



The Kindergarten Chronicles

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Write All About It



It's time to start thinking about our end-of-year writing sample for our kindergarten students' portfolios. This can bring on some stress for both teacher and students, because our young writers are just beginning to step out and try writing on their own. It may seem a bit premature to "throw a writing prompt at them" and expect them to write several sentences on a topic. Many of us can feel that we did not get our students' best work because we are not supposed to guide them through the process for this sample. It is intended to be something that shows their independent writing work.

Fortunately there are some things we can do to prepare our students to write to a prompt, so that the sample we put in their portfolio is truly a sample of the best work each student can do.

All year: Once a month or so, have your students write to a

specific prompt and tell them how many details you want to see in their illustration, how many sentences you'd like them to write, etc. After writing, have students check their work for the details, sentences, and any other criteria you've set out. Then score their writing and conference with each student individually to help them learn how to better address a writing prompt.

Samples: You may want to take some writing samples from students who are not currently in your class and put them on the overhead projector. With your students' assistance, you can revise and edit the sample, so your students have good writing techniques at the forefront of their thoughts prior to writing their own piece.

Prewriting: One or two days before you give the prompt, you are allowed to do some prewriting activities with your students. For example, if the prompt is about an important person in each student's

life, you can talk about who is important in your life. Create a Circle Map and model your thinking process. Do several "think-alouds," so your students can see how you organize your thoughts prior to writing (LA Standard 5.K.1).

Brainstorming: You may allow your students to talk with a partner about their important person (or whatever the topic may be). This will give them the opportunity to expand their thoughts.

Revisit Success: Reinforce your students' confidence by reminding them what good writers they are. You may even want to share some of your students' writing pieces from earlier in the year. This way, they will be feeling good about their writing skills as they write their final piece.

Finally, once you've released your students to write, think back to the beginning of the school year, and remember how amazing it is that they are able to do this! Give yourself a pat on the back!

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Powerful Poetry



Language arts lessons can be very engaging when combined with poetry. Kindergarten is a wonderful time to utilize poetry in your instruction. You can use poetry to reinforce concepts of print and rhyming words as well as to teach children to choose rich, descriptive words in all of their writing. In short, poetry appreciation enhances your language arts instruction.

You may not even be aware of

how much you use poetry in your classroom. When you read books with repetitive, rhyming text, students are experiencing poetry. When you sing songs, you are essentially reciting poems to a melody. Now it's time to help your students write some poetry of their own. Fortunately, there is a relatively simple form of poetry that even our youngest students can write!

Cinquain: (7.K.3, 8.K.3) This is actu-

ally quite simple to teach kindergartners when you do the process step-by-step with your students. Break it down like this: Line one: a noun and the title of the poem. Line two: two adjectives that describe what your poem is about. Line three: three action words ending in -ing that tell what the subject does. Line four: a phrase that indicates a feeling related to the poem's subject. Line five: One word

that essentially renames the poem. Here is an example:

**Spring
Fresh, New
Budding, blooming, growing
A time for new beginnings
Awake**

Now have the kids add a corresponding illustration to their poem, and proudly display it in your classroom. You may even want to laminate it as a keepsake for your poets!