

A young girl with dark skin and curly hair is smiling broadly, her arms raised in the air. She is wearing a white dress with a colorful floral pattern. She is positioned inside a bright yellow slide, which is the background of the entire image. The slide has several silver bolts visible along its edge.

Unit of Study:
*Launching Writing Workshop –
Young Writers at Work – Grade 3*

Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District
Elementary Language Arts Department, Updated June 2012

Launching Writing Workshop – Young Writers at Work

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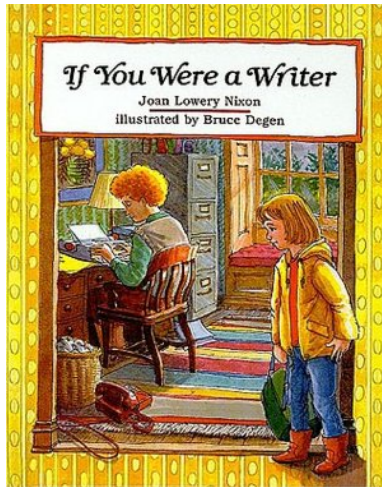
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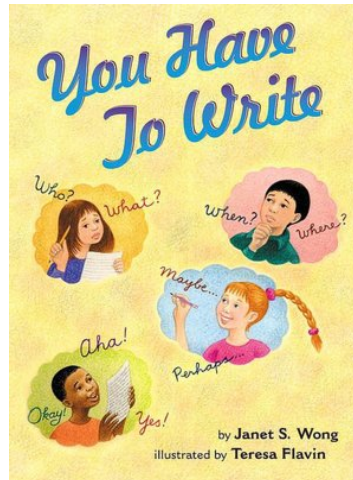
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UPDATED LAUNCHING WRITING WORKSHOP:

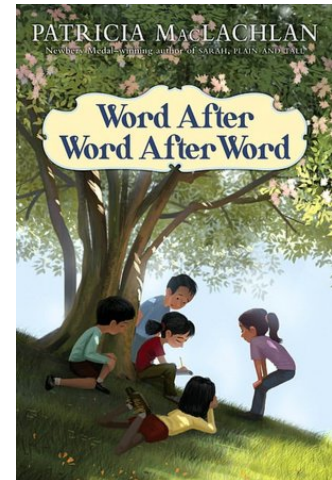
The *Launching Writing Workshop*: unit has been updated for 2012-2013 and includes mentor texts that teachers can use throughout the first few weeks of school to teach both reading and writing processes, concepts, and skills.



If You Were a Writer
Joan Lowery Nixon



You Have to Write
Janet Wong



Word After Word After Word
Patricia MacLachlan

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:

This unit of study is intended to be a guide that helps teachers launch writing workshop in their classroom. This initial unit focuses heavily on the idea collection and development portions of the writing process, as these are essential for all units that follow throughout the school year.

The end-goal for this unit is that students feel a sense of accomplishment and an increased sense of identity of themselves as writers. For this reason, students will be invited to write in an approximated version of any genre that interests them. Their knowledge of characteristics of genre and their ability to accurately represent these genres will be built upon in future lessons throughout the school year.

While different students will most certainly be in different stages of the writing process at different times throughout the school year, this unit strives to guide the class as a whole through each stage in the process during the first few weeks of school. It has been

designed this way so that it affords students the opportunity to receive direct instruction that will enable them to become accustomed to the routines, rituals, and procedures that will drive their writing workshop throughout the rest of the school year.

While this publication is meant to be a resource for teachers that are implementing writing workshop, it can certainly be adapted to meet the unique needs of students from year to year and grade to grade. This document is meant to be a starting point in terms of conversations with grade-level teams about the order in which mini-lessons are presented to students and what those mini-lessons might look like in the context of the classroom.

LENGTH OF THE UNIT:

This unit is intended to begin on the first day of school and carry through to weeks 4 and 5. At that time, students will produce a self-selected piece of writing (narrative or expository) using what they have learned in the first few weeks of school. The writing will be evaluated as part of the Beginning-of-Year Benchmark.

There are a total of 17 minilessons in this unit. In addition to this unit, teachers should incorporate conventions minilessons using the skills shown on the grade-level curriculum map. The resources found in the Editing Invitations section of the grade-level curriculum should also be used to help students apply the skill within their own writing. Gradually, create a classroom editing checklist for use during the editing stage of the writing workshop process. These minilessons address word work and spelling objectives, as well as grammar and mechanics concepts that will be reinforced during the editing stage of the writing process. Typically, these minilessons are introduced once a week, leaving the remaining four days in the week for the minilessons in this unit (assuming a five-day weekly writing workshop schedule).

