

Teaching Writing Simplified
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The National Literacy Act of 1991 defines literacy as “an individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.”

When we neglect to teach the writing process, we are potentially lessening the literacy of our children.

1. Why are some parents not teaching writing as a process?

- They did not learn to write in school, and are afraid to learn the process.
- They did not develop an enjoyment for writing because it was thrust upon them in high school or college. They were not prepared.
- They were not trained to teach writing as a process.



2. In the late 1990s, The National Council of Teachers of English and The International Reading Association adopted standards for educating children in the area of language arts. Following is a summary from the list on page three of their *Standards for the English Language Arts* book:

- Teachers should read a wide range of literature that allows enjoyment for their child, as well as the enlarging of the child’s knowledge base of the different cultures.
- Students should have exposure to many authors and illustrators, as well as have some experience publishing for themselves. They should be able to appreciate and evaluate many types of literature.
- Students need to be able to use diverse language and various types of communication to express their voice effectively to a variety of interest levels and comprehension levels.
- Students should be able to use their knowledge of correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation while still varying their style of writing by using figurative and interesting language.
- Students should be able to make good use of new technology while gathering information to write and speak on a particular subject.

- Students who speak a primary language other than English should use their language as a basis for developing English language arts skills and other subject areas.

4. What Can I Do?

- Provide a rich and warm environment of language in your classroom. It should be a stimulating place where ideas flourish, and yet a child can feel comfortable writing.
- The classroom should be well supplied with a variety of books, magazines, displays of their own writing, and writings of their siblings and parents.
- Immerse children in literature and talk about it. This can be done during your reading lesson, read aloud, extra-curricular reading, reading contests, or library time.

“Twenty minutes per day spent reading to children will result in better writing as the children unconsciously assimilate aspects of what they are hearing.”

(Using Children’s Literature as a Springboard to Writing: Stewig)



- Parents should write to and with their children, and regularly demonstrate writing in order to model the writing and thinking processes involved in good writing.
- Modeling is like thinking aloud as the parents writes with the input of her class. Children need to see us, as parents, work through the writing process ourselves. They want to emulate us.
- “Romancing”: stirring up their minds. This can be done by playing music, taking a field trip, looking at art, conducting experiments, reading aloud or any interesting motivational tool that encourages the child to write.
- Create a writing center for your home. Supply interesting writing paper, a dictionary, prompts, a thesaurus, scissors, glues, crayons, and a screen for privacy. You might even include a cd player for music. Change the center regularly so that children will be excited to get their turn to come back to it.
- Keep a journal. These can be used in most every subject area in addition to a daily log. These should not be graded, as they are primarily designated as an opportunity to share thoughts freely.

5. Writing in the Content Areas

Writing, like reading, taught in isolation from content is less likely to be learned successfully. If a child can express what he is learning in writing in the content areas, his learning becomes more concrete and meaningful.

- **Math:** A child can record information, keep track of successes and struggles, and write story problems and goals. A parent can see her teaching in the eyes of her children and assess her skill as a math teacher.
- **Art:** Children can draw sketches and write matching descriptions. They can pretend they are artists famous for a particular art piece and can write about the time period they live in and the reactions they have received about their works.
- **Spelling:** Word walls or books are a tremendous aid to a child. He can keep a record of his commonly misspelled words in his portfolio to refer to while writing. He can also list words that interest him so that he may incorporate them into his writing to make it more interesting.
- **Science:** This provides an opportunity to identify cause and effect, make predictions, and record experiment findings.
- **Social Studies:** Allowing a child to write in connection to social studies affords the child a deeper understanding of the time period he is studying and will give him a basis for incorporating factual information to his knowledge base.
- **Physical Education:** Journaling is an excellent means of encouraging the uncoordinated as well as the athletic child. He can keep a list of strategies, game rules, and a running log of activities. Most children would enjoy writing a research report on an athlete or a particular sport.



6. Teaching the Writing Process

What is the Writing Process?

Planning/pre-writing: Getting Ready to Write

The stage that allows for “romance.” This is an excellent time for cooperative learning as children can plan and discuss ideas and topics among themselves. Use graphic organizers.

