

Writing Workshop

Kindergarten & First Grade



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Writing Workshop

Overview

The Common Core has laid out three main types of writing: *narrative, opinion/argumentative, and informational*. Writing needs to build upon the previous year's instruction if we are to rise to the high level of demand. *The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model* will be vital to the success of students. Students can no longer have a different daily 15 - 20-minute mini-lesson thrown at them and be expected to understand, own, and apply it to their own writing. The number of focus lessons on particular skills or strategies is dependent upon the complexity of what is being presented.

The Common Core State Standards have been ratcheted up and need to be based upon the fact that teacher maintain a rigorous writing program that is aligned from grade level to grade level. Compounded by students who are learning English, teaching writing can be a challenging task. Oral language is the key for all students. If it is not in a child's oral language, it will never be in their written language. Because of these needs, this program has a weekly focus instead of different focuses each day. This enables:

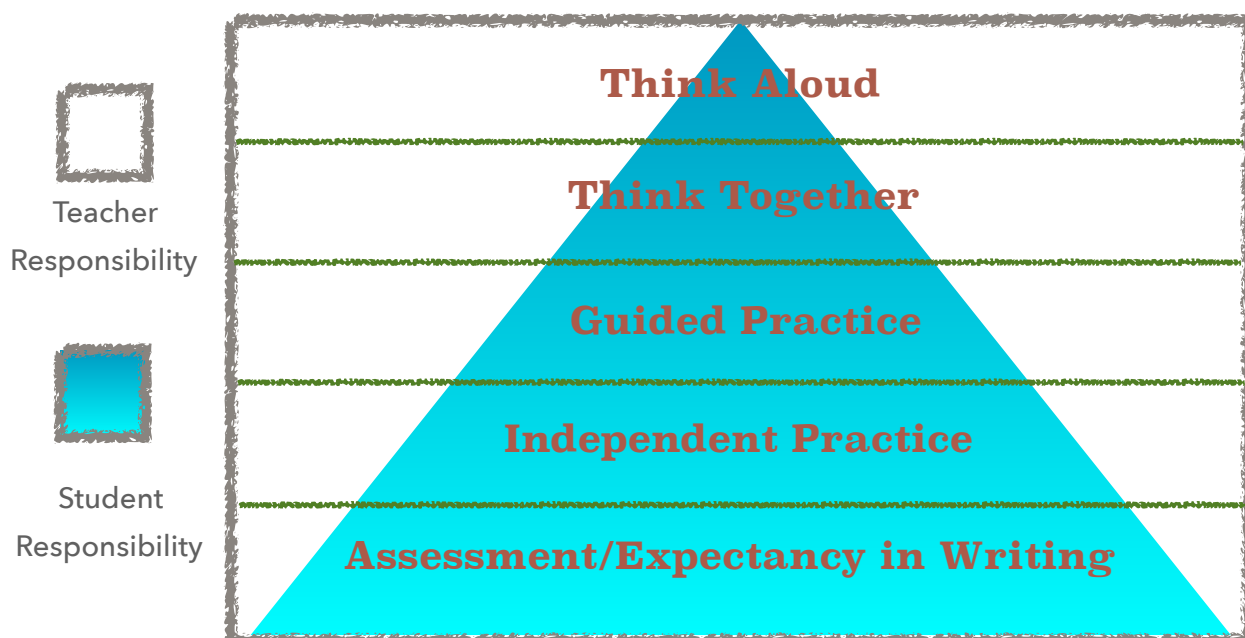
- students to have enough demonstrations to yield an understanding of the process
- the teacher to clearly demonstrate principles of writing on a daily basis
- the mastery of previously taught high-frequency words
- intentional integration of word work and grammar
- the development of oral language that is paramount to successful writing
- focuses on parts of the writing process that the teacher determines are weak for students during the conference time



The Foundation of the Program ***Gradual Release of Responsibility***

The foundation of all focus lessons, small group lessons, and one-to-one conferences is based upon the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1993). In this writing program, the same skill or strategy is often taught in continuous focus lessons over one, two, or three weeks, depending upon the complexity level. Daily, repetitive, intentional focus lessons will accelerate writing development during the elementary years. Materials are included to give adequate demonstration and practice for teachers and students.

- As instruction begins, the teacher thinks aloud the thinking process and creates an anchor chart to guide further release. Students partner up throughout the demonstration as the teacher listens in on the private responses of partners.
- Think together occurs as students begin to offer their thinking after the pair/share is finished.
- Guided practice is used as teachers turn the process over to pairs. The teacher listens in, recording the names of students who will need small group instruction.
- An assessment is given before students are released and required to use the skill or strategy in their own writing. Assessment helps the teacher group students for future instruction.




