



Growing up Writing

Inside



Inspiring Young Writers – Years 1 & 2



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One of the most important things teachers and parents can do is to instill in children the belief they can be writers. Young children find the world full of wonder. They are naturally curious, possess a keen ability to observe and have vivid imaginations. Young writers need to see that writing is about creating meaning through text – a way to record those special moments, big or small, that are part of their inner and outer worlds.

‘Writers do not live more significantly than non-writers; writers just know how to find the significance in the backyards of their lives. I try to make [our children] feel as if they are writers already because I believe all of us can grow like sunflowers toward the wonderful things people see in us.’ Lucy Calkins

And while writing is important in its own right, there is also a powerful reciprocal relationship with reading. The young child who composes a short story, organizes information into a report or makes line breaks in a poem, approaches new reading experiences with informed eyes. Similarly, reading is a vital source of ideas for writing. Exposing children to wonderful literature immerses them in the sounds and power of what other authors have written, and encouraging them to ‘read like a writer’ develops their eye towards not just what the text says, but how it is put together.



‘Writing is a way to hold onto the moments and the selves that would otherwise slip away.’

Lucy Calkins

What is my role as a parent?

Developing confident young writers requires attention to the ‘W-R-I-T-E’ things.....

W is for ‘word power’! Showing children how to savor language and develop their vocabularies provides them with powerful tools to write with clarity.

R is for ‘reading’. The impact that reading has on helping children develop as writers cannot be overemphasized. By reading, we gain inspiration to tell our own stories as well as exposure to rich language choices, forms and structures.

I is for ‘identity’. With some help, children will develop identities as writers.

T is for ‘time’. By making a special time for writing, the child comes to value the act of self-expression. Writing time should feel easy and pleasurable.

E is for ‘environment’. An inspirational writing environment is essential to a young writer’s development.



‘It can be detrimental to the flow of ideas if the student believes they must spell every word correctly.’ *Jill Eggleton*

The intricacies of becoming a writer...

The first step for any writer is to come up with ideas based on experiences and knowledge- in other words, our thoughts.

The next step – that of finding the right words to express the idea is a more challenging task.

Then, for the beginning writer, expressing the idea in just the right way while simultaneously dealing with the mechanics of letter formation, spelling, word spacing, page layout – makes the writing task even more complex!

‘Approximate’ spelling can lead to a control over writing that frees your child to write the messages they want to write. Otherwise they may only ever write the stilted messages that are made up of the words they already know.

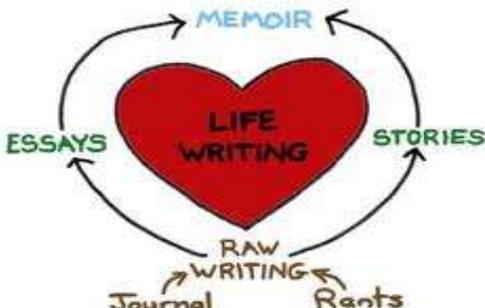
When teaching writing to young children, teachers strive to create a balance between composing (the ideas) and transcribing skills (the mechanics).

Where a child is focused only on the message but lacking mechanical skill, the writing can be impossible to read. However, for a child who carefully writes the same story day after day using the same known words, the writing lacks depth and inspiration.

It’s an intricate process and finding balance is the key!

‘...Writers do not write with words and convention alone; writers write above all with meaning.’

Lucy Calkins



6+1 Traits of Writing

A model that identifies seven key traits or characteristics of writing.

Ideas: the meaning and development of the message.

- Does my writing make sense?
- Do I know my topic?
- Is my writing interesting?

Organisation: the internal structure of the piece.

- Do I start off strong?
- Is everything in the right order?
- Are similar things together?

Voice: the tone of the piece – the personal stamp that the writer brings to it.

- Can you hear me in the writing?
- Can you tell I care about this idea?
- Have I added some sparkle?

Word Choice: the specific vocabulary the writer uses to convey meaning.

- Do these words sound and feel right?
- Have I tried new words?
- Have I painted a picture using words?

Sentence Fluency: the way the words and phrases flow throughout the text.

- Can I read my writing aloud?
- Do my words and phrases go together?
- Have I tried to use sentences?

Conventions: the mechanical correctness of the piece.

- Is the spacing correct between the letters and words?
- Is my spelling readable?
- Does my punctuation and capitalization make sense?

Presentation: the overall appearance of the work.

- Is my paper framed with open space?
- Is there balance between pictures and text?
- Is it neat and legible?

(Culham 2005)

1 Handwriting

The ability to form letters quickly and correctly is often a challenge for some children. If they are unable to do this with minimal attention, their written language can be affected. It is important that students quickly master:

- How to grip a pencil correctly;
- How to sit correctly;
- The correct starting point of a letter;
- The correct directional movement for writing a letter

2 Punctuation

Encourage:

- capital letters;
- full stops;
- question marks;
- exclamation marks

