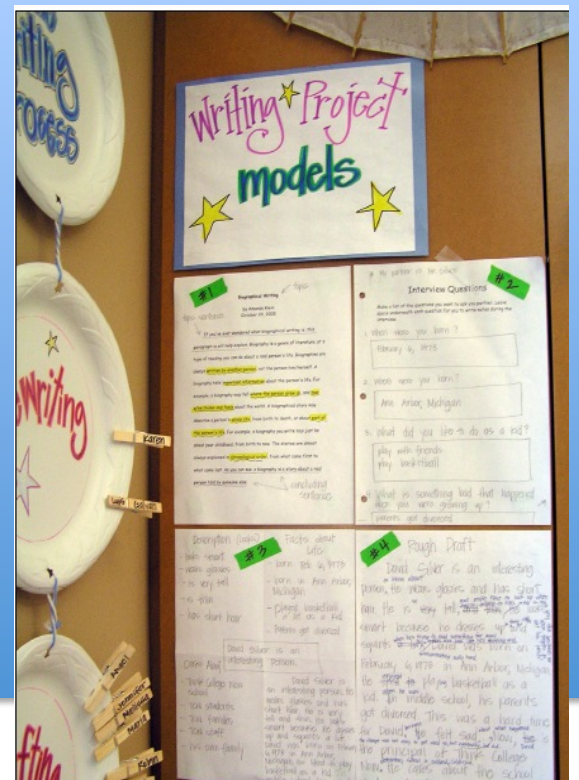
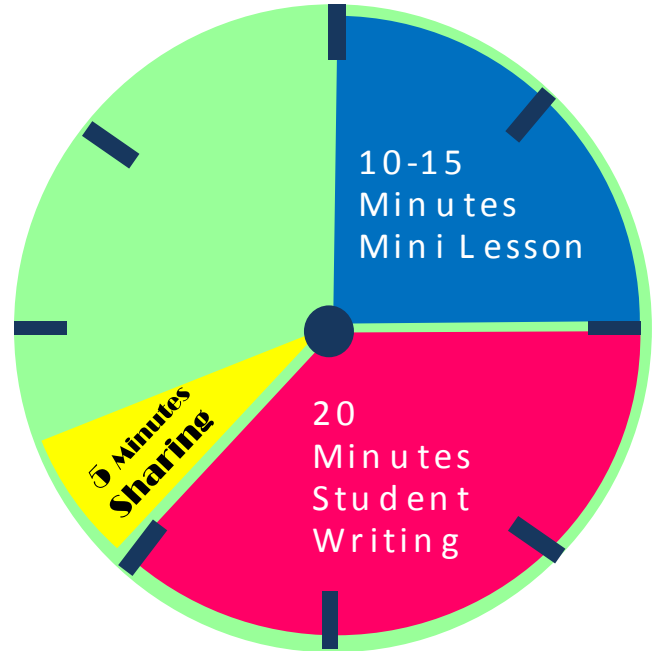
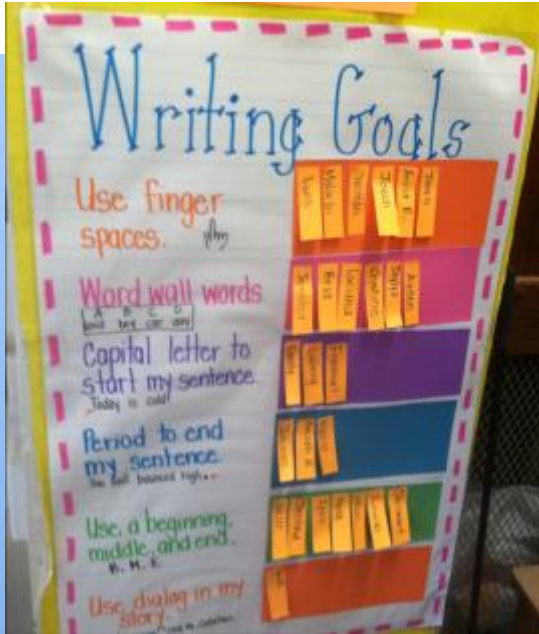


# Organizing for Writing: The Workshop Approach



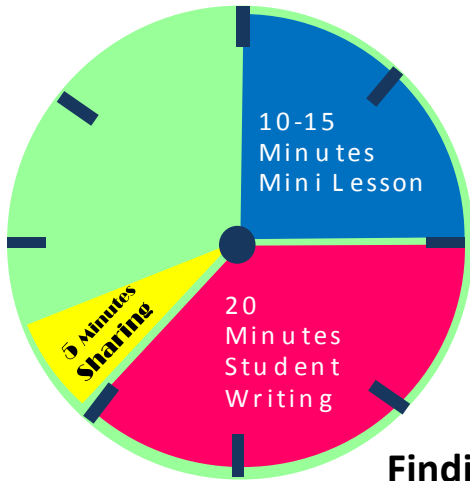


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# I. Making Time for Writing:



Daily routine of at least 40 minutes  
4 times per week

## Finding Time to Write and Read Make a Plan for Reducing Time Wasters

Potential Time Wasters	Why?	Alternatives
Pencils		
Roll/Lunch Count		
Bathroom Breaks		
Materials Distribution		
Announcements		
Classroom Warm Ups that are not Best Practices (DOL, journal prompt of the day, lengthy calendar procedures)		

## 2. Materials for Students:



- Writing folders, binders, or pizza boxes aka “My Writing Office”
- Sheet protectors for reference materials
- Multi-colored highlighters or pencils for editing with colors

### Student Writing:

- Writing paper (lines appropriate to age group)
- Planning paper (blank—can used recycled paper for this)
- Pocket for notes/graphic organizers students are writing from
- Pocket for drafts of writing

### My Writing Office for Young Writers



Children can keep references for writing within a glance with mini-office made of folders.

The reference tools can change throughout the year to offer support with:

- Letter information
- Letter sounds
- High-frequency words
- Thematic words related to school content

Introduce each element slowly—don't bring them in all at once. These reference tools boost confidence and reduce teacher interruptions. Students can help themselves with writing!

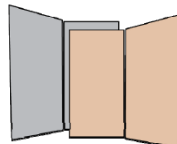
This idea is brought to you by Sylvia Mariscal, Diane Vargas, Vicki Scott, and Pam Kolat from the Atwater Unified School District in California.

### My Writing Office

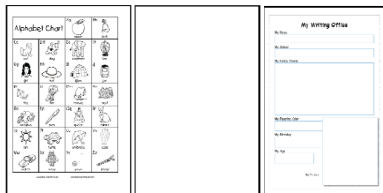
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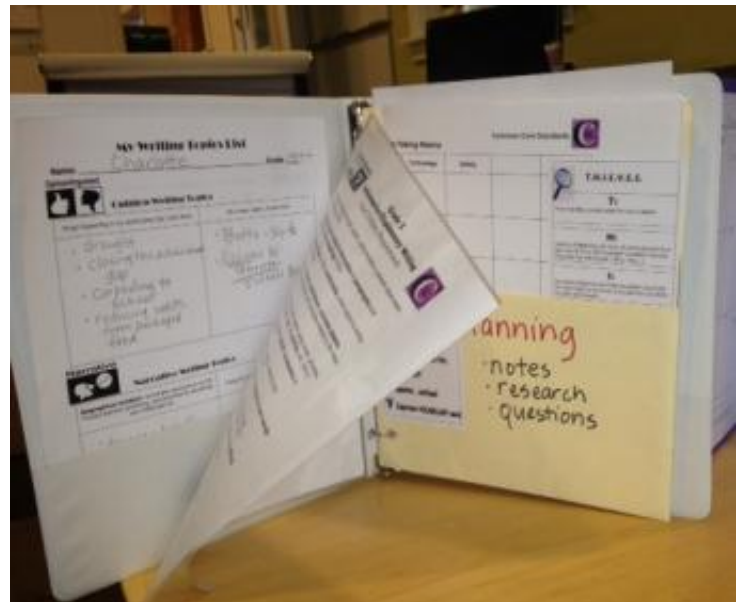
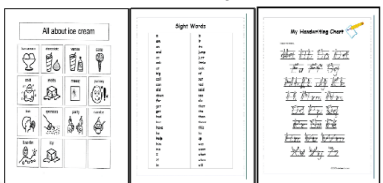
Two file folders stapled together



