. It's hard for everyone. But if you keep trying, you'll get it. If you stop now, you'll never get to ride a bike. And riding a bike is great! It's really fun and you will love it! You can go anywhere on your bike. You can go exploring or to a friend's house. You can have races on your bike. You can learn to do tricks.

You will be so happy when you get it. You will be really proud and feel great. You'll feel like a winner!





SHARE

Getting Ideas from Others' Best Work

Recruit writers to find an example from their writing that shows their best work. Then have students share this example with their table partners, getting ideas from one another.

Without convening the class, I stood in the midst of the hubbub and spoke. "Will you, right now, find the best lines or words that you wrote in your notebook today and put your finger on that part of your writing?" I waited until the children all had their fingers pointed to a spot in their notebooks. "Now think, 'What is it that is good about that one part of my writing? What have I done that others could try as well?' It is important to be able to talk about the decisions that you make as a writer and about what you do that works in your writing.

"Will you get together not only with your partner, but with the two partnerships at your table—we will call these 'table partners'—and listen to what different kids have done that is good, and talk about what makes that writing effective? See if maybe, just maybe, as you listen to each other, you get ideas for ways you could make your writing even better. So listen with your pen in hand, being ready to borrow and steal from each other."

As I crouched between the writers, I heard AJ talking to his partner, Vladimir. "Wow, Vladimir," AJ said. "Yours is two pages. That's amazing. I think you pushed yourself even harder than we were expected to!"

Vladimir beamed. "I kept thinking of reasons, and then when I ran out of one idea I started a new one," he said.

"I'm going to try to do as much as that tomorrow," AJ said.

Meanwhile, other students were staring and sharing their best lines with each other.

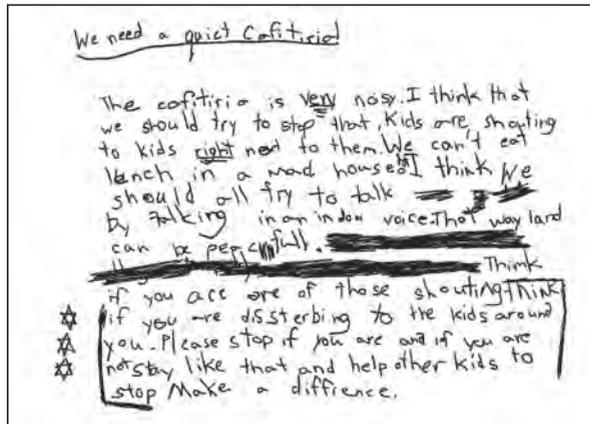


FIG. 2-5 Daniel boxes out and stars the best lines of his writing.

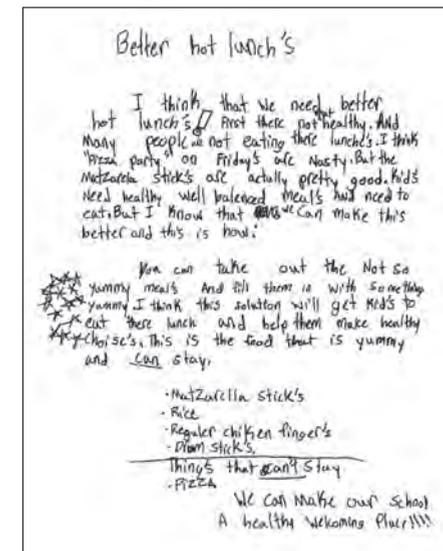


FIG. 2-4 Elizabeth stars the best part of her writing.



Session 18

Revising for Readers

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that writers show their readers how to read a piece by varying the *pace* of the writing.

GETTING READY

- ✓ Excerpts from the class adaptation of *Cinderella* written on chart paper (see Teaching and Active Engagement)
- ✓ Sentence from a student's draft
- ✓ Post-it notes with ending punctuation marks written on them (see Mid-Workshop Teaching)
- ✓ *Prince Cinders* by Babette Cole (see Share)

WHEN I WAS LITTLE GIRL my favorite bedtime story was *Harry the Dirty Dog* by Gene Zion (1976). Night after night, my parents read me the story. I never tired of hearing about the white dog with black spots who did not like to bathe. I giggled with delight every time my father raised his voice to read the funny part when Harry buried the scrub brush in the backyard. I clutched my blanket tight when my mother lowered her voice and read the part where Harry ran away in search of adventure. I clutched tighter still when he returned home a black dog with white spots (because he'd gotten so dirty) and no one in the family recognized him. My parents read in a way that brought the story to life, lifting me out of my bed and into the story.

