

ASSESSMENT OF PARAPROFESSIONAL PROFICIENCY STUDY GUIDE

WRITING

Children are taught to communicate their thoughts through speaking and writing. Many teachers have children keep writing portfolios so that the teacher, student, and parents will be able to see how their writing has improved throughout the school year. This is a very effective method of teaching students to monitor their own writing and look for progress in their writing style. Passing these portfolios on to the next year's teacher is even more effective because the teacher will be able to monitor the child's writing progress (or lack of) through several years of writing.

Process Writing:

Learning to put one's thoughts down on paper in an organized, concise manner is the goal of the writing process. The following steps should be followed to meet this goal:

- ✓ *Prewrite*---In this first step, students are gathering their thoughts as they think about what they are going to write. Any writing done during the prewriting stage is informal. It may include lists, basic outlines, graphic organizers such as word webs, or even pictures. This step is very important to ensure a quality final product in writing. Prewriting is very important in helping students develop their ideas and organize their thoughts. It is also an important motivational tool for students who have difficulty thinking of things about which they will write. Many teachers have students keep journals of their writing ideas. Students should be encouraged to "jot down" any ideas they have that might be used at some point for a writing activity.
- ✓ *Rough Draft*---The second step in the writing process involves organizing the information obtained during the prewriting stage. The student will actually write the paper in the format given by the teacher, but should not spend an excessive amount of their time paying close attention to spelling, neatness, and other significant factors that will be more important in the revision stage. Students will be trying to expand and elaborate upon the ideas they wrote during the prewriting stage. This paper is sometimes referred to as the "sloppy copy." The rough draft of a paper should not be the final product.
- ✓ *Revise*---This is the stage of writing where the student improves upon the rough draft. Closer attention is paid to spelling, capitalization, paragraph organization, and neatness. Ideas from the rough draft are refined and elaborated. Ideally, the revision of the paper is the result of a conference with the teacher to assist the student in improving the quality of the final product.
- ✓ *Edit*---During the editing phase of writing, the student "fine tunes" the revisions. This may follow a teacher conference or may be the result of a peer editing activity.

- ✓ *Publish*—This is the final stage of the writing process. The student is presenting the writing product as “complete” and accurate. It may take several revisions and editing attempts before a paper reaches the publishing stage.
- ✓ *Conferencing* may occur at any stage of the writing process and is a critical component of teaching children to write.

Writing Tips:

Writing from personal experiences is often the easiest topic for students who are just learning the writing process. A paraprofessional who is working with students who are reluctant writers should encourage them to first tell someone the experience about which they are going to write. If this is not successful, the paraprofessional should give a personal example of an experience she had that would be a good writing topic. Some children find it very difficult to express their thoughts on paper, so the role of the paraprofessional in this aspect can be very effective. It may even be desirable to have the student tell the paraprofessional a little bit about the experience, and the paraprofessional will help the student brainstorm the writing activity. Sometimes students just need to get the first sentence down on paper to get their thoughts flowing.

In assisting a student with writing, it is important to point out the student’s strength’s as well as areas that need improvement. **The composition on the next page is an example of a student’s writing that demonstrates good use of capitalization and punctuation, but needs work on organization and spelling.**

Young children learn to write the alphabet after they have learned to recite the letters. One of the first things that children learn to write is their name. Like the alphabetic principle relates to reading, learning to write one’s name relates to an understanding of how print works. Even before a child learns to write all letters of the alphabet, he has usually learned to write and spell his own name. Children who have difficulty with handwriting can often benefit from activities designed to improve their fine motor skills, such as sorting beans, cutting, coloring, finger-painting, and stringing beads.

TEKS AND TAKS:

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) is the state curriculum for all Texas students. The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests whether students have mastered the essential knowledge and skills at each grade level. The TAKS is administered to students beginning in grade three in the areas of reading and mathematics. Writing is added at grade four and at other grades; science and social studies are also tested.

Writing Sample

My favrut vakashun was the time we went to Dizneland. My Unkl Jim and Anut Mary wient with us. I hav nevr bin on an arplan befur. We left mi dog with my frind Bobby. He is a coker spanle named Bailey. Befur we left we had to pak or sutkases. Mine wus so ful we coud bearly pik it up. I hope Bailey dus not git to lonely whil we are gone.

The frist rid we wint on was called Thunder Muontian. It wus rel scary. I thout my sister wus gonna barf. Bailey wud hve been rel scard to. He is afraid of thunder. The secund rid we went on wus the tecups and I got rel dizzy on that wun. My mama thru up all over my dady.

On the airplan I had a sanwich and a coke. It wus good but I wus stil hungry whin we got to the hotel. The thrird ride was spas mountian. I likd that one best of all becus it was so dark and everbodee wus screeming. I lafed at my mama whin she screemed.

We had so muc fun we didn't ever want to cum bak home. But we did and that's why I wrot this storry.

