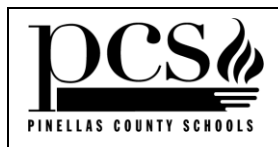
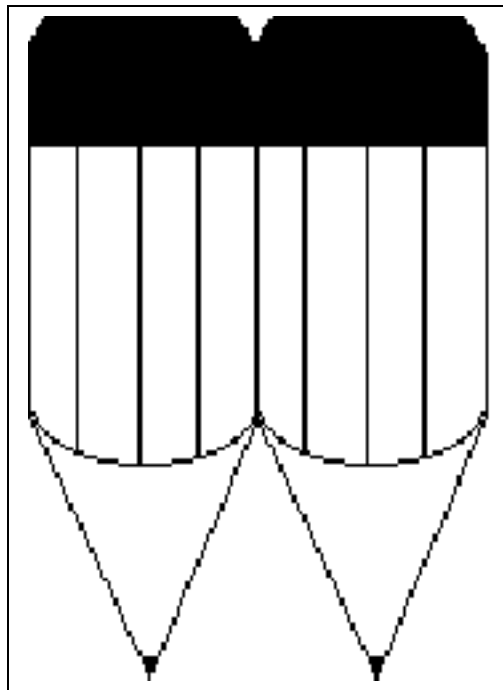


# Units of Study for Writing

Grade 4

Unit 1

## Launching the Writers Workshop



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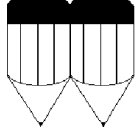
Special thanks to Telsha Marmash, Courtney Rasmussen, Amy Edger, and Susan Herzig for their feedback and hard work in putting this and other fourth grade units together.

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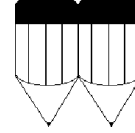
Appreciation also goes out to Tracy Smith at Rawlings Elementary who provided invaluable input and hours of time revising many fourth grade units.

\* \* \*

Thanks also to all the fourth grade teachers in Pinellas County who took the time to send in thoughtful, insightful, and very helpful feedback regarding our Writing Units of Study.



**August**  
**Grade 4 Unit 1**  
**Launching the Writing Workshop**



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Generating Ideas					
Developing	<p><b>Begin to establish your Community of Writers on the first day of school!</b></p> <p>Read through Unit 1 in its entirety before school begins with your colleagues.</p> <p><b>Prepare materials such as overheads and charts ahead of time.</b></p> <p>Get your writer's notebook decorated and ready with models of strategies and entries you can use with students.</p>				
Drafting/Revising					
Editing/Publishing	<p><b>Be sure students bring or are given a notebook they can call their Writer's Notebook on the very first day of school.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falling in Love With Our Writer's Notebook</li> <li>• How to Work Well With a Partner</li> <li>• How Writers Use Entries to Begin Developing for a Draft</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested teaching points to cover this week:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Ways Writers Begin a Draft</li> <li>• Ways Writers Revise Their Drafts</li> <li>• Ways Writers Edit Their Drafts</li> <li>• Writers Celebrate Finished and Unfinished Drafts</li> </ul>				



**Unit 1 - Getting Started: Launching the Writing Workshop**  
**Grade 4**  
**(approximately 2 weeks)**

Please note the emphasis in Unit 1 is on the expectations, routines, and processes students follow during the Writing Workshop. We will shift toward more of an emphasis on the content of the students' writing in Units 2 and 3.

In this unit, students are introduced to the rituals and structures of writing workshop. Teachers need to help their students *fall in love* with this time of the day. In order to make this happen, teachers need to make this time of the day big and important. Carol York says, "A love for writing is caught, not taught." Your excitement and enthusiasm makes all the difference in how your students respond to this time each day. It is essential that students catch the love of writing from you and in turn see themselves as writers. Calling them *writers* is one way to help make them believe that. Another, is making their writer's notebook a sacred treasure. In fourth grade, students are encouraged to carry their notebooks with them everywhere they go. In it they can collect thoughts, ideas, snippets of language, and entries that might one day develop into essays or poems or stories from their lives.

This is a fast-paced unit meant to cycle students through the writing process quickly. Do not worry about the quality of their writing. That will come in time. Simply set an end date, plan a small sharing celebration, allow students to share rough drafts, and savor the excitement of completing a piece of writing and sharing it with others.

**Benchmarks Covered:**

**Standard 1: The student uses writing processes effectively.**

**LA.B.1.2.1** The student prepares for writing by recording thoughts, focusing on a central idea, grouping related ideas, and identifying the purpose for writing. The student: uses a variety of strategies to prepare for writing (for example, brainstorming, making lists, mapping ideas, grouping related ideas, keeping a notebook of ideas, observing surroundings, answering questions posed by others) and establishes a purpose for.

**LA.B.1.2.2 (DRAFTS AND REVISES)** The student drafts and revises a variety of simple texts by writing legibly, using one or more paragraphs to focus on separate ideas and uses transition words where appropriate, considering audience, elaborating upon an idea, using specific word choice and relevant details such as reasons or examples, and by evaluating own and other's writing.

By the end of this short launching unit students should:

- Understand the components of Writing Workshop
- Be able to access necessary tools for writing independently
- Have a personalized writer's notebook
- Be working with some degree of effectiveness with a partner
- Have cycled quickly through the writing process completing one draft

## **The mini lessons are NOT meant to be read as a script.**

You might be thinking to yourself, *It sure looks like a script*. Yes, it sure does look like a script. You might read the mini lessons and say to yourself, *It sure sounds like a script*.

We have provided the mini lessons that look and sound like a script with the intention of offering up a detailed model for teaching the mini lesson. We know that some of you will take some of the words in the mini lessons and use them verbatim to your own students. We also know that more often you'll decide that the teaching we describe needs to be adapted or rewritten in order to fit you and your students. The writing department knows that teachers will read the mini lessons and notice patterns within a single mini lesson and across the mini lessons in the unit. We know you will read each mini lesson noticing:

- A Common Structure: the architecture (connect, teach, active engagement, link).
- Repetition of the teaching point throughout the lesson:
  - In the connect: *Today I will teach you...* (state teaching point)
  - In the teach: *Did you notice the way I ...* (restate teaching point)
  - In the active engagement: *Now I'd like you to practice...* (restate teaching point)
  - In the link: *Anytime you write, you can...*(restate teaching point)
- Common Language: addressing students as writers, calling them to the gathering area the same way (writers, let's gather), *Today I will teach you...*

We know that you, as teachers, are quite familiar with the research promoting consistency in instruction and the impact of consistency – especially with our most struggling students. Teaching in the architecture promotes clarity in our teaching, conciseness in our teaching, and consistency in our teaching.

The unit you are about to read has been written based on what we know about a very broad and large group of fourth grade writers. This unit should serve as a suggestion and a framework from which to teach writing.

We know that you understand it is not the Pinellas Writing Project's intention to make instructional decisions about students we've never even met.

You know your students and their needs better than anyone. Always, always, always base your instruction on the needs of your students.

If anyone gives you information that conflicts with the information provided in this letter, please contact Mary Osborne via Outlook Mail:  
[osbornem@pcsb.org](mailto:osbornem@pcsb.org)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Are teachers expected to use the lessons provided in the Writing Units of Study as a script for teaching?**

The detailed, “*scripted*” mini lessons are meant to support teachers who may be new to the teaching of writing. Many teachers will prefer to use the teaching points as a springboard for planning and adapting their own lessons. Flexibility in **when** and **how** teaching points are covered within the unit of study is intentional to allow teachers to best meet the needs of their students.

### **Where do I begin when planning a new unit of study?**

We recommend reading through the entire unit of study to well before the unit begins. A section entitled “Preparing to Teach the Unit” will offer specific ideas. PLC meetings can be the ideal forum to plan out the unit from beginning to end with colleagues. Establishing the publication/celebration dates teachers stay on schedule as they move through the units of study across the year.

### **I am worried about teaching handwriting, grammar and conventions without the Language Arts books I used for years. How do I fit these into the Units of Study?**

Reading the Red *Provocative* book can provide you with guidelines for handwriting, conventions and spelling. Most units have more days than teaching points so teachers may insert lessons from *Conventions If You Please* and *Writers Express*. While conventions lessons are built in to the units, student writing will guide teachers in identifying areas where students need additional instruction. Mini lessons, mid-workshop interruptions, small groups and conferences provide daily opportunities to tuck in conventions and grammar lessons in the context of student work.

### **I am not a confident writer. How can I use my own writing in my lessons?**

Your best effort will benefit young writers greatly. In fact, your own struggles will illustrate for children the process all writers go through with each piece of writing. Also, your writing coupled with published literature will help students discover how paying attention to writers craft in books can be imitated by using the strategies you teach.

### **Why can't the district provide teachers with the charts necessary to teach the units?**

Writing charts grow as the result of your instruction. Rather than a contrived, perfect, manufactured charts, students benefit from the development of authentic charts as learning progresses through the unit.

### **Given all I have to teach along with special programs and activities associated with fifth grade, how can I find the time in the day to teach writing?**

We do what we value. Writing cuts across all subject areas. The strategies you explicitly teach in workshop can be connected daily to other subjects. The *Essential Learnings* and timelines provided for specific content areas will be most helpful to teachers in planning. Genre-based units prepare students to write effectively for a variety of purposes. Strategic teachers will make meaningful, time-saving connections.

### **What exactly is a Writing Center and when should I open it in my classroom?**

The writing center can be a set up in a quiet, inviting corner of the classroom. Many teachers locate the writing area close to the classroom library and allow students to give it a literary name. It is a place where 1-4 writers can go to devote time to writing. The center can be a few desks or a table with a small lamp and well organized supplies used by writers. Supplies might include: sharpened pencils, pens, highlighters, scissors, tape, three-hole punch, date stamps, writing books and reference tools. Ideally, the writing center is set up when school begins.

## The Writing Process: Upper Grades, 3-5

Two of the biggest differences between the primary grade writing and upper grade writing are the teaching emphasis on the writing process and the use of the writer's notebook within that process. Below is a summary of the writing process and where the notebook fits in with the process.

