Elementary Grades

Narrative Writing Guide
To the Teacher

The purpose of this writing guide is to support classroom teachers as they foster students’ growth as writers, and prepare them to write proficiently on internal and external writing assessments. It contains lessons and activities designed to assist educators in modeling and facilitating the writing process. The booklet is to be used in conjunction with the Milwaukee Public Schools’ Learning Targets, adopted English Language Arts textbooks, and other standards-based instructional materials.

Teachers and students should work through the integrated learning activities prior to writing to practice prompts. The integrated learning activities are designed to facilitate the writing task. When completed, the integrated activities provide students with a bank of writing experiences from which to draw upon in creating longer compositions. The learning activities are written to give students multiple opportunities to practice the stages of the writing process. After some involvement with the learning activities, teachers should assign practice prompts to students.

Educators who achieve the most positive results in helping students enhance their writing skills utilize the writing process as a major instructional approach. These teachers incorporate peer assessment and conference one-on-one with students on a regular basis. Some of the most positive school-wide efforts have been derived as a result of school-wide writing assessments. For these assessments, students and teachers should apply the MPS Writing Rubric to the writing. Students should give and receive descriptive analytic feedback as they work to improve their writing.

Teachers should be sure they provide students with the tools necessary to meet the three MPS Learning Targets in writing that are expected at each grade level. As students participate in writing on a daily basis in all subject areas, they will develop effective writing skills.

It is strongly recommended that teachers and schools utilize portfolio assessment as a school-based strategy to monitor student progress in writing. The effective use of portfolio assessment is predicated upon student reflection and self-selection using established criteria, self and peer assessment, and regular conferencing. It is advised that a baseline writing assessment be administered early in the school year to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in students’ writing. This could be used as the first entry of the students’ portfolios.

Thank you for your efforts as we work to improve the writing skills of all students. I hope this writing guide will be of use to you as you provide writing instruction on a daily basis.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Ball
K-12 English Language Arts Curriculum Specialist
*A special thank you to the following educators for their excellent contributions to the contents of this booklet:

Jennifer Boemmel
Carrie Davis
Leah Donohue
Joan Fecteau
Mary Fowler
Santa Griego
Tina’ Harris
Mike Hughes
Amy Martin
Denice Niebuhr
Abigail Plummer
Kristi Skarie
Matthew Stark
Deb Zaffiro
Dear Educators:

The Elementary Writing Prompt Booklet Committee spent a great deal of time preparing this document for your use. We would like to know what was beneficial to you and what could be improved. Please take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire by April 15th and return to Central Services, Division of Teaching and Learning (Room 253). Your feedback will help us to improve the booklet.

Thank you in advance for your assistance!

1. Did you find the booklet useful as a supplementary resource?  
   Yes  No

2. Did you use the prompts?  
   Yes  No

3. Did you use the activities that were prepared for each step of the writing process?  
   Yes  No

4. If yes, were the lessons easy to follow?  
   Yes  No

5. Did you share the sample essays with your students?  
   Yes  No

6. Were you able to model to students how to move a paper proficiency using the samples and lessons provided?  
   Yes  No

7. What part(s) of the booklet was/were most useful to you?

8. What part(s) of the booklet was/were not useful to you?

9. What do you think should be included in the booklet that was not in it?

10. Do you have any additional comments?

Please return to:  
Patti Ball  
K-12 English/Language Arts Curriculum Specialist  
Milwaukee Public Schools  
Division of Teaching and Learning, Room 253, Central Services
TABLE OF CONTENT FOR NARRATIVE WRITING

It is intended that this booklet be placed in a three ring binder and divided into sections according to the table of contents. Teachers can place additional lessons and information into the appropriate sections as they see fit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SECTION One</td>
<td>1 - 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General Writing Information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION Two</td>
<td>45 - 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Narrative Writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION Three</td>
<td>90 - 228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Samples of Student Work, K5-Grade 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION Four</td>
<td>229 - 283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Samples of Student Work, Grades 4 &amp; 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION Five</td>
<td>284 - 289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Writing Prompts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appendix</td>
<td>290 - 315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher Resources</td>
<td>316 - 319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wisconsin’s Academic Standards for Writing

Content Standard

Students in Wisconsin will write clearly and effectively to share information and knowledge, to influence and persuade, to create and entertain.

Rationale

Written communication skills are central to learning. Whether in academic life, in the workplace, or in personal life, they offer a powerful advantage in a world in which people must constantly learn new information. To become confident and effective writers, students need to learn how to write for various purposes and audiences. They need to try different approaches and to reconsider what they have written through revision and editing. To ensure that their writing is understood and well-received, students need a working knowledge of language as well as grammatical structures, diction and usage, punctuation, spelling, layout, and presentation. This knowledge is also invaluable for discussing, critiquing, revising, and editing written communication in almost any form.

Fourth Grade Performance Standards

By the end of grade four, students will:

B.4.1 Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

- Write nonfiction and technical pieces (summaries, messages, informational essays, basic directions, instructions, simple reports) that convey essential details and facts and provide accurate representations of events and sequences
- Write expressive pieces in response to reading, viewing, and life experiences (narratives, reflections, and letters) employing descriptive detail and a personal voice
- Write creative pieces (poetry, fiction, and plays) employing basic aesthetic principles appropriate to each genre
- Write in a variety of situations (timed and untimed, at school and at home) and adapt strategies, such as revision and the use of reference materials, to the situation
- Use a variety of writing technologies, including pen and paper as well as computers
- Write for a variety of readers, including peers, teachers, and other adults, adapting content, style, and structure to audience and situation
B.4.2 Plan, revise, edit, and publish clear and effective writing.

- Produce multiple drafts, including finished pieces, that demonstrate the capacity to generate, focus, and organize ideas and to revise the language, organization, and content of successive drafts in order to fulfill a specific purpose for communicating with a specific audience
- Explain the extent and reasons for revision in conference with a teacher
- Given a writing assignment to be completed in a limited amount of time, produce a well developed, well organized, and effective response in correct English and an appropriate voice

B.4.3 Understand the function of various forms, structures, and punctuation marks of standard American English and use them appropriately in communications.

- Understand and use parts of speech effectively, including nouns, pronouns, and adjectives
- Use adverbials effectively, including words and phrases
- Employ principles of agreement related to number, gender, and case
- Capitalize proper nouns, titles, and initial words of sentences
- Use punctuation marks and conjunctions, as appropriate, to separate sentences and connect independent clauses
- Use commas correctly to punctuate appositives and lists
- Spell frequently used words correctly
- Use word order and punctuation marks to distinguish statements, questions, exclamations, and commands

Milwaukee Public School’s K-12 Articulation in English Language Arts
Wisconsin State Standards (B) Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Language Arts MPS Learning Target</th>
<th>English Language Arts WI Content Standard</th>
<th>English Language Arts WI Performance Standard</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(K4) Kindergarten B.K.1 - Express ideas using pictures, scribble writing, mock and conventional letters.</td>
<td>Students in Wisconsin will write clearly and effectively to share information and knowledge, to influence and persuade, to create and entertain.</td>
<td>B.4.1 Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.K.2 - Participate in modeled and interactive writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td>B.4.2 Plan, revise, edit, and publish clear and effective writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.K.3 - Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between written symbols and the spoken word.</td>
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<td>B.4.3 Understand the function of various forms, structures, and punctuation marks of standard American English and use them appropriately in communications.</td>
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### Milwaukee Public School’s K-12 Articulation in English Language Arts
### Wisconsin State Standards (B) Writing

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<tr>
<td>B.K.1 - Express ideas using words and sentences.</td>
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<td>B.K.2 - Participate in the planning, revising, editing and publishing components of the writing process.</td>
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<td>B.1.1 - Express ideas using basic sentences that are organized around a specific topic for a variety of audiences and purposes.</td>
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<td>B.1.2 - Create various drafts of writing.</td>
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<td>B.2.1 - Communicate ideas in writing using complete sentences sequentially organized around a specific topic for a variety of audiences and purposes.</td>
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<td>B.2.2 - Independently create multiple drafts of writing in a variety of situations.</td>
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<td>B.2.3 - Correctly compose complete sentences.</td>
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### English Language Arts MPS Learning Target

#### Grade 3
- B.3.1 - Organize sentences into paragraphs to create meaningful communication for a variety of audiences and purposes.
- B.3.2 - Independently apply revision and editing strategies to create clear writing in a variety of situations.
- B.3.3 - Employ standard American English including correct grammar to effectively communicate ideas in writing.

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#### Grade 4
- B.4.1 - Prepare multi-paragraph writing, adapting style and structure to suit a variety of audiences and purpose.
- B.4.2 - Independently employ purposeful revision and editing strategies to improve multiple drafts of writing in a variety of situations.
- B.4.3 - Identify various sentence forms and structures while applying the rules of standard American English to written communications.

Students in Wisconsin will write clearly and effectively to share information and knowledge, to influence and persuade, to create and entertain.

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#### Grade 5
- B.5.1 - Compose detailed, multi-paragraph and organized writing to communicate for a variety of audiences and purposes.
- B.5.2 - Independently produce and analyze multiple drafts of writing, using the writing process to create clear and effective writing.
- B.5.3 - Produce various sentence forms and structures while applying the rules of standard American English in written communications.

Students in Wisconsin will write clearly and effectively to share information and knowledge, to influence and persuade, to create and entertain.

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<td>Students in Wisconsin will write clearly and effectively to share information and knowledge, to influence and persuade, to create and entertain.</td>
<td>B.8.1 Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes. B.8.2 Plan, revise, edit, and publish clear and effective writing. B.8.3 Understand the function of various forms, structures, and punctuation marks of standard American English and use them appropriately in communications.</td>
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COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY FRAMEWORK
A conceptual framework utilized for the development of instructional design that integrates reading, writing, listening, speaking, language, technology, and research across all content areas to promote critical thinking and learning.
A Vision of Writing in the Milwaukee Public Schools

I. Commitment to the importance of writing throughout the general curriculum
   A. The bar has been raised for what counts as literate writing, what good writing requires, and how many people need to be literate.
   B. The assumption that writing well is an innate talent must change to a belief that everyone can learn to write.

II. Effective writing classrooms
   A. Teachers are writers themselves.
   B. Students write in all subjects.
   C. Teachers express confidence in meeting the instructional needs of students with diverse abilities and backgrounds.
   D. Students engage in diverse writing tasks to develop competence.
   E. Writing is learned in school very much the same way that it is practiced out of school.
   F. Teachers have common expectations for good writing.
   G. Teachers are experts in recognizing and analyzing a variety of writing difficulties and in addressing both process and product—applying what research has learned about how writers compose—getting beyond formulaic use of prewriting, drafting, and revision.
   H. Writing is an ongoing, daily practice using such writing process strategies as pair or group work, peer editing, completing multiple drafts, and conferencing.

III. Writing across disciplines
   A. Schools need to offer professional development in teaching writing to all staff.
   B. Substantive writing increases achievement on standardized tests.
   C. Writing is integrated with reading and other components of the MPS Comprehensive Literacy Framework.
   D. Writing supports retention of content. Expressive writing can be a means of thinking through a problem in a class such as biology.
   E. All teachers can use writing to help students reflect and think critically about content.

IV. Professional development
   A. Research shows that teacher expertise is the most significant factor in student success. Teacher quality is more powerful than a student's socioeconomic background.
   B. A changing and diverse student population is one reason why teachers need to keep learning new techniques and strategies.
   C. Professional development models and activities must promote lasting change and offer research-based strategies and demonstrations of best practice.
   D. There must be a context for sustained learning (learning communities/teams to sustain participants in their efforts to reflect, examine, experiment, and change—shared expertise and collegiality).
   E. There must be time, resources, and common focus.
V. School-wide writing reforms
   A. The principal has an essential role in providing resources and leadership for sustaining a vision of shared expectations for high learning.
   B. A high standard of quality in classroom application is maintained.
   C. Students write in school every day.
   D. There are long-term plans that are communicated to the entire school community.
   E. The rationale for why writing matters is clearly articulated to staff and parents.
   F. The status of writing and of teaching is assessed.
   G. Teacher leaders are enlisted as advocates for improving the teaching of writing in all classrooms.
   H. Time and resources are provided for professional development, research materials, and workshops for teachers to develop as writers and learn about research-proven classroom strategies.
   I. Practical solutions to such problems as scheduling and funding are found.

VI. Writing assessment
   A. The purpose and intended use of the assessment is clearly defined and communicated.
   B. Assessments are built around clear targets.
   C. Valid rubrics have been developed and shared with students in terms they can understand.
   D. Assessments guard against bias.
   E. Multiple samples of writing are used to assess abilities and developmental levels.
   F. Students are actively engaged in the assessment process.
   G. Performance is integrated with instruction.
   H. Students are provided with skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to become independent thinkers and writers.
   I. Students have the opportunity and ability to articulate their own awareness of their progress in learning to write.

