What are the stages of writing development? How are the writing development stages for English learners’ similar or different from English-only students?

What are the core writing skills to be learned at each level, and how are they assessed in the classroom?

If you were to assemble a “menu” of evidence-based strategies for teaching the writing process, what would it include?

How can quick writes be used effectively in Tier 2 instruction as part of your Response to Intervention program?

Why is motivation to write different from motivation to read, and how does that difference manifest itself in the classroom?

How might you use online wiki writing programs as part of your content literacy instruction to improve student learning?

If you were to use traveling tales backpacks in your writing program to involve parents in their children’s writing development, what kinds of home-based activities would you include?

- Nation’s Report Card on writing
- Recursive writing
- Prephonemic stage
- Early phonemic stage
- Letter-naming stage
- Transitional stage
- National core writing standards
- Performance-based assessment (PBA)
- Authentic assessment
- Rubrics
- Six-trait model
- Writing process instruction
- Free writing
- Author’s chair

Interactive writing
Writing workshop
Mini-lesson
Writing center
Quick write
POW + TREE
Generous reading
Self-efficacy
Write-talks
Reading and analyzing nonfiction strategy (RAN)
Wiki writing
e-Reading and e-responding
Camp Imagination
Traveling tales backpack

Motivation and Engagement
Motivating and Engaging Students to Write

Technology and New Literacies
Technology and New Literacies That Promote Writing

Family and Community Connections
How Family and Community Connections Can Foster Writing
Three-year-old Laura sits quietly on the living room couch next to her parents as they visit with a neighbor. In her hands are four unlined index cards and an old, tooth-marked pencil. After several minutes, she slips down from the couch and timidly approaches their visitor clutching one index card behind her back. Impulsively she thrusts the card into the waiting hand of the visitor. He studies the marks she has made on the card. “Wow, Laura!” he exclaims. “You are writing!” Laura’s smile stretches from ear to ear. “I really writed, didn’t I?”

Since the earliest days of humanity, people have had a strong desire to share their thoughts in writing. The written word is a potential time machine by which one’s ideas and experiences can be shared virtually forever. We see written “time machines” in the drawings of cave dwellers many millennia ago, in the Egyptian hieroglyphs of 3100 B.C.E., in the Declaration of Independence, or in an e-mail record submitted as evidence in a court of law. In all cases, writing is pointless without a reader to receive the message. Thus, writing and reading are complementary and essential processes of communication.

Writing surely must have been invented before reading. Perhaps it began when one of our forebears decided to record his thoughts about something important on a stone wall for another person to see. Perhaps the message had to do with a food source or a danger in the environment. The creator of the message had to somehow encode it into print—that is, generate a written symbol that represented the idea. The intended recipient of the message coming along later would then need to be able to decode it, or translate the written symbols into language or thought.

For over three decades in the United States, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments have been conducted about every 4 years in reading, mathematics, science, writing, and other subjects. NAEP is a congressionally authorized project of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. Using a 300-point standardized scale score to describe student performance levels, the Nation’s Report Card provides the public a continuing and nationally representative measure of achievement in various subjects over time. You can receive a free copy of the Nation’s Report Card on writing online at http://nationsreportcard.gov/writing_2007.

In 2007 the latest Nation’s Report Card on writing was issued by NAEP (Salahudin, Persky, & Miller, 2008), and the results were not impressive. In short, there has been modest improvement in writing achievement through grade 12 over the past decade. For instance, little better than one-third of all eighth-grade students tested scored at the Proficient level (scale scores between 175 and 230), described as representing “solid academic performance. Students reaching this level have dem-
What Teachers Need to Know about Teaching Writing

What Teachers Need to Know about Teaching Writing

As it happens, learning to write helps children become better readers and comprehenders of all types of text (Akhaven, 2008; Tierney & Shanahan, 1996). A number of years ago, the authors of this text separately decided to leave college teaching and return to public schools as first-grade teachers. It was the first time either of us had established writing as a key part of our reading programs. Of course, we had included writing in our previous curricula but not the full writing process as described by early leaders in the field such as Donald Graves (1983) and Lucy Calkins (1986). In a word, this addition to our instructional programs was powerful. Our students learned to write with excitement and passion, and their reading development was greatly accelerated (Reutzel & Cooter, 1990). So if you are wondering why we include a chapter on writing in a reading methods textbook, research and our own first-hand experience have convinced us that writing and reading are reciprocal processes that simply must be taught together (Córdova & Matthiesen, 2010; Shanahan, 2006).

How Is Reading Related to Writing?

Reading and writing are often thought of as mirror images of each other (Reutzel & Cooter, 2011). Walter Loban (1964) once said that the relationship between reading and writing is “so striking to be beyond question” (p. 212). It happens that reading and writing share a number of traits or underlying processes (Tierney & Shanahan, 1996), but they also have some unique traits as well (Culham, 2010). As Shanahan (2006) notes, they have somewhat different cognitive “footprints.” Let’s take a brief look at ways reading and writing are close cousins.

In the Handbook of Writing Research, Shanahan (2006) explains that “reading and writing are dependent upon shared cognitive abilities (e.g., visual, phonological,
and semantic systems or short- and long-term memory), and anything that improves these abilities may have implications for both reading and writing development” (p. 174). Shanahan’s review of the research concludes that readers and writers rely on four common knowledge bases:

1. **Content knowledge.** Writing has to be about something.
2. **Metaknowledge.** Knowing about the functions of reading and writing, that readers and writers interact, and that monitoring one’s own meaning-making while writing or reading is critical. New learning often happens through examining and reexamining information from a variety of perspectives, and reading and writing provide alternate perspectives (Shanahan, 2006). A person’s culture, by the way, can have an impact—positive or negative—on how well the functions of reading and writing are understood. For example, a second-language learner from an Asian country may not have the same view of how writing is understood in the United States compared to a native-born North American citizen.

3. **Knowledge of specific written language components.** Aspects of language such as phonemic (speech sounds) and orthographic (spelling) knowledge underlie reading and writing.
4. **Procedural knowledge.** Understanding how to access, use, and generate information during reading and writing (Hampton & Resnick, 2009a; Mason, Herman, & Au, 1991) includes an awareness of strategies intentionally used in reading and writing, such as predicting, questioning, and summarizing.

**How Writing Develops**

Young children discover early in life that writing is the sharing of ideas. In our opening vignette, Laura demonstrated her growing understanding that writing can be a tool for recording thoughts on paper to share with others. She came to this understanding without formal spelling and writing instruction. After carefully observing others in her environment, Laura risked acting like a skilled writer and tried out her hypothesis about how printed language functions.

Many of us have seen children attempting to solve the printed language puzzle through drawing and scribbling. One may be tempted to dismiss these early attempts at writing as cute, but certainly not real writing (see Figure 8.1). This judgment may be as misguided as concluding that a flower in its early stages of development is not truly a flower because it does not resemble a full-blown bloom.

Through careful study over a period of decades, researchers have discovered that young children pass through certain developmental stages in their writing and spelling similar to those discussed with respect to oral language and reading development. An understanding of these stages helps teachers recognize the roots of writing and spelling development and enables them to nurture scribbling and drawing into the flower of writing.

**Scribbling and Drawing Stage.** When young children first take a pencil or crayon in hand, they use this instrument to explore
the vast empty space on a blank sheet of paper. In its earliest stages, children’s writing is often referred to by adult observers as *scribbling* (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2000).

These random marks are the wellsprings of writing discovery. As shown in Figure 8.1, Laura’s scribbles appear to be the result of acting on the paper just to see what happens, perhaps without any particular intent. Her scribbles do not demonstrate much of what adults normally consider to be conventional or even purposeful writing. In Figure 8.2, Laura’s scribbles begin to reveal an exploration of alternative forms when compared to her previous markings. Circles, curved lines, and letter-like forms begin to appear as part of Laura’s writing exploration.

Some time later, Laura’s scribbles begin to look more and more like adult cursive writing. Note in Figure 8.3 that the marks have become linear, moving from left to right. When questioned, Laura could tell what she meant by each of the scribbles reproduced in Figure 8.3. Unlike her marks in Figure 8.1, Laura’s later scribbling represented her meaning in a more conventional way. Laura revealed that these later scribbles were a “Christmas wish list.” Often, letter-like writing or shapes, as shown in Laura’s Christmas list, are used repeatedly in early writing attempts. Clay (1987) calls the tendency to reuse and repeat certain scribblings and drawings recursive writing. The purpose for recursive writing seems to be the need for comfort and familiarity as children prepare to move into the next levels of writing development.
Weeks later, Laura produced the writing found in Figure 8.4. Note in this example that she uses drawings to carry part of her intended message. In addition, directly above the head of Laura’s drawing of a young girl, one can detect the emergence of letter-like forms etched in broken detail. When queried about the intent of these letter-like forms, Laura responded, “That says ‘Laura!’” Evidently, Laura had discovered at this point in her development as a writer that drawings can supplement a message and that writing is different from drawing.

In another example, 4-year-old Toby produced the writing found in Figure 8.5. Toby used human forms to represent members of his family in a thank-you letter. One sees letter-like symbols randomly scattered about the page. Near the center, Toby signed his name. By looking carefully, one can see the upside-down letter b and what looks like a letter y, which Toby chose to represent his name. Thus, during this initial stage of writing development, Laura and Toby used scribbling, drawing, and disconnected letter-like forms to explore and record their meanings on paper. These children had discovered that writing is a way to communicate meaning, and that although drawing and writing are complementary processes, they are not the same.

Prephonemic Stage. The next stage of writing and spelling development among young children is often called the prephonemic stage (Temple, Nathan, Burris, & Temple, 1993). At this stage, children begin to use real letters—usually capitals—to represent meaning. However, their letters do not represent their phonemic or sound values; rather, they are used as placeholders for meaning, representing anything from

![Figure 8.4](Laura’s Self Portrait)

![Figure 8.5](Toby’s Thank You Letter)
What Teachers Need to Know about Teaching Writing

a syllable to an entire thought. Chaundra, a kindergartener, produced the writing in Figure 8.6. Note Chaundra’s use of letters to represent meaning. Only by asking the child to explain the meaning can one readily discern that her letters function as meaning placeholders and not as representations of phonemic values.

Clay (1975) points out that children in the prephonemic stage of writing development will usually produce a string of letters and proudly display their work to a parent while asking, “What does this say?” or “What did I write?” In many families today, children do this with magnetic letters on refrigerator doors: They meticulously arrange a string of letters and then ask what they have written.

**Early Phonemic Stage.** During the next stage of writing development, called the early phonemic stage (Temple et al., 1993), children begin to use letters—usually capitalized consonants—to represent words. Children at this stage of writing development have discovered that letters represent sound values. They write words represented by one or two consonant letters—usually the beginning or ending sounds of the word. In Figure 8.7, Samantha uses only consonants to represent the word *house* in her message.

Temple and colleagues (1993) suspect that the tendency for children in the early phonemic stage to use only one or two letters is the result of an inability to “hold words still in their minds” while they examine them for phonemes and match these to known letters (p. 101). Although this may be true, it is also possible that children at this stage are continuing to learn certain letters of the alphabet.

**Figure 8.6**
Chaundra’s Prephonemic Writing

**Figure 8.7**
Samantha’s Early Phonemic Writing: A House
It may also be true that writers in this stage of development have not developed the ability to segment more than the initial or final sounds in a word. Certainly any of these possibilities would lead to the incomplete representation of words as found in the early phonemic stage of writing development. This is an area needing much more investigation (Teale, 1987; Templeton, 1995).

**Letter-Naming Stage.** The letter-naming stage of writing development is a small but important jump from the early phonemic stage. This stage is characterized by the use of more than one or two consonants with at least one vowel to represent the spellings of words. Chris, a kindergartener, produced an example of the letter-naming stage of writing in response to his teacher’s urging him to write about the rainbow he had seen the day before (see Figure 8.8).

Although Chris continues to use capital letters exclusively, vowels have begun to appear in his writing. He has clearly discovered that words are made up of phonemes, both vowels and consonants, that these phonemes occur in an auditory sequence, and that these phonemes are properly represented in printed form from left to right. Although Chris does not yet read independently, he has made important discoveries about print that have nurtured his acquisition of reading, which will in turn inform his acquisition of conventional spellings. With continued experiences in reading, Chris’s writing will rapidly become more closely aligned with standard spelling and lead to the final stage of writing development, the transitional stage.

**Transitional Stage.** Figures 8.9 and 8.10 illustrate the transitional stage of writing and spelling. Writing produced by youngsters in this stage looks like English, but words are a mix of phonetic and conventional spellings. Typically, these writers neglect or overgeneralize certain spelling patterns. For example, the final silent *e* is sometimes omitted by these writers, familiar phonic elements are substituted for less familiar phonic elements, and double consonants are typically neglected.

Devin, a first-grader, wrote the story shown in Figure 8.9 during October. He demonstrates not only some of the substitutions and omissions mentioned previously, but also a top-to-bottom arrangement for his story.

Figure 8.10 shows a note that Candice wrote to her parents during the fall of her second-grade year. Notice the spellings of *parents, hurting, guys,* and *special.* Some of the spellings are unconventional, but the writing of this child looks very much like English and communicates the message well. Candice’s writing is also a good example of the characteristics of transitional writing mentioned previously—the mix of standard and nonstandard spellings. Note also that transitional writers have discovered the use of other features of standard writing such as possessives, punctuation, and the standard letter- or note-writing format.