The End

ABC'S OF THE WRITING PROCESS

A Universal Process for Any Writing Task

The purpose is to provide a resource for students or teachers, no matter what they are being challenged to write.

5 Steps of the Writing Process

- Prewriting
- Writing
- Revising
- Editing
- Publishing

Prewriting

Sources of inspiration – *How do I get ideas in the first place?*

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| • magazines/newspapers/periodicals/CD-ROM | • memories |
| • conduct an interview based on your topic | • discussion and brainstorming |
| • media - radio, TV, internet | • responding to literature |
| • experiences | • role playing |
| • film - movies and documentaries | • research |
| • music | • imagination |
| • visual art - observing or creating | • personal interest inventories |
| • dreams | • class interest inventory |
| | • other |

Tips

What ways can I prewrite?

- free writing
- journaling
- image streaming (transplant yourself to another place or time and describe from a first person point of view)
- lists
- visualization
- brainstorming - individually or as a group
- webbing/mapping/clustering
- graphic organizers
- topic or word chart

Print and Use Prewriting Strategies

1. **Graphic Organizers** are brainstorming webs, mind maps and other charts that allow you to organize your thoughts and ideas. There are many different types to choose from. Pick the one that is best suited to your topic.
<http://www.angelfire.com/wi/writingprocess/specificgos.html>
2. **Come Aboard a R.A.F.T.** - Role, Audience, Format, Topic, Strong Verb, a prewriting strategy
<http://www.geocities.com/writingprocess/rafts.htm>
3. **Descriptive Word Prompts** - to help with description
<http://www.angelfire.com/ab/westmounthaiku/describe.html>
4. **Five Senses Chart** - brainstorm the five senses in a chart like this
<http://www.angelfire.com/ab/westmounthaiku/fivesenses.html>
5. **Ten Prewriting Exercises for Personal Narratives**
http://www.daedalus.com/teach/tens/08_22_98.html
6. **More Prewriting Ideas**
<http://www3.sk.sympatico.ca/fiss/pre-writ.htm>
7. **The P.O.W.E.R.S. of Writing: A Student's Guide to the Writing Process** - More prewriting suggestions
<http://www.people.virginia.edu/~cay2f/powers/#Process>

The ABC's of Writing was used with permission by Arlene Lipkewich, Teacher
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Website: <http://www.angelfire.com/wi/writingprocess>

Revising

WRITING . . . ROUGH DRAFT . . . ROUGH COPY

Whatever you call it, it is still the same thing. Get a working copy of your paragraph or paper so that you have something to work with.

Our Rough Copy Suggestions

- Name, class and date on top right hand corner of all pages
- Number all your pages
- One staple in the top left hand corner
- Double space
- Margin to margin
- Single sided
- Pencil or pen (depending on teacher preference)
- Line space at end of page

Tips When Going From Prewriting to Writing

1. Be selective in the ideas that you include. You don't have to include *everything* that was in your prewriting! Pick your best ideas. Make sure they relate to each other and your topic.
2. **WRITE! WRITE! WRITE!**
Don't stop once you start writing. Revising and editing come later. Just let the ideas flow.
3. Don't count words, ask your teacher how long it should be or when it is done. When **YOU** feel that you have completed your ideas, you are then ready to go to the next stage.
4. **HOLD IT!** Before going to the next stage, make sure you have enough content to work with. If you feel that you are lacking content, go back to your prewriting for more ideas and details.

Revising

Revising is . . .

- making decisions about how you want to improve your writing.
- looking at your writing from a different point of view.
- picking places where your writing could be clearer, more interesting, more informative and more convincing.

Methods

1. **A.R.R.R.** – This method allows you to make four types of changes.

Adding	What else does the reader need to know?
Rearranging	Is the information in the most logical and most effective order?
Removing	What extra details or unnecessary bits of information are in this piece of writing?
Replacing	What words or details could be replaced by clearer or stronger expressions?

2. **R.A.G.** – *Read Around Group*

General Rules for Read Around Groups

- 3-5 writers per group in varying ability.
- Make sure there are no names on the pieces of writing. Student work is to remain anonymous. Photocopies work well.
- In each group, everyone reads each paper once. Nothing is written on the papers. This is the first read. It is written to get a general idea about what has been written.
- During the first read, on a separate piece of paper, each person puts them on a scale of 1-4. (4 - outstanding, 3 - above average, 2 - acceptable, 1 - insufficient) Students also write comments about each piece for later discussion with the group.
- Students discuss why they assigned the score that they did.
- Staying in the same group, students then revise the anonymous work during a second reading. Students can a) read each paper and mark suggestions on it or b) read the piece as a group and mark the group's suggestions on each paper.

3. **A.R.M.S.** - Add, Remove, Move Around, Substitute

Revising Tips - Ask yourself these questions . . .

