

ENGLISH STANDARDS OF LEARNING
ENHANCED SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

K-5

WRITING STRATEGIES

Introduction

The writing strategies included in this document are based on sound research and provide a variety of ways to actively involved children in their learning. The strategies serve to supplement the instructional suggestions in the Houghton Mifflin Teacher's Edition.

The Virginia Department of Education has created a document that MCPS teachers are invited expand. Write up your favorite writing strategies to include in next year's update.

To submit an additional strategy, copy a page from this word document to your hard drive. Use the format to guide you as you type over it the appropriate information for the new strategy. Submit the strategy by sending it as an attachment to bwojo@mail.mcps.org. Please submit strategies throughout the year so that the Office of Curriculum can compile them for review by groups of teachers next summer.

WRITING Strategies Organizational Chart

Strategy	Standards of Learning	Pre-writing	Drafting	Revising	Editing
Modeled Writing	K.9, K.11, 1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12	X	X	X	X
Shared Writing	K.9, K.11, 1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12	X	X	X	X
Interactive Writing	K.9, K.11, 1.11, 1.12	X	X	X	X
Guided Writing	K.9, K.11, K.12, 1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12	X	X	X	X
Morning Message	K.9, K.10, K.11, 1.11, 1.12, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 3.10, 3.11	X	X	X	X
Writing a Story, Using a Story Plan	1.12, 2.11	X	X	X	
Parts of a Story from Start to Finish	K.11, 1.12, 2.11	X	X		
Posting the Writing Process	K.11, 1.12, 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7, 5.8	X	X	X	X
More Than a Web	3.9, 3.10, 4.7, 5.8	X			
Making a List	K.9, K.11, 1.11, 1.12, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12	X			
Brainstorming Topics for Writing	K.11, 1.12, 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7	X			
Creating a Prewriting Web	1.12, 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7	X			
Quick Writes	3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 4.7, 4.8, 5.8, 5.9	X	X	X	X
Visualization	2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7, 5.8	X	X	X	
Focus on the Topic	K.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11			X	X
Revision with a Target	1.12, 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7			X	
Magnifying or Shrinking a Topic	3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 4.7, 4.8, 5.8, 5.9	X	X	X	
Using Strong Action Words to Spark Interest	1.12, 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7, 5.8	X	X	X	
Description Words	1.12, 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7, 5.8	X	X	X	
Overused Words	2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 4.7, 4.8, 5.8, 5.9			X	
Transitions	3.10, 3.11, 4.7, 4.8, 5.8, 5.9			X	X
Combining Sentences	3.10, 3.11, 4.7, 4.8, 5.8, 5.9		X	X	X
Creating a Strong Lead	2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7, 5.8		X	X	
Avoiding Crash Landings	3.10, 4.7, 5.8	X	X	X	
Finding Misspelling	2.12, 3.11, 4.8, 5.9				X
Putting in Punctuation	K.11, 1.12, 2.12				X
Capitalization: A Way to Begin a Sentence	K.11, 1.12, 2.12				X

WRITING Strategy → Modeled Writing

Related Standard(s) of Learning K.9, K.11, 1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12

Overview of the strategy

The teacher demonstrates the act of writing by thinking aloud as text is composed in front of students. This allows students to hear the thinking that accompanies the writing process, such as choice of topic, how to begin the piece, and how to look for interesting vocabulary. Modeled writing also includes revising and editing what has been written.

Strategy procedure

1. Choose a text to compose. The text should serve a well-defined purpose and should be aimed at a particular audience, e.g., instructions for a student assignment or an invitation to a school open house for parents. Modeled writing may be used to introduce students to new writing skills and genres.
2. On an overhead projector, a board, or chart paper, compose a meaningful, coherent message for the chosen audience and purpose, showing students how to think aloud about actions and choices in writing. As you write, demonstrate
 - the correct use of grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and print directionality
 - spelling strategies
 - the connection between spelling and phonics
 - rereading as a process to help students remember what they are writing about.
3. Choose another audience and purpose, and ask students to compose another text, using the strategies you have modeled.

Source

- D. H. Graves, *A Fresh Look at Writing* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1994).

WRITING Strategy → Shared Writing

Related Standard(s) of Learning K.9, K.11, 1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12

Overview of the strategy

In this activity the teacher and students share the composing process. By writing in front of the students, the teacher reinforces concepts of print directionality, and print conventions. Shared writing is a negotiated process with choice of words and topics discussed and decided jointly by students and the teacher. By collaborating with the teacher, who acts as a scribe, the students are free to focus on the composing process without the additional task of transcribing. Shared writing can take many forms, such as: class rules and charts, poems, shared experiences, classroom observations, newsletters to parents, daily message, innovation of a previously read book, a group story, or a model of a new type of writing.

Strategy procedure

1. Introduce the lessons/topic by modeling how to begin writing. With the students, generate ideas for the writing and plan the text. Decisions should be made jointly between yourself and the students.
2. Record class ideas in a format that all can see.
3. Compose the text, using input from the students.
4. As you compose, demonstrate the conventions of writing: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and print directionality.
5. When you have finished drafting the text, have students read and reread the composition with you, editing for clarity, completeness, and correctness.

Source

- D. H. Graves, *A Fresh Look at Writing* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1994).

WRITING Strategy → Interactive Writing

Related Standard(s) of Learning K.9, K.11, 1.11, 1.12

Overview of the strategy

The teacher and students interact to compose a text. The teacher shares with the students, at strategic points, the actual writing of letters and words. The teacher and students collaborate on the content of the text. They should work together to construct words through the analysis of sound, helping students increase their letter knowledge and gain familiarity with many sight words. Interactive writing encourages students to search, check, and confirm during the writing process.