Part of what transported me so thoroughly into the world of the story was the *way* it was read to me—the cadence of my parents' voices, speeding up and getting louder during the exciting parts, slowing down and getting softer at the story's end. And how did they know how to pace the story as they read? Well, the story itself told them, of course.

In this session, you teach students to write stories that will be read in that same wonderful way. Specifically, you help writers experiment with varying the pace of a story—choosing some moments to slow down and some moments to speed up. Your third-grade writers won't master this practice; it's something that even adult writers continue to work on. In fact, prolific children's author Avi spoke to this very practice to an auditorium filled with writing teachers this past summer at Teachers College. During a discussion on writing, Avi shared, "Writers like me don't write *writing*. We write *reading*." You can help writers write *reading* by teaching them to become aware that one way to make a story sound good, and to be memorable, is to think about ways to cue readers into how to read the story well. Of course, working on the sounds of a story can't be separate from working on the meaning; this session, like the last, will remind writers that revision always requires a writer to think, "What's this story really about?" and to craft the text in a way that highlights the meaning.



MINILESSON

Revising for Readers

CONNECTION

Demonstrate one way in which writers leave clues that tell readers how their writing should sound.

"Writers, yesterday I was reading aloud *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* to Aidan and Max, two boys that live near me. And when I got to the 'Who's that tripping over my bridge?' part, I made my voice deeper and louder. Aidan interrupted, 'Why'd you do that?' I looked confused, and he added, 'Why'd you make your voice funny?'

"'Oh!' I said. 'Well,' I looked at the page and thought for a moment. 'Because the author told me to,' and I showed Aidan and Max the page with its capital letters and the voice tag, 'roared.'

"Writers, this got me thinking about the power of writing, more specifically, the power of writers. I mean, think about it, I've never met Paul Galdone, I don't even know if he's alive! And yet, anyone and everyone who reads his book knows exactly how to be the troll because of how he wrote it. That's pretty amazing, when you think about it."

Ask students to think of other ways that writers leave clues for readers that tell them how a piece of writing should be read.

"When I write, I ask myself, 'How might I give people clues as to how to read this part?' Of course, you already know some ways to this. You know that when you write dialogue in all capital letters, like Paul Galdone, you tap your reader on the shoulder and say, 'make your voice deeper and louder in this part.' Are there other ways you show your reader how to read your writing? Turn and talk." I listened in. Not surprisingly, kids mostly talked about using ending punctuation to show their reader how to read their writing.

✿ Name the teaching point.

"Writers, today I want to teach you that writers show their readers how to read a piece by varying the *pace* of the writing—by altering whether a moment passes by quickly or slowly."

◆ COACHING

*You might decide to set up today's minilesson by reading from *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* directly as a way to illustrate how writers leave clues that indicate how their writing should sound.*

TEACHING

In the context of a shared text, demonstrate how writers help readers slow down and savor a moment by adding more words, sentences, and details.

“Let me show you what I mean. We’ve decided to revise our first *Cinderella* adaptation, right? So let’s pluck a sentence from the draft and play with the pacing. First we’ll try slowing the moment down. When you make decisions about pace, about how quickly or slowly you want a moment to pass as readers are reading, you are actually telling readers if this is a moment to be savored and studied or if it may be breezed through.

“But how? How to slow down or speed up a moment? Let’s try revising a moment in our *Cinderella* adaptation to slow it down.” On the easel, I’d written:

Cinderella watched sadly as the invitation disappeared into the flames.

“Okay. Imagine you’ve got a remote control aiming right at this moment when Cinderella is watching the invitation burn. You know how you can use a remote to slow a movie way down? And when you do that, you see all kinds of details that you might have missed? Slow down this one moment with your remote and picture this with me. Everything is happening s-l-o-w-l-y. I see the invitation being tossed into the fire. I see the flames take some time to burn the invitation. I see Cinderella. One tear slides down her cheek as the invitation burns.” I paused to think about how to write this on the page. “Maybe I would write that something like this. . . .” I picked up a marker and wrote on the chart paper:

Cinderella watched sadly as the invitation landed in the fire. The edges started to burn first. A tear slid down Cinderella’s cheek. The flames grew bigger and bigger as more of the invitation caught fire. Cinderella buried her face in her hands. Soon the invitation was a pile of ashes.

Debrief, asking students to notice how slowing down a moment leads to using more words and sentences to describe it.

“Writers, we just imagined we were using a remote to slow down that one moment in the *Cinderella* story and then to write the slowed-down version. Look at the difference between the original sentence and our slowed-down version. What are you noticing?”

