

COMMON CONFERENCES IN GRADES 3-8

If I see this . . .	I'll teach this to the student . . .
The student has trouble coming up with topics to write about.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List of Topics to Write About 2. Map of the Heart/Writing Territories 3. Reread notebook for ideas
The student plunges into writing without "rehearsing" what she's going to write	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Talk out the story/topic before writing 5. Sketch part/parts of the story/topic 6. Write in response to question, "What do I want to say about my topic?" 7. Brainstorm sections of piece 8. Gather information about the topic before writing
The student starts writing without envisioning the parts of her piece.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Write the name of each scene/section on top of a separate piece of draft paper 10. Make a simple plan for a piece
The student writes undeveloped sections in his pieces.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Action, dialogue, thinking (narrative) 12. Facts, definitions, comments (nonfiction) 13. Similes
The student uses general nouns and verbs in his writing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Brainstorming a word bank before drafting. 15. Circling general words, and brainstorming alternatives.
The student "stretches" parts of her pieces, but not the most important ones.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Identifying and developing the "heart" of a story, or the most important parts of a nonfiction piece.

The student moves abruptly from one part to another in a piece.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Time transitions (narrative) 18. Subheadings, bullets, topic sentences (nonfiction)
The student writes “all about” a topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Focus on a part(s) of an event or topic that helps get a “meaning” across
The student is “done” as soon as she writes the last word of a draft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Adding on by rereading 21. Revision tools: post-its, spiderlegs, footnotes, arrows, cutting and inserting more paper 22. Getting feedback from classmates
The student edits by reading her pieces silently to herself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Self-editing by reading aloud. 24. Peer editing. 25. Using an editing checklist
The student uses endmarks inconsistently, or not at all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Reading aloud for endmarks.
The student overuses “and”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 27. Where to use—and not to use—“and”
The student reads her writing with voice, but doesn’t cue the reader to do the same.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28. Using the exclamation mark, the ellipsis, and all caps to signal emphasis.
The student doesn’t know with whom she wants to share her writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 29. Selecting classmates as an audience 30. Selecting people outside of class as an audience
The student has some trouble writing independently, without the guidance provided by a unit of study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31. List of possible projects 32. Choosing a project (with a specific audience in mind, for a specific purpose, to experiment with a genre) 32. Making a plan for developing a seed topic. 33. Using a mentor text 34. Making a schedule for getting a piece done.