SEQUENCE OF THE LESSONS:

Though the mini-lessons in this document are written in a progressive format in which some lessons depend upon those that come before them, slight alterations may be made to the sequence when these changes best suit the needs of the students and the campus. Many factors influencing the beginning of the year (date of first day of school, Labor Day, etc.) will impact the look of this unit from school year to school year. It is advised that teachers and administrators carefully read through this document in its entirety and plot out potential minilessons on a calendar for the entire first nine weeks of school. This can be accomplished in initial team planning sessions.

THE ROLE OF READ ALOUD IN THE FIRST NINE WEEKS:

One of the skills that students are expected to strengthen, throughout this unit and the units that follow, is the ability to use published texts to serve as mentors for their own writing. They are encouraged to use books that they are familiar with, referred to in the literature as touchstone and/or mentor texts, to help them understand elements of genre and craft. When planning read alouds in the first nine weeks of school, use the genres found on the curriculum map that students will encounter throughout the year. Plan to expose students to texts from each of these genres in initial read alouds, if possible. While you need not introduce all of the characteristics of each genre at this time, it is helpful for students to have at least been exposed to each type of text. Because students are able to choose a genre to approximate during this first unit, this added exposure to text from varied genres will prove to be an added component that will ensure student success.

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING POINT:

This is an opportunity for the teacher to check back in with students about halfway through the writing workshop time, after having conferred with several students after the mini-lesson. At this time, the teacher may extend the day's mini-lesson or go back and reteach, if it seems that the class has attempted the strategy and is having difficulties. Teachers may use the mid-workshop conference topic listed or choose one that best suits their class' needs. It should also be noted that the introduction to the Daily Writing Log should occur during the second week of instruction in the unit. Please note that the minilessons in which this instruction occurs may be adjusted to match students' needs.

WRITING HOMEWORK:

Several mini-lessons in this unit refer to weekly homework that requires students to record three entries per week in their writing notebook, with the exception of the first week, in which students are designing the front covers of their writing notebooks. Note that this is a suggestion recommended by many professionals in the field of writing education and is a great asset to the writing workshop. However, homework policies need to be discussed at the campus level and agreed upon during team planning sessions. Obviously, the homework load coming from other subjects must be considered, so as not to overwhelm students. Should grade-level teams opt to include this component in the writing workshop, this homework requirement would stay consistent throughout the school year and would not cease at the end of this unit of study.

A NOTE ABOUT WRITING PROCESS BOARDS:

Some teachers opt to have a writing process board in their classroom, such as the one depicted on page 78 of *Guiding Readers & Writers* by Fountas & Pinnell. Please note that during this initial unit of study, because students move through the project stages together with the teacher, all students would move their name to the appropriate stage on the chart at the beginning of the appropriate mini-lesson. Language to introduce children to the chart itself would need to be integrated into the existing language of the mini-lesson that is provided in this document.

FORMAT OF THE LESSONS:

Lessons in this unit are written using the format recommended by Lucy Calkins and other teacher researchers working at Teacher’s College at Columbia University. More detailed information about the format of the mini-lesson can be found in Chapter 5 of *The Art of Teaching Reading*. Below, however, is a short checklist which describes the amount of time spent in each part of the mini-lesson, as well as a brief description of what should be happening during each portion.

Steps in a Mini-Lesson

Connection: 1-2 minutes

Teaching: 5-6 minutes

Active Engagement: 2-3 minutes

Link: 1-2 minutes

Connection

- I connected today's work with our ongoing work.
- I explicitly stated my teaching point.

Teach

- I restated my teaching point.
- I told a personal or class story connected to the teaching point.
- I demonstrated by thinking aloud.
- I pointed out things students should have noticed.

Active Involvement

- I asked students to be actively involved by turning and talking.
- I listened / observed / coached their active involvement.
- I shared an example of what I heard / observed.

Link

- I restated the teaching point.
- I told students how what I had taught can be used in the future.

STAGES IN THE WRITING PROCESS:

This unit of study conforms to stages in the writing process detailed in Katie Wood Ray's book, *The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts)*. See information below for more detailed description of each stage that students will be experiencing during this unit.

Stage	Activities
Writing in a writer's notebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• gathering scraps• writing, writing, writing; VARIETY
Project planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• choosing a seed idea• choosing a purpose and an audience• choosing "mentor" books• writing anything related to seed (in notebook)• planning a format (interview, poetry, letter, picture book...)
Drafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• using a structure that fits the idea• writing a rough draft
Revising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• reading aloud and listening for things that need changing• asking for feedback from a small group• developing a powerful beginning and ending• using author's craft
Editing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• proofreading and correcting alone• proofreading and correcting with friend(s)• proofreading and correcting with teacher
Final Copy/Publishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• making final corrections• changing font, size, spacing when appropriate• binding the book (when appropriate)• cutting and pasting (when appropriate)• illustrating (when appropriate)
Celebration!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sharing the project with the class• presenting the gift to a recipient

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS AT THE END OF THIS UNIT:

This unit was written to move students towards success in the following areas, listed by M. Colleen Cruz in *Independent Writing: One Teacher – Thirty-Two Needs, Topics and Plans*.