These examples demonstrate the progression of children’s writing along a developmental continuum, originating with their early attempts to make meaning on paper...
through scribbling and drawing to later refinements including the use of conventional spelling, grammar, and mechanics.

One note of caution should be sounded at this point: Although we may discuss oral language, writing, and reading development in terms of stages through which children pass, teachers should not use this information to try to hasten development or expect that children will—or even should—pass through each stage of development in a prescribed order. Rather, teachers should use this information as a basis for understanding and supporting children’s language learning by providing an environment rich in print and print use, gentle guidance, and enthusiastic encouragement as children struggle to solve the writing puzzle. Just as children learned to speak within a nurturing home environment filled with supportive oral language users, they also develop into readers and writers within print-rich school environments filled with the support and encouragement of other competent readers and writers. Figure 8.11 integrates information about oral language, reading, and writing development to show that these modes of language learning are developmentally similar.

The Writing Development of English Learners. Rubin and Carlan (2005) have conducted important research that helps teachers use the writing samples of English learners (ELs) to better understand children’s literacy development. The
parallels to the stages just described are indeed remarkable. In Table 8.1 we share a summary of their findings comparing the stages of writing development of English speakers, Spanish-only speakers, and bilingual children.

**Unique Writing Patterns Used by Authors**

Narrative texts (fiction) are organized in a story grammar scheme using such common elements as setting, theme, characterization, plot, and resolution. Expository text (nonfiction), however, is quite different: Its structure tends to be much more compact, detailed, and explanatory (Heilman, Blair, & Rupley, 2001). Five common expository text structures have been described (Meyer & Freedle, 1984; Williams, 2005): description, collection, causation, problem/solution, and comparison. When preparing to teach units in the content areas, teachers need to establish which expository text structures are used and organize for writing instruction accordingly (Montelongo, Herter, Ansaldo, & Hatter, 2010). The following list provides short descriptions of the five expository text patterns along with examples taken from content textbooks.
**Table 8.1**
Comparison of Stages of Writing Development for English-Speaking, Spanish-Speaking, and Bilingual Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monolingual Spanish Speakers’ Stages of Writing Development</th>
<th>Monolingual English Speakers’ Stages of Writing Development</th>
<th>Bilingual Spanish–English Speakers’ Stages of Writing Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Precommunicative stage</td>
<td>Levels 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Generally the same as monolingual English and Spanish, except some children will write the same letters and symbols in both languages but read them differently in English and Spanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know the difference between writing and drawing. Write with scribbles, mock letters, and real letters unconnected to sounds.</td>
<td>Know the difference between writing and drawing. Write with scribbles, mock letters, and real letters unconnected to sounds.</td>
<td>Generally similar to monolingual English, except some children will write the same words in both languages but read them differently in English and Spanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semiphonetic stage</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Generally similar to monolingual English and Spanish. Some errors are made because of different letter–sound relationships in the two languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters are written to represent some of the sounds in words.</td>
<td>Each syllable in a word is usually represented by a vowel.</td>
<td>Similar to English monolingual stage with some errors caused by different letter–sound relationships in the two languages. Vocabulary and sentence structure become more complex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonetic stage</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Writing is generally correct. Vocabulary and sentence structure become more complex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters are written to represent most sounds in words.</td>
<td>Letters are written to represent most sounds in words.</td>
<td>Writing is generally correct. Vocabulary and sentence structure become more complex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional stage</td>
<td>No corresponding level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters are written according to common spelling patterns and include silent letters.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional stage</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing is generally correct.</td>
<td>Writing is generally correct.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Description.** Explains something about a topic or presents a characteristic or setting for a topic.

  *Decimals* are another way to write fractions when the denominators are 10, 100, and so on.
  
  *(from Merrill Mathematics [Grade 5], 1985, p. 247)*

- **Collection.** A number of descriptions (specifics, characteristics, or settings) presented together.

  **Water Habitats**

  Freshwater habitats are found in ponds, bogs, swamps, lakes, and rivers. Each freshwater habitat has special kinds of plants and animals that live there. Some plants and animals live in waters that are very cold. Others live in waters that are warm. Some plants and animals adapt to waters that flow fast. Others adapt to still water.
  
  *(from Merrill Science [Grade 3], 1989, p. 226)*

- **Causation.** Elements grouped according to time sequence with a cause–effect relationship specified.

  **America Enters the War**

  On Sunday, December 7, 1941, World War II came to the United States. At 7:55 A.M. Japanese warplanes swooped through the clouds above Pearl Harbor. Pearl Harbor was
the American naval base in the Hawaiian Islands. A deadly load of bombs was dropped on the American ships and airfield. It was a day, Roosevelt said, that would “live in infamy.” Infamy (IN fuh mee) means “remembered for being evil.”

The United States had been attacked. That meant war.

(from The United States: Its History and Neighbors [Grade 5], Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985, p. 493)

- Problem/Solution. Includes a relationship (between a problem and possible causes) and a set of solution possibilities, one of which can break the link between the problem and its cause.

Agreement by Compromise (Events That Led to the Civil War)

For a while there was an equal number of Southern and Northern states. That meant that there were just as many Senators in Congress from slave states as from free states. Neither had more votes in the Senate, so they usually reached agreement on new laws by compromise.

(from The United States and the Other Americas [Grade 5], Macmillan, 1980, p. 190)

- Comparison. Organizes factors on the basis of differences and similarities. Comparison does not contain elements of sequence or causality.

Segregation

Segregation laws said that blacks had to live separate, or apart, from whites. Like whites, during segregation blacks had their own parks, hospitals, and swimming pools. Theaters, buses, and trains were segregated.

Many people said that the segregation laws were unfair. But in 1896, the Supreme Court ruled segregation legal if the separate facilities for blacks were equal to those for whites. “Separate but equal” became the law in many parts of the country.

But separate was not equal. . . . One of the most serious problems was education. Black parents felt that their students were not receiving an equal education in segregated schools. Sometimes the segregated schools had teachers who were not as well educated as teachers in the white schools. Textbooks were often very old and out-of-date, if they had any books at all. But in many of the white schools the books were the newest ones. Without a good education, the blacks argued, their students would not be able to get good jobs as adults.

Finally in 1954, the Supreme Court changed the law.

(Adapted from The American People [Grade 6], American Book Company, 1982, p. 364)

Classroom Writing Assessment

The staring point for writing assessment is to answer the question Which writing skills should be learned and assessed at each grade level? The answer to this question lies in evidence-based end-of-year benchmark skills, national core writing standards, and/or writing standards used by your state. In the first part of Pillar Two we identify many of the skills to be assessed.

Once we know what is to be assessed, the next question is How can I quickly and efficiently assess students’ use of writing skills at each level of development? There are generally two perspectives for analyzing student compositions (Moskal, 2003): analytic and holistic. Because they are quick, efficient, and can be constructed using research-based standards, teachers often use rubrics for assessing different aspects or
traits of writing (Hampton, Murphy, & Lowry, 2009; Shermis, Burstein, & Leacock, 2006). In this section we include an overview of writing rubrics and how they are tied to evidence-based writing standards.

**What Are the Writing Skills to Be Learned at Each Grade Level (K–6)?**

Burns, Griffin, and Snow (1999), in their book *Starting Out Right*, summarize skills to be learned in writing for grades K through 3 according to evidence-based research. These should be viewed as “end-of-year benchmark skills,” or targets for every child to attain by the end of the school year in order to be on track in his or her development.

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### Kindergarten
- Writes uppercase and lowercase letters
- Writes own name
- Uses invented spellings to express meaning
- Uses invented spellings to write teacher-dictated words
- Is becoming aware of the differences between kid writing and conventional writing

### First Grade
- Spells three- and four-letter short vowel words conventionally
- Writes texts for others to read
- Writes independently using a mix of invented and conventional spellings
- Uses basic or terminal punctuation (periods, question marks, exclamation points) and capitalization
- Produces a variety of types of compositions and texts (e.g., stories, information texts, poems, notes, recipes, journal entries)

### Second Grade
- Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing
- Represents the complete sound of the word when spelling independently (invented spellings)
- Writes using formal language patterns rather than oral language patterns at appropriate places in own writing
- Makes reasonable judgments about what to include in own writing
- Can discuss productively ways to improve own writing and that of others
- Is able to use, with assistance, conferencing, revision, and editing processes to improve the quality of own writing
- Writes informative, well-structured reports with assistance
- Attends to spelling, mechanics, and presentation for final products
- Produces a variety of types of compositions

### Third Grade
- Begins to incorporate literary words, language patterns, figures of speech, and elaborate descriptions in own writing
- Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing
- Combines information from multiple sources in writing reports
- Productively discusses ways to clarify own writing and that of others
- Uses conferencing, revision, and editing processes to improve the quality of own writing
- Independently reviews work for spelling, mechanics, and presentation
- Produces a variety of written work in various formats including multimedia forms

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State Writing Standards

Teachers in grades 4 through 6 must also have a clear understanding of the writing skills expected of normally developing students. In the United States, under No Child Left Behind and subsequent legislation, the various states have established standards for gauging reading and writing development. In Figure 8.12 we share an excerpt from the grade-level goals and accompanying performance objectives for grades 4 through 6 developed by the state of California. Because they are founded on evidence-based reading research, the California standards essentially mirror those developed by the other states. The full California standards may be downloaded from the Internet on their website at www.cde.ca.gov/standards.

National Core Writing Standards

One of the challenges we face in writing assessment is the lack of a common “roadmap” for measuring student development. Ongoing efforts to unify evidence-based standards in reading and writing are beginning to bear fruit. In 2010 the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) jointly released The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. This document resulted from a broad-based effort to create national core writing standards for K through 12 based on comparisons of the different state standards “in order to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school” (p. 3). In Table 8.2 we share the common core state standards for grades K through 5. All other standards may be downloaded from www.corestandards.org. Our best advice is for teachers to consider both state and national core writing standards when constructing assessment tools.

How Do Teachers Assess Students’ Writing Abilities?

With the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation early in the twenty-first century came a soaring interest in educational assessment and “performance-based education,” in which teachers design task-oriented instruction connected to the lives and learning needs of students using relevant tasks. Performance-based assessment (PBA), sometimes known as authentic assessment, evaluates students’ performance in completing a product that demonstrates their use of new skills and knowledge. PBA is in sharp contrast to more traditional methods of measurement such as paper-and-pencil tests. Some of the popular forms of PBA include journals, checklists, portfolios, projects, and rubrics.

What Are Rubrics? Designed as tools to evaluate student performance on tasks that lead to completion of products, rubrics assess learning outcomes with clearly stated criteria for measuring student performances and skills. These criteria are typically narrative descriptions or checklists separated into levels of performance (high-level performance to lower-level performance) or degrees of proficiency with the targeted skills.
STANDARD 1: WRITING STRATEGIES

*Coding System
First numeral = Grade level expectation
Second numeral = Standard
Third numeral = Skill number

Example: 5.2.3 = Fifth grade expectation, Standard 2 (Writing Applications), Skill #3 (Write research reports about important ideas, issues, or events . . .)

Standards 1: Grades 4–6

Grade 4: Students write clear, coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).

Grade 5: Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits the students’ awareness of the audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

Grade 6: Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students’ awareness of the audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

Performance Objectives: Grades 4–6

Organization and Focus
4.1.1 Select a focus, an organizational structure, and a point of view based upon purpose, audience, length, and format requirements.

4.1.2 Create multiple-paragraph compositions:
   a. Provide an introductory paragraph.
   b. Establish and support a central idea with a topic sentence at or near the beginning of the first paragraph.
   c. Include supporting paragraphs with simple facts, details, and explanations.
   d. Conclude with a paragraph that summarizes the points.
   e. Use correct indention.

4.1.3 Use traditional structures for conveying information (e.g., chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, and posing and answering a question).

5.1.1 Create multiple-paragraph narrative compositions:
   a. Establish and develop a situation or plot.
   b. Describe the setting.
   c. Present an ending.

5.1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions:
   a. Establish a topic, important ideas, or events in sequence or chronological order.
   b. Provide details and transitional expressions that link one paragraph to another in a clear line of thought.
   c. Offer a concluding paragraph that summarizes important ideas and details.

6.1.1 Choose the form of writing (e.g., personal letter; letter to the editor; review, poem, report, narrative) that best suits the intended purpose.

6.1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions:
   a. Engage the interest of the reader and state a clear purpose.
   b. Develop the topic with supporting details and precise verbs, nouns, and adjectives to paint a visual image in the mind of the reader.
   c. Conclude with a detailed summary linked to the purpose of the composition.

6.1.3 Use a variety of effective and coherent organizational patterns, including comparison and contrast; organization by categories; and arrangement by spatial order, order of importance, or climactic order.

continued
Figure 8.12
Continued

Penmanship
4.1.4 Write fluidly and legibly in cursive or joined italic.

Research and Technology
4.1.5 Quote or paraphrase information sources, citing them appropriately.
4.1.6 Locate information in reference texts by using organizational features (e.g., prefaces, appendixes).
4.1.7 Use various reference materials (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, card catalog, encyclopedia, online information) as an aid to writing.
4.1.8 Understand the organization of almanacs, newspapers, and periodicals and how to use those print materials.
4.1.9 Demonstrate basic keyboarding skills and familiarity with computer terminology (e.g., cursor, software, memory, disk drive, hard drive).

Evaluation and Revision
4.1.10 Edit and revise selected drafts to improve coherence and progression by adding, deleting, consolidating, and rearranging text.
5.1.6 Edit and revise manuscripts to improve the meaning and focus of writing by adding, deleting, consolidating, clarifying, and rearranging words and sentences.
6.1.6 Revise writing to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within and between paragraphs.