Cinderella watched sadly as the invitation disappeared into the flames.

Cinderella watched sadly as the invitation landed in the fire. The edges started to burn first. A tear slid down Cinderella’s cheek. The flames grew bigger and bigger as more of the invitation caught fire. Cinderella buried her face in her hands. Soon the invitation was a pile of ashes.

“There are more sentences,” called Zander.

By this time in the year, students will be familiar with the concept of “showing not telling.” This demonstration teaching builds from this, harnessing students’ attention on the purposeful increase of words, sentences, and details (showing) with the intent to slow down the pace.

"And there are a lot more words, like maybe four times as many," said Maggie.

"I noticed that too, and I noticed that slowing the moment down helped us include more details than we used originally. When writers slow a moment down, they pack in more details. That tells readers to slow down as they read, to spend more time in that one moment." (See Figure 18–1.)

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Rally students to practice speeding up a moment by taking out words or sentences.

"Let's try playing with the pace again, with a different moment from the same story. Except this time, instead of slowing down the moment, use your remote to speed it up! The way it's written now, Cinderella takes some time to notice the library as she walked into it. What if you wanted to speed this moment up so that readers get to the next part of the story, the part where she gives Donald the money and saves the library, more quickly—what would you do? Try it with your partner. What do you see as you speed this moment up with your remote? How would you write that on the page?"

Cinderella entered the library. It was big and beautiful. And so empty it echoed. "Where are all the books?" Cinderella wondered aloud.

I listened in as the students talked and then regathered them. "Writers, I was listening in and I heard Charlie say something like, 'Cinderella rushed into the empty library and wondered where the books were.' Lots of you said something similar." I wrote Charlie's sentence below the example:

Cinderella entered the library. It was big and beautiful. And so empty it echoed. "Where are all the books?" Cinderella wondered aloud.

Cinderella rushed into the empty library and wondered where the books were.

Then I asked, "What do you notice about what happened to the writing when we tried speeding up the moment?"

"Fewer words!" Edwin called.

"It's just one sentence now," added Piper.

"I noticed that too," I agreed. When writers want a moment to speed by, they write it in fewer words and fewer sentences. They don't include as many details for readers to linger on. There's no right or wrong way here—you writers may decide for yourselves if you want readers to move really slowly or really quickly through a moment. What might you do if you are revising and you find a moment that you want to slow down?"

Students chimed in, "Add more sentences!" "Add details!" "Use more words!"

SESSION 18: REVISING FOR READERS



First time: Lainie started to practice and then CRAAACK! went the stick.

Slow time: Lainie walked into the garage. She took her hockey stick, Black Magic, and kissed it. She got into hockey position—legs apart, knees bent, two hands on the hockey stick—she shot. The puck went closer to the goal than all of a sudden CRAAACK! went the hockey stick.

FIG. 18–1 Lainie's revised draft, playing with pacing

“And what might you do if you want readers to speed through a moment—how might you speed a moment up?”

They responded, “Take out words!” “Make it shorter!”

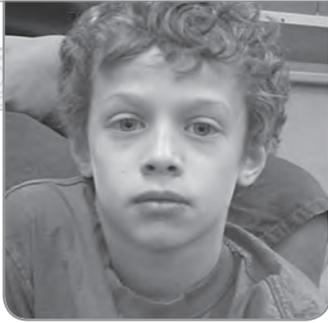
LINK

Encourage writers to be thoughtful about pace as they revise.

“Exactly. And part of your job as writers is to make decisions about the pace of each moment—how fast or slow you want it to go. When you’re rereading your stories, if you find a moment that seems really important that you’ve just breezed right through, you might want to consider slowing it down, adding more sentences and more details. If you find a less important moment that passes really slowly as you read that you want to pass more quickly, you might want to consider speeding it up by taking out some words or sentences or details.

“There is so much work you could try now—you’ll have to decide what to do that will most help your story. Use the charts in the room to remind you of things to try!”





CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Supporting Students Who Struggle with Creating Paragraphs

IT IS EASY IN ANY UNIT OF STUDY TO GET lost in the details, to lose sight of the big things you are teaching. For this reason, it's often helpful to remind yourself of the two or three big, important goals you have for any unit. In this unit, one central goal is helping students find structure in their writing. Writing in the footsteps of classic fairy tales helps young writers try on familiar story structures while also making them their own by writing adaptations. Mimicking fairy tale language supports young writers in learning more complex sentence structures. As you approach the end of this unit, you may notice students struggling with another aspect of structure—creating and routinely using paragraphs.

