

Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of ‘how-to’ books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).

The Writing Process

Learning to Write

Students learn to write by writing. They are empowered when they begin to see themselves as authors because they understand that writing is a way to express their thoughts, interests, knowledge, and needs. Teaching the writing process will help your students learn to write better.

If students are to become authors, they must be taught to write like authors. Authors employ certain strategies that make them successful. They

- See writing as an integral part of their lives and as an essential way to communicate.
- Write for an audience, and they read and write often.
- Follow the same basic writing steps, with slight variations to fit their individual styles.

Use the ideas in this section to help you teach each step of the writing process. The steps are:

1. Prewriting
2. Creating a First Draft
3. Initial Conferencing and Revising
4. Editing
5. Final Conferencing
6. Creating a Final Draft
7. Publishing

Prewriting

Preparing to write is the first important step to a successful writing experience. Students must draw upon background knowledge or experiences to give them topics for writing. Some experiences students can draw upon in order to choose writing topics are:

- Reading—books, poems, magazines, letters, and comics
- Listening—storytelling, music, conversations, and instruction
- Watching—nature, people, plays, concerts, videos, and television
- Tasting—favorite foods, foreign foods, and different flavors like sweet, sour, spicy, or hot
- Smelling—aromas, spices, perfumes, animals, and the outdoors
- Doing—field trips, vacations, museums, sports, playgrounds, parties, family reunions, hospital visits, work, and music lessons

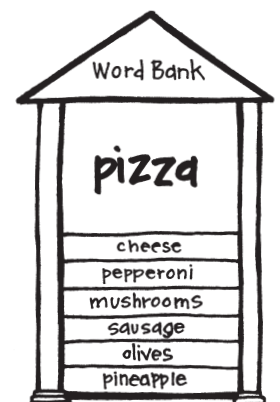
Once students have thought about their experiences and have chosen a writing topic, they can use different methods to generate specific ideas about the topic. Some ideas are listed here.

Idea File

Have students keep idea files using index cards or notebooks. Whenever they think of possible writing topics, have them add the topics to their idea files for later reference.

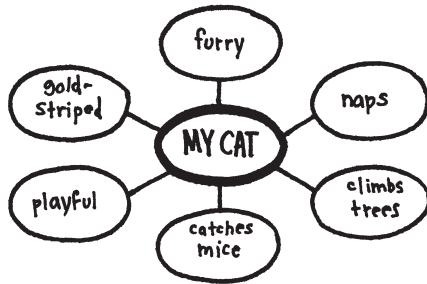
Word Bank

Have students select a topic and write all the words that come to mind about the topic. They should list the words in a column below the main idea.



Brainstorm**Session**

Have students first plan what to write. They can brainstorm randomly on a piece of paper, list the story sequence, or outline or web the story.

**Prewriting Sheet**

Have students turn in a sheet of prewriting ideas before their initial conferencing session. This sheet should list the characters, setting, plot, and audience for the story they plan to write.

Mapping

Have students select topics and draw a map of supporting ideas. First, they write a descriptive phrase for their topic in the middle of a piece of paper. Then, they draw several lines extending from the main idea to an empty circle. Finally, they fill in the circles with words or phrases that support their topic.

Prewriting Chart

Make a tracking chart for prewriting and attach it to the wall to help you observe which students are currently working on this step.

Creating a First Draft

Students should be ready to learn about creating a first draft when they can spell a few words, use basic punctuation, and feel satisfied with their choice of content. You may want to teach this step of the writing process concurrently with the revising and editing steps.

Generally, the writing students do during the school year automatically helps them practice this step of the writing process. However, you may want to use the ideas below to reinforce the idea of a first draft.

Author Visit

Invite authors to visit your classroom to explain how often they wrote parts of their books before they were published.

Show and Tell

Show some of your own writing and rough drafts.

Real Experiences

Read excerpts from authors' experiences with first drafts.