**Generating/Collecting:** Writers collect lots and lots of story ideas. They generate one story after another in the writer's notebook. Writers date entries. Ideally, we hope students will carry those notebooks through their lives. We want to teach our students to live with the perspective of being a writer, seeing potential for stories, essays, and poems everywhere and thinking, "I should write this down. I might make something of it." This work happens in the notebook.

### Here is a sample of a writer's notebook page:

5/22/07

Funny moments

-Emme blew a bubble in the tub

-sprinklers came on in the courtyard

-milk came out of my nose in cafeteria

Last night I was giving Emme and Ella a bath. I must have gotten shampoo in Emme's mouth because when she took a breath out a huge bubble came out of her mouth. Ella and I were cracking up laughing!

---

On April Fool's Day I took my class out to the courtyard. We were running around playing Duck-Duck-Goose and other games. All of a sudden the sprinkler system came on. Kids started running everywhere. My two friends Mrs. Weiffenbach and Mrs. Fullard played a joke on us!

---

When I was in fifth grade I was sitting in the cafeteria with my friends Dawn and Alan. Alan was a "class clown." He told a joke at the same time I took a big sip of my chocolate milk. Somehow I laughed at the same time I drank the milk and it came out of my nose. It hurt a little bit but it was still really funny. The whole table pointed and laughed at me!

**Developing:** After writers have collected lots and lots of entries, they'll choose an entry to develop. Writers often choose entries by asking ourselves: Which one of these do I care about most? Which one of these entries fits with what I know about (kind of writing)? Which one of these entries do I have to say more about? When we develop entries, we think about the possibilities.

#### Writers ask:

- Why am I writing this story?
- What's the big feeling here?
- What do I want my reader to understand or know?
- How did it start, and then, and then, and then?

#### Students can learn how to:

- Tell the story orally over and over again to rehearse how it might go.
- Make simple outlines
- Timeline: lay our stories out on a physical timeline. Often, writers "flesh out" the timeline of events with thoughts and feelings
- Create Story mountains – mapping out the story by building up the rising action
- Gather information and research
- Read mentor texts

**This work happens in the notebook.**

### Here is an example of developing an entry:

First I put shampoo-                      Rinsed                      -                      A big bubble                      -                      we laughed  
In Emme's hair                      shampoo out                      came out of her mouth

**Drafting:** Once we've developed our entry thinking *how it is going to go*, we can begin to draft our story. The draft should be much different from the entry. Often times the draft won't begin in the same place the entry began. When drafting narratives, we hope that students will envision what happened in their mind's eye and write the story fast and long. They'll use whatever plans they made while developing and often times discover new ideas and revise their plans while drafting. We expect, as students grow older and more experienced, the drafts of any one piece will stand on the shoulders of previous writing and previous teaching, especially revision.

**Writers come out of the notebook onto draft paper. Draft paper can be legal pad paper, notebook paper, paper provided in the unit, or teacher-created paper.**

#### Draft example:

I squirted the shampoo in the palm of my hand and began rubbing Emme's hair. Curls of white foam bubbles grew and grew from her head. She looked like she wore a wig of my granny's white hair. She tipped her head forward to grab her rubber duck. "Be careful," I said. "You don't want to get shampoo in your eyes, silly!" I grabbed the sprayer and rinsed the shampoo out. The tub's surface....

**Revising:** Revision means to re-see. When we revise we reconsider our first drafts. We shift to become readers of our own writing.

#### We read thinking:

- What will a reader make of this?
- Are there sections that are unclear?
- Can I see the qualities of writing I am aiming for in this text?
- What works here that I can build upon?
- What doesn't work here that I can repair or eliminate?

We teach students how to use revision tools: tape flaps, colored pencils, erasers, cross outs (never erase!), adding more pages, sketching to include more detail, in order to answer reader's questions, and so forth.

#### Revision example:

I squirted the shampoo in the palm of my hand and began rubbing Emme's hair. **At three, Emme's hair isn't as long or as thick as her big sisters, but it sure seems to have filled out as of late.** Curls of white foam bubbles grew and grew from her head. She looked like she wore a wig of my granny's white hair. **If only Granny were still alive to know Emme. I thought. She'd be amazed.** She tipped her head forward to grab her rubber duck. "Be careful," I said. You don't want to get shampoo in your eyes, silly. I grabbed the sprayer and rinsed the shampoo out. the tub's surface....

**Editing:** Once the main structure and content of the draft has been revised so that the text now feels stable, writers begin to reread, checking each sentence, word, and letter from a “when you falter, alter” perspective. The child will read for spelling, punctuation, and tense agreement. As the year unfolds, the classroom’s editing checklist will grow. Once students have been taught to edit with particular concerns in mind, then those skills and strategies should move forward in the writing process becoming part of the writer’s repertoire of skills that she draws upon while scrawling through a rough draft.

I squirted the shampoo in the palm of my hand and began rubbing Emme’s hair. At three, Emme’s hair isn’t as long or as thick as her big sisters, but it sure seems to have filled out as of late. Curls of **white** foam **bubbles** grew and grew from her head. She looked like she wore a wig of my granny’s white hair. If only Granny were still alive to know Emme. I thought. She’d be amazed. She tipped her head forward to grab her rubber duck. “Be careful,” I said. You don’t want to get shampoo in your eyes, silly. I grabbed the sprayer and rinsed the shampoo out. **The** tub’s surface....

**Getting Started: Launching the Writing Workshop  
Grade 4**

**Note: This is a suggested teaching guide. Included, are 8 teaching points that can be covered over 10 days. Any lesson may be stretched over several days if necessary. You also have flexibility in order to add in appropriate lessons of your choice. Always instruct based upon your students needs.**

**Teaching Points**

**Beginning the Work of Writing Workshop**

**Falling in Love With Our Writer's Notebook**

**How to Work Well With a Partner**

**How Writers Use Entries to Begin Developing for a Draft**

**Ways Writers Begin a Draft**

**Ways Writers Revise Their Drafts**

**Ways Writers Edit Their Drafts**

**Writers Celebrate Finished and Unfinished Drafts**

## Preparing to Teach Grade 4 Unit 1 Launching Writers Workshop

### **Read the entire unit:**

The best way to understand the big picture of any unit is to read it through in its entirety in one sitting. At another time, read it again more slowly in smaller chunks making notes and highlighting portions you want to remember.

**Make ahead teaching charts/transparencies so they will be ready when you need them.**

### **Materials/Books to gather:**

Gather copies of books that tell simple stories--the more the better.

### **Do the following writing/thinking ahead of time:**

Do some writing in your notebook that you will be able to use with students: lists of things you did last week, last month, or over the summer.

Write a few **entries** about different ideas. Make some entries short and some longer. Do not make them perfect.

Remember, any "story" written in your notebook is called an "entry." Don't let that word confuse you. Student entries are actually *stories* of varied lengths. It helps to keep clear the difference between what we write inside our notebooks and what we write outside of our notebooks if we call the writing in the notebook **entries** and the writing outside of the notebooks **drafts**.

Once an entry, several entries, or a new idea from entries is chosen for a topic, then the student writes that outside of the notebook on notebook paper. At this point do tell students to only write on one side of each page. This allows for deep revision strategies later on.

Use a **planning calendar** to map out when you will teach specific strategies that will most benefit your students. Based on informal and formal classroom assessments you will be able to determine when it is appropriate to do several mini lessons on one teaching point, combine or even delete teaching points. Toward the end of the unit, you may find it necessary to insert mini lessons on grammar and mechanics. Most teachers find it helpful to team with colleagues when planning out the unit. The collegial conversation is well worth your valuable time. PLC meetings are an ideal structure for these planning conversations to begin.

Be on the lookout at the beginning of the year for **cooperative partnerships**. After you have assessed students' writing and come to know the children in your class well, set up permanent or long term partnerships.

**Here are recommendations for forming partnerships:**

- Teacher strategically chooses partners. Avoid letting students choose partners.
- Choose like-ability partners whose personalities are compatible.
- Pair similar “talkers” meaning avoid putting a talker with a shy, quiet voice.
- Pair boys with girls when it suits your overall purposes.
- Assign partners places to sit in gathering area.
- Change partners only if they prove to be unsuccessful for one or both students.
- Consistently reinforce effective partnership work and behavior.

**Smart Partnership Work**

**Partners...**

- Face one another to show listening body language
- Take turns speaking
- Respect and encourage one another with responses
- Listen intently
- Sit shoulder to shoulder during mini-lesson and knee to knee during active engagement
- Push each other’s thinking in positive ways
- Engage in productive, meaningful work

**More information on partnerships can be found in a separate booklet, *A Handbook of Interesting and Provocative Writing Terms*.**

The **Units of Study** spiral across the year and across grade levels making it important for teachers to devote time each and every day for writing workshop. They are meant to serve as a resource to guide genre-based writing instruction. While research has proven the architecture of the mini lesson is highly effective, it is not necessary to use the lengthy scripts provided. As always, authentic analogies and stories are more comfortable for teachers and more meaningful to students. The units should serve as a springboard for your own smart teaching.



**The Teacher's Writing for: Unit 1** (Use this sheet to plan ahead for the writing you will need to do ahead of time in your notebook and on charts before instructing each teaching point.)