STANDARD 2: WRITING APPLICATIONS: GENRES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Grade 4: Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

Grade 5: Students write narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive texts of at least 500 to 700 words in each genre. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

Grade 6: Students write narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive texts of at least 500 to 700 words in each genre. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

Using the outline in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

Write Narratives
4.2.1 Write narratives:
   a. Relate ideas, observations, or recollections of an event or experience.
   b. Provide a context to enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience.
   c. Use concrete sensory details.
   d. Provide insight into why the selected event or experience is memorable.

5.2.1 Write narratives:
   a. Establish a plot, point of view, setting, and conflict.
   b. Show, rather than tell, the events of the story.
6.2.1 Write narratives:
   a. Establish and develop a plot and setting and present a point of view that is appropriate to the stories.
   b. Include sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character.
   c. Use a range of narrative devices (e.g., dialogue, suspense).

Write Responses to Literature

4.2.2 Write responses to literature:
   a. Demonstrate an understanding of the literary work.
   b. Support judgments through references to both the text and prior knowledge.

5.2.2 Write responses to literature:
   a. Demonstrate an understanding of a literary work.
   b. Support judgments through references to the text and to prior knowledge.
   c. Develop interpretations that exhibit careful reading and understanding.

6.2.4 Write responses to literature:
   a. Develop an interpretation exhibiting careful reading, understanding, and insight.
   b. Organize the interpretation around several clear ideas, premises, or images.
   c. Develop and justify the interpretation through sustained use of examples and textual evidence.

Write Information/Research Reports

4.2.3 Write information reports:
   a. Frame a central question about an issue or situation.
   b. Include facts and details for focus.
   c. Draw from more than one source of information (e.g., speakers, books, newspapers, other media sources).

4.2.4 Write summaries that contain the main ideas of the reading selection and the most significant details.

5.2.3 Write research reports about important ideas, issues, or events by using the following guidelines:
   a. Frame questions that direct the investigation.
   b. Establish a controlling idea or topic.
   c. Develop the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations.

6.2.3 Write research reports:
   a. Pose relevant questions with a scope narrow enough to be thoroughly covered.
   b. Support the main idea or ideas with facts, details, examples, and explanations from multiple authoritative sources (e.g., speakers, periodicals, online information searches).
   c. Include a bibliography.

Write Persuasive Letters or Compositions

5.2.4 Write persuasive letters or compositions:
   a. State a clear position in support of a proposal.
   b. Support a position with relevant evidence.
   c. Follow a simple organizational pattern.
   d. Address reader concerns.

6.2.2 Write expository compositions (e.g., description, explanation, comparison and contrast, problem and solution):
   a. State the thesis or purpose.
   b. Explain the situation.
   c. Follow an organizational pattern appropriate to the type of composition.
   d. Offer persuasive evidence to validate arguments and conclusions as needed.

6.2.5 Write persuasive compositions:
   a. State a clear position on a proposition or proposal.
   b. Support the position with organized and relevant evidence.
   c. Anticipate and address reader concerns and counterarguments.

continued
### STANDARD 3: WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

#### Standard 3: Grades 4–6

**Grade 4–6:** Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

#### Performance Objectives: Grades 4–6

**Sentence Structure**

4.3.1 Use simple and compound sentences in writing and speaking.

4.3.2 Combine short, related sentences with appositives, participial phrases, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases.

5.3.1 Identify and correctly use prepositional phrases, appositives, and independent and dependent clauses; use transitions and conjunctions to connect ideas.

6.3.1 Use simple, compound, and compound-complex sentences; use effective co-ordination and subordination of ideas to express complete thoughts.

**Grammar**

4.3.3 Identify and use regular and irregular verbs, adverbs, prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions in writing and speaking.

5.3.2 Identify and correctly use verbs that are often misused (e.g., lie/lay, sit/set, rise/raise), modifiers, and pronouns.

6.3.2 Identify and properly use indefinite pronouns and present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect verb tenses; ensure that verbs agree with compound subjects.

**Punctuation**

4.3.4 Use parentheses, commas in direct quotations, and apostrophes in the possessive case of nouns and in contractions.

4.3.5 Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics to identify titles of documents.

5.3.3 Use a colon to separate hours and minutes and to introduce a list; use quotation marks around the exact words of a speaker and titles of poems, songs, short stories, and so forth.

6.3.3 Use colons after the salutation in business letters, semicolons to connect independent clauses, and commas when linking two clauses with a conjunction in compound sentences.

**Capitalization**

4.3.6 Capitalize names of magazines, newspapers, works of art, musical compositions, organizations, and the first word in quotations when appropriate.

5.3.4 Use correct capitalization.

6.3.4 Use correct capitalization.

**Spelling**

4.3.7 Spell correctly roots, inflections, suffixes and prefixes, and syllable constructions.

5.3.5 Spell roots, suffixes, prefixes, contractions, and syllable constructions correctly.

6.3.5 Spell frequently misspelled words correctly.

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Adapted from the California Department of Education English Language Arts Content Standards. [www.cde.ca.gov/standards](http://www.cde.ca.gov/standards).
The following standards for K–5 offer a focus for instruction each year to help ensure that students gain adequate mastery of a range of skills and applications. Each year in their writing, students should demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use, from vocabulary and syntax to the development and organization of ideas, and they should address increasingly demanding content and sources. Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year’s grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.

Table 8.2
Common Core Writing Standards K–5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergartners:</th>
<th>Grade 1 students:</th>
<th>Grade 2 students:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Types and Purposes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Text Types and Purposes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Text Types and Purposes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., My favorite book is . . .).</td>
<td>1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.</td>
<td>1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory facts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.</td>
<td>2. Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.</td>
<td>2. Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.</td>
<td>3. Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriate sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.</td>
<td>3. Write narratives in which they recount a well-collaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Production and Distribution of Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Production and Distribution of Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Production and Distribution of Writing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (Begins in grade 3) With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.</td>
<td>4. (Begins in grade 3) With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.</td>
<td>4. (Begins in grade 3) With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. With guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.</td>
<td>5. With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.</td>
<td>6. With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research to Build and Present Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research to Build and Present Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research to Build and Present Knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).</td>
<td>7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of “how-to” books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).</td>
<td>7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books on a single topic to produce a report, record science observations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.</td>
<td>8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.</td>
<td>8. Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. (Begins in grade 4)</td>
<td>9. (Begins in grade 4)</td>
<td>9. (Begins in grade 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range of Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Range of Writing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Range of Writing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. (Begins in grade 3)</td>
<td>10. (Begins in grade 3)</td>
<td>10. (Begins in grade 3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8.2
Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 3 students:</th>
<th>Grade 4 students:</th>
<th>Grade 5 students:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Types and Purposes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Text Types and Purposes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Text Types and Purposes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.</td>
<td>1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.</td>
<td>1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.</td>
<td>a. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose.</td>
<td>a. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer’s purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Provide reasons that support the opinion.</td>
<td>b. Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.</td>
<td>b. Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.</td>
<td>c. Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition).</td>
<td>c. Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., consequently, specifically).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Provide a concluding statement or section.</td>
<td>d. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.</td>
<td>d. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.</td>
<td>2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.</td>
<td>2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Introduce a topic and group related information together, include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.</td>
<td>a. Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</td>
<td>a. Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically, include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.</td>
<td>b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.</td>
<td>b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information.</td>
<td>c. Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., another, for example, also, because).</td>
<td>c. Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., in contrast, especially)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Provide a concluding statement or section.</td>
<td>d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</td>
<td>d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.</td>
<td>e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.</td>
<td>e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.</td>
<td>3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.</td>
<td>3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.</td>
<td>a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.</td>
<td>a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.</td>
<td>b. Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.</td>
<td>b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, descriptions, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grade 3 students:

Text Types and Purposes (continued)

- c. Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
- d. Provide a sense of closure.

Grade 4 students:

- c. Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
- d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

Grade 5 students:

- c. Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
- d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

Production and Distribution of Writing

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.)

5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 3 on pages 28 and 29.)

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.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

8. Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

9. (Begins in grade 4)

- 7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- 8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.
- 9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
Moskal (2003) offers teachers some useful tips about writing rubrics for student evaluations. First, when developing scoring rubrics for writing, teachers should be certain that the assessment criteria are aligned with state and national standards. Many states have their own rubrics and timelines for writing assessment, and students should be given ample opportunities to practice the kinds of writing on which they will be evaluated. For example, the state of Florida has a very helpful website for teachers providing this information (see the “Sunshine State Standards” online at www.firm.edu/doe/menu/sss.htm).

Second, rubric criteria should be (a) expressed in terms of observable behaviors, (b) written in specific, straightforward, and meaningful language, and (c) designed to show clear distinctions between scoring levels. Third, rubric criteria should be explained to students prior to the writing experience in language that is easy for them to understand. When conducting a writing assessment, teachers should also ensure that students have access to appropriate writing tools (e.g., dictionaries, thesaurus, ample writing materials, computers, etc.) that support the completion of assessment activities. Fourth, the rubric criteria should be fair and free from bias.

**Holistic Scoring Rubrics.** Some rubrics use only a single scale to evaluate the larger writing process (Moskal, 2003). With such holistic scoring rubrics, teachers evaluate a piece of writing for its overall quality (i.e., all of the traits that make up the writing task are evaluated in combination—as a whole). Teachers are encouraged not to
become overly concerned with any one aspect of writing but to look at the composition as one entity. Many states offer holistic scoring rubrics for teachers to use in preparing their students for high-stakes testing (i.e., testing linked to the No Child Left Behind federal legislation). Figure 8.13 features the rubric offered to Florida teachers for holistic scoring.

Figure 8.13
Example of a Holistic Scoring Rubric

6 Points
The writing is focused, purposeful, and reflects insight into the writing situation. The paper conveys a sense of completeness and wholeness with adherence to the main idea, and its organizational pattern provides for a logical progression of ideas. The support is substantial, specific, relevant, concrete, and/or illustrative. The paper demonstrates a commitment to and an involvement with the subject, clarity in presentation of ideas, and may use creative writing strategies appropriate to the purpose of the paper. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language (word choice) with freshness of expression. Sentence structure is varied, and sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. Few, if any, convention errors occur in mechanics, usage, and punctuation.

5 Points
The writing focuses on the topic, and its organizational pattern provides for a progression of ideas, although some lapses may occur. The paper conveys a sense of completeness or wholeness. The support is ample. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language, including precision in word choice. There is variation in sentence structure, and, with rare exceptions, sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. The paper generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling.

4 Points
The writing is generally focused on the topic but may include extraneous or loosely related material. An organizational pattern is apparent, although some lapses may occur. The paper exhibits some sense of completeness or wholeness. The support, including word choice, is adequate, although development may be uneven. There is little variation in sentence structure, and most sentences are complete. The paper generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling.

3 Points
The writing is generally focused on the topic but may include extraneous or loosely related material. An organizational pattern has been attempted, but the paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Some support is included, but development is erratic. Word choice is adequate but may be limited, predictable, or occasionally vague. There is little, if any, variation in sentence structure. Knowledge of the conventions of mechanics and usage is usually demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly.

2 Points
The writing is related to the topic but include extraneous or loosely related material. Little evidence of an organizational pattern may be demonstrated, and the paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Development of support is inadequate or illogical. Word choice is limited, inappropriate or vague. There is little, if any, variation in sentence structure, and gross errors in sentence structure may occur. Errors in basic conventions of mechanics and usage may occur, and commonly used words may be misspelled.

1 Points
The writing may only minimally address the topic. The paper is a fragmentary or incoherent listing of related ideas or sentences or both. Little, if any, development of support or an organizational pattern or both is apparent. Limited or inappropriate word choice may obscure meaning. Gross errors in sentence structure and usage may impede communication. Frequent and blatant errors may occur in the basic conventions of mechanics and usage, and commonly used words may be misspelled.

Unscorable
The paper is unscorable because

- the response is not related to what the prompt requested the student to do.
- the response is simply a rewording of the prompt.
- the response is a copy of a published work.
- the student refused to write.
- the response is illegible.
- the response is incomprehensible (words are arranged in such a way that no meaning is conveyed).
- the response contains an insufficient amount of writing to determine if the student was attempting to address the prompt.
- the writing folder is blank.

Analytic Scoring Rubrics. Dividing writing performance into distinct components or traits, analytic scoring rubrics evaluate each component using a separate scale. As an example, we share in Figure 8.14 a four-level analytic rubric that is available free to teachers on the website readwritethink.org, a joint project of the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. This high-quality website features rubrics, complete lesson plans, and other tools for teachers.