Strategy procedure

1. Demonstrate how to begin writing. Ask students to provide ideas and help you plan the text. Decisions about content and organization should be made jointly between yourself and the students.
2. Record class ideas in a format that all can see.
3. Collaborating with the students, compose the text. Have students participate in the writing at strategic points by asking individuals to write known letters, words, or phrases. Move students to independence by not doing for them what they can do for themselves.
4. As you compose, demonstrate the conventions of writing (capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and print directionality), and reinforce students' phonemic awareness and application of phonetic principles. Make connections between unknown words and known words, such as student names or words that generalize a spelling pattern.
5. When you have finished drafting the text, have students read and reread the composition with you, editing for clarity, completeness, and correctness.

Source

- McCarrier, G. S. Pinnell, and I C. Fountas, *Interactive Writing: How Language and Literacy Come Together: K-2* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2000).

WRITING Strategy → Guided Writing

Related Standard(s) of Learning K.9, K.11, K.12, 1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12

Overview of the strategy

The teacher works with individual students or a small group of students who have similar needs and offers assistance as the students write. This activity provides focused writing instruction to students to enable them to become independent writers.

Strategy procedure

1. Choose a writing assignment for a particular purpose and audience, and discuss it with the students. Explain that they will be writing individual texts but working in small groups, using a variety of resources, including the word wall, dictionaries, and thesauruses. Explain that they will read and respond to the writing of their groups and that you will be available to give guidance.
2. Divide students into small groups according to writing ability and needs. Ask them to begin composing.
3. Circulate around the room, prompting, coaching, and guiding students through the writing process. Encourage students to use the available resources, and prompt them with open-ended questions. Encourage, accept, and expect approximations of spellings for new and unusual words. Expect conventional spelling of grade-appropriate words.
4. When students have finished composing, ask them to share what they have written with the other students in their groups. Readers should respond, making suggestions for revision in areas such as organization, word choice, spelling, and punctuation.
5. When everyone has shared his or her writing, have students incorporate suggestions and corrections as necessary.

Source

- P.M. Cunningham and R.L. Allington, *Classrooms That Work: They Can All Read and Write*, 2nd ed. (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999).

WRITING Strategy → Morning Message

Related Standard(s) of Learning K.9, K.10, K.11, 1.11, 1.12, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 3.10, 3.11

Overview of the strategy

“The Morning Message” is a letter that the teacher writes and shares with the students on a daily basis. The message is cultivated from exciting classroom and current events, content area experiences, and a variety of literacy skills. The parts of a friendly letter are modeled for the students: the date, the greeting, the body of the letter, the closing, and the signature. For kindergarten and first grade students, the message is simple and has some predictable parts, such as “Today is _____.” Or “The weather today is _____.” For second and third grade students, the message need not have predictable language and can have a more detailed message. The message should be no more than three sentences long at the beginning of the year and no more than five sentences by the end of the year. “The Morning Message” should take only 10 or 15 minutes per day. As the year progresses, “The Morning Message” moves from a shared writing experience to an interactive writing experience as the students begin to take over writing some of the daily message to the class. The daily message is best written on chart paper and saved. The letters can then be compiled monthly as a “book” and placed in the classroom library.

“The Morning Message” is a multi-leveled teaching tool. The teacher plans and writes the message about the events in the classroom and includes the literacy skills and vocabulary that are being taught. This daily strategy session is an opportunity for students to show what they know. In the primary classroom, the teacher reads the message to the class and asks several students to come forward to share and circle what they know. The students may share that they know a letter, a letter sound, a word, or a punctuation mark. In a second or third grade classroom, the students might share recognized vocabulary, spelling words, and punctuation, or they might contribute to writing the message. “The Morning Message” can also be used to teach editing and revising skills when the teacher makes “mistakes” in spelling and punctuation or leaves out words and details in the writing.

Strategy procedure

1. Plan the message and the literacy skills that will be reinforced or reviewed.
2. Write the message daily, and provide time to include it in the daily classroom routine. When writing, demonstrate literacy skills, including
 - appropriate handwriting and spacing practices
 - the editing process, using misspelled words or punctuation mistakes
 - tracking
 - phonetic spelling
 - capitalization, punctuation, contractions, and simple abbreviations
 - use of high-frequency words
 - complete sentences
 - use of pronouns
 - use of the parts of a friendly letter.
3. For kindergarten and first grade students, first read the message together, then independently. Have second and third grade students read it first independently, then together. As you read, model tracking the words in

the message from left to right and top to bottom to reinforce the concept of word, an important pre-reading skill for the kindergarten/first grade student.

4. Have several students show what they notice in the message each day, and circle the things they know.
5. To extend the lesson, you may have students sign the message under the teacher's signature, using appropriate handwriting. Reinforce the writing skills by encouraging students to write messages to the teacher or other members of the class. Provide a post office center in the classroom to "mail" the letters.
6. Compile the week's messages into a book for the reading center.
7. As the students begin to hold the pen and contribute to the writing, move from Shared Writing experience to Interactive Writing.

Source

- R. Franzese, *Reading and Writing in Kindergarten: A Practical Guide* (New York: Scholastic Professional Books, 2002).

WRITING Strategy → Writing a Story, Using a Story Plan

Related Standard(s) of Learning 1.12, 2.11

Overview of the strategy

As the students tell a story, the teacher listens, transcribes, and, as necessary, prompts, using a story plan and questions to help the students move the story along. The story plan includes these parts: character, setting, problem, events, and resolution. This strategy may need to be modeled several times for the young writers to internalize it. The students can use the story plan to write future stories of their own.