- Can you read it out loud without stumbling?
- Does every word and action count? There should be a reason why a character acts or speaks in a certain way.
- Is the series of events logical? Do they relate?
- Is it clear what your goal or your main character's goal is throughout the piece of writing?
- Are vivid/descriptive words used to describe characters and/or events?
- Is your train of thought clear? Are there any tangents?
- Do you use a variety of verbs throughout the piece? (Something instead of "SAID")
- Is it wordy and redundant? Are you using the same words and phrases over and over again?
- Is there a catchy introduction? Does the conclusion leave the reader thinking?
- Do supporting details support *only* the topic sentence of *that* paragraph?
- Are transitional devices used throughout?
- Is there a strong hook, thesis and lead-in?
- Is proper format followed throughout?
- Are all sentences complete or are there sentence fragments?
- Is a vivid mental picture created in the reader's mind?
- Have you completed sentence expansion where necessary? (NO "HE RAN!")
- Did you use a thesaurus?

Editing

Editing is . . .

- spelling
- capitalization
- punctuation
- grammar
- sentence structure
- subject/verb agreement
- consistent verb tense
- word usage

Methods

Self Edit

- Read your own work backwards.
- Read the last sentence, then the second, last sentence, etc.
- Does each sentence make sense when you read it on it's own?
- Do you see or hear any errors in the sentence?

Peer Edit

A very useful checklist for students to use for a peer and self-edit is available at <http://206.218.128.2/laintech/peer.htm>

Tips

- Be sure that every sentence has two parts: subject (who or what), predicate (what's happening)
- Use sentence combining words: and, but, or, yet, so, who, whom, which, that, whose because, although, when, if, where, and others
- Use periods and commas where *necessary*, but do not *overuse*.
- Do not overuse the exclamation mark!
- Use a dictionary to check spelling.
- Other tips are available here <http://karn.ohiolink.edu/~sg-ysu/proofed.html>
- Beware of the word processing spellchecker!

Publishing

Suggestions for Publishing/Good Copy

1. Blue or black ink pen or word processed
2. Center title on top line with a line space that follows
3. Name, class and date in top right hand corner
4. Margin to margin
5. Indent and/or leave a line space for paragraphs (depending on teacher preference)
6. Leave a line space at the bottom of the page
7. Single sided
8. Single spaced
9. Neat - no scribbles or overuse of liquid paper!
10. Number the pages
11. Staple in top left hand corner
12. If asked for all stages of the writing process, hand in this order:
 - good copy
 - rough copy with evidence of revision and editing
 - prewriting
13. Include marks sheet or rubric if one was given.

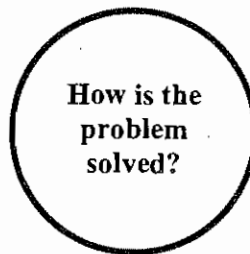
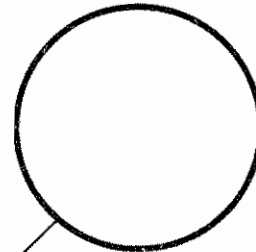
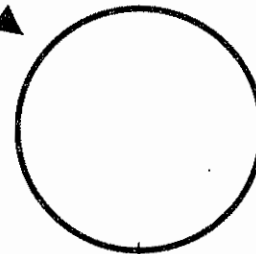
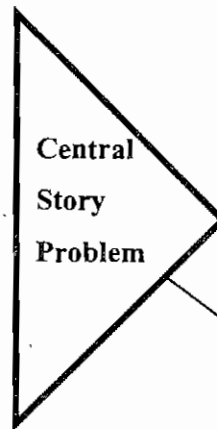
STORY MAP

A story map provides a visual presentation of the story structure and aids students in developing a mental representation, or a story schema. The map may initially be used as a reading or listening guide, and then later be used to help students plot out their own stories.