The Six-Trait Writing Model

In 1983, the Beaverton, Oregon, school district sought a means of assessing student writing that could lead to more effective writing instruction. They examined research conducted by Paul Diederich (1974), featured in his book *Measuring Growth in*

Figure 8.14
Compare and Contrast Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose and Supporting Details</td>
<td>The paper compares and contrasts items clearly. The paper points to specific examples to illustrate the comparison. The paper includes only the information relevant to the comparison.</td>
<td>The paper compares and contrasts items clearly, but the supporting information is general. The paper includes only the information relevant to the comparison.</td>
<td>The paper compares and contrasts items clearly, but the supporting information is incomplete. The paper may include information that is not relevant to the comparison.</td>
<td>The paper compares and contrasts, but does not include both. There is no supporting information or support is incomplete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and Structure</td>
<td>The paper breaks the information into whole-to-whole, similarities-to-differences, or point-by-point structure. It follows a consistent order when discussing the comparison.</td>
<td>The paper breaks the information into whole-to-whole, similarities-to-differences, or point-by-point structure but does not follow a consistent order when discussing the comparison.</td>
<td>The paper breaks the information into whole-to-whole, similarities-to-differences, or point-by-point structure, but some information is in the wrong section. Some details are not in a logical or expected order and this distract the reader.</td>
<td>Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions</td>
<td>The paper moves smoothly from one idea to the next. The paper used comparison and contrast transition words to show relationships between ideas. The paper uses a variety of sentence structure and transitions.</td>
<td>The paper moves smoothly from one idea to the next, but there is little variety. The paper uses comparison and contrast transition words to show relationships between ideas.</td>
<td>Some transitions work well, but connections between other ideas are fuzzy.</td>
<td>The transitions between ideas are unclear or nonexistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Spelling (Conventions)</td>
<td>Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.</td>
<td>Writer makes 1–2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.</td>
<td>Writer makes 3–4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.</td>
<td>Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diedrich had assembled a group of writers, editors, attorneys, business executives, and teachers of English, natural science, and social science, presenting them with student essays to read and rank order into three groups: effective, somewhat effective, and problematic. The group was also asked to discuss why they ranked the papers as they did. Interestingly, Diedrich found that the various members of the group described virtually the same qualities in the writing samples, including ideas and content, organizational structure, voice, and mechanics.

Beaverton teachers decided to repeat Diedrich’s study with a group of 17 teachers and a writing consultant. They read, rank ordered, and took notes on hundreds of student papers and found that they largely agreed with Diedrich’s conclusions. The Beaverton teachers’ notes were eventually condensed into a six-trait scoring guide. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) adopted this six-trait model for its statewide writing assessment. Oregon currently uses a 6-point scale for assessing student development on each writing trait. In the next section, we describe the six traits and ODE scoring guidelines, also adopted by many school districts in North America and beyond.

Describing the Six Traits of Writing.

1. Ideas and content. The writer’s main ideas, purpose for writing, and supporting details. How well does the writer communicate and support his or her ideas through the provision of examples, facts, anecdotes, and details appropriate to the target audience? ODE criterion: The ideas are clear, focused, complete, and well developed with specific details.

2. Organization. The structure of a written composition, including the writer’s ability to hold the central meaning throughout the document. How well does the writer organize information in a clear sequence and make connections and transitions among ideas, sentences, and paragraphs? ODE criterion: The paper moves naturally from one idea to the next, with a strong beginning and ending.

3. Voice. The writer’s unique quality of expression, which is closely allied to style—formal, casual, academic, or anecdotal. How well does the author express himself or herself? ODE criterion: The writing style is lively and interesting and is appropriate to the audience and topic.

4. Word choice. The writer’s use of words that are appropriate to the topic and audience, as well as her or his ability to convey the intended message and emotion. How well does the author choose between a word and just the right word, which as Mark Twain once said is like the difference between the lightning and the lightning bug? ODE criterion: Words are carefully selected to convey precise meaning, images, and tone.

5. Sentence fluency. The writer’s understanding and application of the underlying structures of language. How well does the writing create a natural flow of language when read aloud? ODE criterion: Sentences are smooth, varied, and carefully constructed.

6. Conventions. The writer’s knowledge of spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and penmanship. How well does the author understand the mechanics of writing? ODE criterion: Correct spelling, grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing are used throughout the paper.

Rubrics for Evaluation of the Six Traits. Over the years, six-trait scoring has been revised and marketed by various entities, each having a unique twist on the popular
model. Some evaluate each trait using a 3-point, 5-point, or 6-point scale. Figure 8.15 shows a 6-point rubric derived from the scale used by the Oregon Department of Education (n.d.).

Scoring six traits on six levels can be time-consuming for busy classroom teachers, so we have crafted an alternative three-level scoring model for your consideration (see Figure 8.16).

### Figure 8.15
Scoring Rubric for the Six Traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Exemplary</td>
<td>The paper showed outstanding performance and exceptional control in this trait of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>The paper showed many strengths, and the writer seemed to be perfecting control of the writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>The paper showed more strengths than weaknesses, and the writer seemed to be gaining control of the writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>The paper needs further development in this trait because the writer seemed only partially in control of the writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>The paper needs quite a bit more development, but the writer is addressing this writing trait.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>The paper needs significant development and represents a very beginning effort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 8.16
An Alternate Three-Level Scoring Rubric for the Six Traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Proficient/Exemplary</td>
<td>Outstanding performance and exceptional control in this trait of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Some evidence of the trait, but further development is needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td>Represents little or no evidence of this trait.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing instruction has changed significantly over past decades. Teachers once assigned students writing tasks such as preparing essays, reports, or research papers, expecting students to submit one draft of their work and then move on to the next focus of study. Based on this “one-draft mentality” (Calkins, 1986), students learned that writing was a one-phase process that resulted in either success or failure. In

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**IRA Standards for Reading Professionals:**
- Standard 2, Elements 2.1, 2.2, 2.3; Standard 4, Element 4.1; Standard 5, Elements 5.1, 5.2, 5.3

**Common Core Standards:**
- Writing: K–5, Text Types and Purposes (items 1–3), Production and Distribution of Writing (items 4–6), Research to Build and Present Knowledge (items 7–9), Range of Writing (item 10);
- Writing: Grades 6–12, Text Types and Purposes (items 1–3), Production and Distribution of Writing (items 4–6), Research to Build and Present Knowledge (items 7–9), Range of Writing (item 10)

**Response to Intervention:**
- Instruction, Systemic and Comprehensive Approaches
more recent years, researcher-practitioners like Donald Graves (1983) and his pro-
tégé Lucy Calkins (1994) have helped teachers and students understand that writing
is a process rather than a one-shot, “quick-and-dirty” project. Children are taught
to understand and use the phases of authorship.

Understanding the Writing Process

Writing process instruction (also known as process writing) teaches the kinds of
thinking processes skilled writers use in producing different forms of text. By tak-
ing on the author’s mindset, children are better able to learn from models of good
writing how skillful writers paint pictures with words, how they choose words that
convey just the right meaning, and craft sentences that grab the attention of read-
ers. Through writing process instruction, children become wordsmiths and begin to
enjoy the works of other authors on new and higher levels.

Professional writers do not move rigidly from one stage of writing to the next.
It can be very instructive to examine the various stages through which writers prog-
ress in producing text, which have been identified as prewriting, drafting, revising,
editing, and publishing. Students can benefit from learning these stages through our
modeling, mini-lessons, and practice sessions.

Prewriting Stage. Prewriting is the getting-ready-to-write stage (Tompkins, 2004).
Writing begins with an idea or message the writer wants to express. Many teachers
help students begin the writing process by asking them to brainstorm a list of topics
they might be interested in writing about at some point in the future. These should be
topics that generate a certain amount of emotion in the student, as it is this emotional
engagement that helps drive the entire writing process through to completion.

Donald Graves in his classic book, Writing: Teachers and Children at Work
(1983), suggests that teachers model each of the stages in the writing process to help
students see adult examples. For the first step in prewriting called, brainstorming,
the teacher might list at the overhead projector or whiteboard several topics that he
or she is interested in writing about—sailing, collecting antiques, attending wrestling
matches, or traveling to South Pacific islands. It is important that teachers explain
to the class why each topic is appealing to them. A brainstorming session sometimes
helps children who are having difficulty discovering topics of interest. The key to suc-
cess is helping students find topics that generate emotion, which, as we have noted,
helps provide energy for the writing process.

After students have selected an interesting topic, they gather information by
conducting research. This information gathering may simply involve recalling a spe-
cial event, thinking about a favorite place, or trying to imagine what life might have
been like before television. Other purposes for writing might require students to
gather information at the library, surf the Internet for the latest news on a subject,
interview family members or people in the community, or e-mail to local, state, or
federal agencies.

Once the student writer has settled on a topic and collected useful support in-
formation, he or she is ready to begin organizing ideas for presentation—in short, to
develop a plan for writing of some kind. This plan’s form is relatively unimportant,
but the writer should have some kind of organizational scheme for the composition.
This step helps make the piece clear, concise, and thorough. Two formats depicting
the story theme “My Birthday Trip to Universal Studios,” written by an intermediate
student named Jina, are presented as examples in Figures 8.17 and 8.18.
Sometimes children have a difficult time getting started with their composition, or even coming up with an idea compelling enough to commit to paper. In this situation, it is usually helpful to engage in free writing, during which students simply sit for a sustained period of time and write down anything at all that comes to mind. What often emerges is a rather rambling narrative with many idea fragments. Lucy Calkins (1986, 1994) suggests that children begin free writes by simply listing things in their immediate environment until they come to an idea they wish to write about. After students have an organized set of ideas about which to write and have constructed alternative leads, they are ready for the drafting stage.

**Drafting Stage.** The drafting stage represents an author’s first attempt to put ideas in writing. Teachers should emphasize that the most important part of drafting is simply getting thoughts down on paper, not mechanical correctness. A first draft is often referred to as “sloppy copy.” Such fine points as verb tense, subject–verb agreement, or spelling correctness are not important at this stage. Rather, the expression of ideas is the paramount consideration. The following useful tips can help students as they draft:

- Write as though you were telling a story to an interested friend.
- Use your own “voice” instead of trying to sound like your favorite author.
Use words that create a picture in the reader’s mind. Your words should be descriptive and clear.
Be sure to describe sights, sounds, smells, and other sensory images that are important parts of the story you want to tell.
Say what you want to say directly. (More is not necessarily better. Sometimes less is more if words are chosen well.)

During the drafting process, the writer can create several opening sentences or alternative leads for his or her piece. Having an interesting beginning, one that grabs
the reader, helps create a successful composition. For example, Jina’s first attempt to begin her story might have produced the following:

On my birthday my family and I went to Universal Studios. It was a very fun day that I will never forget.

On the other hand, if Jina had written several alternative leads and then picked the most exciting one to begin her story, perhaps she would come up with a more engaging introduction:

Imagine a birthday party with King Kong, E.T., and the stars from “Miami Vice” as your guests! That’s exactly what happened to me on my 13th birthday. If you think that’s something, hold on to your seat while I tell you the rest of my story.

Struggling students may have difficulty getting their ideas down on paper the first time they attempt to draft. Frequently handwriting difficulties impede the flow of ideas. One solution is to allow students to dictate their stories on audio and then transcribe the material onto paper later. This solution helps keep struggling students from becoming frustrated and improves their ability to transcribe a composition to paper. Another option is to allow students to dictate stories to older students or peer tutors. The advantage here is that the storyteller can get valuable and immediate feedback from the peer tutor, aiding in the clarity of the composition.

Revising and Editing. Once the draft has been completed, the author is ready to begin the stages of revising and editing. Revising, or “re-visioning” (taking a second look), involves improving the first draft by including new ideas—or perhaps rearranging current ideas. Editing is the process of rereading the manuscript to find errors and omissions. This phase of the writing process is often a joint effort between the author and peer editors—often classmates—who offer constructive criticism.

The revision process can take several forms. Perhaps the most traditional method is the student–teacher writing conference, in which the student meets with the teacher after she has read the composition. The teacher asks questions and offers suggestions
Evidence-Based Writing Instruction

for revisions. Some teachers like to use a form for recording their comments (see Figure 8.19).

Because many students prefer to get suggestions from their peers before the final publishing stage, another option for improving compositions is peer editing. Students help each other in a collaborative and risk-free environment. Though some students are able to work one-on-one with their peers successfully, peer editing is often more effective in small groups known as teacherless writing teams or peer editing conferences. Three to four students work together to produce their best work. At each stage of the writing process, students share their writing with the team, and team members question the author and offer suggestions for improvement.

During the editing process, students check compositions for misspelled words, usage errors, poor sentence construction, missing topic sentences, awkward language, and coherence. Many teachers encourage students to use word banks (key word lists on the subject), a thesaurus, and a dictionary or the spelling and grammar checking features on word processing programs. Although some advocate consulting reference tools during the drafting stage, Calkins (1986, 1994) recommends reserving them for these final stages of the writing process.

During the editing stage, writers use proofreaders’ marks. These notations clarify an author’s additions, deletions, or rearrangements of information on manuscripts. Figure 8.20 features several examples of proofreaders’ marks teachers might consider demonstrating to young writers.

Many schools now provide students with personal computers (PCs) for writing projects. Although these devices make the editing process both quick and relatively painless, students must first learn keyboarding skills. Selected computer applications for assisting writing development are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Publishing. A natural desire for most authors, young or seasoned, is to share their compositions with an audience. For

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**Figure 8.19**

Writing Evaluation Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Evaluation Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Name ______________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Composition _________________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Evaluation of the Composition:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underdeveloped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Character development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Conflict description</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Figure 8.20**

Proofreaders’ Marks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text with Proofreader Markings</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>injured</td>
<td>is for inserting missing words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie carried the puppy home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s go to Mark’s house over</td>
<td>for moving text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s go to Mark’s house over</td>
<td>for marking out text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
children, publishing can take many exciting forms. One publishing experience common in elementary classrooms is called the author’s chair. Each day at a designated time, young authors who have completed compositions can sign up to share their work in the author’s chair. When the appointed time arrives, students take turns reading their creations to the class, answering questions about their stories and reaping generous applause. Other forms of publishing include letter writing to pen pals, school officials, favorite authors, and media stars or making stories into classroom books, newspapers, and yearbooks. The key to success in publishing is that students feel their writing projects have an audience.