Strategy procedure

1. Introduce the story plan to the students as books are read aloud during story time. Label the parts of the stories, using the story plan, so that students become familiar with the parts of a story.
2. When students are comfortable with the story plan, explain that they are going to develop a story, using the story plan. Pre-write the components of the story plan on chart paper or the overhead projector. The story plan might look like this:

Character:
Setting:
Problem:
Events:
1.
2.
3.
Resolution:

3. Ask the students to shut their eyes to help visualize the setting and the character's actions. Have the students take turns dictating the parts of a new story. You may want to listen to two or three of the students' suggestions before you begin transcribing. As the students tell the story, record what they say on chart paper, frequently reading the story back to them, asking questions, and clarifying what the students dictate.
4. Read the story with the students when it is completed and praise the strengths of the story.
5. Discuss the story plan to determine if all of the components are present. Identify the components, and reinforce the writing skills the students have exercised.
6. Ask the students to draw a picture to illustrate one part of the new story.

Source

- L. Schaefer, *Teaching Young Writers: Strategies That Work: Grades K-2* (New York: Scholastic Professional Books, 2001).

WRITING Strategy → Parts of a Story from Start to Finish

Related Standard(s) of Learning K.11, 1.12, 2.11

Overview of the strategy

The beginning writer will often use formulaic writing, such as “I love...” or “I like...” and call this a story. They are often unwilling to leave this type of writing behind as it is safe and predictable. The teacher must help the students understand that all stories have a beginning, middle, and an end so they can assist their students in expanding their sense of story. This strategy introduces the writer to more complex story language through real books and invites the writer to experiment with this language in his/her own writing. By using a graphic organizer, the writer will be able to organize the story parts of a favorite story, then use this organizer to expand his/her own writing.

Strategy procedure

1. Use books that are read aloud to discuss the parts of the story. Use this time to think aloud about what words are used to make this story move along.
2. Read to the students a story that has a distinct beginning, middle, and end. Draw three boxes on chart paper, and label them “Beginning,” “Middle,” and “End.” Have the students retell the story while focusing on what happened first, next, and last. Record their sentences in the appropriate boxes.

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Beginning

Middle

End

3. Extend the strategy to show the sequence of the story, using appropriate story language, such as *first*, *next*, *last*, *finally*, *second*, or *at last*.
4. Ask students to write their own stories, using the graphic organizer and sequencing words. Have the students ask themselves, “Does my story have a beginning, a middle, and an end?” If it doesn’t, encourage the students to write a sentence that will fill in that part of the story.

Sources

- L. Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Writing: New Edition* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1994).
- R. Fletcher and J. Poralupi, *Craft Lessons: Teaching Writing K-8* (Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 1998).

WRITING Strategy → Posting the Writing Process

Related Standard(s) of Learning K.11, 1.12, 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7, 5.8

Overview of the strategy

As students begin to write, it is important to explain to them that writing is a process used by *all* authors, even their favorite children’s book authors. Students, too, will use this process to share their thoughts through stories, letters, narratives, poems, and a variety of other writing genres. As the students learn the stages of writing – prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing with others, they can apply them to their own writing processes. Posting the stages of writing in a conspicuous place in your classroom will emphasize the value of this strategic process, and by learning the process, students may appreciate the purpose of writing and value their own writing and the writing of others.