Adapted from Because Writing Matters: Improving Student Writing in Our Schools the National Writing Project and Carl Nagin
Description of a Writing-Intensive Classroom

An effective classroom in a writing-intensive district is a stimulating environment, rich with a variety of literacy activities. All students are actively engaged in writing every day. Students employ a recursive writing process to create authentic works for a variety of audiences and purposes. Writers compose emails to pen pals and poems for class books. At all grade levels, students read aloud stories and essays, using the language of writing to critique their own and others' works. Published samples from students' writing portfolios display evidence of writing across all disciplines, from learning logs in science and math to reflective journals and letters in social studies, and creative illustrations with captions in art and music. Teachers and other adults use writing to help students reflect and think critically about content. Teachers in the writing classroom model lessons by sharing their writing with students. Lessons provide students with focused work in specific elements of the components of writing. Teachers are experts in recognizing and analyzing a variety of writing difficulties and in addressing both process and product—applying what research has learned about how professional writers compose.
Writing Rubric

ADVANCED / EXCEEDING
4
Main idea clearly communicated
Ideas well organized and elaborated
Author’s personality imprinted on the writing task
Effective word choice and usage
Sentence fluency and variety
Correct capitalization, punctuation and spelling

PROFICIENT
3
Main idea communicated
Ideas sufficiently organized and developed
Evidence of author’s response to the writing task
Appropriate word choice and usage
Adequate sentence sense and minimal sentence errors
Occasional errors in capitalization, punctuation and spelling

BASIC
2
Main idea vaguely communicated
Ideas poorly organized and underdeveloped
Little personal relationship to the writing task
Occasional inappropriate or incorrect language usage
Poor sentence structure; some sentence fragments and run-ons
Inconsistent use of capitalization, punctuation and spelling conventions

MINIMAL PERFORMANCE
1
Main idea unclear or nonexistent
Ideas unorganized and undeveloped
No personal relationship to the writing task
Generally inappropriate or incorrect language usage
Lack of sentence sense; sentence fragments and run-ons
Incorrect use of capitalization, punctuation and spelling conventions

0
Blank, illegible or does not address the prompt
MPS Kindergarten – Grade 2 Writing Rubric

4 ADVANCED / EXCEEDING
Conveys a clear message
Organized with apparent patterns
Author’s personality clearly imprinted on the writing task
Correct word usage, including high frequency words
Correct sentence form—including spacing
Appropriate use of capitalization, punctuation and spelling conventions
Writing complements illustration (if present)

3 PROFICIENT
Conveys a message
Sufficiently organized
Evidence of author’s imprint on the writing task
Appropriate word usage, including high frequency words
Adequate sentence form—including spacing
Developing use of capitalization, punctuation and spelling conventions
Writing corresponds to illustration (if present)

2 BASIC
Attempts to convey a message
Evidence of some organization
Little personal relationship to the writing task
Occasional appropriate word usage including high frequency words
Developing sentence form—including spacing
Developing use of capitalization, punctuation and spelling conventions
Writing connects to illustration (if present)

1 MINIMAL PERFORMANCE
Message unclear or nonexistent
Little to no evidence of organization
Generally lacking evidence of personal relationship to the writing task
Generally inappropriate or incorrect word usage
Lack of sentence form
Generally incorrect use of capitalization, punctuation and spelling conventions
Writing unrelated to illustration (if present)

0 NOT SCORABLE
Blank, illegible or does not address the prompt
MPS Kindergarten Through Grade 2
Writing Rubric - Formative

YES

☐ Conveys a message
☐ Sufficiently organized
☐ Evidence of author’s imprint on the writing task
☐ Appropriate word usage, including high frequency words
☐ Adequate sentence form—including spacing
☐ Developing use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling conventions
☐ Writing corresponds to illustration (if present)

NOT YET

Comments:
# MPS Writing Rubric - Formative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NOT YET</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Main idea communicated</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Ideas sufficiently organized and developed</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Evidence of author’s response to the writing task (voice)</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Appropriate word choice and usage</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Adequate sentence sense and minimal sentence errors</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Occasional errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling do not impair comprehension</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

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Teachers and the Writing Process

Teachers should be encouraged to do the following:

- Provide writing models to use for discussion
- Provide students with a variety of pre-writing strategies
- Discuss the evaluation criteria (rubric) with students prior to giving the assignment
- Provide individual conferences with students about their writing when possible
- Function as an editor who is concerned with clarity, word choice, voice, grammar and mechanics
- Allow students to express themselves in terms of developing their own writer’s voices and opinions in a non-threatening environment
- Acquaint students with references that are tools for writers such as dictionaries, thesauruses, conceptual maps, personal journals and encyclopedias

Students and the Writing Process

Students should be encouraged to do the following:

- Introduce, discuss, and develop the topic using a variety of pre-writing strategies
- Utilize peers in every stage of the writing process
- Organize supportive ideas by using a graphic organizer (the graphic organizer can be used as a group process)
- Compose the first draft
- Use the rubric and peer responses to revise the first draft. Peers should function as editors who are concerned with clarity, organization, development, voice, and word choice
- Revise all ideas that are not clear or do not have examples
- Allow their own personalities and voices to be evident in their writing
- Read various drafts of writing in large or small groups
- Review the final copy in small groups by reading out loud
- Edit papers for spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- Write the final draft
# Assessment Definitions

**Writing Performance Assessments** – Assessments that asks students to perform (write) on a given or chosen prompt. This writing is scored using a predetermined scoring guide (rubric) that is composed of criteria understood by its users. Information gathered through this assessment allows teachers to accurately focus and guide future instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<td>anchor paper</td>
<td>A previously scored paper used to train scorers at the district scoring session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anchor team</td>
<td>A group of teachers who discuss and determine the grade level standard for advanced (4), proficient (3), basic (2), and minimal (1) papers for each writing assessment; these papers are used to train teachers to score the students’ writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>holistic scoring</td>
<td>A method of viewing and scoring writing that takes into account all of the important and complex components of writing; a single score, representing the writer’s overall performance, is assigned to the piece of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prompt</td>
<td>Ideas used to stimulate writings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rubric</td>
<td>A scoring tool that identifies specific, observable traits; a rubric explains the necessary criteria students must include in their performance in order to achieve proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scoring session</td>
<td>An interactive meeting of educators who are trained to apply the rubric to score grade-level papers; anchor papers are used in the training process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing Assessment Process

1. A group of teachers create a genre-specific writing guide that includes a number of writing prompts.

2. School-based educators obtain paper and/or electronic copies of the writing guide to use in classrooms by all who assist students as they work to improve their writing skills.

3. Teachers guide students as they interact with the activities and prompts. Teachers provide students with descriptive feedback; they assess, monitor, and communicate students’ progress in writing. Teachers also use the information they collect to guide the pace, content, and purposeful scaffolding of writing instruction in their classrooms.

4. At various times during the school year entire school communities, grade-levels, and/or individual classroom conduct writing assessments. Teachers administer and monitor the assessment, which is based on assigned or self-selected writing prompts. The purpose of the assessment is communicated to all stakeholders.

5. Teachers collect students’ writing

6. If more than one teacher is using the same prompt, teachers should collaborate and form an anchor team. Anchor team members spend time discussing and reading many papers to find examples of advanced (4), proficient (3), basic (2), and minimal (1) level papers. Educators use the appropriate district writing rubrics to set the standard. A collection of papers, representing a variety of scores, is compiled into a training packet.

7. Members of the anchor team use the training packet to train scorers at the scoring session. Participants are trained to ensure all scores are calibrated to a consistent, predetermined grade level standard set by the anchor team. (*Writing scoring sessions can also be conducted by students within a classroom setting. Student names should be removed prior to scoring.)

8. At least two scorers should read and score every paper. Their scores are added together to get a combined score, which is then divided by two. These numbers, along with trends in student performance, are reported to the appropriate various stakeholders.

9. Teachers provide students with feedback that is aligned to the purpose of the assessment. If the primary purpose of the assessment is to improve student performance, students should be provided with rich, descriptive feedback (analytic and formative). If the primary purpose of the assessment is to see how well students can employ the writing process at a certain point in time, the feedback can be evaluative (holistic and summative).

10. Teachers collaborate and discuss major findings based on students’ writing.

11. This assessment can provide valuable data that should be used to inform instruction, assist schools in decision-making, and help determine staff development needs.
### Commonly Used Terms in Writing

#### The Writing Process
A recursive process comprised of various stages that are used to develop and create effective writing. The primary stages in the writing process include: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, creating a final draft, and publishing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>A word that modifies a noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>A word that modifies the action of a verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alliteration</td>
<td>The repetition of beginning consonant sounds in words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anecdote</td>
<td>A little story used to make a point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audience</td>
<td>The intended target group of the message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>author’s chair</td>
<td>A special chair in which students are privileged to sit while reading their published work to an audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>body</td>
<td>The main part of the writing that comes between the introduction and conclusion; the body of a piece of writing contains the specific details that support or develop the main idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brainstorming</td>
<td>Collecting ideas in groups by freely sharing all of the different possibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cause and effect</td>
<td>Cause and effect refers to why things happen (cause) and what happens as a result (effect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characters</td>
<td>A person or human-like animal in a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>climax</td>
<td>A complex sentence in which the events are arranged so that the most important event is placed last</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>closing</td>
<td>The part of the writing that comes at the end that sums up the main points being made in the composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compare (contrast)</td>
<td>To compare two things is to note their similarities and their differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>composition</td>
<td>Writing in which all ideas work together to form a finished product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concluding sentence</td>
<td>The last sentence in a paragraph that restates the main idea using different words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conclusion</td>
<td>The part of the writing that comes at the end that sums up the main points being made in the composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conferencing</td>
<td>A discussion between a student and teacher or a student and a peer about their writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conflict</td>
<td>The “problem” in a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>convention</td>
<td>An accepted practice in written language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>description</td>
<td>Writing that paints a picture of a person, a place, a thing or an idea using specific details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>details</td>
<td>The specific facts, examples and words used in a piece of writing to support or explain the main idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dialogue</td>
<td>Talking characters do in a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drafting</td>
<td>The stage in the writing process during which the writer expands his/her ideas creating sentences and paragraphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>editing</td>
<td>The stage in the writing process in which the writer proofreads and corrects any mechanical mistakes; spelling, capitalization and punctuation are checked; the writer ensures that words are used correctly, complete sentences are written and paragraphs are indented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explain</td>
<td>To make plain or comprehensible, to define; expound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fact</td>
<td>Statement of actuality or occurrence; a fact is based on direct evidence, actual experience or observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>figurative language</td>
<td>Language that is enriched by figures of speech and images created by words (examples include similes and metaphors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>final draft</td>
<td>The last complete phase of writing (writing has gone through all stage of the writing process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first draft</td>
<td>The first complete phase of writing (writing has a beginning, middle and an end)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>form</td>
<td>The shape of a poem, an essay, a novel, a play or other piece of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free-writing</td>
<td>Writing freely and rapidly to discover new ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genre</td>
<td>A type or kind of writing or literature (main genres include descriptive, imaginative, persuasive, narrative, expository)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grammar</td>
<td>The rules and guidelines of a language used when one wants to communicate correctly in writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graphic organizer</td>
<td>An effective tool to organize thoughts (graphic organizers are shapes usually created using lines, circles and boxes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hyperbole</td>
<td>An exaggerated overstatement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instructions</td>
<td>Detailed directions on procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>introduction</td>
<td>The part of the writing that comes at the beginning and addresses the main points to that will be expanded on in the composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irony</td>
<td>A statement which contains a double or hidden meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>journal</td>
<td>A consistently-written record of thoughts, feelings, and/or ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>main idea</td>
<td>The main idea of a paragraph is what all of the sentences are about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanics</td>
<td>Spelling, capitalization and punctuation in writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metaphor</td>
<td>A figure of speech that compares two different things without using the words <em>like</em> or <em>as</em> (<em>The sun was my blanket of warmth.</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modeling</td>
<td>The act of demonstrating the task you want students to perform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narration</td>
<td>Telling a story or recalling an experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>onomatopoeia</td>
<td>Words whose sounds imply their meaning (<em>purrrrr</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opinion</td>
<td>A statement of belief or feeling; shows one’s feelings about a subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oxymoron</td>
<td>A figure of speech that puts two opposites together (<em>clean dirt, large shrimp</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paraphrase</td>
<td>A restatement of a text or a passage in another form or other words, often to clarify meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal narrative</td>
<td>Writing that tells a story from the writer’s life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personification</td>
<td>Giving human qualities to that which is not human or alive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plot</td>
<td>The action or series of events that make up the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prewriting</td>
<td>The stage of the writing process that allows a writer to prepare for the writing task; the planning of the writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proofreading</td>
<td>Checking a draft for spelling, grammar, capitalization and punctuation errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>publishing</td>
<td>The stage in the writing process in which the writer’s work is ready to be displayed and/or shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purpose</td>
<td>The reason a writer writes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rhetorical question</td>
<td>A question which is asked but does not expect an answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resolution</td>
<td>The ending; it tells how things finally turn out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revising</td>
<td>The stage in the writing process in which the writer makes structural changes to the writing to add clarity, organization and/or details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sentence combining</td>
<td>A writing technique used to improve writing by combining simple sentences to make more complex and interesting sentences; sentence combining adds fluency and variety to writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sentence expansion</td>
<td>Adding adjectives and adverbs to a sentence to make it clearer or more interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sequence</td>
<td>The following of one thing after another; succession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>setting</td>
<td>The time and place of a story</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
simile  A figure of speech that compares two things that are not alike by using the words like or as (quiet as a mouse)

style  A writer’s choice of character, often reflected in his/her choice of words, phrases and sentences

summarize  To present an idea briefly

supporting details  The details used to develop and explain a subject or bring a story to life

theme  The central idea or message in a piece of writing

topic  The specific, focused aspect of the subject of a piece of writing

topic sentence  The sentence that contains the main idea of a paragraph

transitions  Words that help tie ideas together; transitions are used to keep writing flowing from one paragraph to the next

voice  The distinctive way in which a writer expresses his/her unique ideas; voice comes through via word choice, sentence complexity and choice of phrasing

writing process  The process a writer goes through from the beginning of a piece to a final product (see graphic on page 18)
Writers’ Workshop

- Gives students reasons to write
- Allows choices
- Should be part of daily practice
- Lets children view themselves as authors
- Creates a supportive environment in which students can take risks
- Emphasizes the writing process

How much time do I need for Writers’ Workshop?