**How Do Interactive Writing Procedures Help Learners Acquire New Writing Skills?**

Interactive writing (Gipe, 2006) can be a powerful way to organize writing instruction and, at the same time, improve reading development for young learners. In recent research (Jones, Reutzel, & Fargo, 2010) interactive writing and writing workshop (discussed later) were discovered to be equally effective in promoting the attainment of early reading skills such as phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and word reading. The idea is for the teacher to demonstrate new ideas about writing for learners in their zones of proximal development—ideas that bridge the reading and writing processes and help students grow in each language area. We begin with a very flexible method of writing instruction known as Writing Aloud, Writing To, followed by activities that fit nicely into this paradigm. Later, we describe other activities that make writing connections with books and other texts for students, followed by bookmaking ideas.

**Writing Aloud, Writing To: A Way of Structuring Your Teaching.** In read-aloud activities, teachers share books orally with students and model such reading essentials as comprehension strategies and decoding skills. Writing Aloud, Writing To (Cooter, 2002; Gunning, 2006) is an adaptation of Routman’s (1995) technique for getting students’ attention and demonstrating various aspects of the writing process. Writing Aloud, Writing To has been used with great success in the Dallas Reading Plan, a massive teacher-education project in Texas that resulted in significant improvement in student writing and reading achievement levels. The Writing To part of the method comes from the notion of writing to, with, and by: In a balanced program of writing instruction, teachers should engage daily in writing to students (demonstrations and mini-lessons), writing with students (guided practice sessions in which students implement new writing skills with the help of the teacher or a more skilled peer), and writing by students (independent writing sessions in which they practice their newly acquired skills).

The materials you will need depend greatly on the kinds of writing strategies you plan to model. In general, we like to use an overhead projector, transparencies, and erasable markers or a large tablet on an easel for writing demonstrations with groups. If the demonstration involves a computer, it is usually best to conduct Writing Aloud, Writing To sessions in small groups unless you have access to a computer projection system.

As with materials, the strategies you will employ will be based on the writing/reading connections you choose to emphasize. Routman (1995) and Cooter (2002) do, however, provide us with some useful tips for Writing Aloud, Writing To.

- The teacher thinks aloud while writing in front of the students.
- Students watch the teacher as he writes and sometimes read aloud with the teacher as he says explicitly what he is doing. This may include the writer’s think-
ing processes, format that has been chosen and why, layout of the piece, spacing, handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and discussion of vocabulary.

- Teachers help students relate the spoken word to the written word at all times.
- The teacher often asks questions that relate to the conventions of writing or features of text.

A graphic was prepared for the Dallas Reading Academy (Cooter, 2002) that summarizes key elements of Writing Aloud, Writing To based on the work of Regie Routman (1995). It is shown in Figure 8.21.

**Morning Message.** A morning message is brief, no more than two to six sentences at students’ ability level for attending to and producing print (Payne & Schulman, 1998). Topics for the morning message are based on recent or upcoming school or class events and ideas or experiences individual students want to share. Typically, the teacher, writes the first sentence of the morning message. It might read, “Good morning, first grade! Today is ____” or “Wow! Yesterday was really special because ____.” Leads such as this get students reading and thinking to start the day.

Next, read the first sentence of the morning message aloud to students. Then, while pointing, have students read it with you. Ask students if they have anything they would like to write to fill in the next part of the morning message. As children offer suggestions, ask them questions like “What will we write first?” or “How many

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**Figure 8.21**

Writing Aloud, Writing To

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To show we write for a purpose</td>
<td>• Morning message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To illustrate that reading and writing</td>
<td>• Daily news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are reciprocal processes (they build</td>
<td>• Mini-lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>each other)</td>
<td>• Responses to literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To develop a sense of community in the</td>
<td>• Directions for routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing Aloud, Writing To**

“A powerful strategy for teacher modeling that helps students cross the bridge to independent writing.”

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**Teacher Modeling Of**

- The conventions of print
- Writing in different genres
- Writing for different purposes
- The thinking involved when composing
- Strategies used by writers
- Expectations for students’ writing

---

**Teaching Tips**

- Have a daily routine.
- Use large, neat print.
- Encourage revising and editing.
- Use alternate colors to emphasize key points.
- Connect the writing process to readings (alignment).
Chapter 8  Writing

sounds do we hear in the first word? Let’s clap and count the sounds.” Sharing the pen with students, write two to six sentences to complete the morning message.

In kindergarten and early first grade, some teachers prepare pictures to be used in place of words to keep the writing of the morning message moving along more rapidly. But by grades 2 or 3, most students will be able to write their messages quite rapidly. Keep the editing pen handy so that you can fix mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization as you talk about them. Morning message provides a nice means of sharing the responsibilities for writing between students and teacher and is an ideal segue into shared writing.

**Shared Writing.** A shared writing session focuses on the teacher writing *with* children—what is sometimes called “sharing the pen” (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 1999). Teachers can employ shared writing for several purposes.

- Connect reading and writing by using literature as a take-off point for writing reproductions, innovations, and new texts
- Help students develop increasingly sophisticated writing skills
- Demonstrate saying words slowly and connecting sounds in words to letters and letter combinations
- Expand students’ repertoire of writing genres and forms
- Help children learn how the spelling process works

The subject and form of shared writing may vary greatly depending on the developmental levels of the students and the context of experiences in the classroom. Typically in the early years, the teacher helps students write simple sentences. As students learn more about the writing process and different types of writing forms and genres, the teacher structures writing activities that become more complex.

**Conducting an Interactive Writing Lesson.** There is no one correct way to teach a shared writing lesson, but based on the writings of McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas (1999), we recommend the following approaches:

1. In the early stages of writing, the teacher should help students compose a simple message drawn from literature or from the group’s experiences. For example, consider this line from *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1986): “On Monday, he ate through one apple.” If the teacher asked children to innovate on what the caterpillar ate on Monday, a child might offer the following: “On Monday, he ate through one tomato.” As the teacher asks students to replace text with new words, as in the preceding example, the entire message is reread from the beginning to help students remember how composing proceeds.

2. Teacher and students share the pen as a message is written word by word. When new words are added to a line of text, the children reread the line up to the added word. In the earliest stages of writing development, the teacher may write the word for students. With time and development, the teacher shares the pen, inviting children to contribute a letter, several letters, or an entire word.

3. Where appropriate, the teacher encourages the child to stretch the word and say it slowly to predict the letters by analyzing the sounds. Children may attempt any letter in the word in any order. Working within the child’s zone of proximal development à la Vygotsky (1962), the teacher fills in those letters that the child is unable to analyze on his own.
4. The teacher can construct a word wall, as recommended by Cunningham (2000), which might be used as a writing resource for students. Words can be listed on the wall as “Words We Know and Can Write,” “Words We Almost Know,” and “Words We Need to Analyze and Write with Help.”

5. As teachers and children write interactively, the teacher helps children learn directionality, punctuation, spaces, features of print, and capitalization. In this fashion, children learn the mechanics and the authoring processes necessary to produce high-quality writing products.

Shared writing sessions typically last from 5 to 15 minutes, depending on the nature of the text to be produced. The goal of the interactive writing is neat, legible, and sensible text.

The Writing Workshop

Writing workshop is an organizational structure for teaching composition skills that can be modified as needed. As noted earlier, this way of orchestrating instruction can help children learn early reading skills (Jones et al., 2010). Instruction can be organized into five phases: teacher sharing time, mini-lesson, state of the class, workshop activities, and student sharing time. Figure 8.22 depicts our organizational scheme for the writing workshop.

Figure 8.22
The Writing Workshop
Phase 1: Teacher Sharing Time (5 to 10 minutes). The purpose of teacher sharing time is to present students with language and experiences through writing that stimulate the natural energies of thinking (Holdaway, 1984). The substance of these teacher-led presentations is usually an assortment of brain-enticing poems, songs, stories, and exposition written by the teacher. The goal is to inspire students to strike out on new adventures in writing. This brief phase should serve as a stimulating introduction to the rest of the writing period.

Phase 2: Mini-Lesson (5 to 10 minutes). The mini-lesson (Calkins, 1986, 1994), is a brief time for teaching skills. Class discussions about activities such as selecting good ideas to write about, gathering reference materials, conducting interviews, organizing information, and publishing are all viable topics. Some common mini-lesson ideas suggested by Atwell (1987) include the following:

- illustrations
- essay writing
- form
- mythology (Greek and Roman)
- résumé writing
- writing conferences with yourself
- correspondence
- focus
- writing short stories
- narrative leads
- spelling
- writing good fiction
- the dictionary
- genre
- job applications
- punctuation
- style

Teachers usually share examples from their own writing or those volunteered by students during mini-lessons. The main focus of the mini-lesson at all grade levels is helping students write with quality at their stage of development.

Phase 3: State of the Class (5 minutes). In the state-of-the-class phase of the writing workshop, the teacher simply lists each student’s name on the left side of a chart and students fill in the blanks for each day, indicating what they will be doing (e.g., drafting, peer conferencing, editing, publishing). Sometimes writing instructors, like Atwell, prefer to complete the state-of-the-class chart in the whole-class setting:

I think the [state-of-the-class] conference is worth three minutes of the whole class’s time. I can’t begin to know all the ways my students find ideas for writing, but I do know that eavesdropping is right up there. When they make their plans public, writers naturally teach each other about new options for topic and genre. (Atwell, 1987, p. 90)

By recording students’ plans for writing and saving them over the weeks of the school year, teachers can see almost at a glance who is failing to progress (Atwell, 1987). This phase of the writing workshop helps teachers set deadlines for key stages of the writing process with individual students, holding them accountable, and also helps teachers determine when “house calls” may be needed.

Phase 4: Workshop Activities (30 minutes). Four activities operate concurrently during the workshop activities phase: (1) prewriting, drafting, and revising; (2) peer conferencing; (3) editing (with the teacher or peers); and (4) preparing for publishing. Students sign up for one of these activities each day and work accordingly during the workshop period. It may be useful to distinguish between activities the teacher is engaged in versus those of the students.

For the teacher, several activities take place during this time. In the first 10 minutes or so of the writing workshop, teachers themselves engage in sustained silent
writing (SSW). In working on a written product of their choice, teachers provide children with models of positive writing behavior as well as writing samples for teacher sharing time. After SSW, the teacher is ready to move on to making individual “house calls” and working with students in private editing sessions.

Students largely move at their own pace during writing workshop activities and select from the four tasks identified. If they choose to prewrite, draft, or revise, students might select topics for narratives, gather resources and references, conduct interviews, create outlines for organizing their documents, and eventually produce drafts.

Once students finish their first drafts, they are ready to sign up for a peer conference. During peer conferencing, small groups of students, usually three or four, read each other’s first drafts and make recommendations for revisions. Peer conferences are sometimes known as “teacherless writing groups” because the teacher is not involved during this analysis phase unless invited by the group for consulting purposes.

Teachers have told us that some students learning the writing workshop system want to peer conference almost all the time. This can be somewhat problematic because even though we want to encourage peer collaboration students need to focus most of their time on writing (i.e., drafting, revising, editing). One solution is to establish guidelines differentiating peer conferences from what might be termed “1-minute conferences.” A student who needs a quick opinion about a composition can usually arrange a 1-minute conference with a peer. Students should not require more than three 1-minute conferences during a writing workshop session.

Group etiquette rules for student interactions should be established early in the school year to ensure maximum productivity and to minimize conflicts. Role-playing is one way to form group-developed rules. Students should be able to come up with a list of their own group etiquette rules that are applicable for all group experiences.

A word regarding classroom noise levels seems warranted. Whenever teachers begin to experiment with modes of instruction that allow students to work on their own or in small groups, the noise level will invariably go up. This may be distressing at first for some teachers, but this issue can be addressed. If the class becomes unruly, then appropriate steps must be taken to maintain class control. More often than not, however, the increase in classroom noise should be viewed as the sound of learning and creative interaction. Silvia Ashton-Warner (1963) refers to this kind of classroom hubbub as “peaceful noise.”

Once the peer conference group meets and considers each student’s manuscript, members make suggestions for improvement. Of course, authors are free to accept or reject their peers’ suggestions. Manuscript revisions follow the peer conference, paving the way for an editing session with the teacher. (p. 86)

Editing sessions are special times for students to meet with the teacher to discuss their writing projects and receive independent skill instruction or coaching. To take part in an editing session, a student signs up the day before the conference and submit a copy of his or her writing project. This allows teachers time to read the composition and prepare notes for the student. Teachers should avoid writing directly on the composition. Instead, remarks should be made on a separate sheet of paper or a stick-on note to prevent defacing the project. When examining some narrative compositions, it may be a good idea to refer to a story grammar outline to make sure all important elements have been included. Semantic and syntactic considerations should also be discussed.

After the editing session, students frequently need to edit or revise further before publishing. It may be desirable for the student and teacher to have an additional
editing session to go over modifications before publishing. A visit to the publishing center to put the writing project into final form is the last stop.

One final point: Publishing does not necessarily happen with every writing project. Sometimes a student will say to the teacher, “I’m running out of interest for this story. May I work on another one?” Most writers occasionally run out of gas during a project and start a new one. Some may have several projects in process. It is not the number of publications a student produces during a given period that is important, but the process itself. Although it is desirable that students reach closure on a regular basis with writing projects, it does not have to happen every time.