What the Program Includes

Kindergarten & First

Each manual includes:

- Foundations of writing instruction
- Format of Writer's Workshop

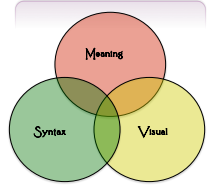


Balanced Writing Instruction


In many schools throughout the country, numerous students come to the classroom with limited literacy, language, and academic experiences. Due to this, writing instruction needs to focus on building the meaning, syntax, and visual cues. First, students need to write about what they know – their own lives and what they do – to even the playing field while they are learning the concepts of print. Second, Total Physical Response (Aicher, 1977), visual, kinesthetic, and auditory – is incorporated throughout focus lessons to help build the seeing systems and language.

Visual – drawing what we want to write about
Kinesthetic – Acting out the parts of sentence
Auditory – numerous repetitions of the writing plan

Finally, direct grammar instruction (Van Patten, 1996) is given through focus lessons to help improve sentence fluency, complexity, and length. All students, regardless of their native language background, benefit from these important skills that are directly applied into student writing.



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Writing Workshop Format

Process Used	Description of Process	Time Allotted
Focus Lesson (Contains think aloud and think together)	Direct instruction using the modeling of the process through gradual release with emphasis on one area (i.e., spaces between words, picture/text match, one editing strategy, etc.). Focus lasts for 2 days to 5 days depending on complexity of skill or strategy	5-15 minutes
Oral Output of sentence, idea or story	Students tell teacher or partner his/her idea before leaving the rug. As students become more independent, they tell their partner while the teacher listens to struggling students	2-5 minutes
Writing Small Group Conferencing	Students write within the genre being taught. Teacher conducts one-on-one conferences and/or small group with students. Teacher should meet with remedial and accelerated groups.	15 (at beginning of year) – 30 minutes
Sharing	Students share part of writing in whole group, table group or pairs. Sharing has instructional focus.	5-15 minutes

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- An overview of each month's skill/strategy
- Sample scripts for any new concept introduced to help teacher demonstration



Week One & Two - Introduction

Weeks One and Two are the most important weeks of the workshop. It begins the management and procedures of writing workshop and ultimately determines its success or failure based upon the routines and procedures that are built. As you begin the Workshop format, train the children in transitions from the desk to the floor. Have a regular place on the floor for students where they sit with a partner. Group students by high/medium, medium/low, special needs/understanding child, or ELL/bilingual. It is important to get the transition down to 30 seconds using music or a song to help.

During this month make sure you think about the whole process, using "everyday" stories that all students can relate to such as:

- I went to my first day of school.
- I ate cereal for breakfast.
- I went to the store.
- I met a new friend in the playground.


Use what you did during the weekend, during the evenings, or at school the day before. Keep sentences at a medium length and always start with "I". The teacher's goal is to infuse current phonics into the sentences at the initial sound placement.

Finally, each day, the teacher will demonstrate THINK, DRAW, SAY & TEST, CLAP & COUNT, and WRITE. During the first month students will generate a sentence or two on the floor and say it out loud to the teacher/class before they go back to their desk to draw. Complete sentences should be generated before the student is sent back to their desk ("Who?" "Did What?")

Top Goals of Weeks 1 & 2

- 1) Emphasize management and behavior of writing workshop
- 2) Sit students in pairs (high/medium or medium/low) on the same location on the rug so that transitions are quick and waste no time
- 3) Demonstrate all the steps as think aloud and have students generate complete sentences that match the picture(s)
- 4) Week One – Review Dot & Say
 Week Two – Review Green/Red Light and Word Wall Words

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Week 1 - Teaching the Process

Each day, the teacher will think of something to write about using the planning guides on page 45. Allow frequent opportunities for students to interact. As students interact, carefully listen to the responses as a way to monitor and adjust your instruction. DO NOT allow students to help as you should be clear in your thinking process.