Back end of Tri-fold Writing Office Folder



Inside of Tri-fold Writing Office Folder



### 3. Routines During the Writer's Workshop:



#### Anatomy of a Basic Mini-Lesson

Parts:	Teacher Talk and Actions	Student Talk and Actions
<b>CONNECT</b> <b>Known-to-new</b>	<p><i>"Yesterday we saw, tried, learned....."</i></p> <p><i>"This week we're focusing on....."</i></p> <p><i>"You've all gotten really good at.....now we are going to learn....."</i></p> <p>Point to charts, student work, or literature as you make the connection</p>	<p>Students pair or group share to recall what they already know about the skill:</p> <p><i>"I tried.....,"</i></p> <p><i>"I know that....."</i></p> <p><i>"When I want to .....I usually....."</i></p>
<b>TEACH</b>	<p>Focus on ONE skill, strategy, or concept at a time. Write the name of it in front of the students. Tell them why it's important.</p> <p><i>"Today I'm going to show you.....so that you can....."</i></p> <p><i>Watch me while I show you how I think of ways to....."</i></p> <p>Demonstrate the focus skill in front of the students. Type and project onto a screen, write on chart paper, or point clearly to what you're demonstrating in text.</p>	<p>Students follow teaching with their eyes, and if able take notes along with you labeling the elements you're demonstrating.</p>
<b>TRY</b>	<p>Invite students to try out what you just taught. Include choices for students to consider whenever possible.</p> <p><i>"Think of an example of _____</i>  <i>tell your partner how you might _____</i>  <i>with your writing."</i></p> <p>Walk around and listen to their attempts to check for understanding and possibly plan the next lesson</p>	<p>Students have a go with the strategy, concept, or skill just taught. They may think of examples and merely tell a partner, or may rehearse with a "quick try" on a whiteboard or in their writer's notebooks.</p> <p>Students share their tries with a partner or the whole group to generate lots of possible ideas.</p>



## Mini-lessons: “Tried and True”

- Using Children’s Literature—“mentor texts”
- Anchor Papers: Examining and labeling it with elements from the rubric
- Teacher Model with Think Aloud about the strategy or process ”
- Teach a technique and have students try it with “Quick Tries” on white boards
- What if?
- Shared Writing—typed in front of students, print out, and label the elements
- Help Yourself with Spelling
- Partner Activities—talk as rehearsal for writing (Elevator Talk )



Here are my “go to” lesson ideas when I am planning for instruction. I’m calling these “tried and true” not only because they have worked for me for years and years, but that they are the most frequent modes of lessons I’ve found in professional literature on the teaching of writing. A list of my favorite resources for finding lessons follows if you’d like to read deeply on the subject yourself.



### Using Published Writing as “Mentor Texts”



Another form of modeling to include as you begin to study any of the major types of writing is to use published author’s works. You may not consider yourself a great writer so, as Katie Wood Ray says in her book *Wondrous Words*, “With a room full of authors to help us teach, teaching writing doesn’t have to be so lonely.”

There are several helpful teacher resources for pre-selected mentor texts, but in my experience, it’s best if the students begin to find these for themselves. With practice and a large volume of reading, students will become more and more discerning about what “sounds great” in writing. Making this an explicit practice in your classroom will build the habit of noticing well-written work, and also assure that the boon to writing skill that high volumes of personal reading is associated with, is realized for every student in your room. As teachers and in the professional literature, we know that students who read a lot, write with a higher quality, but that may not always be the case unless we point out what students are learning about writing as they are reading.

Here is the basic plan for a mini-lesson with a mentor text.



1. Tell the students we are going to read aloud a piece of text to notice what makes it quality writing.
2. Display the text so that the students can see the words and read it aloud to them, or do it as a shared reading.
3. Have students pair share about whatever they noticed first. Share some of those out loud with the whole class.
4. Focus the “noticings” on whatever your objective is for the day. You may be looking at anything from imagery, to use of transitional words and phrases.
5. List the elements they notice on chart paper, or other device so they may be retrieved, reviewed and added to.
6. Ask students to continue noticing for that element in their personal reading time throughout the week and invite them to add to your charts for that element.



## Mentor Texts: Great Story Beginnings

1. Have students copy the first sentence or two out of their favorite story books onto sentence strips. Have students take turns reading these opening sentences aloud to the group. Post all of the sentences on a large bulletin board.
2. Next, as a class determine what are the key elements that make up a great first sentence for a story and list these on a chart. For example it usually mentions:
  - Time, place and main character
  - Can provide suspense
  - Describes a scene which sets the tone
3. You can also have students categorize opening sentences into these commonly used formats:



### Describe the MAIN CHARACTER:

*“There once was a baby koala so soft and round that all who saw her loved her.”*

Koala Lou, Mem Fox

*“Grace was a girl who loved stories.”*

Amazing Grace, Mary Hoffman

### Describe the SETTING:

*“It was a beautiful sunny day on a farm in the country known as Italy.”*

Big Anthony-His Story, Tomie dePaola

*“We were all sitting around the big kitchen table. It was Saturday morning.”*

Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs, Judi Barrett

### Open with an ACTION:

*“I went to sleep with gum in my mouth and now there’s gum in my hair and when I got out of bed this morning I tripped on the skateboard and by mistake I dropped my sweater in the sink while the water was running and I could tell it was going to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.”*

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, Judith Viorst

### Begin with DIALOGUE:

*“That’s a nice hat,”* said Chicken to Scarecrow.

The Scarecrow’s Hat, Ken Brown

### Combination of Things:

*“Where’s Papa going with that ax?”* said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast.

Charlotte’s Web, E.B. White

*“Spring had passed, So had Summer, Freddie, the leaf, had grown large.”*

The Fall of Freddie the Leaf, Leo Buscaglia

Finally, make a chart with possible sentence frames for students to choose from if needed to get their own stories going.

# Resources for Finding Mentor Texts:

## Websites:

### The Writing Fix

[http://www.writingfix.com/picture\\_book\\_prompts.htm](http://www.writingfix.com/picture_book_prompts.htm)

This site, organized by the Nevada Writing Project, houses hundreds of writing mini-lessons aligned with the 6 + 1 traits of writing. There is an emphasis on using published authors throughout, and with one click it will take you to Amazon.com to buy any book mentioned in a lesson, so be careful!

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## Pinterest

Search mentor texts for writing, at last check there were hundreds. You can narrow the search with something specific such as “mentor texts for writing about setting.”

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## Books:

[Lynne R. Dorfman](#) and Rose Cappelli offer extensive suggestions and specific lessons for using published works to teach writing in the following two books.

**[Nonfiction Mentor Texts: Teaching Informational Writing through Children's Literature, K-8](#)**

**[Mentor Texts: Teaching Writing through Children's Literature, K-6](#)**

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This Southern California teacher does a great job of showing you how to use mentor texts in middle and high school classrooms.

**[Write Like This: Teaching Real-World Writing Through Modeling and Mentor Texts](#)** by [Kelly Gallagher](#)

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# Using anchor papers to teach students about a rubric: two approaches:

10-15  
Minutes  
Mini Lesson

## Writing Anchor Papers with Students Learning About a Rubric from the Inside Out

A powerful way to help students understand what the elements of a rubric really mean is to write anchor papers reflecting each level on a rubric WITH the students. Here's how:

1. Either write yourself, or locate a piece of writing that represents a "2" on the rubric you are hoping to help the students understand. (On a four point scale this is a paper that is just below proficient.) Project this piece of writing on the screen or chart paper so that all of the students can see it.
2. Provide each student with a copy of the rubric you will be illustrating with the anchor papers you will be writing together.
3. Read the "2" to the students aloud and ask them to find evidence from the rubric for why it's a "2". For example, *students may say, "I think it's a "2" because it uses a lot of everyday words instead of more interesting word choices."*
4. Using a piece of chart paper take suggestions from the class and collaboratively rewrite the "2" paper to make it a "3" or proficient paper.

**PLEASE NOTE:** you will need to have taught the students about each of the elements on the rubric before attempting this lesson.

