

Writing Workshop

Before Starting the Workshop

Set Up Classroom—Suggestions include:

- Writing Center**—space where students can go to get supplies, tools, check references, etc.
- Labeled Trays**—designated trays for students’ writing (example: Writing Ready to be Edited)
- Permanent Writing Folders**—area to file all pieces so students have access to their writing throughout the school year.
- Notebooks or Daily writing folders**—container or space to store daily writing entries and/or artifacts.
- Conference Corners**—a place where writers can talk or confer with each other.
- Area for Mini-Lessons and Group Share**—an area for students to gather as a group.
- Forms**—space to keep copies of miscellaneous forms.

Before Starting the Workshop

Create Predictable Routines:

- **Transition from mini-lesson to writing time**
- **Decide what students will be doing during writing time. Think about where and how they will do these things. Possibilities include:**
 - Working in their writer’s notebooks
 - Composing, revising, or editing drafts
 - Studying model pieces of literature
 - Having peer conferences
 - Getting writing supplies, literature, reference from writing center
 - Getting a piece of writing ready for publication
- **Designate a specified number of minutes as silent writing time _____ minutes (No Talking, No Walking).**
- **Establish consequences for students who consistently fail to realize their plans or goals—hold students accountable.**

First Few Weeks of Workshop

Possible Mini-Lessons (Expectations & Procedures):

- **Describe the role of the students and the teacher during workshop.**
- **Demonstrate how writers use their writer's notebooks or daily folders to collect and develop ideas.**
- **Develop a repertoire of strategies so students can find ideas to write about (Combats the statement, "I don't know what to write about."):**
 - Sharing literature
 - Making a sketch
 - Looking around the room and letting the objects and people they see sparks ideas
 - Getting ideas from rereading the piece in their writing folders or entries in their writers notebook
 - Think back over the last several days of their lives
 - Free-writing
 - Thinking about something they have recently read, and then writing about what it made them think about.
- **Teach the following strategies for words they don't know how to spell:**
 - Saying a word slowly ("stretching" it out) and listening for the sounds
 - Using an alphabet chart while stretching out a word
 - Using the "word wall" in the classroom
 - Asking a classmate how to spell the word
 - Taking their best shot at it and waiting to verify it later
- **Teach strategies for getting unstuck and saying more about the topic:**
 - Rereading what they've written so far to jumpstart their thinking
 - Free-writing about the topic
 - Sketching what they're writing about
 - Reading what they've written to a classmate and having that classmate ask them questions
- **Define what students can do during writing time (post a chart).**

- **Explain and define stages in the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing).**
- **Explain rules for the writing center and conference corners.**
- **Teach procedures to follow when done with draft (nobody is ever, ever finished writing).**
- **Teach students how to make plans and set goals—At the end of mini-lessons, before students begin to write, try one of the following strategies:**
 - Ask students to turn to a classmate and tell what they’ll be doing that period, and how much they plan to write.
 - Have students write their plans and goals sheets. These can be revisited frequently throughout the week.
 - Have students jot down their plans and goals in an “assignment box” in their writers notebooks.
 - Ask students in turn to say their plans and goals aloud.
- **Publish frequently (sharing finished drafts with an audience):**
 - Primary**—Once a week at the beginning of the year moving to once every two weeks
 - Intermediate**—Once a month
 - Post publication dates in advance**
- **Teach students there are other places to go for assistance when the teacher is conferencing with other students:**
 - Look at a piece of writing by an author and see how he/she handled the problem.
 - Ask a classmate for help in a peer conference.
 - Bring the problem to their response group.
- **Help students discover that writing can be worthwhile.**
 - Read aloud literature. When they are moved by literature, students begin to understand that they too can have the same impact on readers.
 - Share your own writing.
 - Read aloud pieces written by students who are excited about writing.

Remainder of the School Year

PART I: WHOLE GROUP

Continue Mini-Lessons: Increase Emphasis on Craft and Skills. (10-15 minutes)

Procedures (How the workshop works)	Craft (What Authors Do)	Skills (What Readers Need)
Attend to procedures	Analytic Traits—qualities of good writing Ideas for getting unstuck What writers do: demonstrations Qualities of a good title Information: too little, too much, or out of order Ways of planning and organizing information Technique, style Etc.	What conventions are and what they do for the reader How to proofread Exclamation points Spelling: Patterns, strategies, personal word banks Treatment of titles (i.e., in quotes or underline) Etc.

PART II: INDEPENDENT AND SMALL GROUPS

Time to Write (20-60 minutes based on grade level)

- SSW – Silent-Sustained Writing (No Talking, No Walking for __ minutes)
- Writer’s notebook/ Lifebook entries
- Independent writing projects
- Small group share and writing discussions with/without teacher
- Peer, teacher, or self revision and editing group conferences
- Independent conferences with teacher
- All stages of the writing process

PART III: WHOLE GROUP

Whole Group Share (10-15 minutes)

- Whole group share by students
- Author’s chair
- Assessment

PART IV: CLASS STATUS CHECK (3-5 minutes)

General Management Tips

- **Don't take on the role of the "gatekeeper."** Allow students to move from one stage of the writing process to another when they decide they've ready.
- **Confer with students wherever they are in the process of writing their pieces.**
- **Make your presence felt around the classroom.**
 - Circulate around the room as students settle into writing time.
 - Confer where students write.
 - Between conferences, take a minute to walk the room.
- **Students place their name under the stage of the process in which they are currently working.**

EXAMPLE:

Prewriting	Drafting	Revising	Editing	Publishing
Scott	Eric	Anne	Christina	
	Veronica			