Generally, it is best to devote 45 minutes to one hour daily for Writers’ Workshop with the biggest portion of that time dedicated to student time for writing. Writers’ Workshop includes the following components:

- **Mini-lesson** – 5 to 10 minutes long to introduce or reinforce a concept based on the needs of your students. The lesson could be about content, procedures, or skills and children should be encouraged to use the lesson in their writing.

- **Status of the Class** – 5 minutes. This is a quick check with your students to keep track of the stage of writing they are in and to record the title of the piece they are currently working on.

- **Writing** – 30-45 minutes. After you have taken status of the class, students should be working independently. During this time, the teacher conferences with individual students. It is important that children respect the conference time between teacher & student, so they must understand what they are to do while waiting for a conference. You, as the teacher, set those options but here are a few that work:

  While waiting for a conference students can:
  
  - Independently revise their writing using a revision checklist
  - Conference with a peer about their writing
  - Plan and begin a new piece of writing
  - Add ideas for writing to their writer’s notebook
Sharing – 10 to 15 minutes. Have students share their writing by using the author’s chair. Student listeners should respond by asking questions or offering positive suggestions. You can also have students share in small groups or with a partner.

Getting Started

Before starting Writers’ Workshop, it is important to do the following:

- Establish a scheduled time for Writers’ Workshop and stick to it.
- Establish procedures and rules for Writers’ Workshop and review them with students on a regular basis until things are running smoothly. For instance, one rule students need to understand is that the teacher may not be interrupted during a conference with a student. Expectations for students should be clear.
- Be certain students know where to locate writing resources in the room.
- Teach the steps of the writing process to students and explain what takes place in each of the stages of writing.
- Be excited and positive with students about Writers’ Workshop. Tell students that during this time we are all working at becoming published authors and celebrate with them as they achieve this goal.
**Organization**

In order for this writing experience to be a successful one in your classroom it is important for both the physical environment of the classroom and your classroom procedures to be in place. Many children require a quiet environment in which to write and you may need to divide your class so that areas where talking is occurring are separate from the writing area. For instance, the Teacher Conferencing area and the Peer Conferencing area may be removed from the area where students are writing.

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**Teacher Conferencing Table**

**Peer Conferencing Table**

**Student Desks for Writing**

**Writing Center (supplies)**

**What should I put in my Writing Center?**

- Lined Paper
- Unlined Paper
- Picture Prompts
- Dictionaries
- Thesauruses
- Staplers
- Access to Word Wall
- Scissors
- Tape
- Glue
- Pens
- Prompt cards
- Pencils
- Post-it Notes
- Writers’ Workshop Rules
- Revision checklists
- Graphic Organizers
- Paper Clips
- Editing checklists
- Published works of students
- Post Cards
What are Mini Lessons?

These are short lessons at the beginning of your Writers’ Workshop time that can be:

- **Content Lessons** – lessons modeling quality writing by sharing writing from a book. Examples might be the author’s lead, how the author chooses words, or the organization of a text.

- **Skill Lessons** – lessons showing the mechanics of writing, such as changing fragments by combining sentences, the use of transitional words, or the conventions of conversation.

- **Procedure Lessons** – lessons that make clear to students what the expectations are during Writers’ Workshop. For instance, where to look for new ideas for writing, clarifying a revision checklist, or how to peer conference.

These lessons are often driven by what you see in student writing and it should be stressed that the lessons you are modeling should be applied in student writing. It is important to keep your mini-lessons short and to the point so that time is not taken away from student writing. *Examples of Mini-lessons could be:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer Conferencing Procedures</th>
<th>Paragraphing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transitions</td>
<td>Use of a dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent verb tense</td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of quotation marks</td>
<td>Sharing an author’s voice/word choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing techniques</td>
<td>Run-ons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragments</td>
<td>Sentence expansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing methods</td>
<td>Leads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic sentences</td>
<td>Using a variety of sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminating repetitive words</td>
<td>Adding details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figures of speech</td>
<td>Using dialogue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As always, it is important to know your students as writers so that you can choose mini-lessons that will help improve student writing. These lessons may need to be repeated or taught in as a part of a language arts block so that students can apply them to their everyday writing. You can also take the opportunity to point out things to students during conferencing.
Modeling

Modeling is a strategy used to demonstrate expectations to students. Modeling provides students with an example to follow. The teacher demonstrates (talking his/her way through it) a specific writing strategy in each stage of the writing process. He or she gives students the opportunity to practice these strategies in a supportive environment. Teachers should present lessons with enactments and/or visual aids.

Media to Use:
- Chalkboard
- Overhead projector
- Computers
- Chart paper

Ways to Model:
- Write in front of students
- Think out loud when writing
- Use students’ work to demonstrate strategies or to determine proficiency
- Share writing that represents what is being modeled
- Read literature that highlights the area of focus

*Teachers should model the integrated lessons written for each stage of the writing process.*

Status of the Class

This quick review of where students are in the writing process can take place before or after your mini-lesson. There are several ways to keep track of student status, and if one of these doesn’t work for you, be creative and develop one of your own.

- **Class list** – Using a class list, create a grid to write down the title of the piece the student is working on and columns to indicate where they are in the writing process. Call out names in the list and have students tell you their status. You may list the following abbreviations or create your own:
  - **G** – graphic/organizer or planning
  - **SC or 1** – sloppy copy or first draft
  - **C**– need a conference
  - **R** – revision
  - **E** – editing
  - **P** – publishing
- **Status Cubes** – Have students create cubes with each of the stages of writing and place them on their desks at the beginning of Writers’ Workshop. The stage of writing they are in should face the front of the room and as students settle in the teacher can do a quick scan, filling in a Status of the Class grid. This could also be the job of a parent volunteer, teaching assistant, or reliable student.

- **Pizza Wheels** – Create pizza wheels with the stages of writing and clothespins with each of your students’ names. At the beginning of Writers’ Workshop, have students place their own clothespin in the appropriate stage. Use the pizza wheels to quickly fill in your Status of the Class Grid.

- **Pocket Chart** – Much the same as the Pizza Wheel, place the stages of writing on a pocket chart and have students move an index card with their name on it to the appropriate place in the chart.

**It is important to note that while students all move at their own pace in writing, that a student who is continuously in the same stage of writing may require a teacher conference to help them along. “Status of the Class” provides you with a barometer to gauge students’ growth as writers in your classroom.**
Conferencing

There is no pre-determined time to meet with a child about their writing. Some students need to conference before they write because they are stuck coming up with an idea to write about. Your support may be needed to get the ideas flowing and help them begin a graphic organizer. Other students may begin their writing with no problem and hit a dead-end. These children may need help in the middle of their writing and by rereading their work to look for places to elaborate and add more details to their ideas. Still other children will go along the road of writing smoothly and not need to conference with a teacher until the revision stage of writing. As a writing teacher, you will get to know your students well and check in with them throughout the writing process.

Conferencing is an essential part of the writing process; a time when students receive feedback about their writing that can help them improve their writing. Conferencing is a very critical component of the writing process and gives students opportunities to grow as writers. Both teachers and students can request a conference and although many teachers will say they don’t have time to conference, to miss this critical point in the writing process robs children of the opportunity to grow as writers.

It is important for teachers to listen during the conference to what the child has written and not immediately take out a red pen and begin editing the child’s work. Content conferences focus on the content of the writing and give children an opportunity to share their writing with a willing listener.

Conferences should be:

- Short and focused on one aspect for improvement
- An opportunity for the teacher to listen as the child shares his/her work
- Used as a tool to help the writer improve on the quality of his/her writing
- A method to ask questions of the student writer to get them thinking about his/her writing; **not** the teacher fixing the student’s work
In order to assist children in moving forward as writers, it is important for teachers to ask questions that get children thinking. Below is a list of some possible sentence starters and questions that can help lead to an effective conference:

**Choose comments that will help the writer think about their own writing:**

- I’d like to know more about…
- Will your reader be able to follow your story? Is there anything you can do to make it easier for your reader?
- What audience were you writing this piece for?
- What did you want your reader to feel?
- I think you left out some details here. Could you tell me more about what happened in this part?
- Do you think your lead grabbed the reader’s attention?
- Could you read that part again? I got lost in that part of your story.
- What are some other words you could use for ________?
- Good writers paint a picture for their reader. Are there some details you could add to your writing that will make the picture clearer for your reader?
- Tell me about your writing piece. What part do you like best? What part do you think you need to work on?
- Are there any parts of the story where you repeat yourself? Let’s talk about what you could do to change that.
- What will you write about next?
- What will you add to your story?
- What did you do well in this piece?
- What are some other topics you might write about?
- What did you learn about writing by writing this piece?
- How do you know when you’re done?
Writing Conference Ideas

The following techniques can be used to keep in touch with young writers during the drafting stages of the writing process. Conferencing also allows students to express themselves verbally.

**Assigned Conferences:** Set up a specific time to meet with each child. Create a sign-up sheet so that no child is missed. Conduct conferences informally, but take notes. This procedure will provide you with records of your meetings. This documentation allows you to monitor the progress of each child; it can be used for parent-teacher conferences.

**Cruise Conferences:** As you walk around, review students’ work, and make suggestions as you see fit. This method keeps the children on task because they recognize that their work will be checked regularly.

**Child-initiated Conferences:** Set aside a time for children to come to you for help or with questions about their writing. You could use a “take a number” system (ex: If you have a 40 minute writing block, you could see eight children for 5 minutes each).

**Combination Conferences:** These can occur when you rotate periods of assigned, child-initiated, and cruise conferences.

**Managing the Conference:** Here are some tips for managing time in order to ensure productive writing conferences with your children:

- Focus on the writing process. Ask open-ended questions that lead students to self-assess their writing. Teach students to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the writing, based on MPS Writing Rubric.
- Focus on one element at a time; for example, one conference may focus on pacing, the next spelling, leads, etc.
- Look for missing sections or ideas in students’ work. Ask students to clarify (verbally) what they intended to say; then show them how to incorporate those ideas into their writing.
- Teach skills in the context of your students’ writing. Keep grade level appropriate writing samples on hand to illustrate skills such as indenting paragraphs, placing dialogue in quotation marks, and using subject-verb agreement.
- Take note of areas where several students need additional assistance. Form an instructional group to teach or re-teach specific skills as needed.
- Use a portion of the conference time for positive reinforcement of progress. Be sure your feedback is specific, descriptive, and useful. If the work is in progress, note the date and mark the place your conference ended. At the next conference, you can skim to that point.
- Be sure to spend conference time with each student on a regular basis. Make every effort to give that student your complete attention during his/her time.
Peer Conferencing

Peer conferencing can be a helpful tool in the classroom, but students must be trained in how to effectively conference with their classmates. Teachers need to model this process for students and set some “ground rules”

- Be positive – tell the writer what they are doing well.
- Be helpful – make comments that will help the reader improve their writing
- Be specific – talk about specific words, parts of the story, or paragraphs.

Many of the peer conferencing questions/statements could be the same as those used by the teacher in conferencing. As with all areas of the writing process, modeling is key. Students will need to have some kind of guide as they begin the peer conferencing process. Below are a few suggestions:

**Praise – Question - Polish**

P (Praise) What do you like about my paper?
Q (Question) What questions do you have about my paper?
P (Polish) What specific things could I change to make my paper better?

**Peer Conference Guide**

Writer:
Reader:
Date:
Title of Piece:
The reader should respond to the following questions/statements:

1. What I liked most:
2. The main idea seems to be:
3. Your organization is:
4. Questions I have are:
5. An idea to try is:
6. Additional comments:
Two Hugs and a Wish

Two Hugs  Tell the author 2 things you liked about his/her writing.
One Wish   Tell the author 1 thing you wish he/she would change in his/her writing.

Self-Conferencing
In addition to conferencing with a peer or teacher, students must learn to revise their own work and conference in their own heads. One way to do this with students is the use of checklists. Stress the importance and value of rereading their work while writing – not waiting until revision. Here are some samples:

Check Yourself

Read your writing to yourself and think about the following questions. Revise your writing after you have finished the checklist.

- Does my writing make sense?
- Are things in order or did I get lost and confused?
- Can I add or subtract any details?
- Do I use the same words over and over again? Can I change any of these words?
- Can I connect any of my sentences together?
- Did I tell the reader everything I want them to know?
Use the following questions to help make your writing better.

- Do I have an introduction that grabs the reader?
- Have I included enough details in my writing to give the reader a clear picture?
- Did I choose precise, descriptive words in my writing?
- Is my writing organized so the reader will not get lost?
- Do my sentences start in different ways so my reader will not be bored?
- Are my transitions smooth or do I jump from one idea to the next?
- Should I combine any of my sentences to make my writing flow smoother?
- Did I end my piece effectively?
- Is my paper an example of my best effort?
**Idea Notebook**

Students can create lists of ideas in a notebook to help them get started in their writing.