5. Next, take the "3" paper and re-write it collaboratively with student input to make it a "4". There may be times during this process that you make suggestions yourself if the students are stuck for ideas about how to write an advanced paper. Early in the school year, you may even model and think aloud as you go to compose this yourself in front of the students.
6. Finally, revisit the "2" paper and collaboratively re-write it to make it a "1". Display this paper as well.
7. Use these exemplars as anchor papers for students to refer to as they learn to evaluate their own writing throughout the year.



2



3



Portfolio Wall with Anchor Papers  
When teachers display anchor papers and rubrics alongside the portfolio wall of student writing, expectations for writing at grade level can be made very explicit for everyone.

GRADE 3 SAMPLE LEVEL 2 Anchor Paper

Saving Water

Water is rely important. Everyone needs water to live. I learn that peple use about 100 gallons a day of water. Peple use water to drink and wash and water ther gardens. When I was little I like to play in the water. I'm going to ask my mom to save water.

- Weak topic sentence
- Few facts
- Simple details
- Simple sentences
- Some verb errors
- Some spelling errors

GRADE 3 SAMPLE LEVEL 3 Anchor Paper

Life's most precious resource is water. People can't survive without water to drink, wash, and irrigate the plants that become our food. People use about 100 gallons a day just in their homes. We need even more than that to grow crops!

However, many people don't have enough water to live. They live in parts of the world with droughts, or not enough rain. They also

sometimes live where the water has been polluted and it makes them sick if they drink it.

We all need to work together to save water so that everyone on earth can have the water they depend on to survive!

- Topic sentence is clear
- Facts and definitions
- Transition words
- Ideas are grouped into two paragraphs
- Concluding statement
- Sentence variety: simple and compound



## Scoring and Labeling Anchor Papers:

Be sure to collect anchor papers after each writing assessment with your department or grade level. Look for solid papers showing clearly each element on the rubric which goes with the prompt given. There are anchor papers to go with the Common Core State standards on the CDE website, or they can be accessed on our website:

- Pass out copies of the rubric and anchor paper to the students and project the anchor paper on a screen.
- Have the students review with you the elements on the rubric first, to clarify any writing terminology they may not be familiar with.
- Read aloud the anchor paper and pause after each section to identify any elements from the rubric that were noticed.
- Label those elements with arrows or color code each and provide a key.

Here's an example from the grade 8 narrative anchor paper:

### Narrative Writing – Biographical Incident Anchor Paper

## Miss Sadie

Miss Sadie no longer sits in her rocking chair on her porch on summer days. But I still can see her. The old chair squeaking with every sway of her big, brown body. Her summer dresses stained from cooking in her sweet smelling kitchen. I see her gray hair pulled back in that awful, yellow banana clip. Most of all, I hear that voice. So full of character and wisdom.

I used to bring Miss Johnson cookies every summer day of 1988. I miss the days when I would sit on that shabby old porch and listen to her stories. "Melissa!" she would holler. "What 'chu doin' here? Come see me and my poor self, have ya?"

She once told me of her grandmother who escaped slavery, back when white men could only do anything, she would say. Her grandma ran for miles without food or water. It wasn't too long before her master came looking for her and took her home to whip her. I thought of how Blacks are treated today. I sighed. She would sing in her

soulful, blaring voice, old negro hymns passed down from her mother and grand mother. I would sit there in amazement.

Once, Jimmy Taylor came walking by us yelling, "Melissa! Whattaya want with that old, fat, Black lady, anyways?"

Before I could retaliate, Miss Johnson said to me, "Now you musn't. We must feel sorry for that terrible child. His mother must have done gone and not taught him no manners!" She actually wanted me to bow my head and pray for him. (Even though I went to his house and punched him out the next day.)

My friends would tease me for spending the whole summer with Sadie Johnson, "The Cuckoo of Connecticut," they called her. But I'm so very glad I did. She taught me then, to not care what other people thought. I learned that I could be friends with someone generations apart from my own.

My visits became less frequent when school started. I had other things to think about. P.S., clothes, grades. You know, real important stuff.

One day I was thinking, I haven't seen Miss Sadie in a while. So after school I trotted up to her house amidst the twirling, autumn leaves.

I rang her bell. The door cracked open and

the woman adjusted her glasses. "May I help you?"

"Miss Sadie, it's me, Melissa."

"T-T" she'd stuttered. "I don't remember," she said and shut the door. I heard crying. I rang the door again and she screamed, "Please leave!" in a scared, confused voice.

I went home bewildered and my mother told me to stop bothering Miss Sadie. I said I wasn't bothering her. Mama said, "Miss Johnson has a disease. Alzheimer's disease. It makes her forget things... people, family even. And so, I don't want you over there anymore, you hear?"

Then I didn't realize or comprehend, how someone so special to you could forget your own existence when you'd shared a summer so special and vivid in your mind.

That Christmas I went to bring Miss Johnson cookies. She wasn't there. I learned from a family member that she was in the hospital and that she'd die very soon. As the woman, a daughter maybe, spoke, my heart broke.

"Well, you make sure she gets those cookies," I said, my voice cracking and tears welling in my eyes.

Today, I've learned to love old people. For their innocence, for their knowledge. I've learned to always treat people with kindness, no matter how cruel they may seem. But mainly, I've learned that you must cherish the time spent with a person. And memories are very valuable. Because Miss Sadie no longer sits in her rocking chair on her porch on summer days. I'm glad that I can still see her.

## High School Narrative Writing:

**A:**

- Set up the situation: setting, characters, background information, conflict
- Establish point of view: who is telling the story? Why?
- Write a smooth progression of events

**B:**

Use narrative techniques:

- Dialogue
- Pacing
- Description
- Reflection
- Multiple plot lines

**C:**

- Use a variety of techniques to sequence events: varied transition words, flashback, description, foreshadowing, dialogue

**D:**

- Use precise words and phrases which allow the readers to experience the situation, characters, and settings.

**E:**

- Write a conclusion which follows and reflects on the story. And/or provides a resolution to the conflict

Anchor Paper/General Writing on website at:  
[http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/miss\\_sadie\\_anchor\\_paper2.pdf](http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/miss_sadie_anchor_paper2.pdf)





## Teacher Model with “think aloud”

Donald Graves wrote: “Students can go a lifetime and never see another person write, much less show them how to write. ...**Writing is a craft. It needs to be demonstrated to your students in your classroom...from choosing a topic to finishing a final draft. They need to see you struggle to match your intentions with the words that reach the page.**”

It’s so true. At the most basic level the easiest way to teach someone anything is to simply show them how you do it. The critical element to modeling is the “thinking aloud” you do as you demonstrate a composition. Talk with the students about each decision you are making as you go. Feel free to change your mind and go back and revise a word or phrase so that students can see how writers are flexible and revision happens in the midst of the process as well as toward the end. Here is an example of a simple modeling lesson on choosing and narrowing topics for writing a narrative:

*“Writers, today I’m going to show you how I narrow topics for the biographical narrative I’m writing so that I can find the pieces that are most important to include and meaningful to me. So many things have happened in my life with my daughter, it’s hard to choose.....Let’s see, I think I’ll make a big list of things from this summer and see if one stands out.*

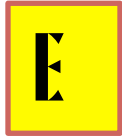
- Road-trip—her correcting my driving
- Begging for new kitten.....trying on some arguments
- Tired all the time, what’s that about?
- Visit to cousins....all those long noses
- Watching her drive the barge the first time.....fear, pride
- Work, earning her own money....careful.....

*“Now I want to close my eyes and think about which experience is most vivid with memories....I can just see it, and feel it, it will be easy to write about.....”*

*I think I’ll write about the first barge ride.....ok.....I’ll draw a quick sketch and list some words to get ready to write....I like to do this because I don’t have to think of a whole sentence, the labeling helps me get right to the parts I want to include more quickly.....*

*Hand on the wheel, so many buttons, fear....will it start? Embarrassment, will anyone tease her? Push, purr, so easy! Sparkle on water as could relax and enjoy ride.....so proud, so much more mature than me at 16.....”*

Teacher tips: as you model and think out loud, the students will naturally become stimulated with their own similar experiences, or want to offer ideas for words to use etc. Tell them that this is your writing, and that in a few minutes they will be able to do their own. Encourage them to jot down ideas that come to them while you’re teaching if they can handle that and still pay attention to the modeling.