Concept / Skill	Expectation
Independently planning and completing writing pieces	With teacher and peer support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create project proposals • Plan deadlines and pace progress • Monitor for quality, content, and genre • Keep track of ideas for future projects • Capable of proficient use of non-human resources (dictionary, thesaurus, grammar guides, etc.)
Choosing and using mentor texts	With teacher and peer support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to identify mentor author and /or text which would be most useful for supporting independent project • Studies mentor text and notices good writing techniques • Proficient use of crafting strategies noticed in mentor text
Using writer’s notebook in support of independent work	With teacher and peer support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to develop personalized methods of notebook keeping • Able to apply whole-class notebook techniques to independent project work • Uses notebook in a variety of ways such as: note-taking, jotting, charts, sketches, and so on that support projects.
Building and sustaining a writing community	With teacher support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to positively support fellow writers in small and large group situations • Proficient at discussing independent work successes and needs • Listens attentively and learns from other writers • Maintains an ongoing written relationship with at least one other person
Connecting independent writing to whole-class curriculum	With teacher and peer support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connects writing process across units of study to the process that occurs in independent writing • Meets independently set deadlines as frequently as teacher-set deadlines

Taken from *Independent Writing: One Teacher – Thirty-Two Needs, Topics and Plans* by M. Colleen Cruz

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS & GUIDING/ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Creating a Writing Identity & Gathering Seed Ideas

Enduring Understandings

- Writers “read the world” to gather a variety of seed ideas that can be used to explore topics for writing.
- A writer’s notebook is a place for writers to explore their thinking and observations about the world around them.
- Writers engage in a variety of daily “quick write” activities to help them explore potential writing topics and make discoveries about themselves, their world, and their writing.
- A writing identity is shaped by an individual’s reflection on the significant events in his or her life.
- Writers use their interests, experiences, thoughts, and feelings to help them generate ideas for writing.

Guiding/Essential Questions

- How do writers “read the world” in search of seed ideas?
- How does a writing notebook help a writer collect potential writing topics?
- Why is it important for writers to engage in daily writing?
- How is an individual’s identity as a writer shaped through reflection on significant life events?
- What kinds of entries help a writer explore a variety of topics?
- Why is it important for writers to use their interests, personal experiences, and views about the world as a basis for developing compositions?

Reflecting and Rereading the Notebook to Select a Seed Idea

Enduring Understandings

- Writers reread their notebook to look for intriguing seed ideas that spark their interest.
- Writers explore potential writing topics by examining their thoughts and feelings about seed ideas through written reflections.
- Writers use feedback from writing partners, along with their own reflections, to help them select a seed idea.
- Prewriting activities help writers select a seed idea and make decisions about the purpose, audience, and genre of a composition, which allows them to develop a plan for organizing their writing.

Guiding/Essential Questions

- Why is it important for writers to reread their notebook entries?
- How do “quick write” reflections about a topic help writers discover their thoughts and feelings regarding a potential seed idea?
- How does sharing seed ideas and gathering feedback from writing partners help a writer “fine tune” the purpose, audience, and genre of a composition?

Determining the Audience, Purpose & Genre Form of a Piece of Writing

Enduring Understandings

- Prewriting activities help writers select a seed idea and make decisions about the purpose, audience, and genre of a composition, which allows them to develop a plan for organizing their writing.
- Envisioning the kind of writing and reader for a piece of writing helps a writer determine the purpose and audience.
- Examining mentor texts with purposes similar to the seed idea helps a writer decide which genre/ form is most appropriate for their piece of writing.

Guiding/Essential Questions

- How does sharing seed ideas and gathering feedback from writing partners help a writer “fine tune” the purpose, audience, and genre of a composition?
- What processes do authors use to determine the kind of writing they want to do?
- What kind of reader would enjoy the topic and writing purpose?
- Who are some authors that write for a similar purpose and audience?
- What genre would best match the purpose and audience?

Developing a Plan to Achieve the Writing Project Deadline

Enduring Understandings

- Deadlines provide writers with a sense of urgency, which encourages them to engage in the writing process and work towards the completion of a writing project.
- A well-developed plan with clearly established outcomes and milestones for completing specific parts of the writing project help writers achieve their goals.
- Prewriting activities help writers select a seed idea and make decisions about the purpose, audience, and genre of a composition, which allows them to develop a plan for organizing their writing.

Guiding/Essential Questions

- Why is a sense of urgency necessary for motivating a writer towards the completion of a writing project?
- What role do deadlines play in helping a writer establish plans to achieve specific milestones (or tasks) for a writing project?
- How does planning help a writer organize his ideas for a composition?
- What kind of prewriting plans best help a writer organize his or her ideas?