SETTING

1. Who? (main character or characters)
2. Where?
3. When?



Major events which lead to
the solution of the problem

MAPPING

NARRATIVE THINK SHEET

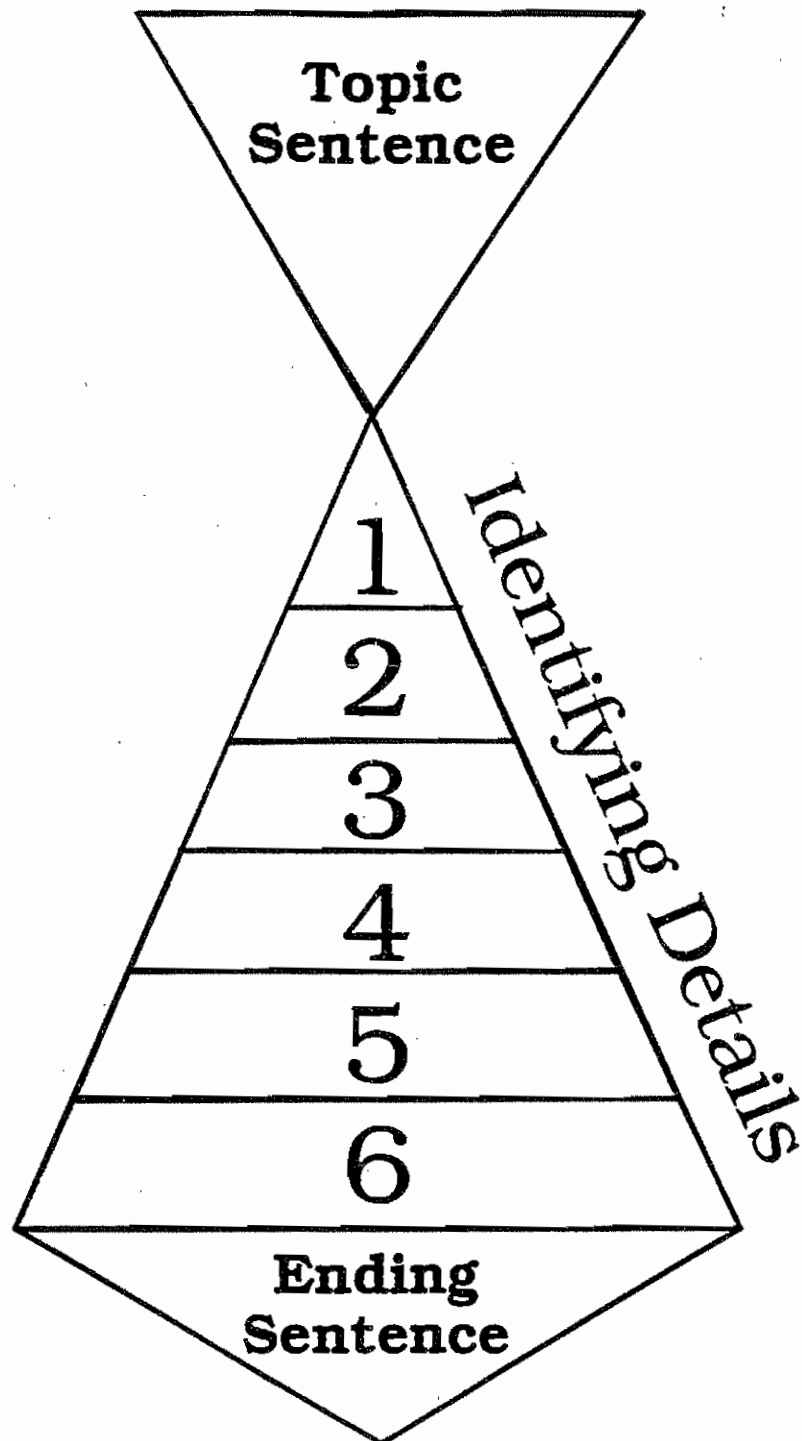
TITLE: _____

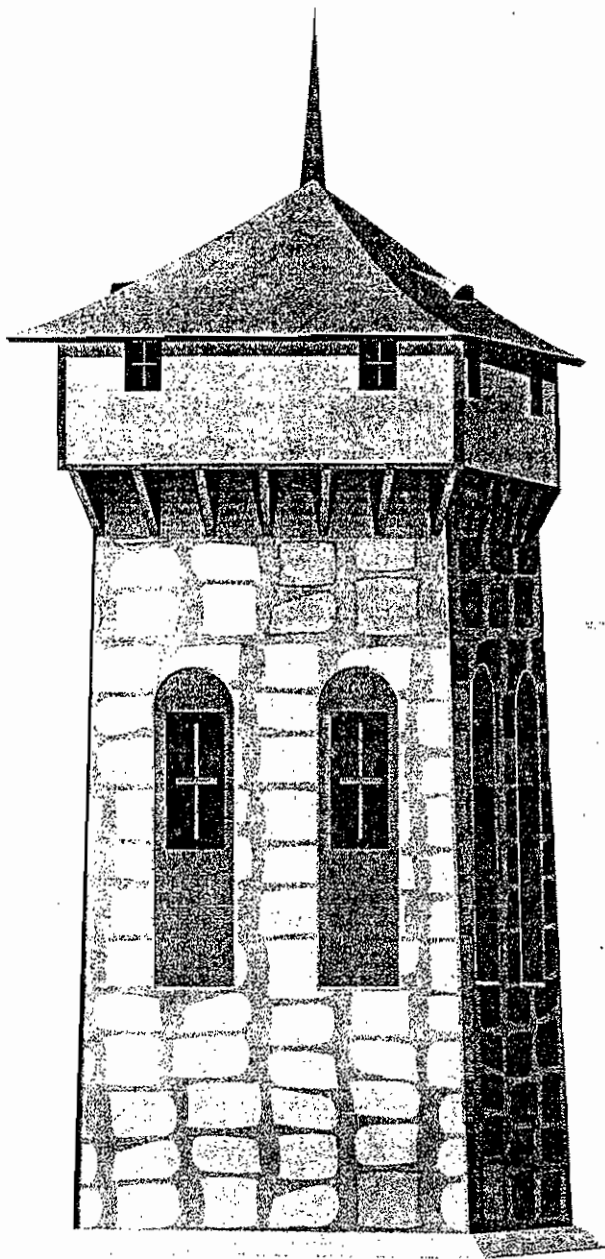
Beginning (What is the setting? Who are the characters?)