# Shared Writing: Identifying Elements of Opinion/Argument Writing with Color Coding:

10-15  
Minutes  
Mini Lesson

Provide students with a sample editorial piece of writing such as the one below. Establish a color coding system such as:

**Green:** Opinion Statement

**Yellow:** Reasons in support

**Pink:** Counter argument

Underline or **another color**—facts and research to support

Guide students to highlight the article using the coding system. They may also want to number the reasons and put a star by the strongest reason provided. They can keep these examples as “anchor texts” to help them understand the structure of this genre of writing.

## Are School Uniforms Really That Bad?

Last week the Parent Teacher Association met to discuss whether or not the students at our school should begin wearing school uniforms. Most students who heard about the discussion were completely against the idea. Juanita Sanchez, a seventh grader, said, “Uniforms are so gross. Why would anyone want to look the same as everyone else?” This seemed to be the general feeling among most students.

But this writer thinks that the school uniform issue should be seriously considered. **In my opinion, school uniforms are NOT that bad, and have some benefits that students should consider before making up their minds against them.**

Miss Sanchez stated that she felt that uniforms made everyone look the same. Is that really so bad? Obviously, we don’t all want to look alike in every way. **But maybe if we all had to wear the same thing, we wouldn’t focus so much on having the coolest jeans, or the hottest sneakers.** According to an article in the **New York Times, students our age spend about \$50 a week on clothes and accessories. That is a lot of money! What if you don’t have that kind of money to spend on clothes?** Unfortunately, at our school, **if you are not wearing cool clothes, people make fun of you. Nobody likes to be made fun of,** so students take matters into their own hands. **Last year at Jefferson cool, over 60 students were robbed. Money, clothes, and jewelry were all taken from lockers and book bags.**

**If everyone had to wear uniforms, students would not feel such pressure to keep up with the latest styles. Also, students could express their individuality in different ways, like hairdos and by must being more outgoing.**

I urge parents, teachers and students at Jefferson School to really think about school uniforms—they are not as bad as you think!



## Help Yourself with Spelling

10-15  
Minutes  
Mini Lesson

Spelling is one of the most common challenges for young writers , so early in the year I always start a chart such as this one, and add to it as we learn more spelling skills:

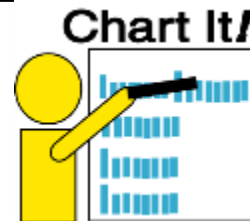
During this mini-lesson, explain to the students that there are many ways that they can figure out how to spell words that they want to write without having to ask a teacher.

Label a chart with the title: **Help Yourself with Spelling**

Next, prompt the students to share all of the ways they know about for how to solve the spelling of an unknown word without asking an adult. Chart these ideas as they are shared and demonstrate each strategy to make sure everyone understands the strategy. Add to the chart as you teach new strategies throughout the year.

The short list of these strategies may include:

- Say it slowly and listen for the letter sounds you know
- Ask yourself if that word is up somewhere in the room
- Use a personal or class dictionary
- Check the word wall
- Is there a chunk in that word you know?
- Have you seen that word in a book you've recently read
- Ask a neighbor
- Put the letter sounds you hear and leave a line for the rest
- Have a go with the word on a scrap paper until it looks right





## “Quick Tries” for Writing

Letting students “have a go” with a writing idea

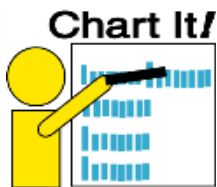
10-15  
Minutes  
Mini Lesson

An effective way to get students to put a mini lesson or shared writing demonstration to use right away is to encourage **Quick Tries**. Following any lesson, have students try out the demonstrated strategy. For example, if you’ve just produced an opinion piece during shared or modeled writing with lots of reasons supporting the opinion, ask students to think of one more reason that wasn’t included and write out a sentence describing that reason as quickly as they can without worrying about spelling or even neatness! This is very similar to a “free write” but strategically focuses on the writing element the students just learned about. This also removes any pressure for correctness that students may feel when they are adding writing to a larger project.

Other examples of “quick tries” while teaching opinion writing might include:

- Write a list of issues you care about personally
- Try out various ways to state an opinion using a list of possible academic language frames
- Write to ask your reader to take an action as a result of the opinion shared in a piece

You’ll need to model this for your students to help them see how to really go for it during “quick tries”. Go ahead and show students how you try an idea, cross out and start over, or even stop mid-sentence if it isn’t going well. You may want to create a chart like this to free students up:



### Quick Try Tips:

- Keep your pencil moving
- Don’t worry about spelling
- Don’t get too picky
- Try several ideas and don’t worry about which is best

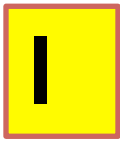


## Mini-lessons on Writing Workshop Procedures: What if?

One of the challenges of a workshop approach to teaching is that the students need to understand how to manage themselves independently while you are either conferring with individual writers or meeting with small groups. One way to prevent constant questions about what to do is to start charts called:

“How to help yourself with \_\_\_\_\_”

Start this mini lesson by saying to the students that they may all be working on different kinds of things during the workshop and that you need to be able to get around and help without being interrupted so that we are now going to make a big list of all of the “what ifs.....?” that may come up during workshop.



# Partner Activities

10-15  
Minutes  
Mini Lesson

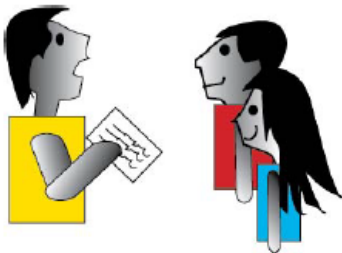


## Elevator Talk

Getting fluent with what you want to say about a topic prior to writing

Having students practice brief spoken presentations about the topics they are researching prior to writing their formal papers really helps them figure out literally how to describe their understandings in "their own words." After students have done all of their reading and note-taking, ask them to get in pairs or triads to practice "elevator speeches" (as if you were stuck in an elevator for 2 minutes and had to describe your feelings before the doors opened). Tell the students they will have 2 minutes to describe the most important understandings they have about their topics to their group.

Students will benefit from being allowed to have a single index card with bullet points reminding them of the key points they want to make. Give them time to do this and think about limiting them to 2-3 main points. Make sure they put their notes and books away before practicing their speeches, otherwise they will be tempted to simply read directly from their notes which won't help them find ways to describe the information in their own words.



When everyone is ready set a timer and have the students give their 2 minute speeches to their partner or group. After each speech, allow a minute or two for questions or positive comments. Take turns until everyone has done a 2 minute version. Next do a round of the same speech reducing the time to a single minute. During the final round, give them 30 seconds only. Ask them ahead of time to think about what is the most important information to share.

### Using the Speaking Score Checklist:

Once students become comfortable with speaking in front of each other, you can introduce the checklist as a rubric for giving feedback on speeches. I always let the students score me first. I'll pass out the checklist, explain what each component is, and then do a very short speech that is not very well done. I'll use a quiet voice, make no eye contact, and go off topic, for example. The students have fun giving the low scores to the teacher and giving you advice on how to make it better. Next do a quality short speech so that they can see what you mean about good body posture, use of visuals, etc. Let the students use the rubric in small groups first before trying it in front of the whole class. Ultimately, you can send your students to other classrooms to give their mini-speeches and have the other classroom teachers score their presentations for you. This can be a big win-win in terms of other students learning from each other, and not needing as much class time to listen to every talk.