Using the Writing Process to Draft & Revise a Writing Project

Enduring Understandings

- The writing process is fluid and recursive as writers move back and forth between the various stages to craft a piece of writing.
- Drafting allows writers to freely develop a piece by writing “long and fast without stopping” to get their ideas down on paper.
- Revising allows writers to polish a draft by deleting off-topic details and adding or rearranging details to improve the clarity of ideas.

Guiding/Essential Questions

- Why is it important for writers to understand that the writing process is recursive and fluid rather than linear?
- How does moving back and forth between the various stages of the writing process allow a writer to craft a composition in a way that matches their personal style and preferences?
- How does writing “long and fast without stopping” allow a writer to draft a composition freely without judging the value of his or her initial ideas?
- Why is it important for writers to “not fall in love” with their first draft?
- What processes do writers use to polish and revise a draft to improve the clarity, coherence, and organization of a composition?

Editing and Publishing a Writing Project

Enduring Understandings

- A writer’s ability to use conventions correctly provides readers with a “first impression” about a writer’s skill and thoughtfulness.
- Editing involves proofreading for errors in grammar usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling, which allows a reader to focus on a writer’s ideas.
- Proofreading for specific conventions one at a time improves a writer’s accuracy in identifying and correcting errors.
- Writers use editing checklists and other resources such as word walls to help them improve the accuracy of written conventions.
- Writers use their knowledge of letter sounds, word parts, segmentation, and syllabication to spell unfamiliar words.
- Writers use their knowledge of orthographic patterns and rules to spell words with more advanced concepts.
- Whisper reading a composition allows a writer to “hear” what their written words actually say and to identify repetition, omissions, and awkward expressions.
- Publishing is the preparation of a final piece for readers by attending to the overall appearance of visual and textual details, including neat, legible handwriting, layout, graphics, and other design elements.
- Writers publish, share, and gather feedback on their writing with an audience.
- Writers use what they learn about their writing strengths and areas for growth on future writing projects.

Guiding/Essential Questions

- Why is it important for writers to carefully proofread for errors in conventions?
- What strategies help a writer improve the accuracy of written conventions within a composition?
- Why do resources such as editing checklists and word walls improve the accuracy of proofreading for conventions?
- Why is it important for writers to use their knowledge of letter sounds, word parts, and orthographic patterns and rules to spell unfamiliar words accurately?
- Why is it important for writers to attend to publishing and design elements to make the overall appearance of a piece of writing appealing to readers?
- How does the sharing of a piece of writing and gathering feedback help a writer grow?
- Why is it important for writer’s to reflect on their strengths and areas for growth?

VOCABULARY

Writer’s Notebook: A book of lined paper that writers use to collect ideas for potential writing pieces

Seed Idea: Entries recorded in a writer’s notebook that may be used to “grow” a written piece

Writing Process: A series of recursive and fluid stages that writers undergo to produce a polished piece of writing

Prewrite: Stage of the writing process for writers to explore potential writing topics, to make decisions about the purpose, audience, and genre of a composition, and to develop a plan for organizing their writing

Draft: Stage of the writing process for freely developing a piece by writing “long and fast without stopping” to get ideas down on paper

Revise: Stage of the writing process for polishing a draft by deleting off-topic details and adding or rearranging details to improve the clarity, coherence, and organization

Edit: Stage of the writing process for proofreading for errors in grammar usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Publish: Stage of the writing process for preparing a final draft for readers by attending to the overall appearance of visual and textual details, including neat, legible handwriting, layout, graphics, and other design elements

Six Traits: The qualities of a piece of writing that allow writers to use a common language

Ideas: The main message of a piece of writing that is developed through supporting details, facts, &/or examples

Organization: The internal structure of a piece of writing that allows for a logical presentation and progression of ideas

Word Choice: The use of rich, colorful, and precise vocabulary that helps the author to clarify and expand upon ideas and to create sensory images

Sentence Structure: The rhythm and flow of language in a piece of writing created through varied sentence beginnings, lengths, structures, and styles

Conventions: The mechanical correctness of a piece of writing that includes accurate spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, sentence structure, and paragraphing

Voice: The personal tone and “flavor” of the author’s message that creates a sense of identity and authenticity

Presentation: The overall appearance of a piece of writing that includes visual and textual elements

LESSONS INCLUDED IN THE UNIT OF STUDY:

The following is a list of lessons that are included in the *Launching Writing Workshop* unit. Each lesson has been assigned a number that correlates to a number found in the upper right corner of each lesson card, which signifies a suggested sequence or progression of the lessons.

After analyzing the grade level expectations, district curriculum, and student needs, teachers should customize the mini-lessons for their students. The mini-lessons are based upon the grade-level expectations found in the English Language Arts and Reading TEKS objectives.