**Teaching Point 1:**

Teacher writing:

Charts to make:

**Teaching Point 2:**

Teacher writing:

Charts to make:

**Teaching Point 3:**

Teacher writing:

Charts to make:

**Teaching Point 4:**

Teacher writing:

Charts to make:

**Teaching Point 5:**

Teacher writing:

Charts to make:

**Teaching Point 6:**

Teacher writing:

Charts to make:

**Teaching Point 7:**

Teacher writing:

Charts to make:

**Teaching Point 8:**

Teacher writing:

Charts to make:



**Assessment Rubric**  
**(To use at the completion of this unit.)**  
**Grade 4 Unit 1: Launching the Writers Workshop**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**1=Little evidence    2=Some evidence    3=Clear Evidence    4=Clear, effective evidence**

Process/ Management	Writer demonstrates pride in writing work by effectively using his/her writer's notebook.				
Process/ Management	Writer builds stamina for writing independently in workshop for a minimum of 10 minutes.				
Management	Writer understands and follows workshop procedures and routines by working cooperatively with peers, independently of the teacher and productively the majority of time.				
Management	Writer contributes to partnership work by listening intently and sharing regularly.				
Process	Writer generates his/her own ideas for personal narrative entries in the notebook by using one or more idea-generating strategies.				
Process	Writer selects and commits to one idea from the notebook in order to develop a personal narrative draft outside of the notebook following the process steps of generating and developing.				
Content	Writer applies strategies, such as: vertical time lining, action, dialogue, and/or setting beginnings all the while working to develop a clear, focused personal narrative.				
Process/ Content	Writer revises draft by incorporating feelings, thoughts, action, and dialogue at appropriate places.				
Process	Writer takes pride in final written work by editing for punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and by using legible handwriting.				
Management	Writer practices for publication/sharing and actively participates in listening/responding/sharing at the celebration.				

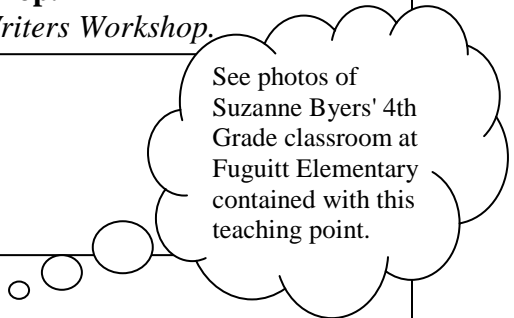


### **Teaching Point 1: Beginning the Work of Writing Workshop.**

*Students will learn exactly what is expected of them during Writers Workshop.*

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Student writing folders (one per student)
- Teacher's writer's notebook
- Students' writer's notebooks (one per student)



See photos of Suzanne Byers' 4th Grade classroom at Fuguitt Elementary contained with this teaching point.

### **Connect**

**Build your student's enthusiasm for writing and explain writing workshop. On the first day of writing workshop, gather students into your gathering area. Make it known that this is the place they will come when you have something very important to teach or share with them. Ask students if they have previously sat together on the floor to be read to or taught something. Connect today's lesson to that experience.**

**Say:** *Writers, today we are starting something very exciting in our classroom called Writing Workshop. I know many of you already know so many wonderful things about Writing Workshop. Today, I'm going to remind you of the work we do during Writing Workshop and remind you of what writers do so that you will always know exactly what you should do during writing time.*

**Name the teaching point:** *Today writers, I am going to teach you what behavior is expected of you during Writing Workshop and we will practice some of those behaviors because we will be working this way every day at writing time.*

### **Teach**

**Explain what the Connect and Teach portions of writing workshop looks like and sounds like and point out certain students who are demonstrating appropriate behaviors in the gathering area.**

Tell students that they will meet in the gathering area every day at the beginning of writing time for the **Mini Lesson** that day. If necessary, spend time discussing how they should sit while in the gathering area. Tell them that a mini lesson will usually involve something all writers do that they too can do in their writing. Explain that after the mini lesson they will go to their seats to write. Tell them this is the second portion or circle of writers workshop called **Quiet Writing and Conferencing**. During the first few minutes of this time, explain that you will be working on your writing so they will need to follow the **Three S's of quiet writing time: seats, silence, and self-reliance** because writers need a few minutes of quiet time to think before they begin writing. Also tell them that

because you will be writing, they can not bother you to help spell a word or solve a problem they are having in their writing. They will have to be self-reliant until you are ready to confer with them. Finally, explain that the last portion of writing workshop is called **Sharing**. Sharing is a time to celebrate all the wonderful things you saw going on that day during workshop time. Students who have participated in writing workshop and unit of study teaching will not need this explained in such detail. Survey the class to see how many students are new to this way of work.

**Say:** *“Writers, you probably already know that everyday at the start of Writing Workshop, we’ll gather together right here on this rug because this is the most special place in the room. Everyday when you meet here on the rug, I want you to do your very best job to sit tall- just like \_\_\_\_\_ is sitting. I want you to always sit with your legs crossed and keep your eyes on me. We all do our best thinking and writing as we sit tall and focus. Let me watch all of you do that work. During the teaching part of the Writing Workshop, I will be the one doing the talking. This is my time to teach or tell you something important. This means that hands should be folded in your lap and not in the air asking questions. This is your time to be the very best listener you can be. After we gather here on the rug each day to learn something new about writing, I’ll invite you to return back to your seats to write and try new things out.*

**Demonstrate how to generate a list of ideas to write a story about.**

**Say:** *Okay, watch how I get ready to write. I need to think of strategies I’ve learned before that might help me to come up with an idea...one strategy I know is to think back over things I did last week or last month...*

*Hmmm...I could write about rabbits. I saw a rabbit in my yard last week I like rabbits and I think they are cute—but wait! I’ve never done anything with a rabbit. Hmm...let me think about last month...it was still summertime... I want to write about what I did this summer. I know! I went to Disney World with my family. Lots of funny things happened that week in Orlando. Let me make a list of some of the things I visited my sister in New England, I can put that on my list. I took my girls to the beach one day and we searched for starfish. I can put that on my list.*

*So do you see how thinking back to things I did last week or last month and then listing those things can help me come up with an idea to write about? And I can write entries about all of them if I want to right inside my writer’s notebook. Nice right? Writers, during Writing Workshop, it’s always good to nod your head so that I know you understand and are paying attention.*

*Writers, what I just reminded you of is the work we do in Writing Workshop. Everyday you’ll come to the rug and sit attentively and learn something about writing. Then you’ll go off and practice that work at your desk or writing spots.*

Close eyes, look up toward ceiling pretending to search memories.

Make a quick list.

The important point today is students' understanding of the workshop expectations.

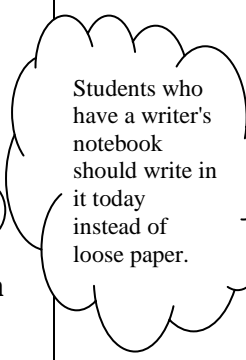
## **Active Engagement**

**Have students turn and talk to a partner about what they would put on their list to help them write some entries today. You can listen in and report out what students say.**

**Say:** *“Let’s be the picture of the perfect class and show exactly what good writers do during the time when we are on the carpet. I would like you to close your eyes right now and think of something that you did last week, last month, or maybe even this past summer that you could write about. I know that some of you rode your bikes, went on vacations, went swimming. I bet you can think of a moment when you were doing one of these things last week, or last month, or over the summer, right? Would you open your eyes and tell someone sitting near you what you might write about today?”*

**Debrief. Share the good work of one partnership in a way that allows you to explain what you want the students to go back to their seats and start writing.**

**Say:** *“Writers listen to this! I really like the way that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ shared what they did this past summer. I knew they were being good partners because when one of them shared, the other one was looking at the speaker and nodding. That’s really respectful, right? I also like the way they told each other what happened. That will come in handy when they go back to their desks and make a quick list of what they are going to write about.”*



Students who have a writer's notebook should write in it today instead of loose paper.

## **Link**

**Tell students that everyday will be special because writing workshop will be a time where they can express their thoughts and feelings in writing. Restate your teaching point from today.**

**Say:** *“Writers, today I taught you what I expect of you during Writing Workshop and how to generate an idea to write a story by thinking back to last week or last month and listing things you did.”*

**Send children off to write, reminding them of your expectations for their independent work. Students should be writing in their writer's notebook today. If any student doesn't have one, tell them they can write on notebook paper today and tape what they write into their notebooks when they have them. Tell students that it is very important for them to bring a notebook by tomorrow since you want to start the work that real writers do and that means having a special notebook to hold their ideas and thoughts and feelings and so much more.**

**Say:** "You can make a quick list about what you did last week or last month or this past summer and then get started writing. Or if you already have an idea that you want to write about, then just start writing about it. Remember this strategy for a day when you can't think of anything to write about. Okay Writers, off you go!"

## **Write and Confer**

**Write on your own for the first few minutes of workshop and then circulate the room to compliment and admire the students' work.**

Always do what you ask students to do. This helps you become part of the writing community.

Wait until every student has stopped and is looking your way.

Students should only write for about 10 min. on this first day.

**\*\*Mid-Workshop Teaching Point\*\*** (Based on what you notice as you research the room and conference.)

Writers, stop for a moment and put your pencils down. I am so proud of the way most of you got right to your seats and began making your lists and started writing. Good work. I can tell you know something amazing and important about writing. During the Write and Confer portion of the Writing Workshop, we follow the three S's: we're seated, we're silent, and we're self-reliant! Self-reliant means you rely on yourself to get the writing work done. You don't raise your hand to ask questions because you know your teacher will come around and ask you "How's it going?" That's a good time to ask for help or advice. If your teacher doesn't make it over to you, just move on. You should always be writing.

- Writers, I know I am going to hear a lot of moans and groans when I say this, but I'm going to have to ask you to finish up the sentence you're on and stop writing. Go ahead—let out a groan if you have to. What I would like you to do right now is to count how many words you wrote today in your story. Then write the number of words you wrote today on the top of your paper. When we gather today for the Share part of our Writing Workshop, we will celebrate by adding up the number of words we've written today as a class. Please be sure you do your counting in your head silently because I get really confused if I'm trying to count my words and I hear someone else calling out numbers. Go ahead and start counting!

Pause to let the students groan here. The more dramatic you can be, the better!

## **Teaching Share**

**Call children back to the gathering area by calling them by table and celebrate by counting up the number of words the whole class wrote.**

- Place the number of words on the board or on a chart and make a huge fuss about it. (Today, August 7, 2006, Mrs. Rasmussen's class wrote \_\_\_\_\_ words!) Whenever someone comes in the room today, make a BIG FUSS about the number of words written.

