

**Children's Literature & The Writing Workshop**  
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**Assertions About Writing**

Writing Instruction should develop life-long writers

Writers learn to write by writing

People teach people to write, not programs

Writing Instruction should address processes, procedures and products of writing

Writing is an act of Discovery, not an act of Transcription

If students aren't engaging in the act of Writing, it's hard to teach them to write

**The Writing Workshop: Creating Space for Writers and Writing**

A community of learners that establishes procedures, provides resources and instructional experiences, and fosters social interactions to develop and support writers and writing.

**Considerations for Instruction**

The writing process should not be seen as a singular, Stage-Bound Linear process, which focuses on the products of writing and not the writer

We must teach the Writer, as well as the Writing

Our processes and procedures should support writers, not get in their way

**Essential Elements of the Writing Workshop**

Shared Experiences

Writing Lessons

Transactional Units of Study

Workshop Block of Time

Sharing and Discussing Writing

Celebrations

**Workshop Procedures**

Adapts to Needs of Writers

Predictable & Consistent

Develops Over Time

Focus on Student Independence & Responsibility

Allows Teachers to Leave the Front of the Room

Keep it Simple

**The Writing Process**

Generating Ideas – Drafting – Proofreading – Publishing

### **Generating Ideas: Attending to Ideas & Purpose**

Writer's Notebook  
Observing the World  
Extensive Reading  
Personal Experiences  
Talk & Share Ideas  
Wonderings  
Research /Inquiry Projects  
Webs / Brainstorms / Outlines

### **Drafting: Attending to Structure**

Get it Down on Paper  
Skip Lines  
Spell So You Can Read It  
Be Willing to Change Ideas  
Sketches  
Storyboards  
Writer's Notebooks

### **Proofreading: Attending to Conventions**

Check Spelling  
Check Punctuation  
Check Capital Letters  
Check Every Sentence  
Check Format  
Is it Ready For the World?

### **Spelling**

Personal Dictionaries  
Have-A-Go Sheets  
Use of Dictionaries  
Use of Thesaurus  
High Frequency Word Lists  
Spelling Tests

### **Publishing: Attending to Audience**

Author's chair  
Class Books  
Newsletters  
Writing Contests  
Share with Family  
Read to Other Classes  
Hang on Walls

## **Role of the Writing Teacher**

To help children become literate in demonstrable ways  
To make learning to write sensible  
To look at what a writer CAN do and build curriculum around those strengths  
Demonstrate the power & value of writing  
Manage the classroom environment  
Create quality learning experiences  
Respond to writers' efforts  
Writer First, Teacher Second

## **Literature in The Writing Workshop**

Get Ideas for Writing  
Explore What Writers Do  
Explore New Genres, Authors, Structures  
Teaching Craft & Literary Devices  
Launch Writer's Notebooks  
For Research / Inquiry Projects  
Using Authors as Mentors  
Establishing Expectations for Writers  
Learn Conventions of Written Language

## **Writers That ...**

Understand the power of writing  
Are willing to engage in writing  
Know resources for writing  
Are able to read like a writer  
Understand workshop procedures  
Understand purpose and audience  
Develop knowledge of writing conventions  
Can make their development as a writer visible

## **Class Chart: What Do Writers Do?**

Writers write everyday  
Writers keep ideas in their notebook  
Writers observe things and take notes  
Writers do research  
Writers talk to other writers about ideas  
Writers read a lot!  
Writers use the dictionary and thesaurus  
Writers pay attention to language  
Writers use their imagination  
Writers play with language  
Writers read differently  
Writers draw and sketch things

### **Launching Writer's Notebooks**

Share Your Own Notebook  
Other Writers Share Notebooks  
Invite Students to Buy Own Notebook  
Make List of Possible Things to Include  
Provide Time for Notebooks  
Mini-Lessons on Keeping a Notebook  
Teacher- Student Notebook Conferences  
Sharing Notebooks in Author's Chair  
Read Literature About Writers