Middle (Action: What is the problem?)

Ending (How was the problem solved?)

WRITING STRATEGIES





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Helping Our Students Develop Voice

Voice in writing shows a clear reflection of the writer's individuality. Compositions with voice sound authentic, original, and highly individualistic. Compositions with no voice read as if the writer is not involved.

How can we help our students develop a writing voice?

- **Remind students that remaining conscious of the audience while writing will lead to a voice.** The audience should never be the teacher. This will lead to an artificial voice, a voice students think the teacher wants to hear.
- **Follow key aspects of a teacher/student writing conference.**
 - The text should remain in the student's hands and be read to the teacher.
 - The teacher should ask questions of the student about the writing process. The focus should remain on what the student is attempting to achieve with the writing, not the subject nor the teacher's standards or expectations.
- **Use freewriting opportunities for writers to write whatever they want.**
 - Schedule freewriting (approximately 10 minutes) several times a week.
 - While freewriting, students start and continue their writing anyway they desire. Students don't need to worry if their writing makes immediate sense or stays focused on a specific subject matter. The key to freewriting is to keep moving.
 - Post freewriting suggestions to encourage students to write as though they were talking to you.
 - Write like you talk.
 - Say something and then write it.
 - When you're done, read what you wrote. If it sounds stilted or wooden, stop for a moment.
 - Think about what you're trying to say and write it down.
 - Save all freewriting in a folder or freewriting notebook. Some freewrites may be worthy of a place in a future composition. Also, reviewing a collection of freewrites helps students feel successful about their writing during other opportunities to write.

- **Use journal starters that would encourage students to use a writing voice.**
 - If I were the teacher, I would...
 - If I could give one piece of advice to any person in history, that advice would be...
 - Describe a dream that you had recently. Provide as many details as possible.
 - The best lesson my grandparent (or parent or any relative) ever taught me was...
 - In 20 years, I will be...
 - Tell about an event in your life that has caused a change in you.
 - I was most angry when...
 - My worst mistake was...
 - If you and your best friend could have a free limousine for 24 hours, where would you go and what would you do?
 - You have the freedom to travel to any city or country in the world. Where would you go and why?
 - What would you do if you were President of the United States?
 - You have an extra \$100,000 to give away; you cannot spend it on yourself. What would you do with the money?
 - The qualities that make a best friend are...
 - If you were an insect, what kind would you be and why?

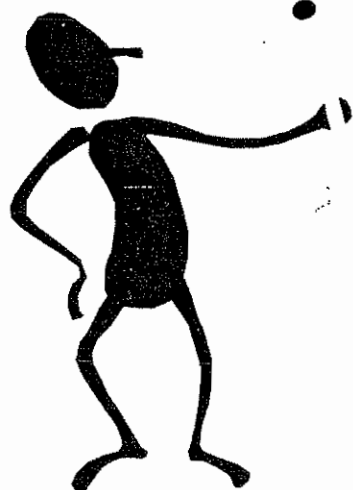
Calkins, L.M. (1994). *The art of teaching writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Elbow, P. (1973). *Writing without teachers*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Fletcher, R. (1993) *What a writer needs*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Graves, D. (1983). *Writing: Teachers and children at work*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Suggestions for Teacher/Student Conferencing



During Conferences:

- ↪ Have the student read his/her piece to you.
- ↪ Reinforce something positive the student has done in the writing.
- ↪ Present one teaching point.
- ↪ Do not write on the student's paper.

Suggested Teacher Questions:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ↪ Getting started | How's your writing going?
What are you working on today?
How can I help you? |
| ↪ Unfocused writing | Tell me what this piece is about.
What's your favorite part?
How can you build on it? |
| ↪ Not enough information | I don't understand...
You wrote ... What I understand is...
Is this what you mean?
What else do you know about this topic? |
| ↪ Lack of voice | Can you put an * where you could add more of your thoughts or feelings?
Why is ... important to you and others?
Why does it matter? |
| ↪ Purpose is unclear | Why are you writing about this? |
| ↪ Ending the conference | What are your next steps with this piece of writing? |

Questions To Ask During Peer Revision

Getting started

How's your writing going?
What are you working on today?
How can I help you?

Unfocused writing

Tell me what this piece is about.
What's your favorite part? How can you build on it?

Not enough information

I don't understand...
You wrote ... What I understand is... Is this what you mean?
What else do you know about this topic?