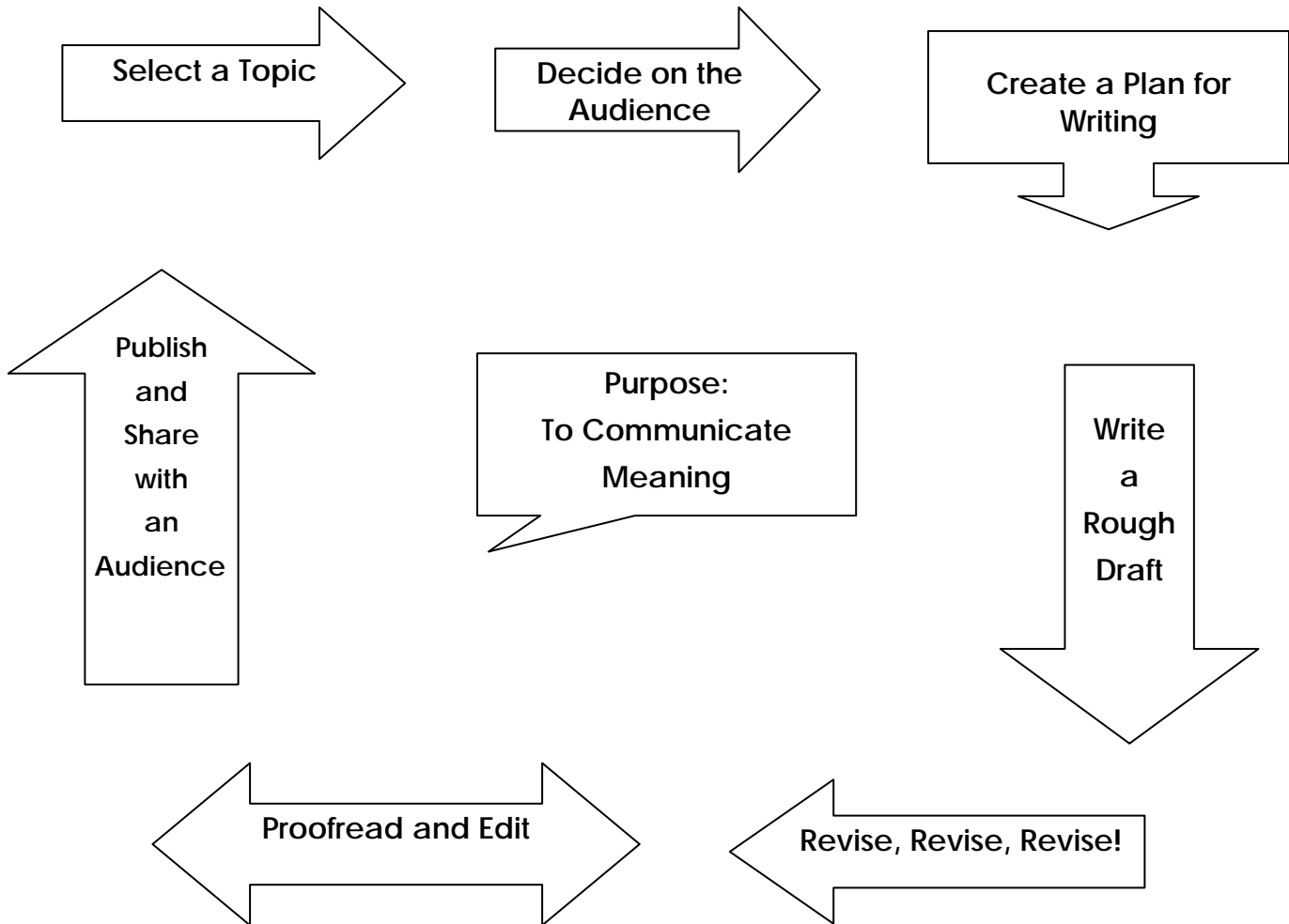
Strategy procedure

1. Make a poster representing the steps of the writing process, and post it in a prominent place in the classroom. (For an example, see *A Sample Writing Process*, next page.)
2. Preview the writing process, and demonstrate each part, using brief, focused writing lessons.
3. Refer to and review each component of the writing process as needed until the students are comfortable with the process and know it.
4. Ask students to begin using the stages of the writing process in their own writing.
5. Support the students as writers by referring them back to the writing process poster. Ask pointed questions about their writing, referring often to the writing process.
6. Talk the “talk of writers” with students, using terms such as *topic*, *author*, *drafts*, *revising*, *thinking*, *brainstorming*, *picturing*, *describing*, and *audience*. Using the terms helps students think, speak, and work like writers. They will come to think of themselves as authors if you treat them as such.

Source

- L. Schaefer, *Teaching Young Writers: Strategies that Work, Grades K-2* (New York: Scholastic, 2001).

A Sample Writing Process



WRITING Strategy → More Than a Web

Related Standard(s) of Learning 3.9, 3.10, 4.7,5.8

Overview of the strategy

Students will use a variety of graphic organizers during the planning stage. The students will learn that some graphic organizers are more appropriate than others for writing specific types of texts.

Strategy procedure

1. As a class, brainstorm ideas for a narrative piece.
2. Chart the brainstorm where all students can see it.
3. Hand out a variety of graphic organizers (e.g., Venn diagram, T-chart, cluster web, story map, and time line). Each student should get copies of all of the organizers.
4. Pair students together. Have each pair of students examine the graphic organizers, choose one, and use it to plan the narrative paper.
5. When the students have finished planning, have them share their reasons for picking the graphic organizer they used. Discuss with the class the advantages and disadvantages of each type of graphic organizer for planning narrative writing.
6. Over the course of the semester, repeat this procedure for an opinion paper, a comparison/contrast piece, a biographical report, or a science report.

WRITING Strategy → Making a List

Related Standard(s) of Learning K.9, K.11, 1.11, 1.12, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12

Overview of the strategy

On the first school day of each month, the class works together to create a list of words that might be used in writing for the month. The list is displayed in the classroom for the students' use during writing. Words included may be thematic, holiday, seasonal, and/or content area words appropriate for the month. Putting them on display alleviates the much-asked question, "How do you spell _____?" It also helps students recognize words that will be used often throughout the month and provides many ideas for writing topics.

Strategy procedure

1. Introduce the strategy by explaining that the class will work together to create a list of words that might be used in writing for the month. The list will be posted in the classroom, available for student use. Words included may be thematic, holiday, seasonal, and/or content area words. Suggest that students may also want to include words that are often-used, but difficult to spell.
2. Begin by modeling a Think-Aloud, recording two or three words that will be used in writing for that month.
3. Ask students to suggest words. Generate more words by discussing upcoming holidays, the season, or topics they will learn about during the month. Record the words the students suggest.
4. After the class has finalized its list, create a poster. You may want to use color markers that reflect the colors used during a particular season, e.g. green and red for December, or you may want to reinforce phonetic strategies by stretching out words, writing sounds or word chunks heard. When you have finished the poster, display it in the classroom.
5. During the semester, refer to the word list as you
 - make connections of unknown words to known words
 - guide the student as he/she holds the pen to write known letters/sounds or chunks of words
 - lead the class in reading and reviewing the list of words.
7. Remind students to refer to the list as they write.
8. Repeat the procedure each month.

Source

- Developed by Jan Stilwell, M.Ed., Richmond City Public Schools.

WRITING Strategy → Brainstorming Topics for Writing

Related Standard(s) of Learning K.11, 1.12, 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7

Overview of the strategy

The teacher guides the students as they brainstorm topics for writing. The teacher records the topics and the students' names on chart paper, and the list is kept on display in the classroom so that students can refer to it when they need help thinking of a writing topic. This strategy works well as an introduction to the writing process for any grade level.

Strategy procedure

1. Think aloud two come up with two or three topics, such as "Pets," "My Mother," or "My Little Brother." Write these on the chart paper.
2. Have students think of topics with which they are familiar, and ask them to take turns naming the topics.
3. Record each topic and the student's name on chart paper. Ask students to contribute some of the known letters or words of the topics as you transcribe them.
4. Display the list of topics in the classroom. Title the list "Ideas for Writing; Topics I Can Write About."
5. Read the list of topics to review for the students.
6. Encourage the students to add to this list throughout the school year.
7. Provide each student with his or her own topic sheet to compose a personal list of topics for writing. (A sample topic sheet is provided on the next page.)