SPEAKING RUBRIC		SPEAKING SCORE CHECKLIST	
4:	<b>Exemplary</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Expressive, fluent <input type="checkbox"/> Loud, clear voice <input type="checkbox"/> Eye contact with audience <input type="checkbox"/> Good body posture <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Smooth content/ beyond expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Visuals used very effectively	Name: _____ # _____	Date: _____
3:	<b>Competent</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Some expressiveness and fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Voice could be louder <input type="checkbox"/> Some eye contact with audience <input type="checkbox"/> Good body posture <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat confident <input type="checkbox"/> Quality content/ meets expectations	Your Rubric Score: _____	
2:	<b>Developing</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Weak expressiveness and fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Soft voice, hurried/unclear speech <input type="checkbox"/> No eye contact with audience <input type="checkbox"/> Poor body posture <input type="checkbox"/> Appear nervous <input type="checkbox"/> Poor content/ below expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Visuals absent or ineffective used	<input type="checkbox"/> Expressiveness, fluency: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Voice: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Eye contact with audience: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Body posture: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Confidence: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Content: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Visuals: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
1:	<b>Beginning</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Little expressiveness and fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to hear or understand <input type="checkbox"/> No eye contact <input type="checkbox"/> Poor body posture <input type="checkbox"/> Appear nervous, unprepared <input type="checkbox"/> Little content/ does not meet expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Visuals absent		

Grades K-3:  
[http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/gk-3\\_elevator\\_talk\\_-\\_speaking\\_and\\_listening\\_2014.pdf](http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/gk-3_elevator_talk_-_speaking_and_listening_2014.pdf)

Grades 4-8:  
[http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/g4-8\\_elevator\\_talk\\_-\\_speaking\\_and\\_listening\\_2014.pdf](http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/g4-8_elevator_talk_-_speaking_and_listening_2014.pdf)

# 4. Resources for the Writing Goal:

- Rubric, student checklist, or “how to” chart for current writing type you are working on
- Anchor papers or teacher modeled writing for the writing type with labels for each element (see Section 10: Mini Lessons)

**Informative/Explanatory** **Grade 3**  
**Informative/Explanatory Writing**  
 Level 3 Rubric Requirements

- Writes informative/Explanatory texts to examine topic and convey ideas and information clearly (W2)
- Begins paper with a clear and interesting topic sentence that introduces the topic (W2a)
- Groups related information together (W2a)
- Supports with facts, details, definitions (W2a)
- Uses illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension (W2b)
- Uses linking words and phrases such as, *also, another, and, more, but*, etc. to connect ideas within categories of information (W2c)
- Provides a concluding statement or section (W2d)
- Develops and strengthens writing by planning, revising, and editing (W5)
- Editing demonstrates command of grade level English language standards for capitalization, spelling, and grammar (W5)
- Takes notes and shares information in own words (W6)
- Uses sound information
- Uses key
- Conducts about the
- Uses time for research, reflection, and revision (W10)

**Level 3 Rubric Poster**  
[http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/grade\\_3\\_informative-explanatory\\_writing\\_level\\_3\\_rubric\\_poster\\_3-2014\\_0.pdf](http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/grade_3_informative-explanatory_writing_level_3_rubric_poster_3-2014_0.pdf)

Strengthening Writing

**GRADE 3 STUDENT CHECKLIST**  
 California Common Core Standards English Language Arts

**Opinion/Argument** **Informative/Explanatory** **Narrative**

**WRITING STANDARDS: ALL GENRES**

□	Number	Standard			
<b>Production and Distribution of Writing</b>					
□	3W 4.	With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)			
□	3W 5.	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. <i>Editing from conventions should demonstrate command of Language Standards 1-3 up to and including grade 3.</i>			
□	3W 6.	With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.			
<b>Research to Build and Present Knowledge</b>					
□	3W 7.	Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.			
□	3W 8.	Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.			
□	3W 9.	(Begins in grade 4)			
<b>Range of Writing</b>					
□	3W 10.	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.			
<b>Speaking &amp; Listening</b>					
<b>Collaboration</b>					
page effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.					
□	3SL 1c.	Participate in discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.			
□	3SL 1d.	Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.			
□	3SL 2.	Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.			
□	3SL 3.	Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.			
<b>Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas</b>					
□	3SL 4a.	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace. <i>Plan and deliver an informative/explanatory presentation on a topic that organizes ideas around major points of information, follows a logical sequence, includes supporting details, uses clear and specific vocabulary, and provides a strong conclusion.</i>			
□	3SL 5.	Create engaging audio recordings of stories or poems that demonstrate fluid reading at an understandable pace; add visual displays when appropriate to emphasize or enhance certain facts or details.			
□	3SL 6.	Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification. See grade 3 Language Standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.			

**Student Standards Checklist**  
[http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/g3\\_ela\\_cccs\\_standards\\_checklist\\_for\\_students.pdf](http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/g3_ela_cccs_standards_checklist_for_students.pdf)

**Opinion/Argument**

**Writing about Our Opinions**

1. Read or learn about a topic.
2. Choose your opinion.
3. List reasons for your opinion.
4. Write a topic sentence that states your opinion:
5. Write sentences about your reasons.
6. Read to a partner.
7. Reread and Check
  - capitals
  - spelling
  - punctuation

**How To Charts**  
 See writing types Student Tools in the Common Core Section at [www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com)

**Student Sample: Grade 3, Informative/Explanatory**  
 This informative report is a process piece that was produced in class.

**Horses**  
 by Owen

**Who I Chose This Animal**  
 I chose horses because I like to ride them. I also like to pet them. At the camp I go to everybody gets to have horses back riding lessons. Horses are so beautiful and fun to ride.

**Horse Families**  
 A mother or female horse is called a mare. A father or called a stallion. A foal is a baby horse.

**Markings**  
 A star is a little white diamond on the forehead. The for horses forehead. A rise is a white line down the middle of th A blaze is kind of like a race bar wider. If the white line an it out to its eyes it is called a white face. A small amount of wh muzzle is called a snip. A muzzle is a horses mouth.

**Breeds and Color Coats**  
 Icelandic and Shetland ponies are very small when grown. Chestnuts are red-brown and Roans have white f brown coat. Cream is a rare color. Rare means you don't cream very much. Brown horses are brown all over. The over. Pintos have black and white spots. Shetlands a white. Duns are a sandy brown with black manes and ta have a yellowish coat and a stinky mane and tail. Gray's white hairs that make the color gray. Bays are brown w manes, tails, and legs. Whites are white all over.

**Breeds I Like**  
 I like thoroughbreds because they are such a prett Arabians because their different coats are very beautif of the oldest horses. I like Morgans because they have a brown coat. I like Lipizzans because their white coat's I like Icelandic and Shetland ponies because they are so and small.

**Anchor Papers**  
 See Writing Standards and Checklists in the Common Core Section at [www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com)

**GRADE 3 SAMPLE LEVEL 2 Anchor Paper**  
 Saving Water

Water is very important. Everyone needs water to live. I hope that people use about 100 gallons a day of water. People use water to drink and take a shower. They use water in their gardens. When I see little I see the water. I'm going to save water so that we have water.

**GRADE 3 SAMPLE LEVEL 3 Anchor Paper**  
 Life's most precious resource is water. People don't realize how much water they use every day. People use about 100 gallons a day just in their homes. We need more water than that to grow crops. However, many people don't have enough water to live. They live in parts of the world with droughts or not enough rain. They also sometimes live where the water has been polluted and it makes them sick if they drink it. We all need to work together to have water so that everyone on earth can have the water they depend on to survive.

• Use topic sentence  
 • Use facts  
 • Organize ideas  
 • Engage audience  
 • Give new ideas  
 • Give supporting details


• Topic sentence is clear  
 • Facts and details are used  
 • Ideas are organized into paragraphs  
 • Supporting information is clearly, simply and complete

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# 5. Spelling Resources:

- Fry's high frequency word lists
- My personal word wall
- 100 most commonly misspelled words

Common Core Standards 

**My Sight Words**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

 I can read and write these words from MEMORY!


Color in the boxes you have mastered!