**Ideas can come from:**

- Interesting facts found in a book.
- Ten Most Memorable Events in My Life (Send home and have parents, family members, and/or others help students fill out.)
- Expert List (A list created by students of things they know a lot about or things they are good at.)
- Field trip memories.
- Leads shared by the teacher.
- Research done in class.
- Content area studies.

**A Writer’s Notebook**

Some teachers opt to have each student create a student writer’s notebook filled with resources that students can use during writing. Three ring binders with dividers work well for this resource.

**Some examples of things that could be included are:**

- Lists of possible ideas
- Revising checklist
- Editing checklist
- Peer conference checklist
- Revision grid
- Graphic organizers
- Personal dictionaries or thesauruses
- Synonyms for overused words
- Frequently misspelled words
- Transition words
- Sections to keep writing pieces at the different stages of writing
- Rules regarding dialogue and use of quotation marks
- Writing rubric
- Definitions of the Six Traits of Writing
Can Parents and Others Play a Role in Writers’ Workshop?

Supportive family members and other trusted adults could play an important role as in many areas of your classroom,

**Parents, supportive adults, and family members can:**

- Monitor and maintain the Writing Center.
- Be trained to assist in conferencing with students.
- Assist students in publishing their work.
- Help their children create lists of ideas to write about.
- Reinforce skills taught in class mini-lessons.

It is important that these supportive adults understand that writing is a *process*. Many people expect any writing that is sent home with students to be in a final, polished stage. We need to inform parents of what happens in each of the stages of writing, and let them know that all writing does not have to be taken through the process to publication.

**How do I find writing prompts?**

There are many ways to find prompts to spark a student’s imagination. The list found in this resource is only a start. Prompts can be found in resources listed in the bibliography or on websites listed in the appendix. Teachers can also generate a collection of picture prompts from old magazines, calendars, discarded books, clip art programs, greeting cards, or photographs. Advertisements also offer a way to collect story starters that can be stored on rings or in a filing box.
Journaling

The focus of journal writing is the writer. Writing may be spontaneous, loosely organized and may include mechanical errors. When students are writing journals they are focused on the thinking, not editing and revising portion of the writing.

**Purpose for journal writing:**
- record experience
- stimulate interest in a topic
- explore thinking
- personalize learning
- develop interpretations
- wonder, predict and hypothesize
- engage the imagination
- ask questions
- activate prior knowledge
- share experiences

**Types of Journals:**

**Personal Journals:** Students write about events in their lives, topics of their choosing, or choose from a list of teacher-written prompts

**Dialogue Journals:** Students converse in writing with others, such as the teacher, a parent or guardian, or a classmate

**Reading Logs:** Students respond to books they are reading or books the teacher has read aloud

**Double-Entry Journals:** Students divide their journals into two parts; on one side they write a quote from a book and on the other side they respond to the quote

**Learning Logs:** Students write in learning logs for social studies, science, math and other subjects; these entries can be used as reflections

**Simulated Journals:** Students assume the role of a book character or a historical personality and write journal entries from that person’s viewpoint
Some Ideas for Journal Prompts:

- My favorite place in town…
- Things that make me happy…
- My pet…
- My neighborhood…
- My teacher…
- Things I did last weekend…
- My ride or walk to school…
- List of words for “good”…
- My favorite meal…
- A field trip…
- My most prized possession…
- My first day of school…
- My favorite cereal…
- Place an object from nature in front of the class such as a rock, flower or shell and have students describe the object…
- A scary experience I have had…
- List words you have heard or seen that are in advertisements to try to sell you something…
- Something I have lost (ex: watch, luggage, shoes, cap, mittens)…
- Place pictures in front of the class and have students describe what they see…
- Provide a topic for student and have them list sensory words…
- Write five sentences using your five senses; use figurative language such as similes, metaphors and onomatopoeia…
Six Trait Writing

If you look at the MPS Writing Rubric, you will notice that it is aligned very closely to the Six Trait approach to writing. The six traits are components of writing that were determined through the input of many teachers as to what they expect effective writing to look like.

The use of children’s literature to model the six traits is an important part of the writing process. The number of books that could be used for each trait is countless. For websites and resources to assist you in locating books to use in your lessons, please see the resource section of this book.

Ideas
- the heart of the message
- the content of the piece
- the main theme
- includes details that support and develop the theme

Teach ideas by

- modeling the use of good details
- sharing examples of good literature that have strong details and images
- demonstrating for students how to eliminate unnecessary information
- modeling for students how to use questions to expand and clarify ideas
- doing “Quick-writes”
- observing the world around them
- listing ideas

Organization
- the internal structure of a piece of writing
- central meaning
- putting things together in a way that makes sense
- a road map for the reader

Teach organization by

- working on strong leads/introductions
- brainstorming transition words
- using sequencing activities
- developing strong conclusions
- developing topic sentences with supporting details
- comparing and contrasting
Voice

- personality of the writer
- feeling and conviction of the writer
- perspective
- holds the reader’s attention

Teach voice by

- reading aloud from literature that models strong voice
- providing examples of various voices
- helping students match appropriate voices with the audience and purpose
- showing students how to identify an audience and write for that audience
- allowing students to hear your voice as you share your own writing
- identifying the voices of favorite authors
- listening to the different “voices” in music

Word Choice

- clear, precise, and colorful
- careful selection of the word that “fits” what the writer wants to say
- use of strong verbs

Teach word choice by

- making word walls of strong words and phrases
- having students collect favorite words
- replacing “overused” words by burying them
- brainstorming different ways to say things
- changing general words to specific words
- demonstrating how to use a thesaurus
Sentence Fluency

- rhythm and flow of sentences
- makes the text easy to read
- variety of sentence length, structure, and beginnings
- adds interest to the writing

Teach sentence fluency by:

- reading examples of text that flows
- asking students to practice reading aloud fluently
- re-writing one sentence many different ways
- taking part in choral readings
- combining choppy sentences
- using connecting words

Conventions

- spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, grammar and usage
- enhances readability
- things an editor would look for

Teach conventions by:

- teaching proofreader marks
- practicing editing the text of other authors
- performing editing lessons
Explanation of Narrative Writing

Narrative writing relies on personal experiences and is often in the form of a story. Narrative essays are told from a defined point of view, often in first person, so there is feeling as well as specific and often sensory details provided to get the reader involved in the elements and sequence of the story. It offers writers a chance to think and write about themselves and their experiences.

The following writing activities will prepare students to perform narrative writing:

- story summaries
- personal experience
- timeline of major events in their lives
- diary/journal
- comic strip
- oral story telling
- story dialogue
- point of view
- tell a story about a picture
- cartoon
- retell a story read
- story dialogue
- create a play
- tell a story about a picture
- biographies-autobiographies

Elements of Narrative Writing

- Describes feelings
- Describes personal experiences
- Contains personal reflections, interpretations
- Tells autobiographical or biographical (about self or someone or something that is known well) stories
- Tells autobiographical or biographical (about self or someone or something that is known well) stories
- Describes people, places, and things using devices and techniques that evoke clear images
- May contain dialogue
- Tells a story
- Is told from a particular point of view
- Makes and supports a point
- Is filled with precise detail
- Uses vivid verbs and modifiers
- Uses conflict and sequence as does any story

Prerequisite Skills for Narrative Writing

- Sequence ideas in a clear orderly way
- Understands point of view
- Has an understanding of audience
- Uses explicit transitional words and phrases
- Involves readers in the story
- Uses vivid descriptions
- Tells stories using a plot, setting and characters, a climax and an ending
- Uses literary devices (simile, personification, metaphor, onomatopoeia, etc.)
- Uses a thesaurus
Some of the Various Patterns of Organization for Narrative Essays Include:

- Chronological order-what happened first, second, third, etc.
- Reverse chronological order
- Most to least confusing
- Least confusing to most confusing
- Most pleasurable to least pleasurable
- Least pleasurable to most pleasurable
- Spatial-according to where things are located
- Most important to least important
- Least important to most important
- Most frustrating to least frustrating
- Retrospectively-from a point in the past to a point in the present or future
Vocabulary for Narrative Writing

These are vocabulary words children need to understand when learning about narrative writing. It is suggested that these terms be defined throughout your writing lessons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>action</th>
<th>adverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>antagonist</td>
<td>antonym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>autobiography</td>
<td>beginning, middle, end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biography</td>
<td>chronological</td>
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<tr>
<td>clarify</td>
<td>climax</td>
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<tr>
<td>comparison</td>
<td>conclusion</td>
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<td>conversation</td>
<td>create</td>
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<td>describe</td>
<td>description</td>
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<td>details</td>
<td>develop</td>
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<tr>
<td>develop</td>
<td>dialogue</td>
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<td>discuss</td>
<td>draw conclusions</td>
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<td>essay</td>
<td>events</td>
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<td>express</td>
<td>first person</td>
</tr>
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<td>flashbacks</td>
<td>foreshadowing</td>
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<tr>
<td>imagine</td>
<td>lead</td>
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<td>main character</td>
<td>monologue</td>
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<td>narrate</td>
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<td>performance</td>
<td>plan</td>
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<td>plot</td>
<td>point-of-view</td>
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<tr>
<td>predict(ion)</td>
<td>pretend</td>
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<td>problem</td>
<td>protagonist</td>
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<td>quotes</td>
<td>relate</td>
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<td>retell</td>
<td>role-play</td>
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<td>scene</td>
<td>senses (5)</td>
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<td>sequence</td>
<td>setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>share</td>
<td>solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>state</td>
<td>summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supporting character</td>
<td>synonym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tell a story</td>
<td>tell about a time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think about</td>
<td>third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time-line</td>
<td>trait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transition</td>
<td>what happens next..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write a response</td>
<td>write a story about</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prewriting Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

Ideas for Integrating Narrative Writing Across the Curriculum

Science
Students may:
- summarize the results of an experiment
- stories about the content being studied such as stories that take place in space
- explain content being studied in story form ex. “Magic School Bus” format

Social Studies
Students may:
- write about a historical event from the perspective of the people involved
- write journal entries as if they were a famous person
- create a dialogue between two people in history

Literature
Students may:
- write letters to the character in the book
- turn a story into a Reader’s Theatre script
- develop a book review of a recently read book

Math
Students may:
- write a story problem
- write a picture book using number concepts for a younger child
- keep a daily math journal about what they’ve learned or accomplished

Language Arts/Spelling
Students may explain how to:
- look up words in a thesaurus
- create their own personal dictionary
- collect alternatives for words that are overused

Art
Students may:
- create a story from an illustration/picture
- turn a chapter of a story into a picture book
- convert a picture book into a comic strip

Music
Students may:
- write a rap song telling a story
- listen to music and write about the images the music creates
- select music to go with a story that they are reading
**Prewriting Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing**

**Physical Education**
Students may:
- Write entries in a diary telling about what they have eaten or the exercises they have done
- Write about their favorite sport or activity and why they like to do it
- Write a letter to their favorite athlete

**School-Wide Activities**
Students may:
- Pass a story from class-to-class and create a school-wide story
- Create seasonal stories
- Have a school-wide Author’s Tea
- Bind student-created book reviews to keep in the school library
- Display student illustrations and summaries of stories throughout the year
- Write math story problems to share over the announcements
- Hold school-wide writing contests
- Write articles for student newspapers
- Publicize writing opportunities/contests available for students
- Write letters to next year’s students
- Write a letter to their future teacher telling about themselves
- Create student plays to share at assemblies
- Write letters to community leaders/partners about what’s going on in school
- Create class books to donate to local hospitals, waiting rooms, libraries, etc.
- Collect poems from students and create a school-wide anthology
- Create a school rap
- Compose lyrics to music
- Share jokes over the announcement
- Share student work over the announcements
- Have students create story starters
- Share student writing in parent publications
- Create biographies about classmates or teachers
What is Narrative Writing?

Trait: Ideas/Word Choice / Organization
Objective: Students will gain an understanding of the concept of narrative writing.
Materials: Examples of narrative texts, chart paper, baskets of books (must contain narrative and other genres).

Steps:
1. Teacher should review the explanation and elements of narrative writing.
2. Read two narrative texts aloud to students (choose two texts that are very different).
3. Tell the students that each of these books is an example of narrative writing.
4. Talk about what makes them narrative and generate a list of ideas on chart paper. Narratives:
   - Describe something or tell a story,
   - Provide information,
   - Focus on one thing at a time,
   - Use specific words to describe or tell about something,
   - Provide a lot of detail,
   - Cite examples,
   - Are organized.
5. Students can use ideas from chart paper to help (in pairs or independently) sort and separate books they believe to be examples of narrative texts.
6. Students share one selection and explain why they determined it was an example of narrative text.

Picture Graphic Organizer

Trait: Organization
Objective: Students will design a picture graphic organizer.
Materials: Old catalogs, magazines (with pictures of furniture and items that may be found in bedrooms), construction paper, scissors, and paste/glue.

Steps:
1. Students will look through old discarded catalogs and magazines to find pictures of bedroom items and accessories that they wish to have in their bedroom design.
2. Students will cut and paste their selected items onto a piece of construction paper.
3. Students will label the items in their bedroom design.
4. Students will share their bedroom design with their peers during “Share Time”.