**End the day by holding up your writer's notebook which you could have decorated with personal photos and memorabilia.**

The goal of this unit is for students to learn the procedures of writing workshop. Do not worry about the quality of students' writing at this point. Instill a love of writing first!

**Homework Idea:** Suggest students bring in things from home this week to decorate their writer's notebooks.



Design your gathering area first. Make it big. Surround it with bookshelves. Then fit your desks around the outside of the room.

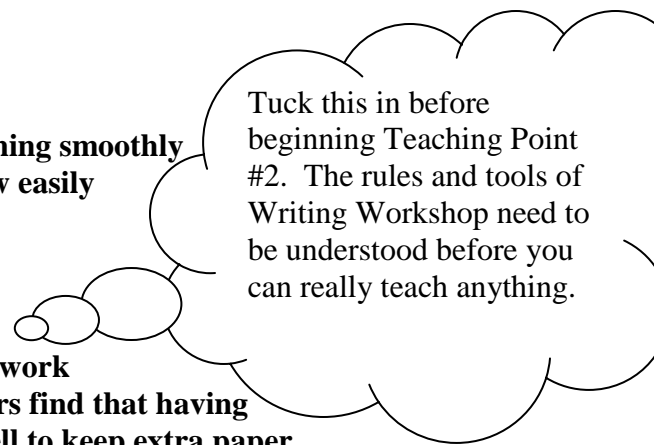


A large colorful carpet defines the gathering area. Since all teaching happens here, desks no longer all need to be facing the "front" of the room.

## Notes to Teacher

**Tell students that an important part of workshop running smoothly depends on how organized their materials are and how easily they can be accessed by the students on their own.**

**Explain to students where supplies will be kept. You will need to establish a comfortable routine for how students are to get the materials they need in order to work independently during writing workshop. Most teachers find that having a container in the center of each table group works well to keep extra paper, markers, pens, pencils, students' writing folders, and any other supplies students might need as they work during the writing and conferring portion of writing workshop. It is not necessary that all teachers have students manage materials in the same way. You need to establish systems for broken pencils, forgotten notebooks, lost writing folders, absences, etc.**



Tuck this in before beginning Teaching Point #2. The rules and tools of Writing Workshop need to be understood before you can really teach anything.

**You might create a chart like the one below to remind students about yesterday's lesson.**

<b>(Sample Chart)</b>	
<b>Writing Workshop: The Work of Writers</b>	
<b>Mini Lesson</b>	-Teacher teaches something -Students try it out
<b>Write and Confer</b>	-Students and Teachers Write Quietly -Students keep writing -Teachers meet with students to talk about their writing
<b>Sharing</b>	-Students and Teachers gather together to share

### **Writing With Stamina and Volume**

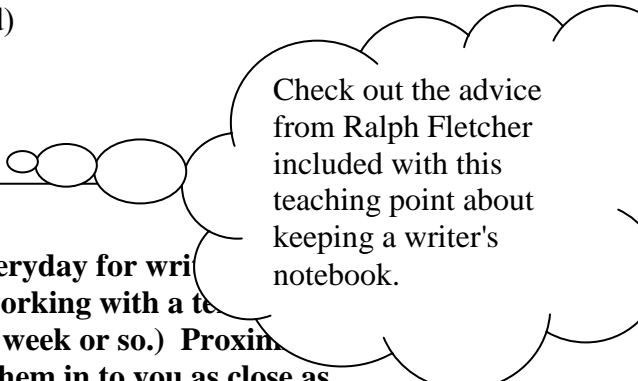
In this first unit of study, one of your goals will be to teach students to write with stamina and volume. It should be no-big-deal for a student to produce a full page of writing every day in school and an equal amount of writing at home-- eventually. The best way to build toward this goal is to give students as few as 10 minutes to write on the first days of workshop. Day by day you can add minutes to that time. It is better to end writing time too early and hear students groan than to let writing time go on too long and hear students cheer when you tell them writing time is over.

## Teaching Point 2: Falling In Love With Our Writers Notebook

*Students will learn the purpose of keeping a writers notebook both in and out of school.*

### Materials Needed:

- Teacher's own writer's notebook decorated with pictures
- Keeping a Writer's Notebook (on chart or overhead)
- Writing Folders
- Writer's Notebooks
- Chart stand/paper in gathering area



Check out the advice from Ralph Fletcher included with this teaching point about keeping a writer's notebook.

## Connect

**Remember, when you gather your students together everyday for writing, have them in pairs to sit on the rug. Tell them they will be working with a teacher partner today (you will assign permanent partners in a week or so.) Proximity is important!!! Assign students exact spots to sit. Bring them in to you as close as possible. Often times coming to the rug might seem informal – students want to lie down. This is not the expectation at all, quite the opposite, in fact. You are bringing them to the rug to gather together closely so that they can keep their eyes and ears glued on your every gesture and every word. You, in turn, will be able to do the same. Teaching on the rug allows us as teachers to be aware of every single child's level of engagement. When you assign permanent partnerships place those students who have the most difficulty paying attention right at your feet (front and center.)**

**Say:** *"Writers, yesterday we talked about writing workshop and what to expect every day at that time (Gesture toward chart: "Writing Workshop: The Work of Writers")*

*So we know that to do the work of writers we need to follow our daily writing workshop routine, we need to be responsible for the workshop tools and rules, and there is one more thing we need in order to do the work of writers and that is...keep a writer's notebook. (Hold up your decorated notebook). This is my notebook, you can tell it's mine because it is covered with pictures and memories that are important to me .*

**Name the teaching point:** *"Today, I want to teach you all about a writer's notebook you will want to keep your writer's notebook close to you always... always at the ready to jot writing ideas and generate lots and lots of entries so you always can find topics to write about."*

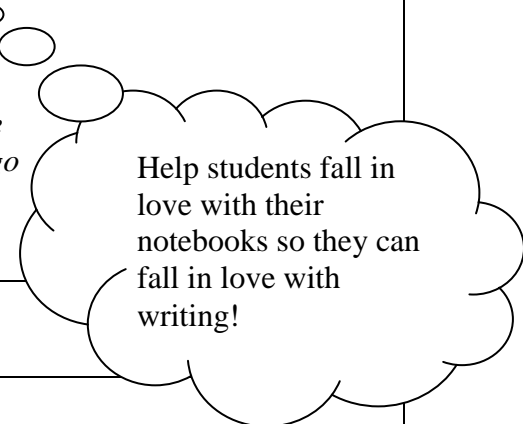
## Teach

**Let your students know that the notebook is the place where you write ideas, interesting words and phrases you hear, where you write entries that sometimes are a sentence long and sometimes might be a whole page or more. Show students the pages you have written on and describe how you use your notebook.**

**Say:** *Writers, notice how I kept the first page blank so I can go back and make it a title page or table of contents page later on. Do you see how each time I write something in my notebook, I put the date at the top? Notice on this page I just have a list of ideas I might write about. On the back of that page I started writing entries about a couple of those ideas from my list. It's okay to write on the back pages of my notebook because I never tear these pages out and I never cut them apart to revise like I sometimes do on a draft, but I'll talk more about drafts another day. Do you notice how some of my entries are short and others are much longer? I always draw a line after each entry so I can just start a new entry below it--often I write 2, 3, or more entries about different ideas on a single day in writing workshop. Oh, and notice how sometimes I even draw a quick sketch if I think it might help me to remember important details. All of the things I did and more you can do as well in your writer's notebooks.*

**You might also want to show students some examples of actual fourth grade student notebook pages contained with this teaching point. If you taught following the units of study before and have saved or copied some of your past students' notebooks, this is the perfect time to show them as models. It is important for students to be able to envision their notebooks at the highest level possible.**

**Say:** *Now you'll be able to live like a writer, not just in writing time at school, but all the time. You can write on the bus, while you are waiting at the dentist, or for a few minutes before you go to sleep. Keep the notebook by your bed and you can jot down your dreams when you wake up.*



Help students fall in love with their notebooks so they can fall in love with writing!

## **Active Engagement**

**Students should be physically turned and facing a partner. Start training students now as to appropriate behavior when working with a partner. Be watching for ways to form your permanent partnerships that might last all year for writing. The sooner you can arrange permanent partnerships the better as it saves a lot of often wasted time during the mini lesson.**

**Say:** *Can you close your eyes right now and think of something you might like to try today in your notebook that you noticed in mine or any of the examples I showed you today...some of you might want to list more ideas, some might want to write an entry and draw a line, write another and draw a line...others might have an idea they'd like to sketch before the write, some might want to try a strategy they remember from third grade writing workshop.. . think for a minute about what you might like to try today in your notebook during Quiet Writing and Conferencing time...think....think*

*Would you open your eyes, and tell someone what you might try doing today in your writer's notebook?*

**Debrief. Share several of the ideas you heard and gush with excitement.**

## Link

**Remember, this portion is a short wrap up of what you taught today. It is the time to restate the teaching point. It is also important that students realize that what you teach everyday is for them to use when they need it for the rest of their writing lives. You rarely, if ever, use this time to assign students a task for the day. Each day students move forward from where they left off the previous day in their writing work.**

*Say: Today, I taught you all about a writer's notebook and how you will want to keep your writer's notebook close to you always... always at the ready to jot writing ideas and generate lots and lots of entries so you always can find topics to write about.*

*Writers, I hope you always remember how important the writer's notebooks are to writers. We've learned that a writer's notebook is a tool writers use to collect ideas and stories. Now it's time to practice using your notebooks on your own.*

*I want to remind you that during writing time, we follow the 3 S's: we're seated, silent, and self-reliant. Self-reliant means we rely on ourselves to write. As I dismiss you to your table groups I also want to remind you that I won't be available for conferences for a few minutes. Like you, I am a writer. I'll write alongside of you.*

*If you are sitting in the back row, let me admire the way you stand up quickly and quietly and move to your desks. Class, let's watch the way they sit down. I just bet they know to pick up their pencils right away and write today's date in their notebooks. I see (Desiree) writing the date. Next row, I know you'll tiptoe just as quietly. Let me watch. Writers, listen to the sound of the room. This is what workshop sounds like. Next row, tiptoe. 1<sup>st</sup> row, you may get started.*

## Write and Confer

**For the first few minutes of writing time, write alongside the children. Today and for the next week or so, it's a nice idea to hold compliment conferences only. Be on the lookout for some of these common compliment topics: topic choice, stamina, independence, use of the notebook (dating entries, drawing a line under each entry, generating lists of story ideas, using check-marks to check-off story lists, sketching, etc.)**

### **Compliment Conference Structure:**

- **Start w/an open-ended question:** *What are you working on as a writer?*
- **Link:** *Because you are already doing that work, I know you'll always remember to choose topics from your heart. Those make the best stories.*
- **Give a specific compliment:** *I'm noticing you are writing a story about...( your mom.) She's someone you care bunches about, right?(Praise their topic idea)*
- **Generalize the compliment:** *Writers do that. We choose topics we care about because we know that our best stories are often those that come from the heart.*

The most successful writing teachers pull up to a group of students with their own writers notebook and begin writing. They model the work they are asking students to do.