Lesson Title	Purpose
1 Getting Acquainted with Our Writing Workshop Procedures & Mentor Authors	<i>Writers envision themselves as writers and gather inspiration from mentor authors.</i>
2 We are Authors!	<i>Writers use mentor texts to discover the authors within themselves and reflect on what inspires them to write.</i>
3 Authors Use Notebooks to Store Their Treasures	<i>Writers learn a variety of reasons why and how authors use notebooks.</i>
4 The Writer's Job in a Conference	<i>Writers understand that their job in a conference is to talk about the work they are trying to do in their writing.</i>
5 Generating Ideas I: People as Treasures	<i>Writers brainstorm special people in their lives to help them generate seed ideas for a personal narrative.</i>
6 Generating Ideas II: Places as Treasures	<i>Writers create a list of places that hold special memories for them and make personal connections.</i>
7 Generating Ideas III: Treasures, Treasures Everywhere!	<i>Writers use objects to recall special memories associated with them.</i>
8 Selecting the Perfect Seed Idea: Which one will I choose?	<i>Writers carefully choose an idea to turn into a published piece of writing by using the list of the qualities that makes a good personal narrative.</i>
9 Authors Have Project Deadlines	<i>Writers learn the importance of using a calendar to help plan and revise their plan to write the perfect piece by the project deadline.</i>
10 Crafting a Story Moment By Moment	<i>Writers learn that they have choices of what to say and how to say it when storytelling moment by moment.</i>

Lesson Title	Purpose
11 The Moment Has Arrived...Let's Draft!	<i>Writers draft their story by writing "fast and long in order to get the whole story down on paper as it comes to mind."</i>
12 Molding the Perfect Story by Revising Leads	<i>Writers revisit their lead to make sure it grabs their audience and pulls them into the story.</i>
13 Molding the Perfect Story by Developing the Heartbeat	<i>Writers revise by developing the most important part of the story.</i>
14 Molding the Perfect Story by Revising Endings	<i>Writers create endings with purpose that stay with their readers and use ideas from mentor texts to make the writing come alive through vivid images, dialogue, and strong emotion.</i>
15 Molding the Perfect Story by Moving, Adding, and Deleting Parts	<i>Writers revise their stories by moving, adding, and deleting parts of text to improve the flow of ideas.</i>
16 Revision: Paragraphing Decisions that Writers Make	<i>Writers reread their drafts in search of places where new ideas or events are introduced to help them decide when to begin and indent a new paragraph.</i>
17 Using an Editing Checklist to Polish My Writing for Readers	<i>Writers utilize an editing checklist to polish the story for the reader by correcting errors in capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling.</i>
18 Publishing the Perfect Story	<i>Writers choose their best piece to publish, take out into the world for others to read, and celebrate.</i>
19 The Colorful Language of the Six Traits +1 Writing (Use as Mid-Workshop Teaching Points or Read Aloud. See Pacing Guide.)	<i>Writers use the shared language of the traits of good writing to provide one another with feedback on what works and does not work in their writing.</i>

Materials:

- *If You Were a Writer* by Joan Lowery Nixon
- *You Have to Write* by Janet Wong
- Sample parent letter - Appendix A
- Students' notebooks if sending home to decorate.
- Teacher's notebook to show sample of cover
- Appendix B
- Books by favorite authors

Notes: Choose a few favorite authors for the students to research. Gather books written by these authors. Preview possible websites for research by the students.

- Tomie De Paola: <http://www.tomie.com/>
- Cynthia Rylant: <http://www.ortt.org/rylant/>
- Patricia Polacco: <http://www.patriciapolacco.com/>
- Ezra Jack Keats: <http://www.ezra-jack-keats.org/>
- Brian Pickney: <http://www.brianpinkney.net/>
- Chris Van Allsburg: <http://www.chrisvanallsburg.com/flash.html>

Reflect on the writing workshop procedures you want to have in place to begin the workshop. Teachers may choose to reserve part of the classroom or outside hallway as a place to introduce this year's authors as a way to prepare for the upcoming lesson *We are Authors*. Teachers may also want to create a publishing company name for your class with the title "Coming Soon _____, Inc." As the year goes on and you are ready to display the wonderful writing, it can be changed to "Now Open." (Appendix B) For homework, consider sending a note home today to have the students' notebooks decorated to inspire writing and have it returned at the end of the week. Alternatively, teachers may choose to have students complete it in class at the end of the week during Independent Writing. Appendix A includes a sample parent letter. *A Writer's Poem* was created by Marissa Ramirez based on ideas from the online Connect and Reflect Writing Workshop.

Purpose: *Writers envision themselves as writers and gather inspiration from mentor authors.*

TEKS: 3.17, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today's work with our ongoing work

- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Reflect on a way to "signal" writers to gather at the meeting area each day (a song, a noise maker of some kind), and introduce this procedure and practice prior to beginning.