Lack of voice

Can you put an * where you could add more of your thoughts or feelings?
Why is ... important to you and others? Why does it matter?

Purpose is unclear

Why are you writing about this?

Ending the conference

What are your next steps with this piece of writing?

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2001). *Guiding readers and writers, grades 3-6: Teaching comprehension, genre, and content literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Glossary of Writing Terminology

aesthetic fluency: the writer's ability to create flow or movement that enhances the reader's understanding of a written composition

analytic scoring: the focus on assessing the writing in terms of its individual components

anecdotal records: informal notes taken during observations or conferences with students that aid in the documentation and recall of things that a teacher thinks are significant about student learning

audience: the individual or group for whom the student is writing; sense of "other"

automaticity: fluent processing of information that requires little effort or attention

cause and effect: a structure the writer uses to state or imply association between an action and an outcome

characters: the people or personified animals who are involved in a story

checklist: a list of student behaviors that can be observed or a list of skills or strategies

compare/contrast: a structure the writer uses to tell how two or more things are alike and different

conventions: the rules of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure in standard English

description: a structure the writer uses to create vivid images or heighten the reader's sensory perception

development: the writer's thorough and specific expansion of ideas that deepens the reader's understanding of a composition

dialogue journal: written conversations in which the writer exchanges ideas back and forth with peers or the teacher

double-entry journal: a two-column entry in which the writer uses one side to record something from a text and the other side to record personal thoughts about it

drafting: the process of getting ideas down on paper, not as a finished product but as a legible work in progress

editing: the process of correcting errors in conventions, such as grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, to enhance the clarity and effectiveness of the writing

form: the organizational strategy or strategies the writer chooses to create an overall structure

freewrite/quickwrite: writing that is unrestricted in form, style, content, and purpose

expository writing: a composition in which the writer's primary purpose is to convey or explain information

holistic scoring: the assignment of a score based on the writing as a whole, which measures the overall effect or performance according to a set of preestablished criteria

learning log: written entries that may include questions to the author, summaries, explanations of problems solved, lists of vocabulary, diagrams and maps, and observational recordings

mood: the feeling or atmosphere the writer creates through the details or language he/she uses

narrative writing: a composition in which the writer's primary purpose is to tell a story, defined as a linked sequence of events that moves through time

organization: the writer's logical progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph; the use of strategies and overall form or structure that provide for the effective communication of ideas

personal journal: written accounts of events in the writer's life about topics he/she chooses

persuasive writing: a composition in which the writer's primary purpose is to support a consistent position or opinion with the intention of influencing a particular audience

plot: the story line or the progression of events from the beginning to the end of the story

point of view: in composition, the writer's feelings about the topic or his/her perspective when telling the story

portfolio: a collection of writing the student produces over a period of time that represents the student's growth and/or accomplishments as a writer

prewriting: the first stage of the writing process in which the writer thinks about the topic, generates ideas, and makes some initial organizational decisions

problem and solution: a structure the writer uses to provide one or more solutions to a stated problem

publishing: the process of sharing written material with an audience

purpose: the goal or reason for writing

revising: the process of reviewing a composition and making additions, deletions, or modifications to content and expression to clarify meaning and expand ideas

rubric: a scoring guide or set of criteria used to judge the quality of a student's work; a rubric distinguishes high-quality from low-quality compositions

scaffold: a temporary support that allows a student to move from current knowledge and skills to a higher level of competence, moving from dependence on the teacher to independence

sequencing: a structure the writer uses to list stages, steps, or events in chronological order

setting: when and where a story takes place

simulated journal: written entry in which the writer assumes the role of a character and writes from that character's point of view

style: the words, phrases, and sentences the writer uses to make a text distinctive from others

technical fluency: the internalized command of conventions that allows the writer to write with ease, accuracy, and automaticity

theme: the underlying meaning(s) of the story

tone: the writer's attitude toward the content that is reflected in the writing itself

topic: the subject about which the writer chooses to write

voice: a clear reflection of the writer's individuality; the composition sounds authentic, original, and highly individualistic

THE SPELLING PROCESS

Imbedded in the process of learning to write is the process of learning to spell: a process in which children develop increasingly sophisticated “rules” for representing oral language in written symbols. In the process children progress through developmental stages:

1. **Scribble Writing:** something that looks vaguely like adults’ cursive writing. In this earliest stage of “writing,” the child knows that marks that these *mean* something: that writing is symbolic, standing for something else.
2. **Prephonemic Stage:** letters do not yet represent sounds.
 - Letter-like marks begin to appear randomly in the child’s “writing” / drawing.
 - Later on, real letters will begin to appear (almost always capitals).
 - Sometimes a child will produce a string of letters and ask an adult what it says.
 - Later on, a child will “translate” a string of letters into spoken words, but the letters will have no phonemic resemblance to real words.
3. **Early Phonemic Stage:** each word is typically represented by one or at most two letters, usually the first and last consonant (if, of course, the word begins and ends with consonant sounds.)
 - Children in transition between this stage and the next will sometimes represent each syllable in a word with a letter.
4. **Letter-name Stage:** the phonemic principle, letters used to represent sounds still being used.
 - More than just one or two sounds in the word are represented.
 - Vowel sounds are represented as well as consonant sounds.
 - It becomes increasingly obvious that although these young spellers typically know the *name* of the many letters of the alphabet, they do not necessarily know which letters are conventionally used to represent certain sounds.
 - When searching for a letter to represent a given sound, they choose the letter whose *name* sounds most like the sound they are trying to represent.
 - Some of the spelling in this stage will typically be inexplicable by *any* of these principles discussed.

As children move toward the next stage, their spelling shows increased influence of the standard spellings they have encountered in books, stores, restaurants, the classroom, and elsewhere in the environment.

5. **Transitional Stage:** spelling shows the influence of standard print by incorporating not only some correct spellings that could not be attained through a letter-name strategy, but also some spellings that show over generalization of the patterns found in print (i.e., *bayed*).

6. **Conventional/Standard Spelling:** the final stage that none of us ever completely attains.

It takes most children many years of reading and writing before they will spell even most (not all) words (correctly in a rough draft) just as it takes most children several years before their speech is sufficiently "correct" as to approximately adult norms of pronunciation and grammar.

ACTIVITIES AND GAMES FOR SPELLING

Activity #1

You will need six tennis balls for this activity. Write "1" on two tennis balls, "2" on two others and "3" on two more. Place all six tennis balls in a paper bag. Divide the students into four teams and write each team's name on the chalkboard. Then have each team line up single file facing its name. To begin playing, the first player in each line steps up to the chalkboard and the remaining students sit in place. In turn, ask each player to write a different word on the chalkboard. If a player correctly spells his word, randomly remove a tennis ball from the bag and bounce it to him. He reads the numeral on the ball and records this number of points near his team's name. If a player misspells his word, his turn is over. Then each first-round player moves to the back of his team's line and a new round of play begins. The team with the most points wins.

Activity #2

Have each student write his spelling words on a sheet of one-inch graph paper – one letter per square. Then, instruct each child to cut out his letter squares and place them in a small resealable plastic bag. Divide students in small groups, and give each group a spelling list and a die. To play, each student scrambles his letters and arranges them face down in front of them. (Caution students to keep their letters separated from their classmates' letters.) Then, in turn, each child rolls the die, turns over the corresponding number of letters, and forms as many spelling words as possible. The student then moves the assembled words aside and turns the unused letters facedown. Play continues until one student has spelled each word on the list.

Activity #3

Have each student fold a sheet of blank paper in half three times, then unfold the paper and write a different spelling word in each box. Next, have them cut apart the boxes and arrange the eight resulting word cards in alphabetical order. Verify each student's work before inviting her to sort her word cards by self-selected categories, such as vowel sounds or number of syllables. To wrap up the activity, have each student name the spelling words in each of her categories and ask her classmates to identify what sorting rule(s) she used.

Activity #4

You will need a pair of dice for each group, a spelling list, a sheet of writing paper, and a pencil. Give each group a pair of dice. Each student also needs his/her spelling list, a sheet of writing paper, and a pencil. To play, each group member takes a turn rolling the dice and adding the two numbers shown. The student who rolls the greatest sum wins the round and copies two spelling words on his/her paper. Play continues in the described manner until one student has listed all of his/her spelling words and is declared the winner.

Activity #5

Give each student a blank 16 space lotto board, or have each child fold a blank sheet of paper in half four times, then unfold his/her paper to reveal 16 spaces. Have each student randomly program his game board spaces with different spelling words. Give each student a handful of cereal (like AlphaBits) to use as markers. To play, announce a word and spell it aloud with students. If a child has this word on his game board, he covers it with a piece of cereal. Continue in this manner until one player covers four spaces in a vertical, diagonal, or horizontal row and announces, "Spell-O!" To win the game, the student reads aloud each word in the row for verification. The declared winner of the first game becomes the caller for the second game. After a desired number of games, invite students to munch on their markers!

Activity #6

This classroom version of "Let's Make a Deal" is a prize-worthy approach to spelling! Collect a supply of small prize items like stickers, homework passes, wrapped candies, and coupons for free time, extra time at the class computer, or lunch with the teacher. (For added fun, gather some humorous prizes like last-person-in-line cards and pencil stubs.) Use colorful paper to cover the sides and bottoms of three empty cans. Then invert the cans; number "1," "2," and "3"; and slide a prize under each one. You will also need a supply of buck coupons or tickets. In turn ask each student to spell a word aloud. If a student spells the word correctly, he/she may either collect a buck coupon or ticket to use later or choose a container and receive the prize it conceals. If a student misspells the word he/she is given, his/her turn is over. Continue play - replacing prizes as needed - until each has taken a turn. A student who collects five buck coupons (or five tickets) may redeem them for the prize of their choice.