Ignore students who have their hands up or gently remind them this is not a time to ask questions. If this continues to be an issue – pull a small group and teach independence.

**\*\* Mid-Workshop Teaching Point\*\*** (This is a time you stop and do a short share or short teach from the front of the room. Most days you will not preplan this portion of Writing Workshop. At this time you might stop the class and share something a student has done especially if it reflects the day's teaching point. You will base what happens during this interruption on the needs of your class that day. Below are possible ideas you could try today if you aren't sure what to do for a mid-workshop teaching point today.)

- Writers, notice the way \_\_\_\_\_ has written a list of things he did last week on this page, last month on the next page, and this past summer on the next page. That is such smart work because now he has so many possible topics he could write about. \_\_\_\_\_ told me that now he's ready to start writing entries about several of these ideas he's most excited about. He thinks some of those entries might be long, but some will be shorter. That's perfect--exactly what writing in our notebooks is all about. Keep at it!

## **Teaching Share**

**Call students back to the gathering area by calling them by table and again count the number of words written in the room today. You are trying to build excitement and stamina. You will not be counting words in every unit.**

**Then you might wrap up today's Writing Workshop by saying something like:**

*Writers, you've remembered something big and important about writing today. You've remembered how writing workshop goes – how we meet everyday on the rug to learn about writing and then we go off and practice our writing. You also learned about the most important tool a writer has, the writer's notebook. You also know that when we go off and write – we are seated, silent, and self-reliant. And most importantly, you learned that when we do our writing work – we write lots and lots and we don't stop writing until our teacher tells us we have to stop (and then we let out big moans and groans!!) Excellent work! Speaking of writers writing, let's see how we did today. Thumbs up if you think you wrote more words today than you wrote yesterday.*

**Repeat the counting words from yesterday's lesson.**

**Make a huge fuss! Add to the chart. Some teachers think it wise to publicly display this chart on the outside of their classrooms for all to see and admire.**

## Watch Us Grow!

**Today, August --, 2007, Mrs. Smith's class wrote \_\_\_\_\_ words!**

**Today, August --, 2007, Mrs. Smith's class wrote \_\_\_\_\_ words!**

*Buzz the office. Could you have Mrs. Schottler stop by our room when she gets a chance? We just have to brag about our class today!*

**Homework Idea: Continue to bring pictures in to decorate and personalize your notebooks. Tomorrow morning, after you unpack your backpacks and get settled in, you'll notice tape on each of your tables. During morning wake-up work, you'll make your notebooks your very own by covering them in pictures with the people, places, and things you love the most!**



## **Keeping a Writer's Notebook Advice from Ralph Fletcher**

### **What Should I Write About?**

I'm not a big believer in "story starters". I believe that the best ideas are living inside you. Your challenge is to dig them out. Do the writing only you can do. But every writer gets stuck from time to time so I've included a few ideas to jump-start your imagination.

### **You might try to write about:**

- \* Family story
- \* A particular tradition in your family.
- \* An artifact (arrowhead, ring, antique, etc.). Important objects in our lives often provide excellent material to write about.
- \* Special place: special room, attic nook, inside of a tree, scary closet. You might start by quickly sketching a map of a house full of memories. Mark those rooms where something important happened to you.
- \* Brother, sister, or special relative. Remember: think small. Focus on one aspect of that person, or one experience you had with him or her.
- \* Your place in the family. Are you the oldest kid in your family? The youngest? The middle child? An only child? Were you adopted?
- \* Best friend. (Did you ever get in trouble?)
- \* Moving. Did you leave behind a best friend when you moved from your old house?
- \* A disastrous time you had at camp or on a family vacation.
- \* Horrible haircut (or other mortifying experience)
- \* An injury. Did you ever have to go to the hospital?
- \* Important first: your first day in school, the first time you rode a two-wheeler, etc.
- \* Favorite pet, or a pet you once had.
- \* When your family changed: your brother went off to college, grandma came to live with you, ...
- \* What you are (or used to be) afraid of.
- \* One thing you never want to do again!

### **How To Use Your Writer's Notebook**

Use your notebook to breathe in the world around you. You can write about:

- 1) What amazes/surprises/anger you
- 2) What you wonder about
- 3) What you notice
- 4) "Seed Ideas" or "Triggers" to generate stories or poems
- 5) Small details that intrigue you
- 6) Snatches of talk you overhear
- 7) Memories
- 8) Lists
- 9) Photos, articles, ticket stubs or other artifacts
- 10) Your own sketches, drawings or doodles
- 11) Quotes or inspiring passages from books or poems

**Once you have gathered a lot of writing in your notebook, try the following ideas:**

- 1) Reread to dig out the best material
- 2) Experiment with new kinds of writing
- 3) Try to write something beautiful but don't expect all your writing to be great. Give yourself permission to write badly!
- 4) Write about personal things--fears, nightmares, or dreams--that contain strong feelings
- 5) Write about writing

**Remember these tips:**

- \* Keep your notebook with you so you can write at any place and time.
- \* Pull your notebook out whenever you have a few minutes with nothing else to do.
- \* The notebook you keep should reflect you. If you like to draw, draw in your notebook.
- \* Writing can be fun. Your notebook is a place to enjoy writing.

**Prewriting Strategies For Your Writing**

- 1) Write in Your Writer's Notebook. A writer's notebook gives you an easy, informal, no-pressure way to start thinking about a topic. Great for brand-new "seed ideas".
- 2) Talk It Out. Sometimes I'll get together with a friend to kick around an idea I'm thinking about. There's a little danger here--if you talk too much you can talk the mystery out of an idea. I have found that a little talk goes a long way.
- 3) List Ideas. Lists are a great way to gather material. The idea is to generate ideas. Don't worry if some ideas are better than others. And don't worry too much about getting the ideas in the right order.
- 4) Make A Web. You may have done this before. Put the main idea in the center, and make a "spoke" for each connected idea.
- 5) Make A Simple Time-line. I find this idea very helpful for writing stories. Jot down when each important event happened. Now, where do you want to start the writing? At the beginning of the timeline? In the middle? At the end?
- 6) Three by Three by Three. Give yourself three minutes to write three ideas on three different topics. Great for generating ideas.
- 7) Free Write. Give yourself a short amount of time (five to seven minutes) to jot down ideas, words, fragments related to a topic. If you doing this right your pen should never leave the page. One friend of mine calls it "Hot-Penning". Don't think: write! Let your pen go wild. Later you can go back and circle any parts you want to use.

**Important Note:** I don't use each one of these ideas each time I write! You will probably find that some of these ideas work better than others. You will have to try them out and see which ones work best for you.

Writing Quotes to Use to Decorate Your Writers Notebook

Write everyday.  
Donald Graves

Writing is discovery.  
Ralph Fletcher

Verbs are the engines of sentences;  
if yours are dead your poem will stop.  
Georgia Heard

Writers write for the  
same reason readers  
read..to find out what's  
gonna happen!

Writing itself is revision.  
Barry Lane

The most important sentence in a good book  
is the first one; it will contain the organic  
seed from which all that follows will grow.  
Paul Horgan

WE NEED TO LAUGH, TO PLAY AROUND, TO  
NOT BE AFRAID OF CREATING A MESS OR  
SAYING SOMETHING WRONG.

Barry Lane



The writer's motto  
should be:  
"Never a day

**When we read live writing, the words seem to  
lift off the page and burrow deep inside us.**

**Ralph Fletcher**

**A word is dead when it is said, some say.  
I say it just begins to live that day.**

Emily Dickinson

**The mind working alone produces thought; the  
heart produces feeling; the tongue makes speech  
and the hand in isolation makes scribble:  
all four together create voice.**

**Geof Hewitt**

**I think I did pretty well considering I started out  
with a bunch of blank paper.**

**Steve Martin**

**I'm rewriting it while I'm  
writing it.  
It's changing itself.**

**Time to a writer is like playdough  
in the hands of a toddler.**

**Barry Lane**



**copy writing notebook page with lists of ideas and entries here for last week last month**



### **Teaching Point 3: How to Work Well With a Partner**

*Students will focus on what smart partnerships look like and sound like and how critical it is to practice being a good partner.*

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Chart paper with partnership tips (see introductory pages in this unit.)