My Topics for Writing

Name _____ Date _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

16. _____

17. _____

18. _____

WRITING Strategy → Creating a Prewriting Web

Related Standard(s) of Learning 1.12, 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7

Overview of the strategy

The prewriting web is a method of gathering and organizing thoughts. A topic is written in the center of a piece of paper or a chalk board, and rays are drawn out from it to details and evidence that support the central topic. Students may use this strategy to organize thoughts and details, sequence a story, or outline parts of a story before composition begins.

Strategy procedure

1. Introduce the prewriting web, emphasizing that it is a strategy to be used before writing begins.
2. Model the use of the prewriting web. Choose a topic familiar to all students and write it in the center of the chalkboard or a piece of chart paper. Think aloud as you add at least three details or facts about the topic. For each supporting detail, draw a line out from the central idea, and write the detail over the line. Ask students to assist you in creating the web by suggesting details or facts about the topic.
3. Review the topic and the supporting details.
4. Conclude the lesson by reviewing the prewriting web strategy with the students.
5. Extend the lesson the next day by combining the topic with the details into a coherent piece of writing.
6. Over time, have students practice this strategy as a small group, with a partner, and then independently.
7. Ask them to demonstrate their understanding of the strategy by explaining it to another student and using it to complete a writing sample.

WRITING Strategy → Quick Writes

Related Standard(s) of Learning 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11. 4.7, 4.8, 5.8, 5.9

Overview of the strategy

Quick Writes build fluency and voice and give students practice at writing spontaneously from a prompt. They can also be used to reinforce specific areas of writing instruction. Quick Writes are a good way to start writing instruction each day.

Strategy procedure

1. Ask the students to get ready to write with pencils poised.
2. Call out a one- or two-word prompt (e.g., *snow*, *football*, *Bubble bath*, *Fridays*) on which the students will base their writing.
3. Say go, and start timing one minute, two minutes, or five minutes. The students begin their writing. Write along with the students.
4. Say stop at the end of the timed interval. The students may finish the sentences they are writing.
5. Volunteers share their writing orally with the class. Share your writing as well, as teacher models are important in this exercise.

Variations and ideas

- Initially you may want to choose the prompts. After doing this a few times students may suggest prompts. Written student suggestions can be put in a jar or bag. It is easy to pull from the jar each day.
- Occasionally students may want to take these short writings through the entire writing process and publish them in a class book. (Example: “Two-minute thoughts about Thanksgiving.”) These books are added to the class library.
- You may focus the writing on writing skills taught during class. For example: if the class has been studying leads, direct students to write a good lead, using the prompt word. If the class has been studying a certain editing technique, such as reading the piece backward to check the spelling of each word, ask students to use this skill.

WRITING Strategy → Visualization

Related Standard(s) of Learning 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7, 5.8

Overview of the strategy

Students will improve their descriptive paragraphs and stories through the use of art and visualization. The instruction can be scaffolded through the use of literature.

Strategy procedure

1. Read aloud an especially descriptive scene from a piece of children's literature. While you are reading, have the students close their eyes and visualize the place, person, or thing.
2. Have the students draw their visualizations on unlined paper. The drawings can be as detailed as you want depending on the time you allow the students. Using color pencils adds another dimension.
3. Reread the selection when the students have completed their drawings.
4. Allow students to add to their drawings.
5. Discuss the details students included and what they overlooked during the first reading.
6. Repeat the same process, using a piece of student writing. Discuss how complete a picture one could draw from the description and what can be added to make the description more complete.
7. Have students pick one descriptive piece each from their writing. Ask them to draw the items or places and then revise their written descriptions, using their detailed pictures.

WRITING Strategy → Focus on the Topic

Related Standard(s) of Learning K.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11

Overview of the strategy

This strategy asks the students to take a closer look at their writing and ask the important question: “Did I stay on topic? The teacher guides the students through this task by using books, writing samples from students, or his/her own writing as a model. The students are asked to focus on a piece of their writing to determine if they have focused only on the chosen topic or wandered off-topic.

Strategy procedure

1. Introduce the strategy by showing the students a well-known book that is well-focused.
2. Ask the students to predict what the book is about. Read the story to the students to check their predictions.
3. Lead a discussion of the book to determine if the author stayed on topic or drifted off of the topic.
4. Display a writing sample in which the writer meanders from one topic to another.
5. Model revising the piece of writing by drawing a line through the parts that do not support the topic.
6. Ask the students to look at their current pieces of writing more closely to decide if they stayed on topic. If they did not, ask them to draw a line through the parts that do not fit.
7. Assist the students in small groups or individually as they focus on their writing for revision. Many beginning writers will not want to re-work their writing and will need extra support from the teacher to look for the parts that do not support the topic.
8. Extend the strategy lesson by teaching the students to work in small groups or pairs to read their writing, check to see if they stayed on topic, and assist each other with this revision process.

Sources

- L. Dorn and C. Soffos, *Scaffolding Young Writers: A Writers’ Workshop Approach* (Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2001).
- R. Fletcher and J. Portalupi, *Craft Lessons: Teaching Writing K-8* (Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 1998).

WRITING Strategy → Revision with a Target

Related Standard(s) of Learning 1.12, 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7

Overview of the strategy

The teacher targets a weak writing element, such as weak or repetitious vocabulary, insufficient detail, or lack of clarity, and asks students to focus on the weakness as they revise their writing. The clear purpose for revision helps focus the efforts of student writers who are often reluctant to make changes to their writing. This strategy should be repeatedly modeled and is especially effective when the class has written a story together and all class members are invested in the piece.

Strategy procedure

1. Explain that *revision* is when the writer changes writing to make it better. Target one writing element to revise during this process, and write it on the board.
2. Use a group story that has been completed recently.
3. Read to the students a group story that has been completed recently and have them listen with their “writers’ ears” or look with their “writers’ eyes” for any changes that need to be made.
4. When the story has been read, encourage the students to make suggestions for revision. Ask leading questions to support the students as they notice potential revisions based on the chosen writing element.
5. Model making these changes in front of the class.
6. Demonstrate this revision process several times so the students will begin to internalize it. Ask them to use it in their own writing.