Activity #7

Have each student incorporate his spelling words into a word-search puzzle. To do this, they write the words horizontally, vertically, and diagonally on a sheet of ½ inch graph paper – one letter per square. Then they fill in the remaining squares with miscellaneous letters. Next they trade puzzles with a classmate. For added fun have students try these simple variations as they solve the puzzles:

Use a different color to circle each spelling word.

Circle nouns in yellow and verbs in orange.

Use a marker to highlight smaller words that are hidden within spelling words.

Activity #8

This activity will reinforce math and spelling! Have a poster that shows each alphabet letter with an assigned dollar value. Then challenge students to determine the cash value of each word on their spelling lists. (Ex. A \$1; B \$2; C \$3; ... X \$24; Y \$25; Z \$26.) You may want to provide calculators for students' use if desired. Some of the following are extension activities:

Instruct students to write their spelling words in order from least to most expensive or vice versa.

Pair students. Have each student dictate three spelling words to their partner. Each partner writes these words on their paper and determines their collective sum. The student who dictates the word list of lesser (greater) value wins the round.

Challenge students to find words (other than spelling words) that are worth more (less) than \$25, \$50, and so on.

Activity #9

Have each student use a crayon to write the alphabet letters on one-inch graph paper - one letter per square. Instruct each child to repeat this activity three times, then cut out the resulting letter squares. Give each child a resealable plastic bag in which to store his or her letters; then have each student store the bag of letters in their desk. For a spontaneous spelling review, have students use the letters from their stored bags to spell words from the weekly lists. Or surprise students and ask them to arrange their letters to spell words related to a current topic or theme being studied.

Activity #10

Give each student an envelope to personalize. You will also need a colorful supply of paper slips. After a spelling test or writing conference, have each student correctly write each word he/she misspelled on a paper slip, then store the word slip(s) in their envelope. Every few days provide time for students to practice spelling their envelope words with different partners. After a desired number of weeks, have each student choose five to ten words from his/her envelope. Ask the student to spell these words for you (orally or on paper). Each word that is correctly spelled can be taken home. A misspelled word is returned to the student's envelope. Spelling accuracy will improve on the double!

Activity #11

For each round of play, write a different spelling word on the chalkboard. Choose one student to oversee an egg timer and ask the remaining students to copy the word from the chalkboard onto their papers. The object of the game is to continually write the spelling word from the moment the egg timer is inverted until the student watching it calls out, "Time!" Then each student speller awards himself one point for every correct (and legible) spelling for that round and writes his score near their word list. Identify the student who earns the highest score; then, with your student's help, determine your score for the round by tallying the words you wrote on the chalkboard. If the student wins the round, award the teacher one point. When each spelling word has been speedily spelled, determine the speedier speller: you or your students!

Activity #12

Label a large index card for each child. Each week date and program the card with a bonus word that is appropriate for the student's spelling skills. A student may keep his/her bonus spelling word card at his/her desk, or the teacher may choose to store the cards in a central location. Throughout the week, provide special bonus word activities like "When you finish your math paper, use a crayon to write your bonus spelling word three times near the bottom on the page" or "During recess spell your bonus word out loud for everyone to hear!" When you administer your weekly spelling test, ask each child to write his/her bonus word in a complete sentence. If a student successfully completes this task, give him a foil star to attach near the word on his bonus spelling card. If he is not successful, encourage him to try again the following week. Each young speller will beam with pride as his galaxy of starred bonus words grows!

Activity #13

Write a note to your teacher. Use ten or more spelling words in your note. Draw a blue line under each spelling word you use.

Activity #14

Hide your spelling words in a letter trail. Draw a purple circle around each spelling word.

Activity #15

Write a word triangle for each spelling word.

c	c
ch	ch
che	che
chee	chee
chees	chees
cheese	cheese

Activity #16

Write a story for the newspaper. Use ten or more spelling words in your story. Draw a red box around each word you use.

Activity #17

Draw a map. Use each spelling word to label the map. Be creative!

Activity #18

Draw a large circle on your paper. Write your spelling words inside the circle. Keep writing until the circle is filled. Use your crayons to make the circle look like a pizza!

Activity #19

Write your spelling words in order from Z to A.

Activity #20

Choose five different spelling words. Write a riddle for each one. Ask a classmate to solve your riddles.

Ex. I have three letters.
 I rhyme with cat.
 You can wear me on your head.
 What am I?

Activity #21

Write each spelling word. Draw a green circle around each vowel. Draw an orange line under each consonant.

Activity #22

Use the color code: Write each spelling word in code.

Color Code:

a – e = red

f – j = blue

k – o = green

p – t = purple

u – z = orange

Activity #23

Write each word as a rainbow word. Use at least three different colors for each letter!