### **Connect**

**Praise students for the good work they did yesterday, and remind the students of what they have learned about writing workshop.**

**Say:** *Writers, even after one day of work I can already tell that you are all writers. You did a wonderful job yesterday transitioning to the carpet quickly and silently.*

**Name the teaching point.**

**Say:** *Today writers, I am going to teach you how to work well with a partner because our partners are important to our success as a writer and we need to understand what makes the best partners.*

### **Teach**

**Describe what “turn and talk” looks like and sounds like and point out students who demonstrate this behavior well.**

**Say:** *Writers, today I want to talk to you about turn and talk. The most important thing to remember when we use partner talk is to be respectful listener and give helpful feedback.*

**Introduce students to what a smart partnership looks like and sounds like by reading and discussing the smart partnerships chart.**

**Say:** *Writers, everyday we are going to gather on the rug and learn many different strategies and in order for us to do this we are going to need to be able to work with our partners. Let’s review the rules for smart partnerships. Partners look and face each other knee to knee. Partners take turns talking respectfully, listening well and responding with only kind words. Last, partners REALLY listen.*

During the lesson, model with a child how we sit face-to-face with knees touching.

Create your own signal.

### **Active Engagement**

**Have your writers practice being excellent partners. Have them turn and talk to their shoulder partner sharing two things that they like doing after school.**

**Say:** *“Writers, let’s practice this work. When I give the signal, I want you to turn and talk to your partner about two things you like to do after school. Remember to practice your best partner skills.*

**Debrief. Pull students back together to compliment partners on working well together.**

**Say:** *Writers, can I have your attention. I really admired the way \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ were being smart partners. They were following all the rules we discussed on our chart. Nice work, right?*

Remind students to really listen to their partner and use a voice that won't be too loud and distracting to others.

## **Link**

**Restate your teaching point.**

**Say:** *Writers, today I taught you what smart partnerships look like and sound like. Everyday we will practice being smart and excellent partners.*

**Send children off to write, reminding them of your expectations for their independent work.**

**Say:** *Remember we talked about yesterday that writing workshop is seated, silent and self reliant. Today you may continue to work on the entries you started yesterday, or you can write more entries. Off you go!*

## **Write and Confer**

**Write on your own for the first few minutes of workshop and then conference with students individually or in a small group.**

**\*\*Mid-Workshop Teaching Point\*\*\*** *(Based on what you notice as you research the room and confer.) You may need to stop students and give them 2-3 additional strategies for coming up with topic ideas they can write more entries for. Look through the lessons at the back of this booklet to find ideas or look in the Pinellas Writing Project: Writing Together Lesson Ideas for Grades 3-5 (Blue Book).*

**Highlight any student who uses a different strategy for coming up with writing ideas.**

## **Teaching Share**

**Practice working well with a partner...**

- Have students get with their partner from earlier and sit anywhere in the room.
- Have writers share a part of their entries, really practicing being an excellent partner.
- Have partners listen for one thing in their partner's writing that they really liked.

If you feel students are ready, have partners pre-assigned and let students move to sit with their new writing partners.

#### **Teaching Point 4: How Writers Use Entries to Begin Developing for a Draft**

*Students will learn how to use their entries to find a story idea they can begin to develop in their notebooks and then take to a draft.*

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Students' writer's notebooks
- Chart paper or white board in gathering area
- Teacher examples of entries in his/her notebook
- Teacher example of a time line in his/her notebook

Be sure students keep their notebooks closed and pencils down until they are told to use them.

### **Connect**

**Have students bring their writer's notebooks to the gathering area today. Gather the students together on the rug seated with their writing partner. You will notice that the Teach portion has two parts with two short opportunities for Active Engagement.**

**Say:** *You guys are learning lots of strategies that good writers use when we are trying to write the true stories of our lives. We've been collecting lots and lots of story ideas and writing entries off of those ideas inside our notebooks. Many of you have at least 9 entries in your notebooks. Would you open your notebooks and fan them around the room showing off your entries. Class, give yourselves a round of applause!*

*You are also getting so much better working as real writing partners. You are facing one another, really looking at each other, and listening to help one another. Keep up that great partner work.*

**At this point highlight with specific praise one or two partnerships and specific behaviors they are doing well.**

**Say:** *Today I want to teach you how writers look through their entries to decide on a story topic and then how they develop that idea by asking, "What's my story really about?" because writers want to help their readers know why the topic is important to them.*

### **Teach Part I**

**Say:** *So watch how I am going to decide on a topic to write a story about outside of my notebook. Hmm...this is a very important and tough decision. I'm going to skim back through the pages of my notebook thinking about what each entry is about. This one is about the day I got my dog, Molly. Next, I need to think Is this an important topic to me? Do I have more I could say about this topic? Would this be a topic my audience (classmates, family, friends) might be interested to read about? Since the answer is **yes** to all of those questions, I'm going to put a big star by that entry.*

Think-Aloud allows you to show how your thoughts become words on a page.

**Continue to model in this way with 2-3 more entries. Only star one more because you could answer yes to all of the questions.**

*The story I choose to publish is the story about Molly and the day we brought her home. So writers did you see what I did? First, I skimmed back through each entry asking myself three important questions:*

- *Is this an important topic to me?*
- *Do I have more I could say about this topic?*
- *Would this be a topic my audience (classmates, family, friends) might be interested to read about?*

*Next, if each answer to those questions was **yes**, then I put a big star by it. If the answer to any one question was **no**, then I moved right on to my next entry asking those questions.*

*Finally, I looked over my entries with stars and chose the one I want to begin developing, or planning for, in my note book. Now you can try this work.*

## **Active Engagement #1**

**Have students do this on their own in their notebooks. You will need to circulate and help students. It might be helpful to have those questions on a chart or white board. Give students a few minutes to do this with at least two entries each. Tell them they can continue searching entries and asking those questions during writing time. Report out the good work of one or two students and how they decided to star or not star a particular entry.**

## **Teach Part II**

**Say:** *Now, after I have read and put stars by entries I decide on one entry or one idea from several starred entries to write a whole story about. Since I have lots of entries about Molly with stars by them, I think I'll write about her. So next I'll ask myself, "What's my story really about?"*

*This is a story about how funny it was when we got our little puppy Molly and how rambunctious she was in the car on the ride home.*

*Now, I'll think, what happened just before that and right after. I can list those 3 events in a vertical time line one side of a new page in my notebook. I'll leave space so I can plan some details to include in each part.*

**Remind students who have previously worked through Units of Study that narratives are stories. In a personal narrative, one character (usually the writer) experiences one thing, then the next, then the next. Remind students that effective narratives zoom in on one small moment.**



**Link** *I hope that you always remember whenever you are writing stories, writers follow a process. Part of that process is developing our story ideas. Writers need to decide what we really want to say in our story. Writers do that. We plan and ask ourselves, “What’s my story really about?” Then we make a time line of the big events that happened.*

## **Write and Confer**

**For the first few minutes of writing time, we suggest that teachers pull up to a table group and write alongside the children. Continue holding compliment conferences.**

Make it a goal to hold at least 3 compliment conferences during today’s quiet writing. It’s a nice idea to keep a record of your compliment conferences. That way you’ll know who you’ve conferred with and who you still need to meet with.

***\*\*Mid-Workshop Teaching Point\*\**** *You could fill in the spaces in your notebook with some feelings, thoughts, actions, and/or dialogue you are thinking of including when you write this as a draft. Tell students they can begin this work "fleshing out" details also in their notebooks.*

***\*\*Mid-Workshop Teaching Point\*\**** *Writers, yesterday you were able to write for 13 minutes without stopping. Did you know that? It has been 12 minutes since you started writing. Thumbs up if you think you can push yourselves as writers and write for 3 more minutes? Let’s go!*

You do not need all four narrative strategies in each part. But do try to include all 4 in the middle.

## **Teaching Share**

**Before coming to the gathering are, allow students time to share their writing from today with their writing partner. At the gathering area, highlight students’ who added sentences that “showed” feelings in some way.**

**You could highlight students who have a sequential vertical time line. Or, you could highlight students who fleshed out their timeline with feelings, thoughts, actions, and/or dialogue.**

**Homework Idea:** Have students choose another idea and time line it vertically in their notebooks. Ask them to begin adding in feelings, thoughts, actions, and dialogue they might include in each part. You can use this for assessment purposes to see how well students understand this one way of developing or planning for a piece of writing.

**Note to teachers:** **At this point students are in the middle of the writing process they have generated ideas, chosen on and are developing or planning it in their notebooks. They are getting ready to move to the drafting phase. Some teachers have students keep track of where the class is in the process by moving a large arrow along a Writing Process chart. See the photograph of such a chart contained with this teaching point.**

## Where is the Class in the Writing Process? (Move the arrow!)

**A Writer's Thinking:**

**Generating Ideas**

- Study Vera's writing to Learn Lessons
  - make ordinary events in our lives important
  - use lots of specific details
  - stretch out the most important parts
- Think of a problem to get a story idea
- Or think of an important person, place, or thing

**Developing**

- Plan Scene by Scene by thinking where you were and what you were doing.  

1
2
3
4
5
- Stretch out each scene with details.
- Try a Background Information Lead.

**Drafting/Revising**

- Show, Not Tell our feelings by describing our actions.
- Show, Not Tell our feelings with dialogue
- Do surgery on your writing to make parts better.
- Reveal your thoughts or feelings by saying "I could imagine..." "I could just see myself..."

**Editing/Publishing**

- Use colored pencil to correct mistakes.
- Make sure you check each sentence for a capital letter and an end mark.
- Use the computer or a dictionary to check misspelled words.
- Write neatly when you publish!
- Make a new paragraph for each scene.

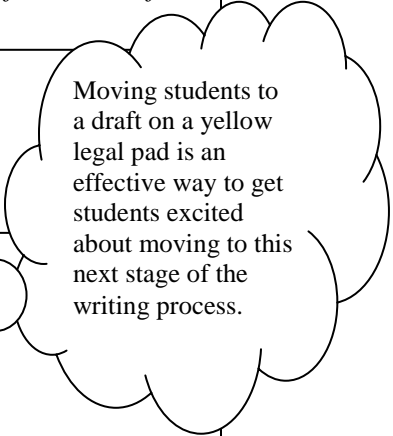


### **Teaching Point 5: Ways Writers Begin a Draft**

*Students will write several narrative beginnings and get ready to begin a draft outside of the writer's notebook.*

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Students' writer's notebooks
- Legal pads (preferably yellow) or notebook paper
- Stories We Will Publish chart



Moving students to a draft on a yellow legal pad is an effective way to get students excited about moving to this next stage of the writing process.