**Sight Words List 1-100**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
see	am	call	he	get	girl	yes	make	or	every
the	and	book	his	that	her	all	you	two	could
is	did	was	just	this	with	were	go	be	boy
up	in	what	down	for	an	was	like	green	some
have	I	had	got	out	they	do	walk	after	take
a	them	to	it	but	we	well	over	does	first
there	can	said	ask	little	do	will	them	many	ball
can	an	of	is	help	word	same	and	other	met
at	at	is	at	then	write	letter	different	people	last
				when	circle	sound		number	truly

**Sight Words List 101-200**

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
have	my	no	one	saw	know	old	five	four	enough
dry	top	that	very	brown	went	and	would	and	laugh
way	came	away	good	how	by	from	pretty	where	maybe
sleep	me	blue	new	about	into	water	your	complete	without
don't	right	question	thing	around	before	come	think	set	surprise
greater	wrong	direction	something	long	yellow	under	eyes	line	awareness
less	correct	because	everything	friend	who	undertha	odd	shape	exciting
more	incorrect	because	anything	school	picture	being	first	pattern	favorite
than	answer	which	together	teacher	follow	been	again	large	through
between			nothing	children	problem	above	both	square	second

Common Core Standards 

**LIST # 1**

see  
the  
is  
up  
have  
I  
a  
there  
can  
on

**LIST # 1**

see  
the  
is  
up  
have  
I  
a  
there  
can  
on

**LIST # 1**

see  
the  
is  
up  
have  
I  
a  
there  
can  
on

Fry's Word Lists 1-100, 1-200, 1-400  
See Language in the Common Core Section at [www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com)

**MY WORD WALL**

Aa	Bb	Cc	Dd
Ee	Ff	Gg	Hh

**My Word Wall**  
See Language in the Common Core Section at [www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com)  
[http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/my\\_word\\_wall\\_format.pdf](http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/my_word_wall_format.pdf)

**100 Most Commonly Misspelled Words**  
See Language in the Common Core Section at [www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com)  
[http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/100\\_most\\_frequently\\_misspelled\\_words.pdf](http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/100_most_frequently_misspelled_words.pdf)


**100 Most Frequently Misspelled Words Across 8 Grade Levels**

1	too	26	didn't	51	like	76	about
2	a lot	27	people	52	whole	77	first
3	because	28	until	53	another	78	happened
4	there	29	with	54	believe	79	Hom
5	their	30	different	55	I'm	80	especially
6	that's	31	outside	56	thought	81	school
7	they	32	we're	57	let's	82	getting
8	it's	33	through	58	before	83	started
9	when	34	upon	59	beautiful	84	was
10	favorite	35	probably	60	everything	85	which
11	went	36	don't	61	very	86	stopped
12	Christmas	37	sometimes	62	into	87	two
13	were	38	off	63	caught	88	Dad
14	our	39	everybody	64	one	89	took
15	they're	40	heard	65	Easter	90	friend's
16	said	41	always	66	what	91	presents
17	know	42	I	67	there's	92	are
18	you're	43	something	68	little	93	morning
19	friend	44	would	69	doesn't	94	could
20	friends	45	want	70	usually	95	around
21	really	46	and	71	clothes	96	buy
22	finally	47	Halloween	72	scared	97	maybe
23	where	48	house	73	everyone	98	family
24	again	49	once	74	have	99	pretty
25	then	50	to	75	swimming	100	tried

Page 192  
From *The Spelling Connection: Integrating Reading, Writing, and Spelling Instruction*, Ronald L. Carter, 1998  
The Guilford Press, ISBN# 1-57230-329-8(paper)

# 6. Vocabulary Resources

- Cues, sequences, and transition words and phrases
- **Content vocabulary** that goes with what they are working on “domain specific” language
- **Content vocabulary** as needed by grade level for example: color words, days of the week, feelings words, strong verbs, synonyms for “said”, etc.

Common Core Standards 

### Cues, Sequences, and Transition Words

**Size Sequence: When details are larger/smaller than each other.**

the smallest	larger than	the largest	the small-sized
the larger of	equal to	the smallest	the medium-sized
the largest	smaller than	the next smallest	the large-sized

**Time Sequence: When some details occur before others in time.**

first	now	at the beginning	before
then	soon	in the middle	during/meanwhile
next	then	at the end	after/afterwards
last	until	so far	later

by this time	first	in the morning	yesterday
at the same time	second	before noon	today
at that instant	third	in the afternoon	tomorrow
since	finally	in the evening	the day after tomorrow
	previously		


the oldest	in the past	the next day	this year
the recent	in the present	two weeks later	next year
the most recent	in the future	six months later	in the next few years
to begin with			

the earliest  
the next earliest  
the most recent

**Space Sequence: When details are arranged spatially in relationship to one another.**




behind	on the edge	beside	in front of	west of	highest
over	toward	around	in back of	east of	against
under	throughout	side by side	facing	north of	alongside
below	to the right of	close to	in the center	south of	ahead of
beneath	to the left of	next to	inside	at the	here
low down	on top of	near	outside	in the	there
above	away	far	across		

(From Backwards Planning for Success with Writing • [www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com) Narrative Writing Section – Page 26)  
You can also find these in the Standards Toolkits section of our website at [knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com)





Common Core Standards 


### Cues, Sequences, and Transition Words for K-3

**Transition Words Describing Importance:**

	the best	the most important	the first interesting
	the next best	the next most important	more interesting
	the least best	the least important	the most interesting
	the worst	not important	not interesting

**Contrast Cue Words: Describing Size or Quantity:**

	♦ best	♦ most	♦ all	♦ largest	♦ biggest	♦ huge
	↑ almost	↑ more	↑ many	↑ larger	↑ bigger	↑ large-sized
	- some	- some	- only	- equal to	- big	- medium-sized
	↓ little	↓ fewer	↓ smaller			↓ small-sized
	♦ worst	♦ least	♦ fewest	♦ smallest		♦ tiny

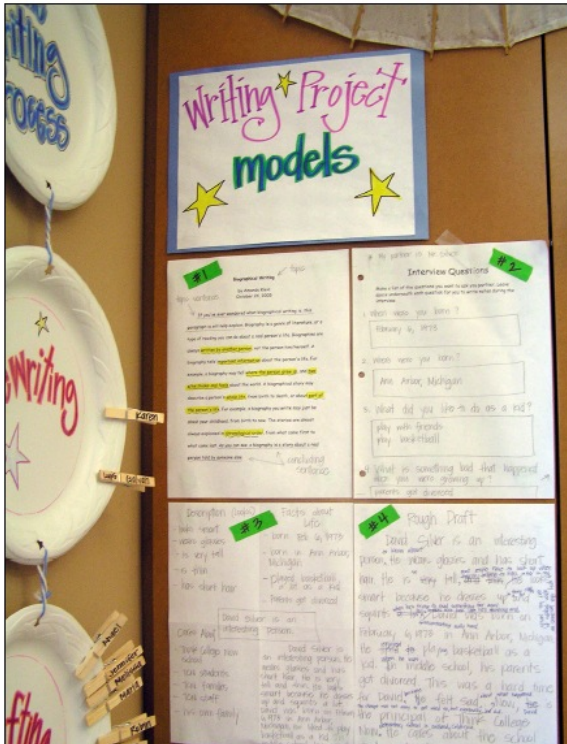
 **Linking Transition Words: to link two ideas together**

To add information	Opposition/change	Timing (see also next page)	To give examples	Reason/conclusion
+ again	↗ although	⌚ after	→ a similarity	⊗ as a result
+ also	↗ besides	⌚ after that	→ in fact	⊗ because
+ and	↗ besides	⌚ at the same time	→ on the one hand	⊗ in conclusion
+ another	↗ conversely	⌚ before	→ on the other hand	⊗ in the end
+ as well	↗ except	⌚ before this	→ a further example	⊗ is
+ consequently	↗ however	⌚ last	→ another example	⊗ since
+ furthermore	↗ in spite of	⌚ next	→ for example	⊗ so
+ in addition	↗ instead	⌚ soon	→ for instance	⊗ therefore
+ in the same way	↗ nevertheless	⌚ still	→ furthermore	⊗ thus
+ moreover	↗ not only	⌚ then	→ likewise	
+ plus	↗ otherwise	⌚ when	→ moreover	
+ still another	↗ yet	⌚ while	→ one example of	
+ too			→ similarly	

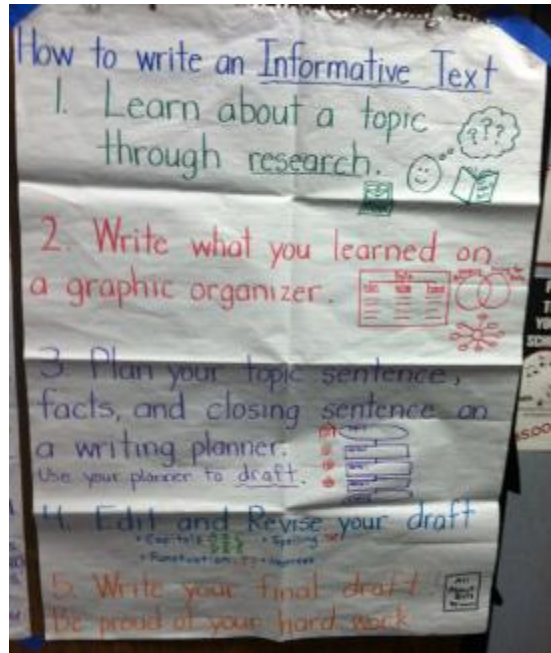
**Cues, Sequences, and Transition Words GK-3 and 4-8**  
 See General Writing Student Tools in the Common Core Section at [www.knoxeducation.com](http://www.knoxeducation.com)