Source

- L. Schaefer, *Teaching Young Writers: Strategies That Work, K-2* (New York: Scholastic Professional Books, 2001).

WRITING Strategy → Magnifying or Shrinking a Topic

Related Standard(s) of Learning 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 4.7, 4.8, 5.8, 5.9

Overview of the strategy

Student sometimes will write a great deal to set up a part of the story and then hurry through the main point. Because of this, the main points of their stories sometimes need magnification. This strategy will teach students how to find focal points that need magnification and how to elaborate those points. It will also help them focus on areas that are too wordy and need to be shrunk.

Strategy procedure

1. Stress that each short story should have a *significant moment* that addresses the purpose of the story, and instruct students to identify the significant moments or events of their stories. Often this element is missing from writing; students often ramble from event to event. If a significant event is missing, the student needs to explore the topic to find it.
2. Once a significant moment has been located, lead students into understanding the following techniques for magnifying the event:
 - *Develop the sense of place.* Add language that develops the scene, giving readers a sense of place. It may help students to envision themselves in control of a camera. They should write to show the readers what the camera sees. The details that are added should not distract from the story, but add to it.
 - *Develop the tone.* Add language that develops the “feel” of the moment. Is it a creepy place or a cold place? Additional language that suggests the feelings of the characters will magnify the moment.
 - *Slow down the passage of time.* Have students picture the significant moment in slow motion and describe it frame by frame. A writer slows down a passage by adding more details, allowing the reader to savor it.
 - *Add dialogue.* The interaction of characters and how they converse with each other can place the reader inside the scene.
 - *Add a “thought shot.”* Explaining characters’ thinking makes them realistic. If he/she is faced with a decision or a task, a “thought shot” can increase the tension or the uncertainty.
 - *Show, don’t tell.* The story may read, “It was cold.” By changing this thought to “Her flesh raised in goose bumps as the air hit it,” the writer forces the reader to infer that it was cold. Writing inferences can be a difficult task. Look for models of this in literature and adult writing to share with students.
3. Student writing often contains many details that slow the story in the wrong places. Readers get bored, and their minds wander. Have students identify these places in their own writing. Showing on the overhead examples of such places can bring home the point. Students can shrink these moments only after identifying them, and this must be modeled and encouraged, as students do not like to delete anything they have written. Young writers are hung up on the length of their works; they need to see adult writers discarding sentences and paragraphs of writing in an effort to improve a piece. A teacher who uses his/her own writing can be a powerful model.
4. Show students ways to shrink the event to avoid wordiness:
 - *Focus on one small space of time.* A student, who writes about a whole day to describe a five minute roller coaster ride, or the entire summer to describe one event at camp, needs focus. Changing the starting point of the paper will help the writer achieve this focus. If the writer begins with the significant event and uses a technique from step 2 to explore it, he or she will be able to focus the piece.
 - *Look for repetition.* If details add the same information or state the obvious, they should be eliminated.
 - *Avoid being too mouthy.* If the dialogue is carrying the story, it needs to be looked at with a critical eye. Keeping essential dialogue and using descriptions to carry the plot will strengthen the paper.

- *Avoid too much description.* If too many details are added, the story can become too slow. Students may be listing information for all five senses when one or two will set the tone.

Sources

- B. Lane, *After the End* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1993).
- B. Lane, *Reviser's Toolbox* (Shoreman, Vermont: Discover Writing Press, 1999).

WRITING Strategy → Using Strong Action Words to Spark Interest

Related Standard(s) of Learning 1.12, 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7, 5.8

Overview of the strategy

Young students tend to use weak or overused verbs in their stories. The teacher assists the class in creating a list of strong verbs that is displayed in the classroom and to which more verbs are added over time. The teacher models writing using a weak verb and then substitutes the stronger verb to demonstrate how it can spark the reader's interest and clarify the meaning of the story. Students then use the list in their own writing.

Strategy procedure

1. Use explicit teaching to point out action-packed verbs used in a children's book. Discuss how this use of strong, precise verbs in writing clarifies meaning. Help the students understand that the stronger action words add interest to the writing and the use of just the right verb describes exactly the action that is taking place.
2. Lead the class in creating a list of strong verbs that students can use in their writing.
3. Display the list of words in the classroom.
4. Write sentences, using weak verbs; model revision of the same sentences, using stronger verbs from the list.
5. Collaborate with the students to record and add strong verbs to the list. Ask students to think of words that are more precise than *ran*, *said*, or *jumped*. For example: *darted* or *galloped* for *ran*; *explained* or *replied* for *said*; and *leaped* or *dove* for *jumped*. Older students can create their own list of words.
6. Demonstrate using the list of action words during prewriting, writing, and revising.
7. Ask students to use the list during planning, writing, and revising a piece of writing.

Source

- N. Atwell, *In the Middle: New Understandings about Writing, Reading, and Learning*, 2nd Edition. (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann 1998).

WRITING Strategy → Description Words

Related Standard(s) of Learning 1.12, 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7, 5.8

Overview of the strategy

Beginning writers usually use sparse language in their writing. Description words can enhance their writing by helping the reader to see, taste, smell, hear, and feel the details. The teacher can best demonstrate the use of description words by reading examples from several children's books. Using this strategy, the teacher leads the students in collecting description words found in Read-Alouds and other books. The resultant list can be used as a prewriting strategy as young writers consider ways to enhance their writing. Students may also use the list of description words during composition and revision.