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Prewriting Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

Descriptive Words
Trait: Word Choice
Objective: Teacher will model and practice the use of descriptive words.
Materials: Large picture of a scene, chart paper, markers
Steps:
The teacher will:
1. Place the picture on the board / easel
2. Invite students to state what they observe
3. Write down the students’ observations on chart paper
4. Remove the picture and read the observations
5. Ask if they can still see the picture in their heads
6. Explain that a good writer can paint a picture with words just as a painter does with colors. The words that help paint a picture are called descriptive words.
7. Put the picture back in students’ view and discuss what details were missed.
8. Extension: Remove the picture and have students draw the picture based on the observations on the chart paper.

Word Wheels
Trait: Organization
Objective: Students will create word wheels for overused words.
Some examples of overused words: said, nice, good, fun, things.
Materials: Word wheels graphic organizer (below), thesaurus, and list of overused words.
Steps:
1. Familiarize students with the word wheel organizer.
2. Place overused word in the center of the organizer.
3. Fill in the remaining spaces with synonyms for the overused words.
   Encourage students to use a thesaurus to find appropriate word alternatives for the overused words.
4. Extension: Students will write sentences using the words on their wheels.
   Word wheels may be displayed in the classroom for references.
Seeing Details

Trait: Ideas
Objective: Students will learn to pay attention to visual details.
Materials: Six ordinary objects on a table, for example, a vase, a calendar, a lunchbox, a box of crayons, a book, a glove or mitten, and a sheet or piece of material to cover the objects.

Steps:
1. Explain to students that they will get five-second glimpses of items on the table.
2. In each glimpse, they must follow the direction given beforehand.
3. After each glimpse, cover the display with the sheet, get students’ oral responses, uncover the display to allow students to verify responses, then cover the display again as you rearrange it.
4. Examples: Glimpse One (Display four of the items.) Teacher states: You have 5 seconds. Look at the display before I cover it. Be ready to name the items you saw. (Get student responses and verify.) Glimpse Two (Add the other two items to the display.) Teacher states: Look at the display and tell what items I’ve added. (Elicit responses and verify.) Glimpse Three (Remove one or two items from the display.) Teacher states: Look at the display and tell what items I’ve taken away. (Elicit responses and verify.)
5. Vary, build and improvise on the activity according to your students’ abilities. Some examples may include:
   - Arrange items on left, middle, and right.
   - Put some items under the table.
   - Have a student add another classroom item to the display.
   - Abbreviate observation time to three or four seconds.
6. Extension: make a list of position words the students use while describing the objects on the table. (See Appendix)

Remembering Visual Details (This is an extension of “Seeing Details”).

Trait: Ideas / Word choice / Organization
Objective: Students will understand the importance of adding details to their own writing to create scenes for the reader.
Materials: A poster, picture, or overhead transparency of a photo that has several major features, such as people, actions, landscape details, colors, or shapes.

Steps:
1. Explain that students have 30 seconds to examine the visual. Each student then lists from memory as many details from the picture as possible. (Allow about 4 minutes for this step.)
2. Students should then work in groups to compare lists and to make a group master list.
3. Groups share their master list with the class.
4. Show the picture again and encourage students to discuss the accuracy and completeness of their lists.
Prewriting Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

5. Point out some real-life occasions when we get just a quick look at something that we wish we had more time to study: when we travel in a car, bus, train; when something moves quickly past us as we stand still: a bird in flight, a fire truck, a parade.

6. Have students write a paragraph describing the scene in the picture.

Description Cluster

Objective: Students will add details to a graphic organizer prior to writing.
Materials: Graphic Organizer
Steps:

1. Show students the example below:

![Example Graphic Organizer](image)

2. Have students make their own Description Cluster.
Prewriting Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

Using Details (General vs. Specific)
Traits: Ideas / Word Choice
Objective: Students will understand the difference between general and specific details.
Materials: Large chart with two columns “General” and “Specific”.
Steps:
1. Make up a large chart with two columns labeled “General” and “Specific”.
2. Under the first heading, list the general words you see in student writing: nice, good, fun, things.
3. Use an example such as “My Grandpa is very nice”. Discuss with students

Focusing on a Slice of the Pie
Trait: Ideas/Organization
Objective: Students will narrow down a topic.
Materials: Chart paper, pie chart, and markers
Steps:
1. Draw a large circle on the chart paper that resembles the pie chart.
2. Introduce the activity to students by talking about how writers sometimes start writing by choosing big topics such as: My Family or Summer Vacation.
3. Explain that choosing a topic this big sometimes causes problems because it is hard for students to decide where to begin their writing.
4. Instruct students to fill in each “slice” of the “pie” with ideas about the broader topic. For example, if the topic is My Family, “slices” of the “pie” might say Uncle Joe or my sister Sarah. Encourage students to fill in as many “slices” of the “pie” as possible.
5. Students should choose a slice of the pie to describe further. For example, “I remember the day that Uncle Joe took me fishing on his boat and I caught a twenty two inch walleye”.
6. Discuss with students how you have now taken a “slice of the slice” and that is a topic they may choose or will write about.
7. Have students fill in their own pie chart, starting with a large topic and filling in the “slices”.
8. Instruct students to keep their pie chart in their writing folders or other accessible area of the room so they may refer to them whenever they need a good idea for a writing topic.
Prewriting Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

**Cartoon Captions**

**Trait:** Ideas/Word Choice  
**Objective:** Students will create captions or stories to fit wordless cartoons.  
**Materials:** Cartoons (wordless or with the words “whited” out)  
**Steps:**

1. Teacher needs to collect cartoons without words to use for this activity. Two websites to help you do that are: [http://crayon.net/index.html](http://crayon.net/index.html) and [http://dir.yahoo.com/Entertainment/Comics_and_Animation/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Entertainment/Comics_and_Animation/)
2. Have students create captions for the cartoons.
3. Extend the captions into stories.

**Object Prompts**

**Trait:** Ideas  
**Objective:** Students will be provided with group input to help give them story writing ideas.  
**Materials:** Large “Grab Bag” of 15 to 20 small items.

Examples of “Grab Bag” items:

- chalkboard eraser  
- lunch bag  
- pencil  
- flower  
- textbook  
- world map  
- comb  
- shoe  
- ruler  
- mitten  
- photo of cat  
- key  
- mirror  
- apple  
- paper clip  
- clock  
- movie ticket-stub  
- compass  
- postcard  
- twig

**Steps:**

1. Prior to the lesson, prepare a large “Grab Bag” of 15 to 20 small items. (Review above list for suggested items).
2. Without looking, ask individual students to select 2 – 4 items from the “Grab Bag” and then quickly improvise aloud a short narrative about the items they selected.
3. The audience can provide feedback for each student describing what they like best about the mini-narrative.
4. Example of Narrative (You may wish to provide it.)  
   A hungry cat found a student’s old lunch bag. There was a mitten inside. The cat wrote a postcard to the student. The card said, “If I return your mitten, will you give me something to eat?”
5. Example of Positive Audience Comments (You may wish to provide some as models.)  
   I like the idea of a cat that can write!  
   I like the mystery! Why is a mitten in a lunch bag? How does the cat know who owns the lunch bag?  
   I like cats, so I want to know what will happen to a hungry one.
Creating a Time Line

Trait: Ideas / Organization

Objective: Students will create time lines to help them come up with good writing ideas.

Materials: Unlined paper

Steps:

1. Have students draw a horizontal line across the center of their unlined paper.
2. On the end of the right-hand side of the line, instruct students to write the current year.
3. Students should work backwards on their time line filling in the years. The year they were born will be at the end of the left-hand side of the time line.
4. Students should write words or phrases above and below the line that tell about the important events in their lives.
5. Remind students to draw a line from the words to the time line to indicate the year in which each event occurred.
6. Instruct students to keep their time lines in their writing folders or other accessible area of the room so they may refer to them whenever they need an idea for a writing topic.
7. It may be helpful to create a time line of your life to share with the students prior to starting this activity in order to provide them with an example of the types of things that may be included on a time line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>I was born on August 1, 1996 in Brownsville, TX.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>I learned how to walk when I turned 1 year old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>My little brother Fermin was born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>My grandma bought me a Radio Flyer wagon for Christmas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>I knew how to sing the ABC song and could count to 20.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Moved to Plainview, TX to live close to Mama Flora, my grandmother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Saw snow for the first time in Plainview, TX.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Moved back to Brownsville, TX to live.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Met my best friend RoseMary in 2nd grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Won 1st place in our class spelling Bee in 3rd grade with Mrs. Mascorro.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drafting Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

**Heart Poems**

**Trait:** Voice and Word Choice  
**Objective:** Students write non-rhyming poetry about an object or event.  
**Materials:** Samples of free verse poetry, paper, pencils  
**Steps:**  
1. Copy a free verse poem on an overhead and read it to students.  
2. Ask students to select words in the poem that helped them visualize what the author was talking about in the poem.  
3. Discuss the meaning of descriptive words with students.  
4. Have students think about a moment when they were unbelievably scared, happy, sad, excited, etc..  
5. Have students write down as many words as possible that remind them of that moment.  
6. Have students write sentences describing that moment in time.

**Use Your Senses**

**Trait:** Word Choice  
**Objective:** Students will use sensory words in their writing  
**Materials:** Paper, pencils  
**Steps:**  
1. Talk with students about the five senses of taste, touch, smell, sight, and sound. Distribute paper and pencils to students.  
2. Take students outside and sit quietly.  
3. Encourage students to record all of the things they can experience through their senses.  
4. Explain to students that when writing, they are the eyes, ears, mouths, etc. for the readers. If they want the reader to experience what they have experienced, they must first remember to use their senses.

**Greeting Cards**

**Trait:** Word Choice, Voice  
**Objective:** Students practice writing greeting cards with voice.  
**Materials:** Samples of a variety of birthday cards from the following categories: romantic, humorous, and sincere, sticky tape, construction paper, colors/markers/colored pencils  
**Steps:**  
1. Discuss the three categories stated above.  
2. Show birthday cards that model the three categories from above.  
3. Have students talk about how they knew which categories each card belong to.  
4. Have the classroom divided into small groups.  
5. Have each group select a picture card that represents a sincere birthday card.  
6. Have each group create a message for their card.  
7. Have each group share their card to the class and why they chose the words they used.  
8. Repeat for humorous and romantic.
Drafting Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

9. **Extension:** Students may choose to do individual cards.

**Imitating Others’ Voice**

**Trait:** Organization, word choice, and voice  
**Objective:** Students will learn to incorporate others’ writing voice  
**Materials:** Proficient sample papers, overhead  
**Steps:**
1. Select student samples that have a unique voice or a specific characteristic that you would like other students to incorporate in their writing.  
2. Present proficient narratives to students (on overhead).  
3. Discuss the aspects of the piece that make it unique, interesting, and proficient.  
4. Instruct students to draft their narratives focusing on voice and characteristics discussed in class.

**Postcard Mini-Narratives**

**Trait:** Organization, convention  
**Objective:** Students will write narratives from picture postcards.  
**Materials:** A variety of postcards that show different scenes and writing paper.  
**Steps:**
1. Distribute postcards to students. (One postcard per student is ideal.)  
2. Have students locate the caption on the postcard.  
3. Teacher should model how to write a postcard message and how to address a postcard.  
4. Ask students to rough-draft three or four sentences for the “postcard message” that narrate in sequence an event related to the picture on the postcard.  
5. Students may address and send the postcards.  
6. **Extension:** Students may create a postcard based on a unit of study. Some examples include regions, planets, cultural celebrations, historical landmarks, etc.

**Picture Leads**

**Trait:** Ideas, Organization  
**Objective:** Students will practice writing leads for photographs or illustrations.  
**Materials:** Interesting photographs or illustrations.  
**Steps:**
1. Model this activity for students by showing them a picture and writing an interesting lead.  
2. Have students select a picture and write a lead.  
3. Share student leads and their matching picture with the class.
Drafting Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

You Need A Lead
Trait: Voice, organization, word choice
Objective: Students will learn to use an interesting introduction or first impression that will hook the reader.
Materials: Examples of story leads: descriptive, action, dialogue p. 58 –60 from Great Genre Writing Lessons. (Copies of story leads can be found in the appendix)
Steps: 1. Introduce the 3 ways students can begin their pieces of writing: with an action, description or dialogue.
   - An action lead places the reader in a scene where characters are already doing something. It requires the reader to figure out what is happening in the story.
   - A descriptive lead gives the reader a “picture” of the story’s setting, characters, or plot and is full of juicy adjectives.
   - A dialogue lead throws the reader into a conversation between characters and makes the reader curious about what is happening.
2. Give students copies of pages 58-60 and have them read them aloud. Share additional leads taken from literature and ask students which type of lead is used.
3. After discussing a variety of leads, have students write different leads for their own stories. Students can write more than one type of lead and have a peer choose their favorite to begin their story.

Characterization
Trait: Word Choice
Objective: Students will identify the traits of characters in a story
Materials: copy of Sylvester and the Magic Pebble by William Steig, chalkboard and chalk, colored pencils or crayons, paper, pencils
Steps: 1. Explain to students that each story has characters. Characters can be people, animals or objects. Characters have unique traits. The more detail the author shares about the character, the more interesting the character becomes. Most stories have a main character and supporting characters.
2. Read the story, Sylvester and the Magic Pebble aloud to the class. After you finish, ask students to think about the characters in the story. Were they people, objects, or animals? Write the names of the characters on the board.
3. As a class, make a list of character traits for each of the main characters.
4. Brainstorm and make a list of as many character traits as students can think of and record them on the board. (This may also be done on chart paper that could become a word wall poster).
Drafting Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

5. Pass out a piece of paper to each student. Have students create a character by drawing a picture of someone’s face. Have them add character trait words around the face.