### **Class Chart: Things We Put in Our Notebook**

Memories / Things we have done  
Artwork - Drawings  
Lists / Ideas / Notes  
Observations  
Poems  
Newspaper clippings  
Noticings / Wonderings  
Research / Inquiry Projects  
Story Beginnings

### **Moving From Notebooks to Writing Projects**

Patterns in Our Notebooks  
Audience and Purpose  
Publishing Opportunities  
Sharing Notebooks  
Seeing Possibilities  
Living with Ideas  
Teaching Writing & Writers

### **Contexts for Instruction**

Writing Lessons  
Workshop Time  
Writing Conferences  
Author's Chair  
Units of Study

### **Writing Lessons**

What it Means to Be a Writer  
Writers' Notebooks  
Workshop Procedures  
Writing Processes  
Craft & Conventions

### **Workshop Time**

Uninterrupted Writing Time  
Peer Conferences  
Research  
Authors as Mentors  
Editing / Proofreading  
Observing the World - Notetaking  
Connections to the Reading Workshop

### **Writing Conferences**

Talking with writers about writing processes and products  
Offer suggestions for improving writing  
Teaching forward  
Celebrate achievements  
One or Two ideas per conference  
Keep records of discussions

### **Author's Chair Prompts**

Genre  
Audience  
Purpose  
Publishing Options  
Response From Audience  
Last Word

### **Developing Units of Study in the Writing Workshop**

A Unit of Study - Time spent with a focus on a particular genre, topic, theme, etc. to help students develop a sense of Preferred Vision for what a piece of writing can be.

### **Possible Units of Study**

Genres / Authors / Illustrators / Craft Elements / What Writers Do  
Story Structures / Writer's Notebooks

### **Units of Study Framework**

*Exposure*

Immersion - Becoming Familiar with a Particular Form of Writing / Text

*Exploration*

Discussing the Craft, Elements and Structures of a Form of Writing / Text

*Experimentation*

Experimenting with a Particular Form of Writing / Text

## **Creating A Unit of Study**

Decide What the Focus Is  
Negotiate Mandated Curriculum  
Consider Students' Prior Experiences  
Possible Links to the Curriculum  
Gather Resources  
Design Writing Lessons  
Publication Opportunities

## **Planning Units of Study**

What genres, etc are required at your grade level?  
What experiences have your students had, not had each year?  
What genres, types of writing are your strengths?  
What resources are available to you?  
What are the "Big" Units of Study? What might be the lesser units of study?

## **A Unit of Study: Poetry and Poetic Language**

### **Misconceptions of Poetry**

All poems rhyme  
All poems have specific formulas to follow  
Poetry is for girls  
All poems have hidden meanings  
Poems have to be memorized  
Great poems are written by dead white men

### **Unit of Study: Poetry**

*Exposure Phase*  
Read-Share-Discuss Poetry  
What Poetry Is... Bulletin Board  
Access to Poetry  
Poetic Vs. Generic Language  
Create Student Poetry Collection  
Search for Poetic Language

### **Writing Lessons: Exposure 1**

Reading Aloud / Discussing Poetry  
Poetry Study Groups  
Create a Poetry Library (Access)  
Bulletin Board of Topics for Poetry  
Poems on Tape  
Biographies and Info about Poets  
Discovering Anthologies  
Invited Readers Share Favorite Poems

## **Writing Lessons: Exposure 2**

Looking in Notebooks for Poetic Language  
Noticings- Picture Books etc  
Author's (Poet's) Chair  
Charts about Elements of Poetry  
Beginning Class Collections  
Developing Criteria for Quality Writing  
Invitations to Write Poetry

## **Class Chart: What is Poetry?**

What Does Poetry Look Like?

- shorter than a story
- line breaks
- thin & tall

What Does Poetry Sound Like?