Strategy procedure

1. Read a book with good descriptive language. Select several passages from the book that exemplify strong description words.
2. Explain to students that description words help the reader paint a picture in his or her mind. Share the passages you have selected, pointing out some of the examples of description words. Ask the students to suggest other examples from the passages shared.
3. Record their description words on chart paper.
4. Continue to collect description words over time from class Read-Alouds and other literary sources.
5. Display the list of words in the classroom for reference.
6. Extend the strategy for older students by having them create a list of description words on a form or in a journal, keeping the list handy for independent use.
7. Extend the strategy by categorizing the description words into the five senses.
8. Encourage the students to add to the list of words on the chart paper or their independent lists and to use description words in their writing.

Sources

- L. Dorn and C. Soffos, *Scaffolding Young Writers: A Writers' Workshop Approach* (Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2001).
- Fletcher, R. and Portalupi, J. 1998. *Craft Lessons: Teaching Writing K-8*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

WRITING Strategy → Overused Words

Related Standard(s) of Learning 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 4.7, 4.8, 5.8, 5.9

Overview of the strategy

Students will expand their vocabularies and avoid slang or overused words.

Strategy procedure

1. Organize a ceremony for the class. Wearing your graduation gown and carrying a lighted candle can work nicely. Write on index cards the words you want the students to avoid. Some suggested words are *stuff*, *cool*, *thing*, *nice*, *good*, *bad*, *happy*, and *fun*.
2. Have students stand in a circle. Be very sober and solemn, as if it is a sad occasion. Holding up the stack of cards, say, “We have to accept responsibility for our actions today. We have contributed to the overuse of these words. As good citizens, it is our duty to say goodbye to them and put them to rest. As I say these words and pass the cards, you should pass them around the circle and honor them one last time by reading them aloud. To remember them and their service to us, we will attach them to this sacred chart after each of us has said goodbye.”
3. Read the word on each card, and pass the cards around the circle. As the cards make it back to the beginning, attach them to a chart. The chart could be shaped like a bed (the words are overworked and need their rest), or the chart could be in the shape of a tombstone (the words have been used to death). They can be called the “RIP Words” or “Resting Words” when referred to in the future.
4. Once all the words are posted, the students can pledge to help the words by using them only in extreme need and to allow them adequate rest.
5. The strategy may be extended by demonstrating and encouraging the use of a thesaurus to find alternatives to overused words.

WRITING Strategy → Transitions

Related Standard(s) of Learning 3.10, 3.11, 4.7, 4.8, 5.8, 5.9

Overview of the strategy

Transitions are the bridges of writing. They affect the flow and rhythm of the piece. Without effective transitions, the writing is choppy and disjointed.

Strategy procedure

1. Select a piece of writing appropriate for the grade level. Rewrite the selection taking out all the transition words.
2. Provide copies of the sample to students and have them look for places where transition words are needed.
3. As students share their transitions chart them on butcher block paper, chart paper, or sentence strips. (These will later be cut apart and sorted.)
4. Have students add other transitions to the chart from their writing and reading.
5. Sort the transitions into categories of how they are used: to transition time or place, bridge ideas, show cause and effect, or compare and contrast.
6. Students tend to over use *and* and *then*. In future lessons, have them revisit a piece of their writing and improve their transitions.

Source

- G.R. Mushula, *Writing Workshop Survival Kit* (West Nyack, New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1993).

WRITING Strategy → Combining Sentences

Related Standard(s) of Learning 3.10, 3.11, 4.7, 4.8, 5.8, 5.9

Overview of the strategy

Students tend to write short simple sentences because they are safe. When they write longer sentences, they risk the danger of writing run-on sentences. Teaching sentence combining gives students greater control over sentence variation.

Strategy procedure

1. Share a paragraph that consists of only simple sentences. (You may have to create this.) Have students describe what they think of the paragraph and its downfalls.
2. Have students suggest which sentences should be combined and how that can be done. As a class, write a revised paragraph.
3. Teach students the coordinate conjunctions. They should memorize these. The acronym FAN BOYS (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) can be used to do this. These are coordinate conjunctions because they are used to join two sentences (two independent clauses) of equal importance. Writing the compound sentence on a see-saw that is level can demonstrate this. The comma and conjunction are placed at the fulcrum point.

I like French fries, and I like pizza.



4. If combining sentences that are not of equal importance, a subordinate conjunction is used. The subordinate phrase is of less importance. Writing the sentence on a tipped see-saw can demonstrate this.
5. Students can begin to generate lists of subordinate conjunctions. There are too many to memorize, but common ones should be noted.

Source

- G.R. Mushula, *Writing Workshop Survival Kit* (West Nyack, New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1993).

WRITING Strategy → Creating a Strong Lead

Related Standard(s) of Learning 2.11, 3.9, 3.10, 4.7, 5.8

Overview of the strategy

Students will learn the importance of creating a strong lead to grab the reader's attention at the beginning of a story. This strategy is especially geared to narrative writing as it is written to entertain the reader.

Strategy procedure

1. Collect and print a variety of leads from familiar stories by both published authors and classroom writers. Show these leads to the students and elicit their responses.
2. Explain the concept of *leads*. Ask students what qualities make a good lead. Why do these sentences attract interest and spur the reader to continue reading the story? Point out to the students that there are several common sentence techniques used to hook the reader, such as a question, a quotation, a sentence fragment that is repetitive, or use of a famous name or place.
3. Display on the overhead a piece of student writing or your own writing. Read with the class the first sentence, discussing its ability to hook the reader.
4. Collaborate with the students to write several new leads for the piece of writing.
5. Discuss with students which lead sentence best hooks the reader's interest and why.
6. Create a bulletin board or chart that displays examples of leads for the students' reference. These leads may be printed on fish that are hooked by a young fisherman. The hook is labeled with the type of sentence lead.
7. Extend the lesson strategy by asking the students to look at a piece of their own writing to revise with a strong lead.