6. Have students use the character traits to write a narrative describing the paragraph.

7. **Extension:** Students can create character sketches from books that they have read. They can sketch the character and write the character traits around them.

**First, Next, Then, Finally…**

**Trait:** Organization

**Objective:** Students will use an organizer to prepare, organize and write

**Materials:** Transparency of “First, Next, Then Finally” organizer
Copy of “First, Next, Then, Finally” organizer

**Steps:**

1. Begin the lesson by sharing an experience of your own. As you talk about this experience, use words such as first, next, then, and finally. Discuss with students how you shared the information about this experience. Point out that you shared the information in a sequential manner. You started the experience at the beginning and walked through each step or event.

2. Explain to your students that in writing, the author needs to do the same thing. Just getting the words down on paper is not enough. The author has to do the work for the reader in preparing, organizing and designing the writing. Doing this not only makes the writing easier to read, but it interests the reader and maintains attention.

3. Place the transparency of First … on the overhead projector. Using the experience you just shared, fill in the boxes on the chart. Demonstrate for the students how to organize your thoughts and plan your writing.

4. Distribute copies of First … to students. Have students choose a recent experience to outline on the paper. Once the page has been filled out, instruct the students to write out this experience on paper, paying close attention to the sequence of the experience. Remind students to write a title.

Use this graphic organizer to help students write sequentially. This can be used with fiction as well as nonfiction writing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First</th>
<th>Next</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Then</th>
<th>Finally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drafting Integrated Learning Activities / Ideas for Narrative Writing

**Story Summaries**

**Traits:** Organization.

**Objective:** Students will learn to recall major elements in a story.

**Materials:** Chalkboard and writing paper.

**Steps:**

1. Begin with a whole-class brainstorm. The teacher should scribe at the chalkboard as students describe briefly what happened in a story the class has read or heard. (Lots of space should be left between each line of the chalkboard paragraph.)

2. The class then decides what information in the paragraph is unnecessary or irrelevant. (Cross these phrases out.)

3. The class studies the remaining information and determines if it’s given in order. (Circle any phrases or sentences that are out of sequence and draw arrows where they belong.)

4. The class determines if any important plot information has been left out and whether all the key characters have been named. (Write any vital additions above the lines where they belong.)

5. With teacher guidance, the class identifies places where key information can be stated in a briefer way. (This is an ideal opportunity for reviewing ways to combine sentences.)

6. Read aloud the final version of the chalkboard summary. If possible, make a clean copy of it. Explain to the class what they’ve accomplished (a story summary) and help them list the criterion they’ve applied:

**Summary:**

- States only the main events and states them in the order they happened;
- Includes the names of the main characters;
- Combines ideas whenever possible;
- Is short: gives all the essential information as briefly as possible.

7. If necessary, provide – via chalkboard or copies to distribute – a model summary. Ask the class to tell how it meets the criteria.

*Cinderella wants to go to the King’s ball, but her sisters won’t let her. Cinderella’s godmother provides her with a dress and a carriage and Cinderella goes to the ball. The Prince falls in love with her. Leaving the ball, Cinderella loses her glass slipper. The Prince searches everywhere for the woman whom the slipper will fit. He finally finds Cinderella. The shoe fits, and the Prince marries her.*

8. Have the class brainstorm a list of titles of stories they’ve recently read. Then ask each student to work independently to choose one of the stories and rough-draft a summary of it.
Drafting Integrated Learning Activities / Ideas for Narrative Writing

**Observation Diaries**

**Traits:** Organization, word choice, voice, ideas  

**Objective:** Students will observe changes or sequences of events to narrate.  

**Materials:** Notebooks or lined paper stapled together in the form of a booklet and the chalkboard or overhead.  

**Steps:**

1. Explain to students that in an Observation Diary, the writer chooses an object or non-human entity in his or her immediate environment and notes briefly, over a two or three day period, what happens to the object or how it changes.  

2. Have the class brainstorm a list of objects or animals they might observe. Record their ideas on the chalkboard or overhead. Possible student suggestions may include:  
   - a tree outside your window  
   - a junk car in an empty lot  
   - a household pet  
   - the school corridor  
   - your toothbrush  
   - an ant colony, spider web  
   - the morning sky  
   - a swing on the playground  
   - a classroom aquarium  
   - the school gym  
   - birds at a birdfeeder  
   - a table in the classroom  
   - your favorite shoes  
   - the sun, moon, stars  
   - sounds in your neighborhood  
   - a particular sidewalk or street  

3. Help students get started by providing a sample entry via chalkboard or overhead.

   **Observing my Pencil**

   **Monday:** Nice and sharp and long and new. This pencil is ready to go! It had to get sharpened after lunch, because it had to write spelling words in the morning. So now it’s shorter. Oops! Point got broken while drawing a map this afternoon.

   **Tuesday:** Pencil got lost in my desk for a while. Found under a pile of old lunch bags. Pencil looks stubby, and there is peanut butter on it.

   **Wednesday:** Sharpened pencil. But what happened to the eraser end? Now it’s stubby! Pencils sure don’t last long!

4. Instruct students to choose an item from the brainstormed list to observe and diary about it over a predetermined period of time. Inform students that the focus is getting ideas down at this point.

5. Students may then use their diary entries to draft a brief paragraph that narrates sequentially what they’ve observed.  

   **Example:**

   On Monday, the pencil was brand new. I used it to write spelling notes, so it got stubby. Then the point broke while I was drawing a map. I stuck the pencil away in my desk, where it fell under some old lunch bags and got smeared with peanut butter. On Wednesday morning, I found the pencil, but the eraser was stubby! How did that happen?
Drafting Integrated Learning Activities / Ideas for Narrative Writing

Photo Time Capsule
Trait: Ideas, Word Choice, Organization
Objective: Students will identify important things in their lives and write a piece to someone in the future describing what life is like now.
Materials: Photographs from students, pictures from magazines, or disposable cameras for students to take their pictures.
Steps:
1. Have students discuss what they would tell someone in the future about their lives now.
2. Divide students into teams and assign categories such as fashion, home life, school, the arts and entertainment, famous people, current events, technology, etc.
3. Ask each team to come up with a list of things for their category and find pictures to include in a time capsule. Students may use magazines, their own pictures, or take pictures.
4. Have students write a brief description of each photo.
5. Place the photos in an actual time capsule or use them on a bulletin board as if students were living in the future and had already opened the time capsule.

Unusual Narrators
Trait: Ideas, Word Choice
Objective: Students will practice seeing events and people from different points of view.
Materials: A sample list of prompts to introduce children to the idea. For example,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School bus</th>
<th>My pet goldfish</th>
<th>A library book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My gym shoes</td>
<td>A new pencil</td>
<td>Their teacher’s desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The refrigerator</td>
<td>Soccer field</td>
<td>A seat in the movie theatre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Steps:
1. Explain to students that sometimes stories are told from different viewpoints. For example, in the book, Ben and Me, Benjamin Franklin’s mouse tells the story.
2. Have students brainstorm a list of pets, things, and places they see everyday.
3. Model for students what it would be like to be one of the items on the list and read aloud to students what that “thing” might say.
4. Have students identify the “speaker”.

   It’s been such a pleasant summer. No noisy kids, no gum stuck under my seats, nobody jumping up and down on my seats. That sure changed in a hurry. All those kids climbing my steps for the first day of school, some happy, some scared, some excited, and some mad. Now, I only get a few hours of peace and quiet during
Drafting Integrated Learning Activities / Ideas for Narrative Writing

the day and that’s only if there’s no field trip. Only nine more months until I can be happy again. **The School Bus**

5. Have students pick another item from the list above.
6. Students should construct their own list. For example:
   - Have students pick another item from the list and construct a class paragraph told from the first-person viewpoint of another item.

Students should construct their own list, choose one of the items and write a short paragraph from the items point-of-view.

**Historical Newspapers**

**Trait:** Ideas, Organization, Word Choice

**Objective:** Students will review/summarize a unit in Social Studies or Science by writing articles about key events or concepts they have studied.

**Materials:** Textbooks or notes from a completed unit.

**Steps:**

1. As a class, brainstorm a list of key concepts or events from a recently completed unit. This activity can also be done at the completion of a literature circle book.
2. In small groups, students should write narrative pieces about the key events of the time as if they were important news right now.
3. Provide students with some sample headlines to get them started.
4. For example if you have just completed a unit on the Revolutionary War some sample headlines might be:
   - **TEA OVERBOARD**
   - **PAUL REVERE TAKES MYSTERIOUS MIDNIGHT RIDE**
   - **GEORGE WASHINGTON LEADS TROOPS**
5. Group articles can then be put together in a class newspaper and used as a study guide before a test.

**Classmate Biographies**

**Trait:** Ideas, Word Choice, and Organization

**Objective:** Students will use information gathered in an interview with a classmate to write a biography of that person.

**Materials:** Biography Interview Sheet

**Steps:**

1. This is a good activity to do at the beginning of the year as students get to know each other.
2. Pair students and have them interview each other using the “Biography Interview Sheet”. (Teachers may change the sheet to fit their students.)
3. After completing the interview session, students will write a biography of their classmate.
4. Biographies may be shared orally or used as part of a bulletin board.
Drafting Integrated Learning Activities / Ideas for Narrative Writing

Biography Interview

Personal Information:

1. What is your full name?
2. What is your birth date?
3. Where were you born?
4. Why were you given the name you were?
5. Do you have a nickname? How did you get it?
6. What is your favorite subject?
7. What do you like to do when you are not at school?
8. What is your favorite TV show?
9. What is your favorite food?

Family:

1. Who do you live with?
2. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
3. Do you have any pets?
4. Name something special that you do with your family?

The Future:

1. What kind of career do you want to have when you finish school?
2. Where would you like to travel?
3. What other things would you like to do when you get older?
Add A Word

Trait: Ideas, Word Choice
Objective: Students will create a poem by adding words to a format.
Materials: “Add A Word” template
Steps:
1. Using the template provided, model the activity for the student that describes the dog.
2. Brainstorm or prepare ahead of time a list of other things that could be described.
3. Have students use the template to create a poem.
4. Using their newly created poem, students can write a paragraph about the object of their poem.

Add A Word Template

__________ dog

__________ __________ dog

__________ ___________ __________ dog

__________ ___________ __________ ___________ dog

__________ ___________ __________ __________ ___________ dog

Pet Talk

Trait: Ideas, Word Choice, and Organization
Objective: Students will construct a conversation between two pets.
Materials: A list of pets (pictures might be helpful).
Steps:
1. Remind students that often time stories are written from different points-of-view.
2. Tell students that they are to imagine that they can hear two pets talking about what they see going around them everyday.
3. Have students write the conversation they hear.
4. After students have written the conversation, have them write a story about an adventure the two pets have together.
Drafting Integrated Learning Activities / Ideas for Narrative Writing

Two Bad What?
Trait: Ideas, Word Choice, Organization, and Sentence Fluency
Objective: Using the book, Two Bad Ants, by Chris Van Allsburg students will create a new version of the story.
Materials: A copy of the book, Two Bad Ants, blank books.
Steps:
1. Read Two Bad Ants aloud to the class.
2. Talk about the ants’ behavior, where they went, and what their view was of each place they traveled.
3. Ask students how the story would change if the places were different or if the ants were other characters such as mosquitoes, cats, bears, etc.
4. Have students rewrite the story using the same style of language but using different animals for the main character.
5. Remind students that they will need to think about the story from the new animal’s perspective.
6. After students have finished their stories, have them create picture books to share with each other.

Additional Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas
Students may:
- be encouraged to write about their own personal experiences.
- utilize spontaneous classroom experiences that develop from activities such as block play, experiences with art materials (clay, paints, crayons), science experiences, a pet in the playground, etc.
- write a group story about their neighborhood using observations noted from a class walk around the neighborhood.
- create stories in anticipation of a field trip and/or create a story based on something observed on a field trip.
- use pictures clipped from magazines, newspapers, or old books to express ideas in writing.
- use items from the newspaper as a basis for writing group stories or individual stories.
- use journal entries as springboards for narrative writing.
Revision Integrated Learning Activities / Ideas for Narrative Writing

**Comic Strip Revision**

**Trait:** Organization  
**Objective:** Students will learn to evaluate and revise their own writing  
**Materials:** Unlined paper, sample comic strips  
**Steps:**

1. Have a discussion with students about what the elements in comic strips. Make the point that comic strips do not include every event that occurs; rather they focus on those that are most important.  
2. Refer students to their own narrative drafts. Without rereading, have the students create a rough comic sketch of their narratives focusing on the points from the discussion. (Stress to students that the art work is not important. Pictures should be stick figures and color is not needed).  
3. When students are completed, group them into pairs. Partners read each other’s drafts and compare them to the comic strips, focusing on the following questions.  
   - Are the scenes in your comic strip included in your narrative?  
   - Can the reader recognize these scenes?  
   - Do the comic strip and the rough draft have the same organization?  
   - Based on feedback from the discussion, students revise their drafts.