### **Connect**

**Praise students for the good work they did yesterday, and remind students about all they have learned so far about writing workshop, writing tools, procedures during writing workshop, keeping a writer's notebook, and ways of working with a partner.**

**Say:** *Writers, you have come so far already in understanding all that goes on during this special time in our day. I am amazed.*

**Name the teaching point.**

**Say:** *Today writers, I am going to teach you three strategies you can try to begin your narratives. One is an action lead and the other is a dialogue lead and the third is a setting lead because any of these three kinds can make a story beginning sound like a story you might read in a book.*

### **Teach**

**Explain to students that part of developing or planning for our drafts involves coming up with a strong beginning or lead (as journalists call it.) Remind students that writers often start a story with action, dialogue, or a description of the story's setting. All of these strategies are effective in helping students to actually write a small moment narrative (about a 20 minute or less period of time.)**

**Demonstrate how to generate several beginnings or leads that are actions and several that are dialogue and several that describe the setting. Make the point that the more beginnings you write, the better your choices in finding just the right one for your story.**

**Say:** *Writers, watch how I think of ways to begin **using actions** ...first I close my eyes and think about the first part of my story. What happened? How can I put what happened into slow motion like a slow motion movie for my readers? I need to tell each action bit by bit...I walked to the door. I knocked gently and put my ear to the door. Maggie and I looked at one another. Suddenly we heard wild barking coming from inside. We both grinned. Writers, do you see how I pictured the actions and described what happened in slow motion bit by bit?*

Writers, watch how I think of ways to begin **using dialogue**...first I close my eyes and think about the first part of my story. What did people say? Hmm...I really can't remember exactly. I can imagine what we probably said so I could make up what we said and start my story like this... "Should I ring the bell or knock?" I whispered to my daughter Maggie. Our hearts were racing as we approached the home where our Cairn terrier puppy was waiting for us. "Just knock," she said.

Writers, do you see how I closed my eyes and tried to remember what was said? And how I made some of those words up because I couldn't remember exactly? You can do that too.

Now, watch as I think of a beginning that describes the **setting**. Again, I need to close my eyes and picture myself right there at that house. Then I'll write a description of the house and include some details about the weather. My setting beginning might sound like this...The air was chilled. It was Christmas Eve afternoon. Maggie and I walked along the brick pathway toward the small white house they held our new Cairn terrier puppy.

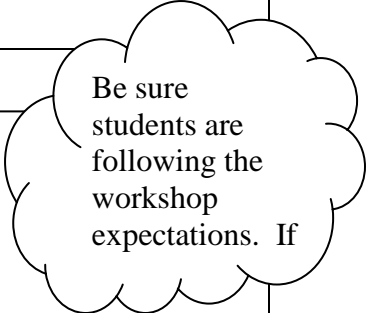
## **Active Engagement**

**Have students turn and talk to their partner. Think about an event that the entire class has recently experienced: walking to lunch, playing kick ball in P.E., a fire drill...**

**Say:** Writers, think back to yesterday when we had that fire drill. Imagine we are writing about that. Write one or more action beginnings in the air with your partner.

**Debrief what you heard. Share the good work of one partnership in a way that allows you to encourage the students to go back to their seats and try that strategy in their writing.**

**After you report out some action leads, have partners do the same thing creating dialogue and then setting leads.**



Be sure students are following the workshop expectations. If

## **Link**

**Restate your teaching point from today.**

**Say:** Writers, today I taught you three ways to begin a narrative. I taught you three strategies you can try to begin your narratives. One is an action lead and the other is a dialogue lead and the third was a setting lead because any of these kinds make a story beginning sound like a story you might read in a book.

**Send children off to write. Tell them you will call them by table groups to find their names on the "Stories We Will Publish" chart and jot the topic of the story they are taking to draft next to their name.**

**A photograph of a similar chart used in Suzanne Byers' classroom is included below.**

## Stories We Will Publish



### Write and Confer

Remember to write on your own for the first few minutes of workshop and then circulate the room to compliment and admire the students' work.

**\*\*Mid-Workshop Teaching Point\*\*** (Based on what you notice as you research the room and conference.)

- Writers, stop for a moment and put your pencils down. Listen to how many \_\_\_\_\_ beginnings Emily wrote--Wow, seven \_\_\_\_\_ leads. Now she's going to try writing that many for the other kinds--great work. You guys may want to see how many you can write for each kind.

### Teaching Share

Call students back to the gathering area by calling them by table and remember to celebrate by counting up the number of words the whole class wrote.

- Continue adding to your Number of Minutes We Wrote Today chart. This builds excitement while it builds volume and stamina.
- Highlight students who wrote several beginnings using several strategies.

Students should be writing for a little longer time each day. Build their writing stamina by adding a few minutes to their independent writing time each day.

### **Teaching Point 6: Ways Writers Begin to Revise a Draft**

*Students learn to make a narrative even better by adding feelings and thoughts.*

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Teacher piece (on legal pad/chart)
- Shared Class Experience story on chart paper (with editing errors--see TP #7)
- Writing Process Chart (post-it arrow on revision-see photo with TP #4)

## **Connect**

**Gather the students together on the rug seated with their writing partner.**

**Say:** *You have all been working so hard to develop and begin to draft your narratives. Yesterday, most of you wrote lots of leads, chose the one you liked best, and began your draft outside of your notebooks. Most of you will continue to work on those drafts today since we are getting close to our celebration date for this unit.*

**At this point highlight with specific praise one or two students and specific behaviors/writing strategies they have been doing effectively.**

**Say:** *What I want to share with you today is a revision idea you can use while you are in the drafting process or you can use this after your draft is complete and you want to try making it even better.*

*Some people think that the reason we make things better is because they are broken or not right or ugly or terrible. Not so. Many times we make things better because we care deeply about those things and we think they are practically perfect.*

*I was thinking that revision is a lot like that. We revise our writing only because we care about our work in such a way that we are striving to make it better.*

**Name your teaching point.**

**Say:** *So, today, I want to teach you how to take your practically perfect stories and make them even better. One way we can revise our stories to make them even better is by adding our thoughts and feelings. When we include our thoughts and feelings it helps our readers really understand both the outside story, but the inside story as well. Adding these things makes the story even more real for our readers – helping them feel as if they are there with us in that moment.*

## **Teach**

**Say:** *Watch me try this work out in my story. I'll read each sentence in my draft and stop after each to decide if this might be a good place to add a thought, feeling, or both.*

**Read from your story written on a legal pad or copied onto a piece of chart paper. It need not be finished to model this revision technique. Model for students by reading a sentence then stopping and doing a think-aloud that might sound something like this:**

(Read sentence #1) then say, *Hmmm...I remember thinking...I could add that. I remember feeling...I could add that...I could add both...I think I'll just add my thought here. So I'll write \_\_\_\_\_.*

(Read sentence #2) then say, *Wow, I don't remember thinking or feeling anything special here. Of course I can imagine what I might have been thinking or feeling and I know I can make those things up so long as they sound realistic. But, I think I'll just leave this as it is. I don't want to overdo adding in too many thoughts or feelings. So let's move on to my next sentence...*

**Continue modeling in this way for one or two more sentences.**

**Say:** *Did you notice the work I did writers? One way I can help my readers be there in that moment is to add my thoughts or feelings or both. I read each sentence then I thought: What was I feeling? What was I thinking? or What might I have been thinking or feeling? Then I made a decision as to whether this would be a good place to add in a thought or feeling because I don't want to overdo it.*

*Writers, I'm telling you this today because you can do that work as writers. You can reread your story sentence by sentence and decide when and where you might add in a thought or feeling or both.*

## **Active Engagement**

**Have students turn to their partner. Together they read the shared class experience story you have displayed. It only needs to be 4-6 sentences long. The story should be about an ordinary event the whole class has recently experienced like walking to lunch, playing a game at P.E., or watering the class plants.**

**Say:** *I'm thinking we could add thoughts and feelings to our class story about \_\_\_\_\_ Let me reread it and will you revise it sentence by sentence with your partner deciding whether we should add a thought, feeling, or both after those sentences.*

**You will need to circulate and help students. Give students a few minutes to do this with their partners. Report out the good work of one or two partnerships and how they decided to add or not add a thought, feeling, or both after a few sentences.**

Always be sure the **Active Engagement** exactly replicates what was modeled during the **Teach** portion.

When you send students off to write, you rarely tell them what to do back at their seats. They always write and use the strategies you've taught **when they need them.**

## Link

Remember, the purpose of the Link is to remind students about what they learned today and to remind them that what they learned is a strategy they can use for the rest of their lives whenever they are writing.

**Say:** *I hope that you always remember whenever you are writing stories, writers follow a process. Part of that process is revising our story to make it better. Writers many of you will continue to draft and revise your stories, shifting between the two processes. And when you revise, I know you'll add thoughts and feelings at just the right places, to help your reader be in the moment. Thumbs up if you plan on making revisions to your story by adding thoughts and feelings today.*

## Write and Confer

For the first few minutes of writing time, we suggest that teachers always pull up to a table group and write alongside the children.

After 5 minutes of silent writing you might:

- Continue holding compliment conferences.
- Continue trying table conferences: Pull up to a table and ask for the attention of the group (wait until all pencils are down and eyes are on you).
- Compliment the students at the entire table. Topics could include: stamina, independence, not wasting a single moment of precious writing time, putting characters into action unfolding the moment step-by-step, being brave spellers, making revisions...

**\*\*Mid-Workshop Teaching Point\*\*** You could continue your draft on yellow legal paper and/or continue drafting and revising for feelings and thoughts you could add to your story. Share whatever you do with students. Don't forget to share your struggle and thinking work as well.