Positive Reinforcement

Let students know it's okay to change or rewrite parts of their stories. Explain that it does not mean the writing was wrong in the beginning; it just means that the story improves each time. Emphasize how good their stories can be if they write several drafts.

First Draft Chart

Make a tracking chart for first drafts and attach it to the wall to help you observe which students are currently working on this step.

Initial Conferencing and Revising

You can teach students about initial conferencing and revising when they feel comfortable with the concept of a first draft. You may also want to wait until students feel fairly confident with their writing so they won't be discouraged when you help them revise.

Have students choose a favorite first draft and continue refining it as you teach this step of the writing process. Use the ideas below to help students practice the initial conferencing and revising steps of the writing process.

Group Revision

Write your own story and bring it to class so students can help you revise it. Elicit suggestions of details to add, details to delete, ways to word sentences differently, and ways to order the story events. Use revision marks to incorporate the answers and changes into the first draft. When the group has finished revising the story, read it aloud and point out the improvements students have made.

Teacher Conferencing

Hold a conferencing session with each of your students to review first drafts. In each case, focus on the content of the story and save editing comments for the next conference. Praise each student for at least two or three details about the story.

Partner Review

Point out that we all think differently. Tell students that two heads are better than one because one partner will often see details the other person has missed. Then have students read each other's papers and offer suggestions.

Question and Answer

If you plan to have students do initial conferencing with each other, have each student practice asking questions about another student's paper. Demonstrate how to incorporate the answers into their stories.

Initial Conferencing and Revising Charts

Make tracking charts for initial conferencing with partners

Editing

Teach students the editing step of the writing process as soon as they are comfortable with their writing abilities. Once students learn a particular grammar or usage skill in the classroom, they should be held accountable for incorporating it into their writing.












Use the ideas below to help students practice editing.

Daily Oral Language

Each day write a sentence on the board that contains spelling and punctuation errors for the class to fix. Teach students the different editing marks for fixing capitals, periods, and spelling. You can use the following chart to teach students basic editing marks.

Editing Chart

Make a tracking chart for editing and hang it on the wall to help you observe which students are currently working on this step.

Proofreader's Marks	Meaning	Example
	Capitalize	<u>k</u> ate came out with a big black hat.
	Make lowercase	I like S trawberry jam anytime!
	Add ending punctuation mark	Dad and I like dinosaurs ○
	Add a word	Mike likes ^{to}  drive.
	Check spelling	<u>Sp. Two</u> <u>T</u> o bees hid in some weeds.
	Add punctuation within sentence	"I won't peek  ,
	Take out	We looked around around the kitchen.
	Paragraph	"Hi, Mrs. Newton. Did you see it?" asked Andrew. ¶ "I did, Andrew," answered Mr. Lewis.
	Indent	→ "Will you go with me?" she asked Red Hen.

Final Conferencing

You can teach students about final conferencing when they feel comfortable editing their own writing.

Help students understand that good authors meet with editors (or in this case, their teacher) to help them catch any mistakes they might have missed in their writing. You can use the ideas below to help students practice final conferencing.

Group Editing

Write a story that contains many mistakes and show it to the class. Let them fix the errors for you. Point out that they noticed the mistakes you made and helped you correct them.

Teacher Conferencing

Hold a conferencing session with each of your students to review nearly final drafts. In each case, focus on grammar, punctuation, and usage. Help students notice any errors still in the story, giving praise for their ability to notice the errors. Make any corrections on the paper with editing marks.

Final Conferencing Chart

Make a tracking chart for final conferencing. Attach it to the wall to help you observe which students are ready to meet with you.

Creating a Final Draft

Teach students to do a final edit of their stories, incorporating changes suggested in the final conferencing, to create a final draft.

Help students understand that good authors perfect their stories before publishing them. The ideas below can help students create final drafts of their writing.

Final Draft Time

Save five minutes of class time daily for students to work on final drafts. During this time they can read the story aloud and look for any errors they may not have caught before.