**Show Not Tell Revision**

**Trait:** Word choice, sentence fluency  
**Objective:** Students will learn to evaluate and revise their own writing  
**Materials:** Sample sentences of telling/showing  
**Steps:**

1. Discuss with students the importance of word choice in their writing.  
2. Note that in today’s lesson they will be looking at the difference between telling the reader through boring language and showing them with descriptive language.  
3. Show sample tell sentence “Susie liked the pink necklace.”  
4. Compare the tell sentence with the sample “show sentence”. “Susie eyed the necklace with awe. It was as beautiful as the fragile pink roses that grew in her mother’s garden. She longed to pick it and keep it forever.”  
5. Discuss with students the differences and similarities in the sentences and why the “show sentence” is better writing.  
6. Put a student writing piece on the overhead and have the students pick out tell sentence.  
7. As a group, develop a “show sentence” to replace it.  
8. Put the students in pairs or small groups, assign each group a tell sentence and have them convert it into a “show sentence”.  
9. Ask students to share both with the entire group.  
10. Have students look back in their narrative drafts and find tell sentences. Instruct them to create “show sentences” in their place.
Dialogue Revision
Trait: Organization
Objective: Students will learn to evaluate and revise their own writing
Materials: Sample play or movie scripts
Steps:
1. If students are not familiar with dialogue from scripts, share samples with students and discuss components.
2. Instruct students to choose a time in their narratives when characters are talking to each other.
3. Instruct students to write the conversation in script dialogue. Students should focus on capturing the actual language and style that would be used in the conversation (even if it is not standard English).
4. When students are finished, they should compare the script dialogue to the dialogue used in their narrative drafts.
5. Students should then add details from the script dialogue to their narrative draft.

Newspaper Facts Revision
Trait: Organization
Objective: Students will learn to evaluate and revise key facts in their writing
Materials: Sample newspaper articles
Steps:
1. If students are not familiar with newspaper articles, show samples and discuss components.
2. Instruct students to rewrite their narrative as a short newspaper article.
4. When students finish the article, they should compare it with their narrative drafts.
   ❖ Are the same facts in both pieces?
   ❖ Are the same facts given equal importance in both pieces?
   ❖ Are the facts in your narrative draft organized appropriately?
   ❖ Looking at your draft, are there facts that should be added or deleted?
5. Students then revise narrative drafts based on the answers to the above questions
6. Extension: Write a narrative draft from a newspaper article.
Writing in First- and Third Person

Trait: Organization, voice, conventions
Objective: Students will get practice in staying in first- or third-person in their own writing.
Materials: Chalkboard or overhead and writing paper.
Steps:

1. Familiarize students with when to use first- or third-person in their writing. Share the example paragraphs with students.

   - First person means the narrator of the story is the main character, telling his or her own story. You will know a story is written in the first person if it uses words like I, me, or my.

     Here is an example of first-person writing:
     
     A strange, hideous noise woke me from a deep sleep. I sat straight up in bed, shaking all over from head to toe. “What is that?” I wondered. My heart was beating so hard I thought it might jump out of my chest. All of a sudden, something pounced on me, something hairy. I screamed at the top of my lungs.

   - Third person means the narrator of the story is watching the main character and all the action. He is telling the reader the main character’s story, not his own. You will know a story is written in the third person if it uses words like he, she, his, her, the boy, the girl, or a character’s name.

     Here is an example of third-person writing:
     
     A strange, hideous noise woke Cameron from a deep sleep. The boy sat straight up in bed, shaking all over from head to toe. “What is that?” he wondered. His heart was beating so hard Cameron thought it might jump out of his chest. All of a sudden, something pounced on him, something hairy. He screamed at the top of his lungs.

2. Present the following mixed-up paragraph to students on the chalkboard or overhead. Have them determine where the author switches from first-person to third-person, or vice-versa.

   Baily went out to the barn to check the new baby pigs. She banged the barn door and shuffled her dirty boots along the path between crates. I didn’t want to be out in the barn because my favorite TV program was coming on soon. I made sure the baby pigs were underneath the heat lamp where they would stay warm. Then Baily made sure the mother pig had enough food and water and went back to the house. I was glad my chores didn’t take too long.

3. Ask students to write two paragraphs. One in the first-person and one in the third-person. They should highlight the words in each paragraph that indicate each type of writing.
Revision Integrated Learning Activities / Ideas for Narrative Writing

Character Sketch Revision

Trait: Organization
Objective: Students will learn to evaluate and revise their own writing
Materials: student’s drafts
Steps:
1. Instruct students to reread a draft of their own writing and think about the people involved in the event that is being narrated as characters in a piece of literature.
2. Instruct students to write a character sketch about each character in their narratives.
3. Students compare the character sketch to the details contained in their drafts. The picture of the character in the sketch should be revealed in the narrative.
4. Drafts are revised based on the differences found.

Checking Tenses

Trait: Word Choice
Objective: Students will revise their writing to determine if they have stayed in the verb tense throughout the piece.
Materials: Examples of students’ writing using each of the verb tenses on transparencies, overhead projector and overhead marker.
Steps:
1. On the overhead, have students examine the prompt or topic written about. Have a discussion about what verb tense is being used. For example, are they to write about something that already has happened (past), something that will happen (future), or something that is currently happening (present).
2. Use a piece of student writing as a sample on the overhead. Go through the piece to determine the topic and which verb tense should be used.
3. Next, read through each sentence circling the verb in each sentence. Check to see that the verb tense is consistent throughout. This may need to be modeled several times and for each tense.
4. Have students use this strategy to examine and revise a piece of their own writing.

Organization of Paragraphs

Trait: Organization
Objective: Students will revise their writing to determine and organize the main topic and subtopics of their writing.
Materials: Examples of previously completed graphic organizers, students’ rough draft writing on transparencies, overhead projector and colored overhead markers.
Steps:
1. Explain to students that paragraphs consist of one or more sentences that make sense together. They contain a single train of thought. Paragraphs are a way to organize a piece of writing so that it reads smoothly and logically.
2. Have students look at previously completed graphic organizers to locate main topics and subtopics to demonstrate how writers think of a topic before they begin writing.

3. Choose an example of student writing that is not in paragraph form in which the topics do not follow a single train of thought.

4. Highlight the similar topics with the same colored marker as a group activity.

5. Discuss the fact that when the piece is rewritten, it should be written with the proper paragraphs that are grouped in a logical order and arranged in proper time sequence.

6. Have students apply this strategy to their own writing.

**Using Dialogue**

**Trait:** Word Choice, Voice, Organization, and Conventions

**Objective:** Students will revise their writing and add dialogue to make the writing more interesting.

**Materials:** Students’ own writing, 100 Savvy “Said” Substitutions handout (copy of 100 Savvy “Said” Substitutions can be found in the appendix)

**Steps:**

1. Show students how an event can be described using dialogue.
   
   Example: My mom told me to pack some things to take on our vacation.
   
   Mom said, “Jose, please pack some things to take on our vacation.”
   
   I replied, “What kinds of things mom?”
   
   “Anything that will make the car ride more enjoyable for you son,” she explained.
   
   I decided to bring my Game Boy and a book to read. “Okay, Mom!” I answered.

2. Remind students to:
   
   ❖ place quotation marks only around what a character SAYS.
   
   ❖ use a capital letter after beginning quotation marks.
   
   ❖ insert punctuation before ending quotation marks.
   
   ❖ use juicy words instead of “said” to tell who is talking.
   
   ❖ indent for a new paragraph each time the speaker changes.

3. Students should select a draft of writing they have previously created. Have students read through their draft and choose a point in the piece where two people could hold a conversation to tell about the event that has been written.

4. Have students rewrite the event using dialogue to describe it.
Revision Integrated Learning Activities / Ideas for Narrative Writing

**Double Spacing**

**Trait:** Ideas, Organization  
**Objective:** Students will work with a partner and write questions about each other’s writing in order to revise and add more details.  
**Materials:** Student pieces of writing which are written on every other line or double-spaced if typed, writing paper  
**Steps:**

1. Prior to writing, have students number every other line on two pieces of paper. One sheet will be used for writing the draft and the second sheet will be used by the revising partner.
2. Instruct students to write only on the numbered lines on the first sheet.
3. Once students have completed writing a first draft of a piece, have them give their paper to a revising partner.
4. The revising partner will read the draft, line by line and write questions on corresponding numbers.
5. Students should then use the questions as guides for revision. For instance, a question such as “Where was the boy?” can lead the reader to revise their writing and add details such as the “The boy was building sand castles on the shore of the wide, blue ocean.”
6. Student writers should then go back and use the blank lines for revision.

**Cutting and Pasting**

**Trait:** Organization  
**Objective:** Students will add details to their writing by manipulating the text.  
**Materials:** A story to use for a model, tape, scissors, student writing.  
**Steps:**

1. Using your own writing as a model, explain to students that when we write first drafts we are busy getting ideas down and sometimes we need to take a second look at our writing.
2. Explain to students that upon looking at your writing you have decided you need to add more.
3. Cut out the sentence/idea that you need to add on to and glue or tape it to the top of a new sheet of paper.
4. Add your ideas and model for students how to expand their writing.
5. Continue modeling this technique with other sentences.
6. Have students use the strategy independently.
Too Many “I’s”

**Trait:** Word Choice  
**Objective:** Students will revise their writing to determine if they have used too many “I’s”  
**Materials:** Examples of students’ writing of personal narratives on transparencies (choose samples that have many “I’s” in them), overhead, yellow overhead marker.

**Steps:**
1. Have students read a draft of a student’s personal narrative writing.  
2. Highlight all of the sentences that begin with “I”.  
3. Discuss other ways to begin some of the sentences. For example: Change the sentence order, make compound sentences, use transition words, etc.  
4. Repeat with other student’s writing or when you see necessary.  
5. If students find that they are overusing “I” at the beginning of their sentences have them revise 3 or 4 of their sentence beginnings.

Graphing a Trait

**Trait:** Any of the traits  
**Objective:** Students will critique a specific trait in their writing.  
**Materials:** A piece of student writing, a copy of “Graphing a Trait”. (A copy of “Graphing a Trait” can be found on the appendix)  

**Steps:**
1. Select a trait that you want students to look at in their writing.  
2. Explain to students that they will be concentrating on only the trait you have assigned when looking at their writing.  
3. Model the use of the “graph” for students with a piece of your own writing.  
4. Have students complete the task individually. Encourage students to use the data shown on their graph to make revisions to their writing.  
5. **Extension:** Have students exchange writing to complete the graph.
# Revision Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

## Graphing a Trait

### Title of Writing Piece: ________________________________

**Date:** _____________  **Author:** ____________________________________________

### Trait:
- Level 5
- Exciting
- Intriguing
- Very cool

### Paragraph or Page

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<td><strong>Very cool</strong></td>
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</table>
Apostrophes

Trait: Conventions
Objective: Students will learn to edit for apostrophes in their writing.
Materials: Samples of students’ work, overhead.
Steps:

1. Review apostrophes with students.
2. Place student sample on overhead.
3. Using the student sample, model the following thinking out loud and discuss key points.
   a. Read the paper stopping at any word that ends in “S” (words can be circled in a special color for younger grades).
   b. Introduce students to the guidelines to determine if an apostrophe is necessary.
      - If the word needs an apostrophe you can change the word order and add “the” and “of”.
      - Example: Mary’s hat/The hat of Mary, or The students’ desks/The desks of the students.
4. Complete another sample as a whole group.
5. Instruct students to edit their narratives with this strategy.

General Proofreading Strategies

Trait: Conventions
Objective: Students will learn to use strategies for editing their writing.
Materials: Samples of students’ work, overhead.
Steps:

1. Inform students that they will be learning ways to slow down their reading during editing.
2. Discuss why it is important to read slowly and thoroughly while editing.
3. “Read Aloud”: Read the paper aloud to a partner, stopping to make notes when errors are found.
4. “Read with a Cover”: Using a blank sheet of paper, read one line at a time, sliding the sheet down only after you have read and edited every word on the line.
5. Model both of these methods for students.
6. Encourage students to use these methods when editing.
Editing Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

**Spelling**

**Trait:** Conventions  
**Objective:** Students will learn to edit for spelling errors in their writing.  
**Materials:** Samples of student work, overhead  
**Steps:**
1. Place student work on the overhead.  
2. Model reading the story backwards, one word at a time. Using a pen to point to each word and reading each word aloud are strategies to help students slow down.  
3. Instruct students not to move on until you are sure the word is spelled correctly. This includes looking up the word in the dictionary before you move on.  
4. Pass out a paragraph to the class and practice the strategy together.  
5. Encourage students to use this strategy when checking for spelling errors.  
6. **Extension:** Students can also use this activity to see if words are missing.

**Subject/Verb Agreement**

**Trait:** Conventions  
**Objective:** Students will learn to edit subject/verb agreement in sentences.  
**Materials:** Samples of student work, overhead.  
**Steps:**
1. Review subject/verb agreement with students.  
2. Place student sample on overhead.  
3. Using the student sample, model the following thinking out loud and discuss these key points.  
   - Locate the main verb in sentence.  
   - Match the verb to its subject.  
   - Make sure the subject and verb agree in number.  
4. Complete another sample as a whole group.  
5. Instruct students to edit their narratives with this strategy.