**\*\*Mid-Workshop Teaching Point\*\*** *Writers, yesterday you were able to write for 18 minutes without stopping. Did you know that? It has been 14 minutes since you started writing. Thumbs up if you think you can push yourselves as writers and write for 4 more minutes? Let's go!*

## Teaching Share

Before coming to the gathering are, allow students time to share their writing from today with their writing partner. At the gathering area, highlight students' who added sentences that "showed" feelings in some way.



### **Teaching Point 7: Ways Writers Begin to Edit a Draft**

*Students will edit by themselves and with their partner using an editing checklist as a guide.*

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Teacher's writing on a chart
- Shared Class Experience story on chart
- Editing checklist (1 per student)
- Transparency of Editing Checklist

## **Connect**

**Remind students of all the work they have done so far in this unit. Remind them also of how efficient they have become in following the expectations of writing workshop. Give out lots of praise.**

**A good rule of thumb in teaching is to focus on things that are “do-able and worth doing”—editing is both.**

*Say: Today I want to teach one of my favorite parts of writing---editing. Most writers use a checklist to use almost like a whisper coach as they reread many times to refine their own writing or a trusted partner’s work. The checklist provides a lens to look closely at writing to find places to “fine tune” the work.*

*Analogy: Fine tuning an instrument before a performance.*

**Tell students that the final step in the writing process is editing and that it is important to do this work before we share our writing with an audience.**

**Editing and recopying should involve only two days at the end of any unit.**

## **Teach**

*Say: So watch how I am going to use an editing checklist to help me make corrections.*

**Tell students you will show them how one item on the checklist becomes a lens for rereading work so it will make sense to strangers. Good writers say, *When you falter, you alter.***

**Have students watch as you reread the piece for each item on the checklist making corrections as you go. Think aloud as you model this process. Proceed step by step though the list. Consult the dictionary and thesaurus to model further.**

**Tell students that sometimes our own work looks fine to our eyes. Invite extra pairs of eyes to help edit work. Good writers understand and help one another.**

Remind students to use the checklist as a “self-help” tool to refine writing for publication. Focus on one item at a time.

**Say:** *Notice how I mark places I need to make clearer by rewording sentences.*

**Show on your draft.**

**Tell students that sometimes our own work looks fine to our eyes. Invite extra pairs of eyes to help edit work. Good writers understand and help one another.**

Remind students to use the checklist as a “self-help” tool to refine writing for publication. Focus on one item at a time.

### **Teaching Tip**

Students will benefit if they have opportunities to pay attention to punctuation in reading, in read aloud, shared reading, and when they read themselves.

The most common method of instruction of grammar and mechanics rules and tools is through explicit teaching in the form of a mini lesson. In these mini lessons, students are taught strategies for using punctuation and then they are given opportunities to try them out in their own writing.

Many conventions lessons will also occur in small groups. Lesson ideas for convention or usage lessons can be found in your *Great Source* materials and in your *Conventions, If You Please!* notebooks.

### **Active Engagement**

Have students turn to their partner. Together they read the shared class experience story you have displayed. It should be the same one used previously in the unit.

**Say:** *Using the editing checklist, work with your partner to edit our shared class story.*

You will need to circulate and help students. Give students a few minutes to do this with their partners.

Report out the good work of one or two partnerships and how they decided to add or not add a thought, feeling, or both after a few sentences.

## Link

Remember, the purpose of the Link is to remind students about what they learned today and to remind them that what they learned is a strategy they can use for the rest of their lives whenever they are writing. Encourage students to return to seats for quiet writing to slowly, carefully work step-by-step through the items on the checklist. Invite them to be detectives looking for even the tiniest changes to improve the piece. Once they have checked all items, it is time to ask their writing partner to follow the same process. Celebrate together all of the improvements you are able to make. Recopying and beautifying in legible handwriting can be done at home if necessary. Motivate writers to be ready for the unit's celebration.

*Say: Today and whenever you prepare to publish, take time to use the editing checklist like a whisper coach by using each item as a lens for looking closely to find places to make important refinements. Good writers edit with care. Off you go!*

**Note: Resources for additional editing ideas include: *PWP Blue Book* p. 107,113; *Writers Express*; *Conventions If You Please*; *A Handbook of Interesting and Provocative Writing Terms* p. 25. The class writing table (center) should be established and well stocked by this time with editing resources.**

## Write and Confer

For the first few minutes of writing time, remember to always pull up to a table group and write alongside the children.

**\*\*Mid-Workshop Teaching Point\*\*** Highlight students who are effectively using the editing checklist. Encourage those who have edited themselves, to now get with their writing partner to help one another edit.

Remember, not every student is ready to edit today. At this point, all students should be well into a draft. However some may be completing that draft today. Others might be just at the revising stage. Some may actually be ready to edit.

The mini lesson you teach on any given day, may not actually be put to use by all students on the same day. This is the essence of strategy-based teaching vs. activity-based teaching. Strategies last a student a life-time. Activities last students for a day.

## Teaching Share

You might highlight writers who sustained their writing the entire time and accomplished a lot of work today, or those who revised and/or edited. You could also have a student read a part of their story. Make a big deal about getting our drafts finished and ready for the big celebration.



## Editing Checklist

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

For every item listed, reread your writing carefully. Put a check mark in each box under “Writer” as you complete each editing item. Once all the boxes are checked, give this editing checklist to your partner to further edit and refine the piece of writing.

Editing Checklist	Writer	Partner
<b>1. Capitalization</b> - Read, asking, “Will this make sense to a stranger?” <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Find where a new thought or idea begins.</li><li>• Be sure that the first word begins with a capital letter.</li></ul>		
<b>2. Punctuation</b> - Read, paying attention to the actual road signs you’ve given readers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you followed the punctuation as you’ve written it, will the piece sound the way you want it to sound?</li><li>• Have you guarded against sentences that run on and on?</li><li>• Have you punctuated dialogue?</li></ul>		
<b>3. Spelling</b> - Do your words look correctly spelled to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Circle ones that feel as if they could be wrong, try them again, get help with them.</li><li>• Check that the words on the word wall are correctly spelled.</li></ul>		
<b>4. Paragraphs</b> - Narrative writers use a new paragraph or a new page for each new episode in the sequence of events. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do you paragraph to show the passage of time or place?</li><li>• Do you also paragraph to show changes in who is speaking?</li></ul>		

### **Teaching Point 8: Writers Celebrate Finished and Unfinished Drafts**

*Students will share something they have written and receive praise. This is the reason we write!*

**Teaching Tip:** You'll need to decide exactly how you'll celebrate. Here are some considerations to keep in mind: Your celebration should last no more than the time allotted for writing workshop. Your celebration should extend beyond the classroom in some way. You might consider partnering up with another 3rd grade class and placing the students in groups (a partnership from one class meets with a partnership from another class.)

You might consider putting your writers in groups of 4 or 5 students, assigning at least one adult to each group. Many teachers invite parents, specialists, administration, staff developers, and community members to join the celebration. Each student shares their piece to the small group. Then, you might consider inviting 2 or 3 students to share their pieces to the whole group.

Whatever you do, have a plan! How will you move students from one place to another? How will you arrange the room to facilitate audience sharing? Who will go first? What will the groups do if they have finished and others haven't? Could you have a list of questions group members can ask each other if time permits? **Think through your celebration from start to finish.**

### **Open the Celebration**

**Say:** *Writers, welcome to the 4th grade writing celebration! We have learned to write the true stories of our lives with a process in mind. We've learned strategies to plan, draft quickly, revise, and edit. We've learned that real writers work hard at writing, they don't just sit down at their writing desks and presto! Out comes a story! Writers, give yourselves a pat on the back!*

*Writers and friends, we are going to celebrate this wonderful writing by having each writer read his or her piece to (the group/the class/a buddy.) Audience members, it is your job to be very good listeners and then tell the writer what you liked about his or her writing. Once you tell the writer what you liked, be sure to shake their hand and congratulate them on their fine writing work. Please begin.*

### **Ending the Celebration**

**Say:** *Thank you, (Mrs. Robinson's class/teachers/parents/community members) for joining us today and celebrating our hard work with us. Congratulations, 4th graders, for writing the stories of your lives by following the writing process and working hard to stretch yourselves as writers.*

At the end of each unit, be sure to display the writing of your students in some way. This photo comes to us from Janice Schomburg's classroom at Rawlings Elementary.



**Close the ceremony by explaining to students what will happen to their piece of writing after this, inviting a round of applause, and thanking everyone:**

**Say:** *Later today, I will display your writing (on this bulletin board/outside the classroom on a shelf/across the top of this part of the room) so that others (hopefully the whole world!!) can stop and admire your fine work. In a month or so, I know you will take them home and put them in a special place so that you can keep your stories forever and ever. Writers, please stand and take a bow. Let's give these writers a round of applause!*

### **Some final thoughts:**

- **Use extra days during this month to teach your own mini lessons based on the needs of your students. Most likely the mini lessons you will need to create will have to do with management of materials, behaviors, and expectations during any one part of writing workshop. Extra time spent practicing the rules and tools of workshop will be well worth it for effective learning to take place the rest of the school year. A sample blackline for writing a mini lesson within the mini lesson architecture can be found in the separate booklet titled *A Handbook of Interesting and Provocative Writing Terms*.**
- **The Pinellas Writing Project blue booklet for the intermediate grades continues to be a great resource for lesson ideas. Use the lesson ideas in this book, but plan them following the tighter architecture for teaching mini lessons explained in this booklet.**
- **For additional support with this unit, see *Launching the Writing Workshop (Unit 1 book)* from *Units of Study for Writing in Grades 3-5: A Yearlong Curriculum* by Lucy Calkins. These kits can be purchased from Heinemann.**
- **See the separate booklet titled *A Handbook of Interesting and Provocative Writing Terms* for more information about ways to celebrate student writing at the end of a unit of study.**