Focus Lesson

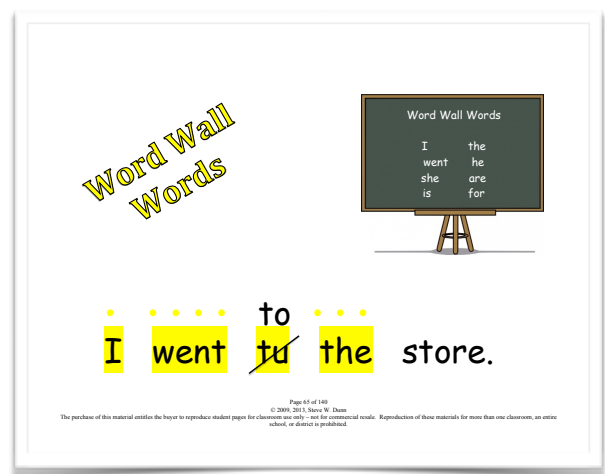
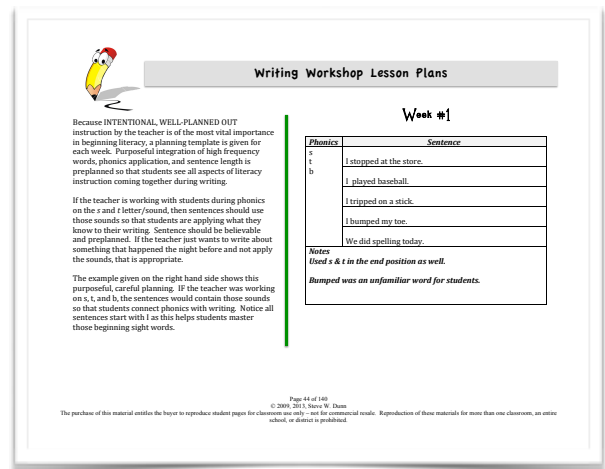
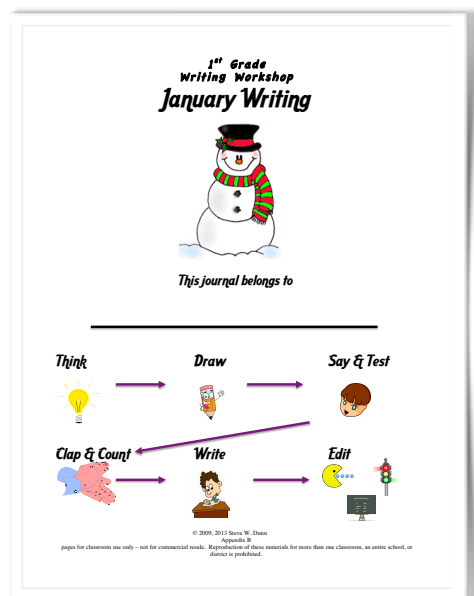
Teaching the Process (10 – 15 minutes)-Sample Script...

THINK (page 38)
 "Today I want to write to my friends and tell them something that happened to me. Let me think for a moment. I'm asking myself, 'What did I do last night, this morning, this weekend, yesterday in school or over the summer.' Last night I went home. As I was driving, I stopped at the market. I could write about that. I went home and ate dinner and had Mac and Cheese. Oh, there's another idea! I watched T.V. I could even write about that. Then I went to bed. This morning I got up and came to my first day of 1st grade. I was really nervous, but now I feel good about it since I have met all you wonderful friends. I have so many ideas. I need to think about just one. I think I'll write about my first day at school because it is a special day for me. I could say Who? I. Did What? Went to my first day of school. That is a complete sentence. It tells who and what I did. That's what I will write."

As often as possible, try to think of simple sentences that incorporate the phonics that is being taught as well as the high frequency words for the month.

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- Monthly skill/strategy assessments to inform reteaching and small group instruction
- Additional explanations to deepen teacher understanding
- Guide to conferencing using Praise & Prompt and potential conferencing focuses
- Lap cards to help guide instruction and anchor student learning in the writing process or anchor poster models
- Masters of suggested paper to use
- Masters of monthly journal covers



Workshop Length: 3 days throughout the year

Overview: Theory, in classroom demonstrations of strategies being learned, specific skills and strategies, and practice/planning time are the focus of each workshop. In addition, coaching days can be added to help administration and coaches identify fidelity to this evidence based program. Many E.L.L. and special education strategies are identified to help second language and SPED students transition to english.



Content Covered:

- Overview of writing workshop format
- Demonstration of narrative, descriptive, letter writing, and Book Review
- Monthly focus lessons
- Developing complete effective sentences
- Building vocabulary
- Applying phonics and phonemic awareness
- Teaching skills and strategies
- Meaningful 1-to-1 conferences with accountability
- Small group instruction for differentiation
- Editing and beginning revision
- Monthly writing assessment that drives instruction
- Principles of assessment and grading
- Sharing – 3 settings – multiple purposes

Scope & Sequence

	Kinder	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Secondary
Genre: Narrative	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Concepts of Print	x	x					
High Frequency Words	x	x					
Sentence Fluency	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Dot & Say	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Green Light Red Light	x	x	x	x	x		
Word Wall Words	x	x					
Bottom to Top Editing			x	x	x	x	x
Every Word has a vowel	x	x					
Every Syllable has a vowel		x					
Conferring & Small Group	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Writing Process	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Concepts of Literature	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Dialogue			x	x	x	x	x
Adding Adjectives			x	x	x	x	x
Vigorous Verbs			x	x	x	x	x
Building the Paragraph				x	x	x	x
Sentence Variety				x	x	x	x
Mood/Tone					x	x	x

	Kinder	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Secondary
Genre: Opinion	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Book Review	x	x					
Citing Text Evidence			x	x	x	x	x
Explaining and Extending Text Evidence					x	x	x
Editing Text Evidence			x	x	x	x	x
Genre: Informational	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Compare/Contrast			x	x	x	x	x
Summarizing		x	x	x	x	x	x
Synthesizing					x	x	x
informational	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Genre: Descriptive & Letter Writing		x					
School-wide Supplemental Manual - Sold Separately		x	x	x	x	x	x

In order to fully implement this curriculum, purchase of teacher manuals needs to accompany all professional development.