**Pronoun/Noun Agreement**

**Trait:** Conventions  
**Objective:** Students will learn to edit pronoun/noun agreement in sentences.  
**Materials:** Samples of student work, overhead.  
**Steps:**
1. Review pronoun/noun agreement with students, putting emphasis on: this, they, their, and them.  
2. Place student sample on overhead.  
3. Using the student sample, model the following thinking out loud and discuss key points.  
   - Skim the paper stopping at each pronoun (can be circled in a specific color for younger grades).  
   - Find the noun that the pronoun replaces.  
   - If the noun cannot be found insert one or change the pronoun to a noun.
Editing Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

• If there is a noun, be sure it agrees in number and person with the pronoun.
4. Complete another sample as a whole group.
5. Instruct students to edit their narratives with this strategy.

Which Punctuation?

Trait: Conventions
Objective: Students will use periods, capital letters, question marks, and exclamation points in context.
Materials: Index cards and writing paper
Steps:
1. Prior to teaching the lesson, the teacher should prepare the following information on separate index cards. (If there are more than four groups, use duplicate instructions.)
   Card 1: Write 3 statements or commands that are missing periods.
   Card 2: Write 3 sentences without capital letters.
   Card 3: Write 3 questions that are missing a question mark.
   Card 4: Write 3 exclamatory sentences that are missing an exclamation point.
2. Divide the class into groups of two to four students.
3. Give each group an index card and a piece of paper.
4. Instruct group members to follow the directions on their card.
5. Instruct group members to trade papers, make any needed changes to correct the sentences, and then give the papers back to the original group for correction.
6. The teacher should collect the papers to double-check the students’ work.

Run-On Paragraphs

Trait: Sentence Fluency, Organization, and Conventions
Objective: Students will organize ideas into paragraphs.
Materials: Page-long run-on text, paper, scissors, and tape.
Steps:
1. Prior to teaching the lesson, the teacher should find a text that is approximately one page long and retype it so that the paragraphs run together.
2. Divide the class into groups of two to four students.
3. Give each group a copy of the run-on text.
4. Instruct the groups to read the text and decide where paragraphs should be. The students should cut the text to make paragraphs and tape them to a piece of paper.
5. When finished, groups can share and compare their work.
Who’s Talking?

Trait: Conventions and Sentence Fluency.

Objective: Students will use quotation marks and punctuation in written dialogue.
Students will use a new paragraph for each speaker.

Materials: Chalkboard or overhead and a short text that contains dialogue with the punctuation and quotation marks omitted.

Steps:

1. Display the following dialogue on the chalkboard or overhead. Ask a student to read it aloud.
   “Jimmy,” said Coach Wilson, “You’re at bat next.”
   “Wasn’t I supposed to be up fourth?” Jimmy asked.
   “I’ve changed the batting order,” the coach replied. “You’re up now.”
   So Jimmy picked up his bat and marched to the plate. Robert, the team captain, was behind the batting screen as Jimmy reached the plate. “You’re not up yet. Go back!” he yelled.
   “You bet I will!” explained Robert as he stomped off toward the coach’s bench.

2. Ask the students:
   ❖ Who are the different speakers in this dialogue?
     [Answers: Coach Wilson, Jimmy, Robert.]
   ❖ What words, or “speaker tags,” tell us that someone is talking?
     [Answers: said, asked, replied, yelled, exclaimed.]

3. Circle the speaker tags as students name them. Then explain, “Each tag helps us locate the speaker’s words.”

4. Invite students to underline the speakers’ words. Then say, “These words are always separated from the rest of the sentence with opening and closing quotation marks. Look at the lines where the dialogue is first and the speaker tag is last. What other kinds of punctuation do you see before the closing quotation marks?” [Answers: exclamation point, question mark, comma.]

5. Also, point out that there is a separate paragraph for each speaker.

6. Distribute the short text.

7. Instruct the students that they will be editing the dialogue. Offer them the following tips on how to edit the dialogue.
   ❖ Read the text.
   ❖ Locate the speaker tags.
   ❖ Underline the speaker’s words very lightly in pencil.
   ❖ Put quotation marks around the speaker’s exact words.
   ❖ Capitalize the first word the speaker says.
   ❖ Insert additional punctuation (, . ? !) before the closing quotation marks.

8. Once the students have had sufficient time to edit the text, go over text and make the corrections with the group as a whole.

Extension: Post pictures with two or more characters together. Have students write a possible dialogue between the characters.
Editing Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

**Fun With Fragments**

**Trait:** Conventions, Sentence Fluency  
**Objective:** Students will be able to identify and correct sentence fragments.  
**Materials:** Pre-selected advertisements from magazines, one for each student or enough for students to work in pairs.

**Steps:**

1. The teacher should find ads in magazines that students are familiar with such as *Teen People, Sports Illustrated for Kids, American Girl, Ebony Jr.*, etc.
2. Select ads from the magazines that contain fragments such as “What I am”, “Precise application”, or “Lots of shine”.
3. Pass out the ads in class and give students time to find the fragment(s).
4. Tell them to find a way to correct the fragment.
5. Have students share what the advertisement is for, read the fragment, and read the correction.
6. Each student or pair of students should use a different ad.
7. Ask students to go back to their own writing and check to see if they can locate any fragments. Explain that they should correct fragments by expanding their intended thought.

**Assembly Line Editing**

**Trait:** Conventions  
**Objective:** Students will have a paper edited by a peer in an assembly line format.  
**Materials:** Student writing.

**Steps:**

1. Place students across from each other at a table.
2. Students on one side of the table will serve as editors. Students on the opposite side will have their writing piece present to be edited.
3. Each editor is assigned a specific task. For instance, periods, capitalization, spelling, fragments, commas, quotation marks, etc.
4. As each editor completes their specific task, writers slide down the “assembly line” to the next editor.
5. The editing process is complete as students reach the end of the line.
Editing Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

Editing Checklists

Trait: Conventions
Objective: Students will use an editing checklist to correct their own writing.
Materials: Copies of editing checklists, student writing.
Steps:
1. Provide students with editing checklists.
2. Model using the checklist on a piece of writing.
3. Have students independently use the checklist to edit their writing. (Samples of checklists can be found in the appendix).

Examples of Editing Checklists:

Five Finger Editing Checklist:
Students should use their fingers to ask themselves five very important questions while editing.

1. Did I use a capital letter at the beginning of each sentence?
2. Did I use capital letters for names?
3. Did I put spaces between my words?
4. Did I use a period, question mark or exclamation mark at the end of each sentence?
5. Did I check my spelling?

Student Editing Checklist:
When you are certain that your message is clear and you have added all the details you need to in your piece of writing, you may use the editing checklist to get your piece ready for publication. Make sure all of the boxes are checked before you publish your writing.

- Have I corrected all of my circled misspelled words?
- Does every sentence begin with a capital letter?
- Have I correctly used all ending punctuation? (., !)
- Have I used quotation marks in any conversation I’ve written? (“”)
- Have I written in complete sentences?
- Is my piece in paragraph form?
- Did I give my piece a title?
Additional Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas

Students engage in peer editing exercises to give them practice in the following areas:

- When to start a new paragraph
- Using correct choice
- Using correct words from the thesaurus
- Omitting words or sentences
- Identifying and correcting run-on and fragment sentences
- Subject/verb agreement
- Pronoun agreement
- Quotation marks
- Appropriate use of capital letters
- Where to place commas
- Irregular plurals
- Spelling
Did You Hear the One About...
Trait: Voice and Organization
Objective: Students will create original riddles or jokes that have punch lines.
Materials: Joke books and paper.
Steps:
1. Display an assortment of joke books students can browse through to stimulate their creativity.
2. Read aloud some riddles or jokes. Before you reveal the endings, give students time to guess the answers to the punch lines.
3. Instruct students to write their own jokes. Students should be reminded that jokes should be short and to the point.
4. Hold a “Joke-Around.” Let students take turns sharing their jokes with the class. Pass around a microphone (or something to represent one). Other ideas include inviting guests in for a “Funny Friday” or having the principal or other personnel tell the students’ jokes each day during announcements.

You Don’t Have to Write the End
Trait: Voice
Objective: Students will create icons to use at the end of their stories instead of writing “The End.”
Materials: Unlined paper.
Steps:
1. Show the class some magazines that use icons at the end of stories instead of writing “The End.”
2. Next, have students create his or her own icon and use it to “sign” his or her writing.
3. **TEACHER NOTE:** Try to discourage students from using popular icons such as the Nike “swoop.” Encourage them to come up with something that is unique, original, and reflects their own personality.

Story Banner
Trait: Ideas
Objective: Students will write a class story and create a bulletin board book.
Materials: Class story, chart paper and markers.
Steps:
1. After the completion of a class story divide the story in the pieces to reflect the number of students in the class. Be sure to group sentences that can be illustrated together.
2. Each student should be given a piece of the story to illustrate.
3. Have students draw pictures on each page to go with the story.
4. Put the pages in order and create a story banner on a bulletin board.
Publishing Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

**Classroom Newspaper**

**Trait:** Ideas, Voice, Organization  
**Objective:** Students will publish their work in a classroom newspaper.  
**Materials:** Student writing pieces. **Optional:** computer-based publishing software.  
**Steps:**

1. Assign students jobs that would be found at a newspaper such as sports writer, advice columnist, entertainment reporter, food critic, comic strip writer, photographer, etc.  
2. Allow students time to write a piece and bring it to final form.  
3. Publish student articles in a classroom newspaper.

**Student Reader’s Theatre**

**Trait:** Voice, Organization, Conventions  
**Objective:** Students will change a piece of their writing into a play to be shared with the class.  
**Materials:** Finished pieces of student writing and lined paper.  
**Steps:**

1. Locate an example of a Reader’s Theatre script (see websites in the Appendix).  
2. Read the book that the script was taken from and then share the script with students.  
3. Model the process for changing the text to a script.  
4. Have students create their own Reader’s Theatre scripts from a piece of their own writing.  
5. Celebrate with a performance of student plays.

**Classroom Anthology**

**Trait:** Ideas, Voice, Organization  
**Objective:** Students will publish their work in a classroom anthology.  
**Materials:** Student writing pieces and binding material.  
**Steps:**

1. Have students write pieces in the same genre. For instance, write class mysteries or fairy tales.  
2. When students have revised and edited their contribution to the anthology have them create a title page for their “chapter” in the book.  
3. Assign students to make other pages for the book such as a dedication page, cover, table of contents, and title page.  
4. Donate the book to a classroom library, your school library or a doctor’s office for everyone to enjoy.
Publishing Integrated Learning Activities/Ideas for Narrative Writing

**Publishing Center**

**Trait:** Ideas, Voice, Organization  
**Objective:** Teacher will create a publishing center that students can use to create a finished piece of writing.

**Materials:**  
- Blank paper in a variety of sizes  
- Lined Paper  
- Construction paper  
- Cardboard for covers  
- Stationary  
- Envelopes  
- Stamps  
- A file of addresses  
- Tape  
- Glue  
- Scissors  
- Stapler  
- Paper Clips  
- Eraser  
- Binding Tape  
- Wallpaper  
- Directions for bookbinding & bookmaking  
- Word Processors  
- Dictionaries & thesauruses  
- Checklists for students  
- A variety of writing tools: markers, pens, pencils, colored pencils, crayons, etc.

**Steps:**

1. Collect and organize the items in your publishing center. (The items listed above are suggestions so use your imagination and add others).
2. Explain to students that when they have gone through all of the stages of writing with a particular piece and they are ready to publish their writing they may use the publishing center.
3. Be certain that students understand the stages of writing and are able to determine when a piece of work is ready to be published.
4. Designate an area of the classroom where students can turn in completed work.

**Writing Reflections**

**Trait:** Voice  
**Objective:** After publishing a piece of writing students will reflect on their own writing.

**Materials:**  
- Finished piece of student writing and “Writing Reflections” worksheet (a copy of “Writing Reflections” worksheet can be found in the appendix).

**Steps:**

1. Explain to students that in order to grow as writers they need to think about and analyze their own writing.
2. Distribute “Writing Reflections” worksheet and model its correct use.
3. After publishing a piece of work have students complete a “Writing Reflections” worksheet.
4. Keep the “Reflections” worksheets in a portfolio or binder so that students can go back to them throughout the year and see how they have grown as writers.
Writing Reflections

Fill out this page after you have published a piece of writing. Keep this reflection sheet in your writing portfolio.

Name: ____________________________________

Title of Your Writing: ___________________________________________

Date: _____________________________

I think the trait that was strongest in this piece was ________________ because I ______
__________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________.

The trait I think I was weakest in was ____________ and I can improve by
__________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________.

I think my writing has improved in the following areas (be sure to state why it has
improved): ____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________.

What trait will you focus on in your next piece of writing? What will you do to improve
your writing? ____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________.
### Other Publishing Ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accordion books</th>
<th>Pop-up books</th>
<th>Fold-out books</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letters &amp; Envelopes</td>
<td>Recipe books</td>
<td>Diaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time Lines</td>
<td>Comic strips</td>
<td>Alphabet Books</td>
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<td>Re-illustrated books</td>
<td>Card</td>
<td>Advertisements &amp; Flyers</td>
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<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Word-Shape Books</td>
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<td>Rebus books</td>
<td>School Newspaper</td>
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<td>Talking books for listening centers</td>
<td>Writing Contests</td>
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<td>Books for doctors’ or dentists’ waiting rooms</td>
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