- rhythm & rhyme
- song without music

Meaning

- makes sense
- tells us about the world
- old ideas in new ways

## **Unit of Study: Poetry**

*Exploration Phase*

Criteria for Quality Poetry

Forms / Formats

Apply Criteria to our Poetry

Poetry "Exercises"

Exploring Poetic Devices

"Noticings" Charts

## **Writing Lessons: Exploration**

Create Criteria for Quality Writing

Explore Elements of Poetry

Poetry "Exercises"

Poetry ToolBoxes

Possible Poetry Formats

Author's (Poet's) Chair Continues

Expectations to Write Poetry

## **Poetry Toolbox 1: Meanings**

Imagery

Using Senses

Comparing Things

Choosing Poetic Language  
Expressing Feelings  
Personification

### **Poetry Toolbox 2: Sounds**

Rhyme  
Rhythm  
Alliteration  
Onomatopoeia  
Repetition / Patterns  
Songs  
Line breaks

### **Class Chart: Criteria for Quality Writing**

Poetic language / word choice  
Unique ideas / not generic  
Makes sense  
Interesting - want to finish reading it  
Has emotional impact  
Has details / answers readers' questions  
Proper sentence structure  
Proper format  
Uses the poetic devices we have learned  
Correct writing conventions

### **Unit of Study: Poetry**

*Experimentation Phase*  
Present Publishing Opportunities  
Poetry Conferences  
Publishing Class Poetry Books  
Selecting Poetry for Portfolios  
Celebrations - Young Poets Day  
Deadlines Set for Completed Poems

### **Publishing Opportunities: "Go Public"**

Class Poetry Books  
Poetry Contests  
Newsletters  
Author's Chair  
Young Poets' Day  
Publish Own Anthology  
School Collections

Authors as Mentors: Reading Like Writers  
Reading Like a Writer  
Immersion in a Particular Author's Work  
Exploring Craft & Writer's Style  
Use of Mentor Texts  
Decide on Aspects to Draw Upon  
This is NOT Cheating, It is What Writers DO!

## **Assessing Writers & Writing**

### **Focus on Processes & Products**

What Do We Assess About Writers?  
Sense of self as a writer  
Willingness to engage in writing  
Knowledge of resources  
Ability to read like a writer  
Knowledge of workshop procedures  
Writing Craft  
Knowledge of writing conventions

### *Focus on Writing Practices*

Observational Records  
Student - Teacher Conferences  
Status of the Class  
Writer's Notebook Conferences  
Author's Chair Observations

### *Observational Records*

Date and label each Record  
Context of the event  
No secrets  
Simple system, what works for you  
Accounts for every child  
Describe rather than evaluate  
Note student progress

### *Teacher - Student Conferences*

Attitudinal information  
Discuss how writing is going  
Share concerns  
Teacher as literary docent  
Make small suggestions  
Don't take over writing  
Take notes

## **Focus on Writing Products**

Portfolios  
Writing Samples  
Observational Checklists  
Rubrics  
Publishing Conferences  
Author's Chair  
Young Author Days

### *Portfolios*

Exhibition  
Work in Progress  
Self-Evaluative  
Evaluation - Standardized

### *Launching Portfolios*

Start by collecting one's own work  
Invite guests to share "authentic" portfolios  
Create a place to collect work  
Set aside specific times for portfolio work (ritualize)  
Extended Audience Response

### *Writing Samples*

Use "objective measure" for focusing observations  
List what the writer CAN do  
Attention to genre, structure, content, audience, and purpose as well as conventions  
Impact - Success of Piece

### *Observational Checklists*

Constructed in Classrooms or Externally Mandated  
Designed to Help Guide Observation  
Should Remain Dynamic - Changing Over Time  
Statements Concerning What We Value about Writing

### *Rubrics*

Set of guidelines for distinguishing between levels of performance  
Descriptors for defining each level  
Benchmark examples are often provided  
Can be Used for Self-Evaluation of Products

## **Negotiating Criteria for Quality Writing**

Standards documents  
Writing Awards Criteria

Teachers' Knowledge  
Examples from Literature  
6 Traits  
Community Ideas & Norms

#### **4th Grade Criteria for Quality Writing**

Poetic language / word choice  
Unique ideas / not generic  
Makes sense  
Interesting - want to finish reading it  
Has emotional impact  
Has details / answers readers' questions  
Proper sentence structure  
Proper format  
Legible  
Correct writing conventions