Writers, each day when you hear this "signal," that means it is time for the writing workshop. It's that time of the day when we study what famous authors do that makes them so great, and we try it out on our own. During the workshop, I will teach you something that writers do and we will talk about it and try it out, and then I will send you off to try it out on your own during independent writing time. When you hear the signal again, we will all gather together again to celebrate those wonderful things that happened during independent writing time!

Introduce the expectation that a writer's work is never done using the poem below.

A Writer's Poem
Writers work on writing. Writers work hard. Writers use soft voices. Writers NEVER EVER finish!!!

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Think about your favorite book. Show the students a book that inspires you to write such as a book that was used in today's Read Aloud.

Have you ever wondered what inspired the author to write? Why did they write it? Are there similarities in the author's books? Are there similarities in the author's life and his/her books?

Show the students several books by the same author and think aloud as you look through them, making inferences about their lives. Use statements such as "I wonder if..." or "Maybe..." to share your wonderings about the author.

Show the students a website for this author, and highlight some of the important information, such as answers to some of the questions you had or new, unexpected details.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement

- share an example of what you heard or observed

Together as a group, discuss the discoveries and wonderings that happened during your "research" together about the author. Tell students that during the active engagement portion of the minilesson, they will have time to turn and talk to a partner about their learning &/or practice a new strategy. Then have students turn and talk about something new they learned about this author. Listen in on the conversations and share a few of the ideas that you overheard. As a class, review the expectation for the author research by explaining the information students are responsible for gathering during the author research.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future
- connect today's work with our ongoing work

Partner students with one another to research an author. Choose one author per table. Some tables research in books written by the author, while the other tables research using the computer. Switch roles on day 2.

While researching your author, I want you to think about yourself. I want you to think about why you write, what inspires you to write, and what kind of writer you are. Remember that when you hear the "signal," we will all gather again at the meeting area to share our findings.

Think about the procedure you might put in place for returning back to their seats. Will you call them back one table at a time? Will they return one row at a time? Practice the procedure while the students return back to their seats for independent writing.

Share:

Have groups of students share and discuss what they learned about their author.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What are you learning about this author?
- Does his/her life affect his writing in any way?
- What does this make you think about your own writing?
- What lesson can you learn about writing from this author?d

Materials:

- *Meet This Year's Featured Authors* – Appendix D
- *Purposes for Writing* – Appendix E
- *Miz Berlin Walks* by Jane Yolen
- *If You Were a Writer* by Joan Lowery Nixon
- *Word After Word After Word* by Patricia MacLachlan

Note: Any book to help demonstrate the point of why writers write will be helpful to use in today's lesson.

- Jane Yolen wrote *Miz Berlin Walks* to share the story of her own grandmother and how she used to take walks around her neighborhood and share stories with those around her.
- In *If You Were a Writer*, a little girl learns about writing by watching and talking to her mother who is a writer herself.
- In *Word After Word After Word*, an author visits a classroom, tells them that people write for a variety of reasons, and inspires them to write to change their lives.

Purpose: *Writers use mentor texts to discover the authors within themselves and reflect on what inspires them to write.*

TEKS: 3.17, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today's work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Writers, during the past few days we have spent time researching famous authors and learning what inspires them to write. We will learn so much from these and other authors throughout the year. If someone wants to be a great football player, they might go to a football game and watch a professional football player and really study them to see exactly what it is that they do that makes them so great. Then they might go to practice and try it out on their own. That is exactly what we will do with famous authors throughout the year. We will study them to see exactly what

it is they do that makes them so great, and then we will try it out on our own. This week we have been studying what it is that inspires various authors to write. As we studied them, we thought about ourselves to get ideas, make connections, and see if any of these authors might remind us of ourselves and the kind of authors we aspire to be.

Review the findings. Tell students that today they will think back to the various authors, their lives, their books, what inspires them to write, etc. and see how they might be similar or different from some of these authors. Today they will discover what type of author they aspire to be.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Ask students why writing matters.

All writers have something to say, and they write it on the page as a way to communicate with their audience.

Show the mentor text and share why the author wrote it. You may choose to read the story and stop periodically to talk about the power of storytelling.

This year during writing workshop you will have the opportunity to share your stories with others. You will also have the opportunity to tell others about all the things that are important to you.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Turn and share with your partners the reasons that people write. Why do authors write? Why do you write? Do any of these authors remind you of the kind of author you are or aspire to be? (Reinforce partner talk procedures).

Allow the students time to share reasons to write with their partner. Allow students to share ideas and list

on an anchor chart. Ideas can be found on Appendix E.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

From now on, writers, I want you to remember that you are all authors! Just like the famous authors we have studied this week, we all have different things that inspire us to write. When you are reading books throughout the year, one thing you can do is think about the author of your text and why you think he/she chose to write the way they did. When you are trying to come up with ideas to write about, think about what inspires you to write. We are all unique in our writing abilities and reasons for writing, and that's what makes our stories so unique. As you go off to independent writing, I want you to write a blurb to your readers, explaining to them why and what you like to write and what inspires you to write. Encourage them to watch for your published pieces to come out soon. After all, that's what some famous authors do!