Publishing Demonstration

Introduce students to different kinds of published books. You may include books such as lift-the-flap books, touch-and-feel books, pattern books, cartoon strips, riddle books, demonstration books, and so on.

Fun Writing

Show students how to add dots, stars, lines, and other decorative accents to their print to make their titles look interesting. They can also practice making creative borders.

Final Draft Chart

Make a tracking chart for final drafts. Attach the chart to the wall to help you observe which students are currently working on this step.

Publishing

The final stage of the writing process allows students to publish and showcase their work by sharing it with an audience. Author sharing can be done in a variety of ways. Some ideas include:

- Read aloud to the class or to a kindergarten class
- Make a card
- Send a letter to pen pals or relatives
- Post work on a bulletin board or in the hallway
- Make audiotapes of students reading their stories and keep tapes in a listening center
- Produce a puppet show
- Create a play
- Make a video
- Enter a writing contest
- Publish on the Internet

Another way for students to publish their writing is to have them create a book. Here are some suggestions for making different kinds of books.

Simple Books

Students' writing can easily be made into books by using creative covers and bindings. For example:

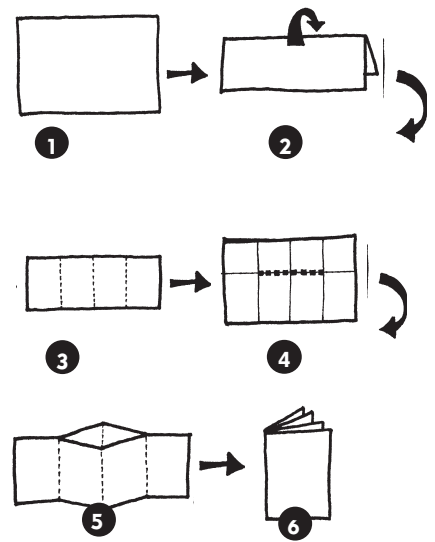
Covers: Use construction paper, poster board, cardboard, wallpaper, card stock, paper sacks, gift wrap, butcher paper, contact paper, acetate folders, or manila folders.

Bindings: Use staples, metal rings, ribbon, yarn or string, plastic (cerlox) binding, or machine stitching (through the center).

Miniature Books

Use the steps below as a guide to help students make miniature books.

1. Use one sheet of 11" × 17" paper.
2. Fold the paper in half.
3. Fold into fourths.
4. Unfold the paper and cut in the middle (on the dotted lines).
5. Refold the paper in half (the long way). Push the ends toward the center.
6. Fold all pages one way. It should look like a little book.



Computer Books

On the computer, have students type and illustrate their final drafts.

Illustrated Books and Covers

Provide art supplies such as markers, colored chalk, stickers, colored paper, buttons, and so on for students to use when illustrating their books.

Shape Books

You can use the steps below as a guide to help students make shape books.

1. Draw a shape that matches the topic on a piece of lined paper. Cut out as many pages as necessary for the story.
2. Write a story on the lined cutouts.
3. Make a book cover by cutting out the same shape from construction paper. Laminate the cover, if desired.
4. Bind the lined pages with the book cover using some of the binding ideas listed previously in "Simple Books."

**Step Books**

You can use the steps below as a guide to help students make step books.

1. Gather three sheets of 8 1/2" × 11" paper and overlap each sheet so that one inch appears at the bottom.
2. Fold the top of the pages over on the dotted line to make six pages.
3. Staple the layers together at the top next to the fold.
4. Write a recipe or other step-by-step procedure, using one layer of paper for each step.

Accordion Books

You can use the steps below as a guide to help students make accordion books.

1. Write and illustrate a story, using a new sheet of paper for each new page. (The paper can be any size.)
2. Tape the pages of the story together from left to right. Mount the taped pages to heavier card stock paper to help the book stand.
3. Fold the pages back and forth to form an accordion book.