Young writers will most likely struggle in a variety of ways when structuring their writing using paragraphs. You may look out into the sea of writers as the unit's end approaches and notice a range of struggle around the routine (and accurate) use of paragraphs. During one of the final conferring and small-group sessions of the unit, you might look for the types of struggle groups of students are having regarding paragraphs. That way, you'll "brand" the types of paragraphical issues and address them in small bursts of small-group teaching as you circulate the room.

For instance, you might first notice the infamous "blob," where the entire piece is one amorphous section of writing. Or perhaps you notice the trend of students starting off with a strong use of paragraphs that dissipates as the draft continues. Or a pattern might emerge whereby students indicate time shifts with new paragraphs but lack the understanding that paragraphs occur when a new character speaks. Whatever the trend, enter the room with a handful of teaching tips for creating and sustaining paragraphs, such as

Writers create a new paragraph when . . .

- ◆ time changes: *The next day . . .*
- ◆ place changes: *Breana was walking home from swim practice . . .*
- ◆ a new character arrives: *Then the shark came in.*

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

Trying Out Punctuation

"Writers, at the beginning of the lesson, you told me that punctuation is another way you let your reader know how to read your piece. But did you know that some writers actually audition their punctuation marks?" Some kids looked a little puzzled. "Let me show you what I mean. I've written a sentence from Andrew's draft on the easel—*Zander showed his evil step-parents the ticket.* And, as you see, I've placed different ending punctuation marks on these Post-it notes."

I looked around the room. "Andrew, would you come up here and place one of these marks at the end of your sentence?" Andrew hustled to the front of the room and placed a question mark at the end. "Writers, let's read this out loud and Andrew, you decide if a question mark is the right punctuation mark for this sentence."

The class said, "Zander showed his evil step-parents the ticket?" Andrew shook his head.

"Try another one," I prompted. Andrew placed an ellipsis at the end of his sentence. The class said, "Zander showed his evil step-parents the ticket. . . ." Andrew shook his head again.

"Writers, Andrew knows how he wants his reader to read this sentence and he's going to continue to audition punctuation marks until he finds the right one. I suspect many of you will want to try this too."

- ◆ a new person speaks: *Jill replied, "That's fine with me!"*
- ◆ something important happens: *Poof! The pumpkin became a stagecoach.*

These helpful hints can provide young writers with the energy to improve their writing as they revise for structure.



SHARE

Using Commas in a Series

Explain and give an example of a way commas give readers information about how to read a piece.

"Writers, it is so clear to me that you are taking Avi's words to heart. You are not writing *writing*, you are writing *reading*. That's why I must share one additional way that you may show your reader how to read your piece—using commas in a series." I pulled *Prince Cinders* from the basket of fairy tales and said, "Many of you are already doing this, but let me show you how Babette Cole does this and then you may check to see if there are places in your draft where you need to add commas because you've listed a series of items, actions, or even descriptions."

I opened the text to the first page, "Prince Cinders was not much of a prince." As I read this, I made my left hand flat, like a page, and with my right hand I made a "period" on the "page." I read on, "He was small, spotty, scruffy, and skinny." As I read each description in the series, I made a comma on my palm and ended with a period. "See how Babette Cole is using commas in a series to tell us how to read that part by separating each description with a comma? Try it with me." I reread the page and invited this kids to punctuate in the air on imaginary pages.

Rally students to try adding commas in a series in their own drafts.

"Now it's your turn. Look in your draft for the places where you've listed items, actions, or descriptions in a series of words. Make sure that you are adding commas to your list because this, too, tells your reader exactly how to read your piece. Not only will you do this now, you'll need to do this as a writer for the rest of your life."



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](https://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

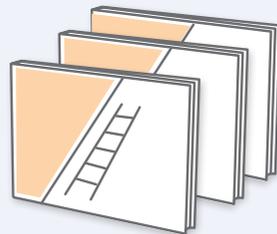
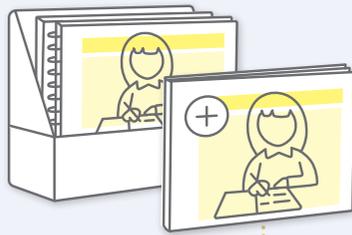


State-of-the-Art Units, Tools, and Methods for Teaching Reading and Writing Workshop

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



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.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TCRWP CLASSROOM LIBRARIES