1. Choose your topic
2. Determine your purpose for writing
3. Find out your audience
4. Choose your format

Drafting/writing: Writing Your Ideas in Sentences and in Paragraphs

This part of the process takes time. Parents need to remember that writing is a process and not a product. It is not intended to be done all in one sitting. Handwriting, proper grammar, or spelling should not be an issue at this time.

1. Write until you are finished: do not stop to correct spelling or punctuation.
2. Do not take the time at this point to change errors or wording.
3. Skip lines so that you have room to edit and make changes.

Revising/Conferencing: Improving Your Writing

The rubric is important in this stage. Check to see if sentence structure and sense is correct. This stage allows a child to find more descriptive and appropriate wordage, and is a great teaching time for the use of synonyms and figurative language.

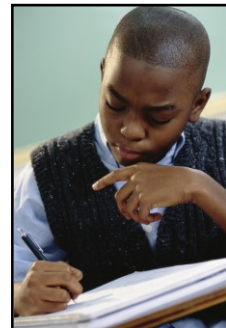
1. Look over and change your details and topic sentences if necessary.
2. Use more exact words: use a thesaurus if necessary.
3. Review your sentence order to be certain it makes sense.
4. Read your writing to others so they can use an objective ear to correct errors in communicating your message.

Proofreading/ Editing: Finding and Correcting Mistakes

Part of the excitement of drafting is that children can write without the concerns for grammar and punctuation. Ideas can flow freely. Editing is the time a child corrects spelling and grammar errors. Again, the rubric is very handy at this time. Conferencing is important during this stage of writing as well.

Look over your rubric to check for these items:

1. Check capital letters.
2. Check punctuation marks at the end of sentences.
3. Check punctuation within sentences.
4. Check for correct indention.
5. Check for mistakes in spelling.



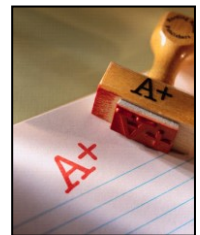
Publishing: Sharing Your Writing with Someone

Publishing includes all the activities that parents and children can do with a finished piece of writing. It is a tangible form of communication and one of the most satisfying parts of the process.

1. Recopy and correct all mistakes found in proofreading.
2. Check rubric to be sure you have corrected each mistake and have followed the directions completely.
3. Give the published copy of your writing to the parents.
4. Writing can be displayed on a bulletin board.
5. The story or letter can be read aloud or recorded on a tape recorder or video.
6. A story could be acted out.
7. Stories or writings can be compiled with other writings in a book.
8. Book report can have additional activities that include cereal box reports, board games, mobiles, dioramas, and oral reports.

7. Different Types of Writing Activities, and How to Plan for Them

- Book Report: Read the book, plan summary, plan opinion
- Letter: Know the purpose of the letter, the audience to whom you are sending it, and which format you will be using.
- Personal Narrative: Choose a topic and make a word web.
- How-to Paragraph: Choose a topic and make a time order chart.
- Descriptive Paragraph: Choose an object, place, or event and make a sensory chart.
- Research Report: Choose a topic, locate information, take notes, and make an outline.
- Story: Choose and develop characters and setting, plan problem and solution, and map the plot



8. Grading

- Holistic Rubrics
 1. Measure the overall effect of the writing with a set of guidelines.
 2. Are designed to promote fluency.
 3. Focus on the organization, expression of ideas, and use of lively language.
 4. Are not specific in identifying errors a child may need to correct.
- Analytic Rubrics
 1. Measure various elements of the writing
 2. Consist of points assigned to each element
 3. Sometimes discourage children from writing very much because the more that is written, the greater the possibility of error.

- Combination Rubrics
 1. Measure the carrying out of the writing process
 2. Measure the overall effect of the writing
 3. Measure the various elements of writing.