Phase 5: Sharing Time (5 to 10 minutes). The writing workshop concludes with student sharing time or publishing. Students proceed to sharing time only with the approval of the teacher after an editing session.

Even students who may be publishing their writing project outside of class (e.g., putting their book in the school library or submitting their work to a children’s magazine) should take part in sharing time. This allows other students to see and enjoy the finished products. The most common format for sharing time is the author’s chair experience, in which students sit before the group and share their composition.

The Writing Center

The writing center is an integral part of the writing workshop approach in the K–3 classroom. Because of the nature of the multiple activities occurring in the writing center, it should be located away from the quiet areas designated for silent sustained writing.

The writing center (see Figure 8.23) often includes three smaller integrated areas:

- Work area for collaborative writing projects, conferences, and editing
- Quiet area for silent sustained writing away from collaborative areas
- Publishing area with necessary supplies

As noted, a space for collaborative writing is designated for children to interact with teachers and peers about their group writing projects—or for individual authors to get ideas or feedback. A conference area with table and chairs or just a quiet carpeted corner can function as a location for conducting peer–student or teacher–student conferences about developing writing projects. An editing area can be located at a desk or table near the conference area. An older student, the teacher, or an adult volunteer can function as an editor for student-authored works in the classroom. An editor’s visor, printer’s apron, various writing and marking media, and a poster displaying editorial marks can be located here for the editor’s use. The publishing area should be stocked with pencils, pens, markers, staplers, and paper of various colors and sizes for covers.
Materials also should be available for students to bind or publish their final writing products in a variety of ways. The location for each of the many supplies in this area can be indicated by a printed label or an outline of the object; doing so makes it easier for students to help in keeping the publishing area neat and tidy. Student works published in this area may take the form of big books, shape books, micro-books, accordion books, letters, notes, lists, posters, bulletin boards, and murals.

The First 6 Weeks of Writing Instruction

From the first day of school, you must show students that you consider them to be competent writers (albeit at their own stage of development). In this section, we offer some general guidelines for structuring writing instruction for the first 6 weeks of school.

Week 1. Writing and reading are reciprocal processes and should be started at the same time. In order to get a sense of momentum established right away, do the following.

• Introduce writing mini-lessons working with the whole group. Mini-lessons could focus on selecting appropriate topics, using graphic organizers, crafting opening sentences (leads), and learning the conventions of writing.

• Make in-class writing assignments to help you begin the assessment process.

• Introduce students to the writing center, the variety of tools available, and their purposes and correct uses.

• Introduce students to the notion of using a “writer’s notebook” for gathering brainstorming ideas, completed graphic organizers, “sloppy copy” first drafts, and so forth. This can take the form of a pocket folder, a file folder kept in an easily accessible storage unit, or a tabbed three-ring binder.

Weeks 2 and 3

• Have students begin making entries in their writer’s notebooks.

• Explain how student writing folders are to be used to store work.

• Introduce the rudiments of letter writing and have students use that format to write a letter to a friend or family member.

Weeks 4 Through 6

• Conduct mini-lessons in small- and large-group settings, focusing primarily on revising and editing fundamentals.

• Post and discuss numerous writing models for each stage of the writing process that meet curriculum or state assessment requirements for best-quality work. Students need to see examples of competent work to understand the expectations.

• Conference with two to three students per day about their progress using work samples in their writing folders.

• Conduct small- and whole-group guided writing sessions.

• Introduce writing backpacks as homework assignments that involve parents.

• If adult volunteers are available, begin to assign them to struggling writers to assist in specific areas of need. You must first train the volunteers on writing activities they can deliver and then match them to students having that particular need.
Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to Intervention: Using Tier 2 Writing Interventions

Written expression remains a primary means of communication in modern society and is used to assess knowledge across academic content areas (Mason, Benedek-Wood, & Valasa, 2009). Thus, students’ academic achievement often depends on the ability to write well (Mason, Benedek-Wood, & Valasa, 2009). As we saw earlier, results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress 2007 writing test were unimpressive; 74 percent and 65 percent of students in 8th and 12th grades, respectively, did not meet the proficiency skill level in writing (Salahu-Din et al., 2008). This is a clear indication that many if not most students will, from time to time, require Tier 2 classroom interventions to help continue their growth as writers.

In this part of the chapter we begin by sharing two strategies for assisting struggling writers that may be used in small-group settings for Tier 2 instruction: quick write and POW + TREE. Then we turn our attention to English learners (EL) and their special needs through a strategy called generous reading and writing.

Quick Writes and POW + TREE

A quick write uses writing as a vehicle to activate students’ prior knowledge on a particular topic (Fisher & Frey, 2008) and can promote various types of thinking such as (1) reflecting on prior knowledge, (2) recalling specific information, (3) summarizing content, or (4) expressing thoughts, opinions, reactions, or questions (Mason et al., 2009). Quick writes can be used at the beginning, middle, or end of a lesson to draw out student thinking about specific topics and incorporate writing to make learning connections across subject areas.

Quick writes usually begin with the teacher posing a question to which students respond by writing for 10 minutes about their thoughts. As with many writing activities, struggling writers often write too little and with little development of a thesis or argument. Mason and colleagues (2009) illustrate this problem with an example of a student who responded cryptically to a question about free downloads on the Internet and authors’ rights: “When people download music from the Internet it should be free. People put that music on the Internet for free so why do other people that visit that page have to pay?” (p. 305).

Quick writes can be developed and extended to written summaries using two proven organizing tools (Graham & Perin, 2007): POW and TREE. POW is an acronym for a three-step planning strategy (Pick my idea, Organize my notes and ideas, Write and say more). TREE is another mnemonic for helping students expand and organize their thinking and writing (Topic sentence, Reasons [three or more], Examine, Ending). Used together as POW + TREE students are helped to become more fluent and reflective writers (Mason et al., 2009). In Figure 8.24 we share the POW + TREE mnemonic for classroom use. As with the introduction of all new tools and strategies, teachers should provide direct instruction and a gradual release of responsibility to students with POW + TREE: introduce and explain, teacher modeling and think aloud, guided practice, and independent practice.
Understanding English Learners Through Generous Reading

Lucy Spence (2010) shares a writing sample from an English learner (EL) named “Delia” (a pseudonym) from her research on an approach to assessment known as generous reading:

I believe that people have to help the world be a better place. Lots of animals are dying of the water because the water is polluted and animals drink the water and they die (p. 634)

Generous reading is an informal way of looking beyond grammar and spelling miscues to “hear” a student’s message. In the instance just noted, using a generous reading perspective will allow teachers to readily see that Delia has great concern for pollution and the welfare of animals. Generous reading helps us to take into consideration the multiple cultures, home language, history, and social settings that EL students draw on as they write (Coady & Escamilla, 2005).

It was learned in landmark research conducted by Edelsky (1986) that ELs construct theories about writing as they apply and transfer grammar rules, use complex syntax and stylistic devices, and make modifications based on audience awareness. Edelsky’s findings call into question formally held beliefs that “poor children who speak non-standard varieties of one or more languages are language-deficient or semi-lingual” (p. 59).

Because generous reading can be time-consuming for busy teachers—an average of about 20 minutes per student artifact (depending on length and complexity, of course), Spence (2010) suggests using generous reading with only a few (three to five) EL students per week. Be sure to keep ongoing records of students’ progress and use these insights to plan your next steps in writing instruction. The most promising aspect of generous reading is the potential to help teachers expand their understanding of EL writing over time.

Motivation and Engagement

Motivating and Engaging Students to Write

Motivation to write is a very different animal from motivation to read. Readers can be motivated to read in order to know more about a topic of interest and link new information to that which they already know. Readers are consumers. Writers, on the other hand, are producers of text rather than consumers. They must persist in the writing task frequently without feedback from another person and do not always feel entirely competent at the undertaking (Hidi & Boscolo, 2006).

One of our jobs as teachers is to help young writers have a sense of self-efficacy—a positive belief about one’s ability to perform a task at a developmentally appropriate level.
How we structure writing experiences and offer feedback determines the kind of self-efficacy learners will possess in our classroom. Following are some strategies we feel help teachers accomplish the twin goals of effective teaching and building student self-efficacy.

Write-Talks

Book talks are a popular activity for helping students learn about new books and motivating recreational reading. The idea is that students prepare a short introductory talk about a favorite book for the class. They explain a little about the nature of the book, then read aloud an excerpt that leaves readers wondering what will come next. When we do book talks we usually end by saying something like, “And if you want to know what happens, I guess you’ll just have to read the book!”

Teacher Amy Wilson (2008) asked herself one day why she was not doing something similar to book talks to engender a love of writing and created write-talks. She developed several research-based steps for conducting write-talks and found the activity quite successful in motivating young writers.

**Step 1: Ask your students to identify and discuss adults they admire.** Identified individuals can be invited to give write-talks in your classroom about real aspects of their lives. Parents tend to be the most common people students think of, but others (e.g., scout leaders, musicians, grandparents, athletes, etc.) are also possible candidates.

**Step 2: Invite adults to give write-talks in your classroom.** One of the authors of this book remembers well a third-grade student in his class who suggested her grandfather who grew up in the Cajun culture in southern Louisiana. He first read aloud some of his memories from childhood prepared for the event and then later shared one of his favorite books, *Cajun Night Before Christmas* (Trosclear, 2000). The students were absolutely enthralled by his write-talk and oral reading. This led to students writing about their own experiences which they compared and contrasted to our visitor’s, as well as creative rewrites of favorite Christmas and other stories.

**Step 3: Ask students to prepare a list of questions for the guest writer before, during, and after the write-talk.**

**Step 4: Use examples from your write-talk guests to examine aspects of writing that are relevant to your curriculum.**

A lesson plan using write-talks can be downloaded online at www.readwritethink.org under the title “Write-Talks: Students Discovering Real Writers, Real Audiences, Real Purposes.”

Reading and Analyzing Nonfiction (RAN) Strategy

Tony Stead (2001, 2006), an Australian teacher, points out that some 85 percent of all reading that we do as adults is nonfiction or informative in nature, but most of what we deal with in K–3 classrooms is personal narrative or fiction. We believe that all learners are motivated by an increased diet of nonfiction reading and writing activities. Not only that, children truly enjoy expository texts. Reading informational writing can help children do the following:

- Increase their concept knowledge and vocabulary
- Learn important research skills with a variety of tools
- Develop cooperative learning abilities
Motivating and Engaging Students to Write

- Distinguish the writing patterns and styles used by authors in constructing informational texts

Stead (2006) explains that good learning with expository/informational texts has students talking, listening, seeing, exploring, questioning, observing, and sharing. In the reading and analyzing nonfiction strategy (RAN), Stead has produced innovations on the popular K-W-L strategy (Ogle, 1986) to promote small-group interactive learning. Featured in Figure 8.25 is an example of our interpretation of Stead's RAN model completed by a group of students beginning a study of arachnids (spiders).

With the RAN strategy learners begin by working as a team to list what they think they know about the subject. This creates an implicit understanding in the learner’s mind that some of what they think they know may not be true and that it is okay to have some knowledge that is not accurate.

The second part of RAN involves students in looking for information about the subject—researching. Stead (2006) explains that information resources must be preselected by the teacher to ensure that students do not become frustrated in trying to locate information or lose precious time reading unrelated or unreliable sources. After the team’s research is completed, they compile what they have learned in the

**Figure 8.25**

Reading and Analyzing Nonfiction (RAN) Team Learning Form: Arachnids Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What We Think We Know About This Topic</th>
<th>Information We Have Confirmed</th>
<th>New Information and Facts We Have Learned</th>
<th>Some Misconceptions We Have Learned About This Topic</th>
<th>We Now Wonder . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They're scary</td>
<td>Songs about spiders* we found in the Internet:</td>
<td>The scientific name for spiders is arachnids. There are 37,000 species of arachnids. Some spiders eat insects we don’t like such as flies and mosquitoes. Others eat frogs, fish, lizards, and snakes.</td>
<td>Some people think spiders have hair, so they must be mammals. Spiders are not mammals, they are insects. Some think spiders kill people, but no one has died from a spider bite in 20 years. All spiders eat bugs—not true. Some eat animals. Some people think there are spiders that are as big as a cat, or even bigger. This is not true since the biggest spider is the size of a dinner plate.</td>
<td>What is the biggest spider in North America, since we live there? What is the strongest kind of silk made by spiders? Can you make clothes out of spider silk? Do any spiders live under water? Where did the name “arachnid” come from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We think there is a song about an Eensy Weensy spider</td>
<td>Eensy Weensy Spider Spider Dance Busy Spider Four Little Spiders</td>
<td>Most spiders carry venom to stun or kill creatures they want to eat, not to hurt humans. Of all spiders only about 25 are thought to have venom that can hurt humans. Not all spiders are poisonous. Two venomous spiders in the U.S. are the black widow and brown recluse—but they have not been proven to kill people in more than 20 years. The biggest spider is the Goliath bird eater tarantula. It is found in the rainforests of northeastern South America, and can be as big as a dinner plate. It can grab birds from their nests! The smallest spider is from Borneo and is the size of a pinhead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My cousin says to stay away from them ‘cause they'll hurt you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They kill people every now and then</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All spiders are poisonous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The biggest spider is as big as a cat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


columns labeled “Information We Have Confirmed” and “New Information and Facts We Have Learned.” In doing this, students give evidence that they recognize the validity of some of their previous knowledge and can articulate their new knowledge. In the next column of the summary form, students list misconceptions about the topic they have debunked as a result of their research.