WRITING UNITS

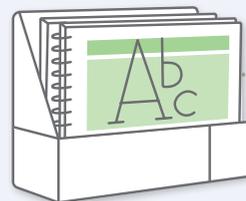
READING UNITS

UP THE LADDER UNITS

PHONICS

Units of Study in Phonics

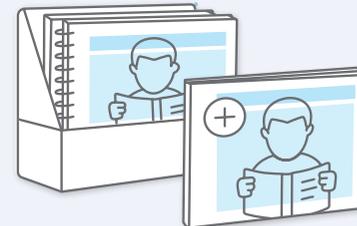
These lean, engaging phonics units are deeply grounded in best-practice research—and are also kid-friendly and fun. Lessons synchronize instruction across the reading and writing Units of Study, allowing opportunities to revisit high-leverage phonics skills across the day in ways that help students become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



Reading Units

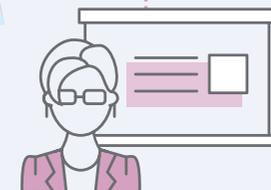
The Units of Study for Teaching Reading offer a framework for teaching that:

- 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



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.



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.

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.



Maggie Beattie Roberts As a former Staff Developer with the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Maggie is committed to helping teachers tap into the power of their own deep engagement in reading and writing. Maggie has led research and development to help teachers use digital literacy and technology, including popular media, as an alternate way to help young people grasp fundamental concepts; she has also pioneered new work in content-area literacy. Maggie began her career in the heart of Chicago, and pursued graduate studies in the Literacy Specialist program at Columbia University's Teachers College. She is a frequent speaker at national conferences, and leads school- and city-wide staff development around the country.



Kelly Boland Hohne, EdD, is a Writer-in-Residence and Senior Research Associate at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Kelly was part of the leadership team for a think tank sponsored by the Council of Chief School Officers, in which researchers from both CBAL (the research arm of Educational Testing Service) and TCRWP studied learning progressions in argument writing. In all of her work, Kelly draws on her experience as a classroom teacher at PS 6, one of TCRWP's mentor schools. Kelly is coauthor of several books in the units of study for reading and writing series, among them, *Changing the World* (Grade 1) and *The Art of Argument* (Grade 7). She also curated the Grades 5–6 "High-Interest Nonfiction" shelves in the TCRWP Classroom Libraries collections.



Colleen Cruz, Director of Innovation, is a writer of children's literature and of professional texts for teachers, including *Independent Writing*, *A Quick Guide to Reaching Struggling Writers, K–5*; *The Art of Information Writing* (Grade 3); *The Arc of Story* (Grade 4); *Writing Realistic Fiction: Symbolism, Syntax, and Truth* (Grade 7); *Fantasy Book Clubs: The Magic of Themes and Symbols* (Grade 5); and *The Unstoppable Writing Teacher*.



Shana Frazin, Senior Staff Developer, works closely with administrators, coaches, and kids across the country and around the world. She has led leadership groups on strong readers and higher level comprehension, as well as taught institutes on the teaching of reading, writing, and contents areas. Prior to joining the Project, Shana taught third, fourth, and fifth grades in Pasadena and Los Angeles Unified School districts and was a faculty member at Pacific Oaks College. Shana was a lead coordinator and curator for the TCRWP Classroom Libraries Project, as well as co-curator of the Grades 3–5 "Historical Fiction Book Clubs" shelves in that series. She is coauthor of *Once Upon a Time: Adapting and Writing Fairy Tales* (Grade 3) in the writing Units of Study series. Her "Once Upon a Time" began in Rockford, IL, and she is currently authoring her very own "Happily Ever After" in New York City with her dog, Floyd, and an ever-growing, never-ending stack of books.



Marjorie Martinelli is a Senior Research Associate, Writer, and Staff Developer at TCRWP. She is the coauthor of *Smarter Charts* and *Smarter Charts for Math, Science, and Social Studies* (Heinemann 2013–14). Marjorie has illustrated charts in many books in the Units of Study series and is the coauthor of a unit in the reading Units of Study series, as well as one in the writing Units of Study series. Her other publications include the BrainQuest Math series for Grades 1 and 2. Before working at the Project, Marjorie taught at PS 77 and The Laboratory School for Gifted Education in New York City, and was an instructor at the Bank Street College of Education.



Julia Mooney was Writer-in-Residence at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, where she collaborated with Lucy Calkins and a team of writers on K–8 literacy curricula, learning progressions, performance assessments, and other major projects. She holds a BA in English from Stanford University. At Teachers College, Julia helped organize and TA courses by children's book authors James Howe and Sarah Weeks. Julia is coauthor of *Constructing Curriculum: Alternate Units of Study for Teaching Reading, Grades 3–5* (Heinemann 2010) and other books in the Units of Study series.