9. Suggestions for Published Work

- Publish student writing in magazines, co-op magazines, make a collection, or community newspapers.
- Have children share their writing by reading it aloud to a small group, a class, or a larger community audience.
- Have children read their script for a tape or video recording or adapt it for dramatization.
- Display writing from all age and ability levels in your family or co-op.
- Have advanced bilingual children translate their work from one language to another.
- Have children share writing about their heritage with children of other cultural backgrounds.
- Create group activities for resumes, job applications, advertising, and business letters.
- Recognize outstanding writing through writing contests, awards and assembly programs.
- Keep a book for each type of writing and a student book of all of his writings. Include author information, illustrations, and table of contents.



Writing websites

inscriptions

<http://www.bjupress.com/inscriptions/>

technology in writing

<http://www.thewritingsite.org/resources/technology/default.asp>

weblinks

<http://www.thewritingsite.org/resources/links/default.asp>

alphabet book idea

http://writingfix.com/classroom_tools/alphabet_books.htm

alphabet book article

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson083.shtml

writing across the curriculum suggestions

<http://www.writingfix.com/WAC.htm>

alphabet books

http://readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=412

hamburger exit ticket (scroll down)

http://www.writingfix.com/WAC/Exit_Tickets.htm#corbett

writing bugs

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/archives/writing_bugs.shtml

integrating writing into the content areas

<http://www.pgcps.pg.k12.md.us/~elc/writingacross2.html>

writing in math

<http://mathwire.com/writing/writing1.html>

<http://www2.ups.edu/community/tofu/lev2/journaling/writemath.htm>

<http://www.math.montana.edu/mathed/distance/capstone/bryson/iss.htm>

http://www.math.montana.edu/mathed/distance/capstone/bryson/w_strats.htm

math journals

<http://www.calicocookie.com/mathjournal.html>

Homeschool websites:

reluctant reader activities:

<http://homeschooling.families.com/blog/writing-activities-and-ideas-for-the-reluctant-writer>

homeschoolers writing club:

<http://homeschooling.about.com/od/langwriting/a/writingclub4.htm>

<http://homeschooling.about.com/>

writing process:**

<http://homeschooling.about.com/gi/o.htm?zi=1/XI&zTi=1&sdn=homeschooling&cdn=education&tm=9&f=10&tt=14&bt=0&bts=0&zu=http%3A//www.angelfire.com/wi/writingprocess/>

writing bugs:

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/archives/writing_bugs.shtml

writing activities and resources(contests, writing opportunities for kids)

<http://www.homeschooling-ideas.com/kids-writing.html>

journal ideas:

<http://www.homeschooling-ideas.com/journaling-for-kids.html>

lapbooks:

<http://www.homeschooling-ideas.com/lapbooks.html>

shapebook patterns:

<http://www.eduplace.com/shapebook/toc.html>

postcard creator:

<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/postcard/>

letter generator:

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/letter_generator/

wordle: word art:

<http://www.wordle.net/create>

comic strip maker:

<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>

travel brochure:

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/travel-brochures-highlighting-setting-961.html>

international reading association:

<http://www.readwritethink.org/>

book report sandwich maker:

<http://www.scholastic.com/kids/homework/sandwich.asp>

book report ideas:

http://www.rochester3a.sangamon.k12.il.us/webpage/buyze/index/book_report_alternatives.htm

NCTE:

<http://www.ncte.org/>

read, write, think printing press:

http://interactives.mped.org/view_interactive.aspx?id=110&title=

writing with writers:

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/index.htm>

science writing:

<http://www.thewritingsite.org/articles/vol2num3c.asp>

homeschool diner:

<http://www.homeschooldiner.com/index.html>

A-Z Home's Cool Homeschooling:

<http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/weblinks/lessons.htm>

successful homeschooling.com- writing:

<http://www.successful-homeschooling.com/homeschool-writing-curriculum.html>

homeschooling ideas.com

<http://www.homeschooling-ideas.com/>

Books

Reading and Writing Across Content Areas: Roberta Sejnost, Sharon Thiese

Writing in the Content Areas : Amy Benjamin

Envelope Rubric

1. Both addresses- capitalize first and last name. (4 points)
2. Put names in right locations. (2 points)
3. House numbers in correct locations. (2 points)
4. Street names in right locations (correct abbreviations and capitalizations). (8 points)
5. Cities in right locations, capitalized. (4 points)
6. Comma after cities. (2 points)
7. States are abbreviated and capitalized correctly and in right location. (6 points)
8. Zip codes are correct and in right locations. (4 points)
9. Both addresses are in the right location on the envelope. (2 points)