The final column of the RAN Team Learning Form is directed toward what the learners still wonder about. For the topic of spiders, learners may wonder how they can tell which spiders are poisonous or which spiders can be found in their hometown. If they are learning about zebras, they might wonder if the stripes are as different as fingerprints in humans. This “wondering” column is driven by students’ research and frequently results in higher levels of learning and comprehension.

RAN can be quite useful as a prewriting tool. To help students use RAN to move into the drafting stage of writing, teachers must provide direct and explicit modeling examples.
Motivating and Engaging Students to Write

For teacher “think-aloud” modeling, it may be helpful to use a graphic organizer like the one recommended in the Memphis Striving Readers Project called “Structure for Written Retellings” or SWR (Cooter, 2006), as shown in Figure 8.26. A completed version of the SWR is shown in Figure 8.27, in which the teacher has

**Figure 8.27**
Example of a Completed Structure for Written Retellings on Arachnids

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiders are very interesting creatures, and are even scary to some people. The scientific name for spiders is “arachnids,” and they are insects. There are 37,000 kinds of spiders. There are even songs about spiders we learn in school. In this report we will learn facts and misconceptions about this special living thing we learned in our book and on the Internet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic #1 (from graphic organizer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One misconception is that all spiders are poisonous. Some spiders are poisonous, or “venomous,” but not all spiders have venom. Spiders use venom to stun or kill creatures they want to eat. Of over 37,000 kinds of spiders, only about 25 have venom that can hurt humans. Two spiders in the U.S. with venom that can hurt humans are the black widow and the brown recluse, but no one has been proven killed in over two decades (20 years).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic #2 (from graphic organizer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Another misconception is that some spiders can be larger than a cat. Spiders come in many sizes. The largest is the Goliath birdeater tarantula. It is found in the rain forests of northeastern South America, and can be as big as a dinner plate. It can grab birds from their nests! The smallest spider is from Borneo and is the size of a pinhead. So, there are no spiders larger than a cat, but they can be very large and also very small.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic #3 (from graphic organizer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One thing we learned is that different arachnids eat different things. Many spiders eat insects, but not all do. There are spiders who dine on birds, frogs, fish, lizards, and snakes. So it is not true that all spiders eat bugs!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic #4 (from graphic organizer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are other things about arachnids, or spiders, that we still do not know. What is the largest spider in North America? Is it as big as the Goliath birdeater tarantula? We hope not. Also, is the silk spiders make all the same kind? How strong is their silk? Could you make clothes out of spider silk? We wonder where the name “arachnid” came from? And what about water spiders? Do any of them actually live under water? We still have a lot to learn about arachnids.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiders, or arachnids, are very interesting insects. They come in many sizes, live on different things, and some are poisonous. We want to know more about this special creature.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
demonstrated how information gathered using RAN could be transposed onto the Structure for Written Retellings (SWR) graphic organizer to create a first draft of a summary paper. (Note: In modeling, teachers should use alternative examples of previously learned material cast in the RAN format because it is the process, not the content, that is being emphasized.)

Technology and New Literacies That Promote Writing

Writing is one of the most prevalent skills needed in a digital age. From e-mails and text messaging to wiki writing to blogging, learners have myriad opportunities to practice their drafting, editing, and publishing skills in ways never imagined just a few decades ago (Zawilinski, 2009; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009). Here are some ideas we have used successfully in federally funded research projects in schools with some of the country’s most economically disadvantaged children (Reutzel & Cooter, 2011).

Wiki Writing

The term wiki refers to a jointly authored document that is searchable and contains links to other parts of the document and/or to related information on the Internet. Unlike blogs, which limit readers to offering comments about the content of an electronic document, wikis allow visitors to the online site to change the content. The online encyclopedia, Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org) is a popular wiki example.

Wiki writing (Morgan & Smith, 2008) in the classroom has students researching topics and creating online multimedia reports using wiki technology to encourage collaboration between students and the teacher. The first order of business for the teacher is to set up a classroom wiki site on one of the online resources available. PBWiki (pbwiki.com) and the Edublogs affiliate Wikispaces (www.wikispaces.com) are examples of sites often used by classroom teachers to set up their own wiki writing projects. Students will then need explicit instruction and modeling as to how wikis work, explaining terms like usernames and passwords and showing ways they can create their own composition pages for reports within the classroom wiki site. You will also need to teach students basic wiki text skills using revising and editing tools as well as other online resources (grammar, thesaurus).

Once they understand the schedule and due dates, students begin conducting research in the school library and online. Collaboration is an important aspect of wiki writing (Morgan & Smith, 2008), so students might be assigned to teams with the responsibility of making regular comments and recommendations on team members’ work. Virtual sticky notes and footnotes are wiki tools usually available for this purpose.

Morgan and Smith (2008) suggest ideas for using wiki writing. First, remember that wikis are almost “bulletproof.” Any mistake can be easily fixed and original documents are recoverable with a single mouse click. Second, because wikis are set
Using Wikis to Promote Writing

As students’ writing skills extend to online communications, teachers have more resources available to help them engage students. The following are examples of resources often used by classroom teachers to set up their own wiki writing projects.

**PBWiki**
This website hosts wikis for organizations, businesses, and schools. For information on how this site will help educators set up wikis in different settings and how to get started, go to www.pbwiki.com.

**Edublogs affiliate Wikispaces**
Another wiki host to businesses, organizations, and schools, you can read about how you can create your own classroom wiki by going to www.wikispaces.com.

up as a group of linked pages, create a “playground page” where you and your students can attempt wiki experiments without any apprehension. Third, explore other wikis and note the source code of pages you like (there is usually a button on the wiki where the source code is revealed). By copying and pasting, you can borrow these pages. Fourth, create a structure for your wiki writing project. This might include a page for each major category of information, a page for each student, a page for each book to be discussed, a page for each topic in a unit of study, and a page for each collaborative group of students.

e-Reading and e-Responding

A study by Lotta Larson (2009) presented research on students who, instead of reading traditional texts and writing in student response journals, read e-books on laptop computers and responded to readings in electronic response journals. **e-Reading and e-responding** was shown to improve student engagement and increase writing to such an extent in the fifth-grade classroom studied that the teacher, Mrs. Stitt, decided to move her literacy circles online.

Laptop or other personal computers are needed, along with e-books you have selected. Larson lists some sources for free online e-books (see Table 8.3). Students will choose one e-book title from the selection to read. Also present a handout for prompt writing such as Figure 8.28, which was used by students in Mrs. Stitt’s fifth grade and can be easily adapted for your own use.

In the Larson (2009) study, Mrs. Stitt’s fifth-grade students had the choice of reading the e-book version of one of two books. In this case, there were 15 reading and responding sessions in which students participated. While reading, students share their reactions, questions, and thoughts about the e-book in an electronic response journal. After reading the e-book, students log onto an online message board to discuss and respond to the reading. Because the e-books, e-journals, and online
message boards are acquired through the laptop, the transition to each activity is relatively seamless.

As with all new learning, it is important for the teacher to explicitly explain, model, and allow for student practice on each of the tasks to be performed. If possible, explanations and modeling are best done with the whole class using a laptop, projector, and screen. Some of the most obvious and critical elements to explain include log-in procedures, how to respond to prompts, and vocabulary (e.g., thread, prompt, post). It is a good idea to offer a reminder that this is a learning activity and that students are expected to stay on task and use appropriate language. In a typical session, students read and respond in their e-journals before reading and responding to other responses from classmates.

Larson (2009) explains that students were shown how to construct five kinds of research-based prompts to deepen the quality of threaded discussions and, we believe, promote higher-order comprehension: experiential prompts, aesthetic prompts, cognitive prompts, interpretative prompts, and clarification prompts.

- **Experiential prompts.** Focus on what the reader brings to the experience (i.e., prior knowledge and experiences). These threads might begin with the question, “Have you ever . . .”
- **Aesthetic prompts.** Inspire, as Larson (2009, p. 643) reports, “heartfelt, and sometimes heated, discussions among group members.” They promote emotional reactions to the text such as empathy or character identification.
How Family and Community Connections Can Foster Writing

**Cognitive prompts.** Encourage students to make predictions, solve problems, make inferences, and other higher-order responses.

**Interpretative prompts.** Involve higher-level reasoning and analysis. Readers are often encouraged to think about moral values, meaning, or message, making judgments. You can expect students to offer rich replies and express personal thoughts and viewpoints.

**Clarification prompts.** Request more information to find an answer to a specific question related to the text. Entries often offer myriad perspectives. These prompts help students make sense of what they are learning. As noted, see Figure 8.28 for an instructional handout to help students construct prompts. We feel this strategy would be equally useful with nonfiction and fiction texts.

**Figure 8.28**

Instructional Handout for Prompt Writing

Name: ___________________________ Group ______________

1. Think about the part that you read today in your book.
   - What did you like?
   - What questions do you have?
   - What did this chapter make you feel or think about?
   - What would you have done if you were in a similar situation?

2. Write two quality prompts (new threads) that can be used to start a good discussion in your group. Your prompts should relate to the book.

3. You will post your BEST prompt on the Message Board. Your prompt must be approved by Mrs. Stitt BEFORE you post.
   - Prompt 1: ________________________________________________________
   - Prompt 2: ________________________________________________________

Check your work:
- My prompt relates to the book.
- My prompts are open-ended and cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.”
- My prompts make my group members think about what they have read.

IRA Standards for Reading Professionals: Standard 4, Elements 4.1, 4.2, 4.3
Common Core Standards: Writing: K–12, Production and Distribution of Writing (item 4)
Response to Intervention: Collaboration

Family and Community Connections

How Family and Community Connections Can Foster Writing

Family and community involvement is indeed a pillar of comprehensive literacy education. In this section we explore two options for strengthening these connections
that have seen success in increasing student learning. The first, Camp Imagination, is a terrific summer program you may be able to get started at your school. The second, Traveling Tales Backpacks, is a strategy we have used extensively in our own classroom practices as a means for getting parents directly involved in the writing development of their children.

**Camp Imagination**

Educators are always concerned about the “summer slump” when students’ reading and writing skills tend to regress during the summer break. Many argue that a lengthy summer vacation does not make good educational sense and is simply an anachronism unique to American education, a leftover of agrarian times when children were needed to help in family farming. Many European schools, for instance, break for about one month during summer, thus lengthening the school year and significantly lessening the summer slump impact. Since the latter part of the twentieth-century, scores of school districts, churches, and social agencies have experimented with summer programs aimed at helping some of the more at-risk students keep their literacy skills developing.

Camp Imagination (Jurand, 2009) is a summer tutoring program in Kansas for elementary students that has enjoyed great success. In this model students from a number of schools in the same school district are bussed to a single school for tutoring. Sessions meet for 3 hours each morning over 3½ weeks. Tutoring is separated into two instructional groups: primary (kindergarten and grade 1) and intermediate (grades 2 through 4), with low teacher–student ratios (we feel about eight to ten students per teacher would be optimal).

The curriculum of Camp Imagination has a central thrust of incorporating visualization in the writing process. Jurand (2009) explains that students participate in four field experiences: Fishing at the neighborhood pond, Hiking on the prairie, Visiting a local nature center, and Touring the city fire department. Field experiences provide motivation for students to write through real-world events that give students purpose and audience. Students record immediate responses to the field experiences in their art/writing journals. Classes brainstorm ideas through discussion around digital photographs taken during the outings. Once a topic is decided, the students create artistic illustrations using a variety of media including markers, crayons, pencils, clay, and watercolors. These products are always referred to respectfully as their “art work.” This picture-writing is used as part of the prewriting process serving to incorporate visualization in the writing process.

Although each day of the summer tutoring program looks a bit different, elements are all related to a writing workshop framework similar to our previous discussion. Mini-lessons focus on topics such as choosing words, learning and practicing writing conventions, selecting writing topics, and using art to stimulate understanding of details. Students write descriptive narratives, personal memoirs, and informational technical pieces. Teachers also integrate quality literature as touchstone literary pieces in the mini-lessons.

Camp concludes after 3½ weeks of field experiences and writing. In the closing activity, students choose their favorite experience and continue to expand the piece using the complete writing process. All final products are evaluated using six-trait analysis (described earlier).
Traveling Tales Backpack

We have used the traveling tales backpack (Reutzel & Fawson, 1990; Reutzel & Fawson, 1998; Yellin & Blake, 1994) strategy to involve parents and children in collaborative writing projects. A traveling tales backpack (see Figure 8.29) is filled with writing media and guidelines for parents to work with their children at home in producing a self-selected writing project.

The backpack is sent home with the student for two nights. To maximize involvement and success, parents are contacted by phone or note before the backpack is sent home. Parents and children can choose a variety of ways to respond to their favorite book: They can write shape stories, pocketbooks, accordion books, or cards. Included in the traveling tales backpack is a letter to parents with guidelines on how to engage their child in the writing process.

After completing the writing project together, parent and child are invited to share their work with the class in the author’s chair at school. After sharing, the written product is placed on display for students to read and enjoy.

Summary

Writing instruction is an essential part of a comprehensive literacy program. Among numerous benefits, writing shares the same cognitive processes as reading (Shanahan, 2006), helps children crystallize their understanding of important reading skills such as phonics and other word recognition skills (Juel & Minden-Cupp, 2004), and has great power in helping students’ deepen procedural knowledge about how to access, use, and generate information (Mason et al., 1991).