Review procedures for returning back to their seats and returning to the gathering area for share time. During independent writing, have the students write a blurb introducing themselves and what inspires them to write. They might want to write it like a letter to their readers. Refer to Appendix D for a sample format. This can be hung up in the area of your class where you may have introduced your classroom publishing company. An idea is to add a title saying something like "Meet This Year's Featured Authors."

Possible Conference Questions:

- What inspires you to write?
- Is there an author that makes you think of yourself as a writer?

Materials:

- *Why Writers Use Notebooks* anchor chart
- Teacher's Writing Notebook with cover decorated
- Mentor texts
- *The Paper Boy* by Dav Pilkey or a book that shows how an author used his personal experience in the story
- *Alex's First Notebook Entry* - Appendix E
- Teacher and student writing notebooks
- Chart paper and markers

Note: This lesson features ideas from Dav Pilkey's website: <http://www.pilkey.com/bookview.php?id=11>. On this page, he talks about his inspiration for writing *The Paper Boy*. Teachers

Purpose: Writers learn a variety of reasons why and how authors use notebooks.

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today's work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Writers, this week we not only launched the writing workshop in our class, but we also launched an author study that will continue throughout the year.

Show the students *The Paper Boy* by Dav Pilkey.

Yesterday, as I looked back over one of my favorite books, *The Paper Boy*, I thought about what we have been discussing in class – studying authors to see what they do that makes them such good writers and thinking about what inspires them to write and why they write. I found myself wondering about Dav Pilkey and decided to check out his website to see what information I could find.

Follow the link above and read along with the students about how reflecting on his emotional memory of being a paperboy inspired the story.

As I imagined Dav Pilkey remembering and reliving this experience in his life, it reminded me of the most important tool that writers use – their writing notebook. I can imagine that when Mr. Pilkey relived this memory, he wrote every detail in his notebook so that he could capture this moment and hold onto it forever, because that's what writers do.

"The difference between a writer and everyone else is that they open themselves up to see the world around them and write down all of their observations and ideas." (From How Writers Work)

Today, we will start using our notebooks to capture emotional moments in our lives, just like Dav Pilkey and other authors do.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Have you ever had an emotional memory like Dav's? When you do, it's important to capture that memory forever by writing it in your writing notebook. You might decide to capture a conversation, a setting, an emotion, or an event. Sometimes you can capture memories by writing down the details – exactly what you heard, what it looked like, and how it made you feel. You might decide to use an artifact (a picture, a napkin) to help capture a memory. In that case, you can just tape it inside your notebook.

Demonstrate how you can imagine Dav Pilkey doing this. Show parts of his paper boy experience and demonstrate how he may have recorded his experiences in his notebook. Also demonstrate by showing parts of your teacher's writing notebook.

Discuss writers' workshop procedures for the notebook: where the writing notebooks will be kept and whether they will be taken home or not. If not, is there a place for them to hold their memories when they happen and transfer them into the notebook when they return to school? Maybe a tiny spiral that fits in their back pockets. How many entries are required per week? The more entries the students collect, the easier it will be for them to come up with writing ideas.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Direct students to turn and talk to a partner about the other reasons writers might use notebooks. Listen in on the conversations and record the suggestions on a chart.

Why Writers Use Notebooks

- to help them remember all of the things they've seen or heard
- to get things out of their head so they don't get stuck up there
- to keep memories
- to get stress of their mind – "Tell it to your notebook."

(From *Guiding Readers & Writers* by Fountas & Pinnell, p. 427)

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Writers, today and from now on when important things happen in your daily lives, remember to capture it in your notebook right then and there by either writing it in your notebook or taping an artifact in your notebook. That way when it's time to write, you have plenty of moments to write about.

Show an example from Appendix E.

Today, during independent writing, we will write our first entry titled "My Writing Notebook." Take a moment to reflect on the things we talked about today and write down the things you might record in your notebook.

Possible Conference Questions:

- How's it going?
- What types of things will you store in your notebook this year?
- What does a writing notebook mean to you?
- How do you think you'll use your notebook this year?

Materials:

- Writing Conference Role Play script – Appendix
- Teacher and student writing notebooks
- Chart paper and markers

Note: Prior to the minilesson, select 2 students to role play a conference with you. Prep the students so that the first conference shows the student responding to questions with simple one-sentence answers that don't reveal a lot about the work he is doing. The student in the second conference will provide more detail about the kind of work he is doing.

Purpose: *Writers understand that their job in a conference is to talk about the work they are trying to do in their writing.*

TEKS: 3.17, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today's work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Inform students about the kind of work that they have been doing and what to expect during writing workshop.