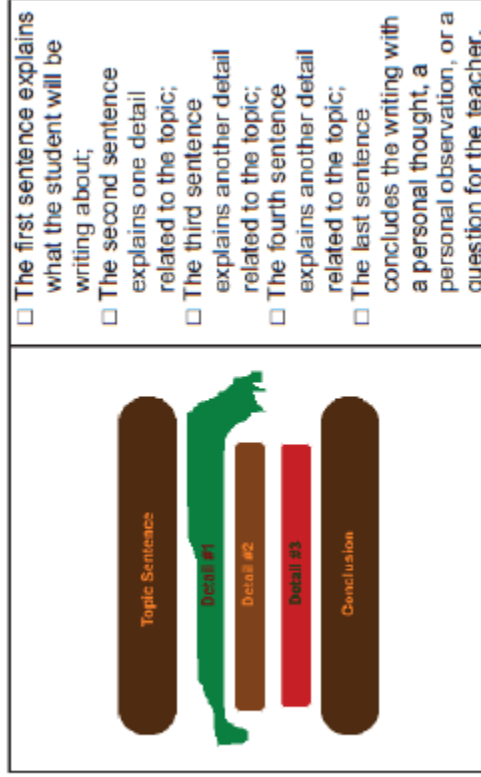
_____ out of 34 points correct



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What's an organized paragraph?

Here's one technique:



The diagram shows a vertical stack of five rounded rectangular boxes. From top to bottom: a brown box labeled 'Topic Sentences', a green box labeled 'Detail #1' with a green outline of the state of Nevada, a brown box labeled 'Detail #2', a red box labeled 'Detail #3', and a brown box labeled 'Conclusion'.

- The first sentence explains what the student will be writing about;
- The second sentence explains one detail related to the topic;
- The third sentence explains another detail related to the topic;
- The fourth sentence explains another detail related to the topic;
- The last sentence concludes the writing with a personal thought, a personal observation, or a question for the teacher.

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This writers' handout was designed to accompany one of WritingFix's on-line, interactive writing prompts.

Name: _____

Hamburger Paragraph Visual Template for Students



- Your top bun is for your topic sentence on your strong opening sentence.
- The sentences that come next are your supporting details. They are the heart of the hamburger, just like meat, tomatoes, lettuce, etc.
- Holding it all together is the bottom bun of the hamburger. It should be an interesting conclusion sentence.

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This handout is featured in the NNWP's "Going Deep with 6 Trait Language" print guide. Visit <http://nnwp.org> for information on ordering the complete guide.

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Name : _____

Chapter 2: Writing Game Instructions Rubric

	Points Possible	Points Earned
Planning Planning: composed a time-order chart	5	
Drafting Wrote a first draft	5	
Revising Improved the first draft	5	
Proofreading Marked mistakes and corrected them	5	
Publishing Prepared the final draft	5	
Title Has a title	1	
Topic Sentence Introduces the topic in the first sentence	1	
Materials Tells material needed in second sentence	1	
Instructions Places instructions in a sensible order	1	
Time-order words Uses time-order word	5	
Exact words Uses exact words	5	
Capitals Begins each sentence with a capital letter	5	
Ending Has an interesting ending	5	
Punctuation Ends each sentence with correct punctuation	5	
Spelling spells words correctly	5	
On Time Assignment was completed in a timely manner	1	
Effort Student put forth his best effort on this assignment	5	
Total	65	

Rubric Websites

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>

http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/

<http://edtech.kennesaw.edu/intech/rubrics.htm>

<http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/rubrics.shtml>

<http://www.ncsu.edu/midlink/ho.html>

<http://www.winona.edu/AIR/rubrics.htm>

<http://www.rubrician.com/writing.htm>

<http://bard.huensd.k12.ca.us/html/writingrubrics.html>

http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/tguide/assess_eval.htm