Sources

- J. Gould and E. Gould, *Four Square Writing Method, Grades 1-3* (Carthage, IL: Teaching & Learning Company, 1999).
- R. Fletcher and J. Portulapi, *Craft Lessons: Teaching Writing K-8* (Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 1998).

WRITING Strategy → Avoiding Crash Landings

Related Standard(s) of Learning 3.10, 4.7, 5.8

Overview of the strategy

Endings are important to the reader’s satisfaction and the completion of a piece. Good endings can be taught. Endings usually are not obvious in the initial writing of the story, but as the writer drafts the story, the appropriate ending develops. Students need many examples, so they can understand the choices they have as the story develops.

Strategy procedure

1. Use examples from children’s literature to explore several kinds of endings to stories, such as
 - circular endings
 - surprise endings
 - wrap-up endings
 - cliff-hanger endings
 - sad-but-true endings
 - all’s-well-that-ends-well endings.
2. Use examples from student writing to demonstrate “good” endings.
3. Model on the overhead the re-crafting of an ending in a piece of writing.
4. Have students in pairs re-craft the endings of a children’s story to fit a different kind of ending. Fairy tales work well for this. For example, *Jack in the Beanstalk*, which has an All’s-well-that-ends-well ending, can be rewritten to have it be a cliff-hanger.
5. Have students select a piece from their writing folder for which they would like to craft a better ending. After they have rewritten the ending, have them share their “before” and “after” endings.

Sources

- R. Fletcher, *What a Writer Needs* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1993).
- B. Lane, *Reviser’s Toolbox* (Shoreman, Vermont: Discover Writing Press, 1999).

WRITING Strategy → Finding Misspellings

Related Standard(s) of Learning 2.12, 3.11, 4.8, 5.9

Overview of the strategy

Students will learn strategies to identify possible misspelled words.

Strategy procedure

1. Provide instruction in and opportunities for students to practice the following strategies:
 - **Moving your mouth.** Students move their mouths as they silently read their papers. This technique activates a different portion of the brain than that used when students read silently without moving their mouths. When reading silently, the brain is more apt to correct misspellings unconsciously. By activating the mouth, the brain is not fooled into making unconscious corrections. Students should circle all questionable spellings.
 - **Reading it backwards.** Students read their paper backwards, word by word. This strategy helps the eye become more discerning of each word's spelling.
 - **Knowing your demons.** Everyone has certain words he or she struggles to remember how to spell. Students should be aware of their “demons” and have a strategy for overcoming them. For example, *necessary* is often a demon because students find it difficult to remember the order of the *c* and the *s* and which one is double. A helpful strategy is to remember that the *c* and the *s* are in alphabetical order and that the first one is single and the second is doubled — i.e., 1, 2. Known “demon” words should always be checked until the spellings are memorized. Students should be persuaded that avoiding the use of a demon word is not a legitimate strategy.
 - **Using a spelling buddy.** After a student has checked his or her paper, a spelling buddy can be asked to circle words he or she thinks are misspelled, but not to correct the spellings. The circling indicates only that the words need to be checked, as they may or may not be spelled correctly.

Source

- Irene C. Fontas and Gay Su Pinnell, *Guiding Readers and Writers: Grades 3-6* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2001).

WRITING Strategy → Putting in Punctuation

Related Standard(s) of Learning K.11, 1.12, 2.12

Overview of the strategy

Emergent and beginning writers need direct instruction in learning to punctuate their writing. The best way to learn this skill is by using the students' own writing. This strategy helps writers take a second look at a piece of writing to determine if all of the punctuation is in place and the ways in which punctuation enhances meaning. This strategy works best if the teacher has previously modeled appropriate types of punctuation through Morning Messages or other writing.

Strategy procedure

1. Select a piece of student writing that needs punctuation, and transfer it to a transparency. Ask the student if you may share his or her writing with the class.
2. Gather the students around the overhead projector. Invite the student who wrote the piece to read it to the class.
3. Ask the students to pay close attention to where the student's voice pauses or stops in reading. Point out to the students that this is probably a place where punctuation is needed.
4. Ask the students for suggestions to correctly punctuate the sentences. Assist the student to place the appropriate punctuation behind the sentences.
5. Ask the students to reread the story with the correct punctuation. Discuss with the students how punctuation assists the reader in understanding the meaning of the writing.
6. Encourage the students to reread a piece of writing that needs editing for punctuation. Instruct them to listen to where their voice pauses or stops to determine where punctuation needs to be placed.
7. Alternatively, place the students in small editing groups to listen to each other's writing and assist each other in editing for punctuation.

Source

- L. Dorn and C. Soffos, *Scaffolding Young Writers: A Writers' Workshop Approach* (Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2001).

WRITING Strategy → Capitalization: A Way to Begin a Sentence

Related Standard(s) of Learning K.11, 1.12, 2.12

Overview of the strategy

In order for young writers to understand capitalization, they need to understand that a sentence is a complete thought and that punctuation comes at the end of the sentence. Examples of this are everywhere. The teacher can share examples from books, newspapers, etc. and place an example on a transparency. In doing this, the teacher prepares the students to observe that capital letters begin a sentence.

Strategy procedure

1. Copy a section of a book onto a transparency to demonstrate complete sentences. Show the students where the sentence ends with the punctuation marks. Guide the students to see that each sentence begins with a capital letter. Circle or underline the capital letters that begin each sentence.
2. Use a piece of student writing that has been previously edited for punctuation and needs to be edited for capitalization. Read the piece of writing with the class. Show them how to edit for capitalization by drawing three lines under the letter that begins each sentence. Explain that these lines will remind them to go back and edit for capitalization in their final draft.
3. Have the students apply this strategy to another piece of writing that has been edited for punctuation. Place the students in small groups to assist each other in editing for capitalization.

Source

- L. Dorn and C. Soffos, *Scaffolding Young Writers: A Writers' Workshop Approach* (Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2001).

