

Developing Writers

Writing is thinking. —Fountas & Pinnell

As students read and discuss a variety of fiction and informational texts, they are constantly exposed to the writer's craft. Through guided and independent reading, they discover how a writer builds a plot, fleshes out characters, organizes information, and expresses and supports a point of view. Becoming writers themselves enables students to experience how authors work. Putting their ideas on paper and beginning to think of themselves as writers can have a powerful impact on students' confidence and ability to express themselves.

Creating an Environment for Writers

- Provide a quiet place to work.
- Provide time for sharing in small group guided writing time
- Provide basic writing materials in one place: notepads, index cards, markers, colored pencils, pens, construction paper, lined and plain paper.
- Provide a writing folder in which each student can store work.
- Provide each student with a writing notebook.
- Post or provide copies of word lists: colorful adjectives, action verbs, singular/plural nouns.
- Conduct brainstorming sessions on writing topics and post ideas for reference.
- Give students frequent opportunities to write.
- Provide age-appropriate resources and references.
- Post a chart of standard editing marks.

Revising

To revise writing, have your students check for:

- focused writing
- ideas in a logical sequence
- evidence of the writer's voice
- strong word choice
- smooth transitions
- strong beginnings and endings
- organized information
- figurative language used accurately and appropriately
- natural dialogue, if a part of the writing
- supporting ideas for nonfiction

Model for Students

- Brainstorming ideas for writing.
- Playing with titles.
- Starting with short pieces.
- Beginning with a draft in which they get something down on paper to generate ideas.
- Making numerous drafts.
- Revising.
- Editing. Plan mini-lessons on the craft of writing to teach students the characteristics of good writing. Also conduct mini-lessons on conventions.

Editing

To edit writing, have students check for:

- sentence fragments
- correct use of punctuation and capitalization
- spelling
- paragraphing, indentation

Publishing

Students publish their writing by preparing a final copy after editing and proofreading have been done. Publishing can include framing, making a picture book, sending a letter, or displaying work.

Link Reading and Writing with Graphic Organizers

One way to get students to begin writing about reading is to use graphic organizers, which are visual diagrams on which ideas can be recorded. Seeing their ideas on paper helps students see relationships and how authors structure text. Students can work on graphic organizers in pairs or small groups so they can discuss words and ideas. Some common graphic organizers include:

- character webs
- Venn diagrams to compare/contrast
- story maps
- sequence charts
- cause/effect charts
- semantic feature analysis
- KWL charts
- main idea and key details charts