[http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/ccss\\_cues\\_sequences\\_and\\_transition\\_words.pdf](http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/ccss_cues_sequences_and_transition_words.pdf)

# 7. On the Walls:



- Anchor Charts
- How to Charts
- Teacher modeled Writing
- Class shared writing
- Brainstormed topic lists or ideas for writing specific sections of the piece such as “leads”
- Academic Language Frames



## My Writing Topics List

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Opinion/Argument



### Opinion Writing Topics

Things happening in my world today that I care about	My reviews: Books, movies, food

Narrative



### Narrative Writing Topics

Biographical incident: memorable stories from my life. Times I learned something, was surprised by something, was challenged etc.	Fictional Topics for stories I could make up that interest me: historical, fantasy, animals etc.

[http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/my\\_topics\\_list\\_ccss.pdf](http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/my_topics_list_ccss.pdf)

## Opinion/Argument Language Frames

### State your position:

- In my opinion...
- I believe that...
- It seems obvious to me that...
- Although not everybody would agree, my position is...

### Support your position:

- I have several reasons for arguing this point of view.
- My first reason is... Another reason is...
- There are several points I want to make to support my point of view.
- Research shows.....
- It has been found that .....

### Consider the counterargument:

- Some argue that...
- They say (claim, hold, maintain) that...
- On the other hand, there are many who disagree with the idea that...
- They also argue that...
- A further point they make is...
- Yet some argue vehemently that...

### Restate your position:

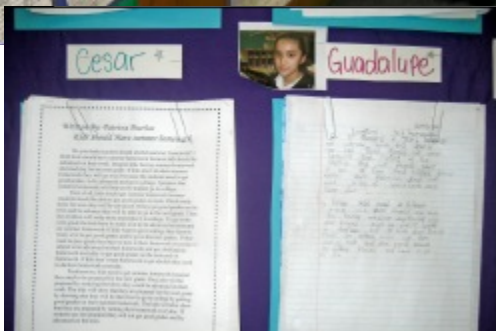
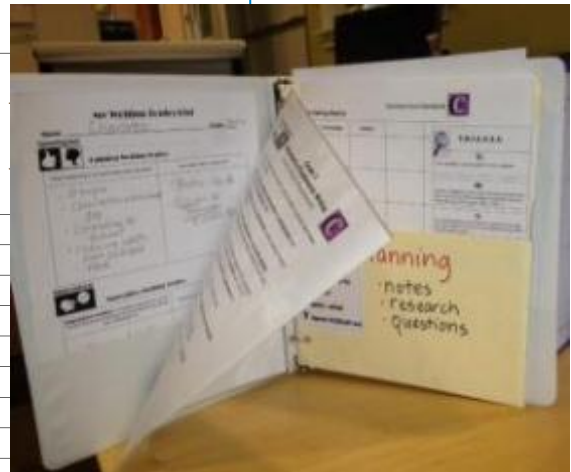
- However, there are several reasons to oppose this point of view.
- After looking closely at both sides of the issue and the evidence, I believe it is best to... because...
- Despite the fact that...it is also vital to consider....
- Well, that is only partly the case. The other side of the story is...
- The advantages of ... outweigh the disadvantages of....
- The issue is not so much a question of..., but a question of....
- What it seems to come down to is... versus....
- Even though the issue has two sides, I think I have shown that....
- Even though both sides have merits, the greater good will come from....
- If we look closely at..., we will see that it is better to....
- Based on the evidence so far, we should...because....
- When you take a close look at this part, you see that....

# 8. Tracking Student Progress

- Portfolios
- Portfolio Wall
- Student “My Writing Progress” chat form with reflections and student writing goals chart
- Anecdotal notes on post-its with mini-lesson planning form
- Class Writing Proficiency Charts with standards: analysis of the class strengths and challenges

**Writing Development Checklist – Grade 3**  
**Informative Writing and Language Skills**

Student Name	3.W.A. Introduce a topic and group info, use illustrations.	3.W.B. Develop the topic with facts, descriptions, and details.	3.W.C. Use linking words and phrases.	3.W.D. Provide a concluding statement or section.	3.W.5. With GSA/FA, use writing process: draft, revise, edit.	3.W.6. With GSA/FA, use technology.	3.W.7. Research.	3.W.8. Take notes.	3.L.1.A-4. Use a grade-level grammar in writing.	3.L.1.1. Write simple, compound, and complex sentences.
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										
13										



**My Writing Progress Test Chat Form**

My Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Level	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
4			
3			
2			
1			

	WRITING	LANGUAGE	WRITING	LANGUAGE	WRITING	LANGUAGE
TRIMESTER 1 Text Type: _____ (Opinion, Informative, or Narrative)						
My Strengths: _____						
My Goals Next Time: _____						
TRIMESTER 2 Text Type: _____ (Opinion, Informative, or Narrative)						
My Strengths: _____						
My Goals Next Time: _____						
TRIMESTER 3 Text Type: _____ (Opinion, Informative, or Narrative)						
My Strengths: _____						
My Goals Next Time: _____						

My Published Writing Pieces:

Title	Text Type

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

[http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/my\\_writing\\_progress\\_chat\\_form\\_2015.pdf](http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/my_writing_progress_chat_form_2015.pdf)










# 10. Conferencing

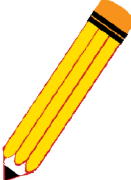
- “I’m Ready for a Conference” Chart
- Teacher desk for individual conferencing and note-keeping system
- Whole group conferencing, “I noticed, I wonder”
- Preparing extra adults to help you with individual conferencing aka, “writer’s coaches”



## Writing Conference

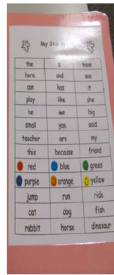
**I am ready for a conference:**

1. I have followed the steps for this writing assignment and completed everything I can do on my own.
2. I have reread my piece and checked to make sure it makes sense.
3. I have reread my piece and fixed all the spelling and punctuation mistakes that I can on my own.
4. I have practiced reading my piece aloud to myself.



**Punctuation**

! , ?




**Bring to the Conference:**

- Your writing folder
- The writing you are working on today
- A pencil
- Your personal spelling dictionary or spelling wall
- The checklist for this writing

**5-Star Checklist: Descriptive Paragraph Writing**

★ <b>TOPIC SENTENCE</b>	★ <b>DETAILS</b>	★ <b>CLOSING SENTENCE</b>	★ <b>REVISE</b>	★ <b>EDIT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underline</li> <li>• Main ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illustrate main ideas</li> <li>• Make a connection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sense?</li> <li>• Word choice?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling</li> <li>• Capitals</li> <li>• Punctuation</li> </ul>	



### My Writing Progress 2014-15

My Name \_\_\_\_\_

Level	Trimester 1			Trimester 2			Trimester 3		
4									
3									
2									
1									
	Text type	ORG	LANG	Text type	ORG	LANG	Text type	ORG	LANG

Text Type = Opinion, Informative, or Narrative    ORG = Writing Organization (addressing prompt, research, planning/organization, style)  
LANG = Language Conventions (spelling, grammar, sentences, paragraphs, vocabulary)

**TRIMESTER 1** Text Type: \_\_\_\_\_    My Goals Next Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**TRIMESTER 2** Text Type: \_\_\_\_\_    My Goals Next Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**TRIMESTER 3** Text Type: \_\_\_\_\_    My Goals Next Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**My Published Writing Pieces:**

Title	Text Type

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

**Ready for a Writing Conference Poster**  
[http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/ccss\\_writing\\_conference\\_poster\\_final\\_11-2013.pdf](http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/ccss_writing_conference_poster_final_11-2013.pdf)

**My Writing Progress Form**  
[http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/my\\_writing\\_progress\\_chat\\_form2.pdf](http://www.knoxeducation.com/sites/main/files/file-attachments/my_writing_progress_chat_form2.pdf)

## Whole Group Conferences as Mini-Lessons for Writing:

### Strengthening Writing



Common Core anchor standard 5 says: students will “develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.” As early as second grade, it also suggests that students do this with “guidance and support from peers and adults.” One-on-one conferencing allows for entirely customized support of each writer’s revision process, but it is not easy for teachers to find time for this in a classroom of 30+ students. Peer conferencing can be a valuable way to learn. Students automatically “kidify” their explanations for each other, however it can be problematic and also hard to manage. Either students don’t have the skill to offer suggestions to strengthen writing, or they take over and do the work for the student.