In this chapter we saw how writing develops progressing from scribbles and drawing in the early stages to transitional and fluent written communications. Comprehensive writing instruction ensures that students learn logical stages of the writing process and involves the construction of both narrative writing and expository passages in various forms. Thus, students learn the logic of writing conventions used by myriad writers—they become “insiders” in the world of authoring texts. Over time, student writers begin to read in order to learn how their author-peers maneuver the English language to tell a story or expound on ideas to guide the construction of their own compositions.

Part of our journey through this chapter involved an exploration of the specific writing skills to be learned at each level and how to assess student knowledge in a real-world classroom. Tools added to our assessment toolboxes included the use of story grammars, rubrics, and the six-trait scoring assessment paradigm. These tools help us to monitor student progress, differentiate instruction by forming small groups according to student needs, and plan “next steps” in instruction.

Once we have gathered initial assessment data on student knowledge in writing the teacher is ready to begin instruction. We learned about the basic stages of the writing process that may be used to author everything from poetry to biographies. We also saw how critical the teacher’s role is in modeling the writing process, and in establishing collaborative writing activities such as Writing Aloud, Writing To as well as shared writing, interactive writing lessons, and the writing workshop.
Differentiating instruction is critical if we are to meet the needs of every learner. Appropriate uses of technology for reaching English learners (ELs) and students with special needs were explored including generous reading, classroom wiki writing and e-responding. We also saw how Ogle’s (1986) popular K-W-L strategy can be modified to better motivate students’ written academic summaries through Stead’s (2001, 2006) reading and analyzing nonfiction strategy (RAN).

Families have an important role to play in student learning, as we saw in this chapter on writing. A powerful strategy we have used ourselves, traveling tales backpacks (Reutzel & Fawson, 1998; Yellin & Blake, 1994), was described in some detail. We also took a look at a summer program called Camp Imagination where students are taught to use imagery and art as part of the writing process. Using these and the other evidence-based ideas presented in this chapter can help you create a community of writers in your own classroom!

Field and Classroom Applications

- This activity is intended for those who are practicing teachers or teacher education students working closely with a teacher in a practicum experience. We call this activity “The Investigator.” Assume the role of an investigator to discover and describe instructional resources for writing that are available to teachers at your school. Complete a summary chart for your investigator’s notebook (it can take any form) showing specific materials of any type (i.e., books, nonprint materials, computer-related items, etc.) available to supplement your writing curriculum. You should search for the following resources that may be available at your school:
  - Resources available in your school library
  - Resources for accommodating struggling readers and writers
  - Graphic organizer resources
  - Computer resources (hardware and software, as well as on the Internet)
  - Resources to help student with their written retellings about new subject-related information.
- Using your notebook, write a brief news article (two to three double-spaced pages) reporting on what you find. Be sure to include a statement of needs that your principal should consider to help you do your job as a core content teacher. Note: Be sure to attach your summary chart with your news article as backup support.

- This is an activity for teacher education students or practicing teachers we call “Sage on the Stage.” It may be done as a small-group activity or individually. Assume the role of a master teacher who is now touring the country conducting 3-day seminars for elementary or middle school teachers (you decide). Your task is to develop “real-world classroom examples” to illustrate proven assessment or writing instruction strategies.
  a. Select four writing assessment and/or teaching strategies from this chapter for your workshop.
  b. Develop model examples you can share with the teachers attending your seminar. Be sure to identify key textbook readings and any supplemental materials you might use.
  c. Create a list of resources for writing instruction based on what is available at your school (if you already a teacher) or with a partner school (if you are a teacher education student). This will help you produce an authentic presentation with actual school resources.
  d. Develop a lesson plan or handout showing how you would implement these strategies specifically. State clearly which writing assessment or teaching strategy you would use and the procedure. Remember, this will be new information for teachers in your seminar, so they will need for you to be very specific.

Recommended Resources

Print Resources


**Web Resources**

www.readwritethink.org  
Read Write Think  
A special website for teachers co-sponsored by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. Provides free lesson plans and other instructional aids for teaching reading and the other language arts.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page  
Wikipedia  
A free encyclopedia that anyone can edit or provide information on myriad topics.

National Geographic’s  
Features different people, animals, and places each month with facts, games, activities, and related links.

http://interactive2.usgs.gov/learningweb/students  
USGS Learning Web  
The U.S. Geological Survey provides scientific information intended to help educate the public about natural resources, natural hazards, geospatial data, and issues that affect our quality of life. Discover selected online resources, including lessons, data, maps, and more, to support teaching, learning, education (K–12), and university-level inquiry and research.

www.smithsonianeducation.org  
Smithsonian Education  
Education resources and information, lesson plans, field trips, and fun interactive activities for educators, families, and students.

http://pbskids.org  
PBS Kids  
Research-based educational games, watch PBS Kids shows and activities.

www.ozprojects.edna.edu.au/sibling/home  
Oz Projects  
The OzProjects website provides access to a host of resources to support students’ involvement in online projects. There is a Teachers’ Group section for educators new to online projects where you can view ideas for projects and/or create an account (no charge) and enroll in projects which have been created by the OzProjects team. You can also request an OzProjects space to create your own online project. After requesting and developing your own project in OzClassrooms you can invite others to join your project if you wish.

www.starfall.com  
Starfall  
Starfall began as a free public service to motivate children to read with phonics. Their systematic phonics approach and phonemic awareness practice is targeted for preschool, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, special education, homeschool, and English language development (ELD, ELL, ESL).

www.funbrain.com  
Funbrain  
Provides online educational games for kids of all ages (math, grammar, science, spelling, history).
To come

• To come
# STANDARDS
for Reading Professionals and Guiding Principles for Educators

## What Teachers Need to Know About Teaching Writing

### IRA Standards for Reading Professionals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge</th>
<th>Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Element 1.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Element 6.2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates understand major theories and empirical research that describe the cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and sociocultural foundations of reading and writing development, processes, and components, including word recognition, language comprehension, strategic knowledge, and reading–writing connections.</td>
<td>Candidates display positive dispositions related to their own reading and writing and the teaching of reading and writing, and pursue the development of individual professional knowledge and behaviors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Element 1.3

Candidates understand the role of professional judgment and practical knowledge for improving all students’ reading development and achievement.

### Common Core Standards

Teachers should be familiar with the following standards.

**Writing: K–5**

**Text Types and Purposes**

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

**Production and Distribution of Writing**

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Writing: Grades 6–12**

The grades 6–12 standards on the following pages define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. They correspond to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below by number. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.

**Text Types and Purposes**

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
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8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

**Response to Intervention**
6. **Expertise**
   - Important dimensions of teachers’ expertise include their knowledge and understanding of language and literacy development, their ability to use powerful assessment tools and techniques, and their ability to translate information about student performance into instructionally relevant instructional techniques.
   - Success for culturally and linguistically diverse students depends on teachers and support personnel who are well prepared to teach in a variety of settings. Deep knowledge of cultural and linguistic differences is especially critical for the prevention of language and literacy problems in diverse student populations.

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**Classroom Writing Assessment**

**IRA Standards for Reading Professionals**

**Standard 3: Assessment and Evaluation**

**Element 3.1**
Candidates understand types of assessments and their purposes, strengths, and limitations.

**Element 3.2**
Candidates select, develop, administer, and interpret assessments, both traditional print and electronic, for specific purposes.

**Common Core Standards**

Teachers must be able to assess students’ ability to do the following.

**Writing: K–12**

**Text Types and Purposes**
1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

**Production and Distribution of Writing**
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge**
7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Range of Writing**
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 tasks, purposes, and audiences.
Response to Intervention

3. Assessment

- Assessments, tools, and techniques should provide useful and timely information about desired language and literacy goals. They should reflect authentic language and literacy activities as opposed to contrived texts or tasks generated specifically for assessment purposes. The quality of assessment information should not be sacrificed for the efficiency of an assessment procedure.
- Multiple purposes for assessment should be clearly identified and appropriate tools and techniques employed . . . Particular care should be taken in selecting assessments for ELLs and for students who speak an English dialect that differs from mainstream dialects.

Evidence-Based Writing Instruction

IRA Standards for Reading Professionals

**Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction**

**Element 2.1**
Candidates use foundational knowledge to design or implement an integrated, comprehensive, and balanced curriculum.

**Element 2.2**
Candidates use appropriate and varied instructional approaches, including those that develop word recognition, language comprehension, strategic knowledge, and reading–writing connections.

**Element 2.3**
Candidates use a wide range of texts (e.g., narrative, expository, and poetry) from traditional print, digital, and online resources.

**Standard 4: Diversity**

**Element 4.1**
Candidates recognize, understand, and value the forms of diversity that exist in society and their importance in learning to read and write.

**Standard 5: Literate Environment**

**Element 5.1**
Candidates design the physical environment to optimize students’ use of traditional print, digital, and online resources in reading and writing instruction.

**Element 5.2**
Candidates design a social environment that is low risk and includes choice, motivation, and scaffolded support to optimize students’ opportunities for learning to read and write.

**Element 5.3**
Candidates use routines to support reading and writing instruction (e.g., time allocation, transitions from one activity to another, discussions, and peer feedback).

Common Core Standards

**Writing: K–5**

**Text Types and Purposes**
1. (See previous)
2. (See previous)
3. (See previous)

**Production and Distribution of Writing**
4. (See previous)
5. (See previous)
6. (See previous)

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge**
7. (See previous)
8. (See previous)
9. (See previous)

**Range of Writing**
10. (See previous)

**Writing: Grades 6–12**

**Text Types and Purposes**
1. (See previous)
Response to Intervention

1. Instruction
   • The success of RTI depends on the classroom teacher’s use of research-based practices.
   • Research on instructional practices must provide not only information about what works, but also what works with whom, by whom, in what contexts, and on which outcomes. The effectiveness of a particular practice needs to have been demonstrated with the types of students who will receive the instruction, taking into account, for example, whether the students live in rural or urban settings or come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
   • RTI is centrally about optimizing language and literacy instruction for particular students. This means that differentiated instruction, based on instructionally relevant assessment, is essential.
   • Instruction and materials selection must derive from specific student–teacher interactions and not be constrained by packaged programs. No single approach to instruction or intervention can address the broad and varied goals and needs of all students, especially those from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

5. Systemic and Comprehensive Approaches
   • RTI needs to be integrated within the context of a coherent and consistent language and literacy curriculum that guides comprehensive instruction for all students.
   • Specific approaches to RTI need to be appropriate for the particular school or district culture and take into account leadership, expertise, the diversity of the student population, and the available resources.
   • Approaches to RTI must be sensitive to developmental differences in language and literacy among students at different ages and grades.

Response to Intervention: Using Tier 2 Writing Interventions

IRA Standards for Reading Professionals

Standard 5: Literate Environment

Writing: K–5
Text Types and Purposes
1. (See previous)
2. (See previous)
3. (See previous)

Production and Distribution of Writing
4. (See previous)
5. (See previous)
6. (See previous)

Research to Build and Present Knowledge
7. (See previous)
8. (See previous)
9. (See previous)

Range of Writing
10. (See previous)

Common Core Standards

Writing: Grades 6–12
Text Types and Purposes
1. (See previous)
2. (See previous)
3. (See previous)

Production and Distribution of Writing
4. (See previous)
5. (See previous)
6. (See previous)

Research to Build and Present Knowledge
7. (See previous)
8. (See previous)
9. (See previous)

Range of Writing
10. (See previous)
Technology and New Literacies That Promote Writing

IRA Standards for Reading Professionals

Standard 5: Literate Environment

Element 5.1 (See previous)

**Response to Intervention**

1. **Instruction**
   - Whatever approach is taken to RTI, it should ensure optimal instruction for every student at all levels of schooling. It should prevent serious language and literacy problems through increasingly differentiated and intensified assessment and instruction and reduce the disproportionate number of minority youth and ELLs identified as learning disabled.
   - Research on instructional practices must provide not only information about what works, but also what works with whom, by whom, in what contexts, and on which outcomes.

Response to Intervention

2. **Responsive Teaching and Differentiation**
   - Instruction and materials selection must derive from specific student–teacher interactions and not be constrained by packaged programs.

Response to Intervention

5. **Systemic and Comprehensive Approaches**
   - RTI needs to be integrated within the context of a coherent and consistent language and literacy curriculum that guides comprehensive instruction for all students.

Motivating and Engaging Students to Write

IRA Standards for Reading Professionals

Standard 5: Literate Environment

Element 5.2 (See previous)

**Response to Intervention**

1. **Instruction**
   - Instruction and assessment conducted by the classroom teacher are central to the success of RTI and must address the needs of all students, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Response to Intervention

1. **Instruction**
   - The success of RTI depends on the classroom teacher’s use of research-based practices.
   - Research on instructional practices must provide not only information about what works, but also what works with whom, by whom, in what contexts, and on which outcomes.

Common Core Standards

Writing: K–12
Production and Distribution of Writing

6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
IRA Standards for Reading Professionals

Standard 4: Diversity
Element 4.1 (See previous)
Element 4.2
Candidates use a literacy curriculum and engage in instructional practices that positively impact students’ knowledge, beliefs, and engagement with the features of diversity.

Element 4.3
Candidates develop and implement strategies to advocate for equity.

Common Core Standards

Writing: K–12
Production and Distribution of Writing
4. (See previous)

Response to Intervention

4. Collaboration
• Involving parents and students and engaging them in a collaborative manner is critical to successful implementation. Initiating and strengthening collaborations among school, home, and communities, particularly in urban and rural areas, provides the basis for support and reinforcement of students’ learning.