#### **Dealing with Standardized Writing Assessments**

Writing for a Prompt  
Work Backwards - From Rubric to Topic  
Practice BEFORE Test Day  
Focus on Conventions  
Not necessarily from the Heart  
What do the Test Graders Want to See?  
Recheck work using Rubric

#### **Writing for a Prompt**

Address the Prompt  
KISS - Keep It Simple Stupid  
Write in First Person Wherever Possible  
Include Beginning, Middle & End  
Be Sure Writing is Legible  
Proofread at least Twice!

#### **Where Do I Begin ?**

Designate a Block of Time for Writing  
Discuss / Read About What Writers Do  
Keep a Notebook / Share Your Writing  
Organize Writing Curriculum Into Units of Study  
Multiple Contexts for Writing Lessons  
Introduce Author's Chair  
Consider Publishing Possibilities  
Organize Celebrations

## **Final Thoughts**

We need to teach the Writer as well as the Writing  
Teachers need to be writers FIRST, and teachers SECOND  
Writers Write, they don't have to be famous

## **Literacy Website:**

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## **Favorite Professional Books:**

Wondrous Words – Katie Wood Ray: NCTE  
The Writing Workshop – Katie Wood Ray: NCTE  
Fletcher & Portalupi – Craft Lessons: Stenhouse  
Fletcher & Portalupi – Non-Fiction Craft Lessons: Stenhouse  
Fletcher & Portalupi – The Writing Workshop: Heinemann  
Georgia Heard – For the Good of the Earth & Sun: Heinemann  
Georgia Heard – Awakening the Heart: Heinemann  
Georgia Heard – The Revision Toolbox: Heinemann  
Don Graves – A Fresh Look at Writing: Heinemann  
Shelly Harwayne – Lasting Impressions: Heinemann  
Ralph Fletcher – What a Writer Needs: Heinemann  
Lois Bridges – Writing as a Way of Knowing: Stenhouse  
Lucy Calkins – The Art of Teaching Writing: Heinemann  
Regie Routman – Writing Essentials: Heinemann

## **Children's Picture Books For Teaching Poetic Devices**

### *Metaphors / Similes*

Frederick – Leo Lionni  
Quick as a Cricket – Audrey Woods  
The Wonder Thing – Libby Hathorn  
Hailstones and Halibut Bones – Mary O'Neill

### *Onomatopoeia*

A Day at Damp Camp – George Ella Lyon  
Double Trouble in Walla Walla – Andrew Clements  
City Sounds – Rebecca Emberly  
Charlie Parker Played be bop – Chris Raschka

### *Alliteration*

Animalia – Graeme Base  
Alpha Beta Chowder – William Steig

*Poetic Language*

When I Was Young in the Mountains – Cynthia Rylant

The Relatives Came – Cynthia Rylant

What You Know First – Patricia McLachlan

Owl Moon – Jane Yolen

Dreamkeeper – Langston Hughes

Going Home – Eve Bunting

Night of the Gargoyles – Eve Bunting

Welcome to the Sea of Sand – Jane Yolen

Night Sounds, Morning Colors – Rosemary Wells

*Poetic Forms*

A Poke in the I – Paul Janeszko

Eats – Arnold Adoff

*Dialect*

Flossie and the Fox – Patricia McKissack

Airmail to the Moon – Tom Birdseye

*Letter Writing*

The Gardner – Sarah Stewart

Dear Mr. Blueberry

*Point of View*

Gila Monsters Meet You at the Airport – Marjorie Weinman Sharmat

*Playing With Language*

On Beyond Zebra – Dr. Seuss

Dog Breath & Others – Dav Pilkey

Pish, Posh said Hieronymous Bosch – Nancy Willard

*Descriptive Language*

Nettie's Trip South – Ann Turner

The Table Where Rich People Sit – Byrd Baylor

Daddy Played Music for the Cows – Maryann Weidt

It Rained on the Desert Today – Ken and Debbie Buchanan