Whole group conferences using projected text of student writing provide the ideal instructional vehicle for teaching students what it looks like to *strengthen* writing, as well as

how to offer suggestions in a way that is helpful, not hurtful. Here’s how:

#### STEP 1:

Select 2-3 students’ writing to focus on per session. Start with stronger, more confident writers so that shy or reluctant writers can see that it will be a supportive, rather than embarrassing experience. Also select writing of these students that contains a teaching point for revision that you want to make during this lesson. For example, typical revision lessons may include:

- Improving word choice
- Varying sentence structure
- Adding detail or missing information
- Selecting details or evidence that supports the thesis or main idea of the paper
- Finding more precise transition words
- Dividing run-on sentences into distinct, complete sentences
- Showing what is meant with using vivid detail instead of “telling”
- Writing an interesting conclusion

#### Step 2:

Ask the students permission to share their writing with the class and suggest they practice reading it aloud. They may also want to fix editorial errors so as to save embarrassment. The focus of these lessons is on *revision*, NOT editing. Project the writing on the screen and have the student read his or her piece aloud to the whole class.



#### Step 3: “I noticed”

Ask students to celebrate the strengths they notice in the writing with “I noticed...” statements. For example they may say, “I noticed that you really told about your topic in the first sentence,” or “I noticed that there is a lot of detail in your picture,” or “I noticed that you used a lot of adjectives to describe things in your writing,” etc. Feel free to model these statements yourself during the initial lessons.

#### Step 4: “I wonder?”

Tell students they can ask questions about the writing to help the writer think about what may be missing in the writing or made more interesting. Students use questions, not suggestions, to keep the writer in control of his or her own writing. Initially, students will need a lot of modeling of this by the teacher in order to get the difference between a comment or judgment, and a question. For example, “I wonder what the room looked like when you stepped inside?” or “I wonder what else you learned about \_\_\_\_\_ that you might want to include to explain more.” As the writer answers these questions from the students, you take notes for the student writer on a post-it so that the writer can remember what they said they wanted to add or change. After 3-5 questions are answered, project the post-it with your notes on the screen so that the class can see what you wrote for the writer. The post-it may look something like this with bullet points, not entire sentences:

#### I wonder?

- dog: rusty brown, long fur
- parm: windy, leaves, ground
- feeling: confused

#### Step 5: Closure:

End the session with reminding students what we learned about revising writing today while helping our fellow students. Suggest to the others that they use what they learned to strengthen their own writing during writing time. The spillover effect of these whole group conferences on all the students’ writing is notable. Make sure to be equitable and work your way through the entire class list before you invite the first writers up to share again. You may choose to do this at the beginning of a writing session to make a specific teaching point to apply, or at the end as a way to celebrate as well as extend quality into the writing for the next day.

# Whole Class Silent Work Time—classical music, establishing norms, “how to help yourself”

Small group differentiated lessons during whole group time—placement of small group table, easel for teaching, “spillover “ effect—benefits to whole class, managing this.



## Narrative Differentiation Techniques Narrative Writing



Most Special Education students can learn to write to grade level common core standards with a higher level of scaffolding as well as a more gradual release of responsibility to the students. This means that initially the students may be mostly dictating their ideas to the teacher as the teacher is writing a group story with the students. Other forms of scaffolding include providing frames, CLOZE passages, or narrowing the choice of options for developing their stories. The following suggestions provide one sample of what we mean by increased scaffolding and a more gradual release of responsibility.

### Week 1

Choose a narrow topic focus for your modeling, read alouds, share. Spend the entire 6 week unit learning how to write narratives about easy topics include stories that involve pets, and simple stories about (George for ideas). This will allow the students the multiple exposures of responsibility over to the student that will allow them to become grade level standards.

#### Read Alouds

Choose a narrow focus, and read several very short pieces. Pause literature matrix that is simplified:

Title	Setting	Characters

Here is a list of simple stories that take place in school:

- Oh No, It's Robert**, by [Barbara Seuling](#)
  - If You Take a Mouse to School**, by Laura Numeroff.
  - David Goes To School**, by [David Shannon](#)
  - School**, by Emily Arnold McCully
  - IQ Goes to School**, by Mary Ann Fraser
  - Arthur Books**, by Marc Brown. Many of these easy reading books
  - Biscuit Goes to School**
  - Froggy Goes to School**
  - My World Going to School**, by Tammy Schlepp
  - The Berenstain Bears Go Back to School**
  - I Am Not Getting Up Today**, Dr. Seuss
- Readworks.org has about 45 simple narratives that can be duplicated.

[http://www.readworks.org/literary-reading-comprehension-passages?utm\\_source=Email&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=Readworks.org](http://www.readworks.org/literary-reading-comprehension-passages?utm_source=Email&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Readworks.org)

### Sample Schedule for Differentiated Writing Support

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>Writing Lesson:</b> Model with samples, teacher model; identify features of focus genre.	<b>Writing Lesson</b> continued	<b>Mini-lesson</b>	<b>Mini-lesson</b>	Remind students of project/lessons using samples and a checklist of "how to" chart.
<b>Students Write:</b> Meet with Jumpstart group	<b>Students Write:</b> Small group 1	<b>Students Write:</b> Small group 2,3 or individual conferences	<b>Students Write:</b> Small group 2,3 or individual conferences	Meet with individual students.
	Students share.	Students share.	Students share.	Longer student sharing period with reflection.
<b>WHOLE GROUP FOCUS FOR WEEK:</b> Standards		<b>Small Group Differentiated Lessons</b>		
Assignment				
Modeling				
Mini-lessons				

## Sharing and Getting a Response:

- Author's chair
- Partner share
- Read a favorite sentence, word, etc.
- Publishing Week and Author's Tea or parent event
- School-wide writing celebration

### The Author's Chair:

#### Students Respond to Each Other's Writing

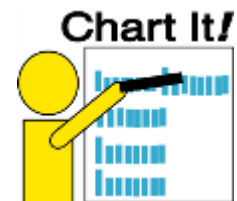
Students may periodically sign up to read their work aloud to the class and get feedback. For K-1 students this can be a daily practice since their writing is not lengthy. Other ways to organize this include:

- o Sign up to read a piece when students get to a certain stage in the process.
- o Designate days of the week for students to share.
- o Teacher chooses opportunity for sharing based on a teaching point the teacher wants to make.

#### Steps to Running an Author's Chair Session:

1. Students read their piece aloud to the class.
2. The writer calls on students to comment on the piece or ask questions.
3. Another student or the teacher takes notes on the comments and gives them to the writer when he/she is finished.

It is critical to teach students how to give appropriate comments and ask helpful questions. You may want to create a chart with the students with sentence stems and sample questions such as the example below:



#### Author's Chair

*I liked the part where....*

*I liked the way you described....*

*I'm wondering why you chose....?*

*I'm wondering where you got the idea for....?*

*I really like..... Could you describe/explain it in more detail....?*

*I noticed that you \_\_\_\_\_ Maybe you could try \_\_\_\_\_ instead?*

*That story made me feel.....*

*I could really picture.....*

## II. FAQ:

### tips for handling the most frequent challenges of teaching writing

1. What about the reluctant writer?
2. How do I keep the slow kids on track with an assignment?
3. How do I make sure everything is correct before publishing if I don't correct every paper?
4. My students say they don't have any ideas.....how do I get them started?
5. I have students who are just learning English, how do I help them with writing in English?
6. How many pieces do the students need to finish? Do I need to grade every piece?