Writers, we've been working together in writing workshop and learning about the different kinds of work a writer does. You can count on having lots of time to write and a chance to write on topics that are important to you using all the strategies that you've learned. You can also count on the fact that I will often pull up a chair alongside you to confer with you about your writing.

Relate a personal story in which a writing conference helped you learn a new strategy and discuss how the conference helped you grow as a writer. Explain that both the writer and the "coach" (teacher) each have a role in the conference.

Both the writer and the teacher have important roles in a conference. A teacher's job at the start of the conference is to study the writer in order to figure out how to help them, and the writer's job is to teach the teacher about the kind of writing work they are doing. Today, I will share some tips to help you understand how to talk about your writing in a conference.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Writers, when I pull up a chair alongside you, I want to find out what you are working on, so I start by asking you a question about your writing. Your job is to share what you are working on in your piece by explaining your ideas and sharing the thinking work you have done.

Tell students that you are going to role play two different writing conferences. Ask them to listen to the writer and evaluate whether he has clearly explained the writing work he is trying to do. Conduct the first role play in which the writer doesn't understand his role and debrief by discussing how the writer's responses to the questions did not provide the teacher with much information to clearly understand the kind of writing the student is trying to do. Next, ask students to observe the second conference and tell them to notice how the writer's responses provide the teacher with more information. Conduct the second role play and debrief by having students share what they noticed the writer doing that was different than the first writer's conference. Explain that in the second conference, the writer knew that he needed to teach the teacher the specific goals that were important to him and the strategies he used to reach those goals. Create an anchor chart that highlights the key elements that both the teacher and the writer engage in during an effective conference.

Roles in a Writing Conference	
Teacher	Writer
- Watch what the writer is doing	- Talk about the kind of work he is doing & explain what he is thinking about the writing
- Ask questions to understand the writer's thinking & goal	- Read aloud parts of the writing
- Listen carefully to the writer talk about his work &/or share his writing	- Listen and watch the teacher share a strategy/tip
- Choose a strategy/tip to help the writer achieve his goal	- Think & explain what he will do next & how he will use the learning in his writing
- Teach/coach the writer	

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Tell children that it is their turn to practice their role in a writing conference. Explain you will ask the questions and give them time to think about their responses.

Writers, we're going to practice the part of a conference that is your job. Remember, your role is to teach me what you are trying to do as writer. I will ask you the same questions I asked our writer in the role play. I want you to think about your answer and give me a thumbs up when you have an answer in mind. Ready? What are you working on as a writer?

Provide about 30 seconds of silence for students to reflect.

Remember you can say your topic, but a good answer tells more specifics about your writing goals. Here's another question. What are you trying to do as a writer? Give me a thumbs up when you have an answer.

Wait again for students to form a response. When most students have their thumbs up ask them to tell their partner what they are thinking. Listen to students' responses.

Here is one last question for you to answer silently in your mind: What will you do today in your writing?

Pause again and direct students to give a thumbs up when they have an answer. Reiterate the kinds of thoughtful responses that writers need to give in a conference to help the teacher understand their writing goals.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Writers, from this day forward when I confer with you, remember that you have a job to do in conferences. I'll be coaching you not only on your writing, but also on your conferring.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What are you working on as a writer?
- What kind of writing are you making? What are you doing to make this piece of writing work?
- What do you think of what you've done so far?
- What will you do next? How will you go about doing that?

Materials:

- Teacher’s notebook with *People T-Chart*
- *Word After Word After Word* by Patricia MacLachlan
- *Author’s Techniques for Creating a Personal Narrative* anchor chart
- Teacher and student writing notebooks
- Chart paper and markers

Note: It would be best if you have read the MacLachlan book as a read aloud before or have started it as a read aloud. You will only be using a small section of the book as a teaching point. Along with the anchor chart, you will also be creating a t-chart for brainstorming. This can be done on a piece of chart paper or within your writer’s notebook.

Purpose: Writers brainstorm special people in their lives to help them generate seed ideas for a personal narrative.

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Writers, yesterday we talked about how authors use their notebooks to store their special treasures; their ideas, feelings, and memories. A writer’s notebook is a very important and special tool to a writer. Today, we are going to continue working in our writer’s notebook and start brainstorming ideas for personal narratives. A personal narrative is a true event that has happened to us.

Show the students the book *Word After Word After Word* by Patricia MacLachlan (pg. 33-34).

Last night, I was rereading one of my favorite books, and I came across the part of the book where Ms. Mirabel talks about characters in our stories. Ms. Mirabel read a part from a book about a mom and a dad. I thought to myself that I have lots of special memories of small moments that include my mom and dad. I realized that personal narratives are full of special people. However, sometimes when I’m ready to write, I can’t really think of anything to write about. This is when I take time to

brainstorm a list of special people that hold a special place in my life.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

We all know that when we read books during reading workshop some of the books we read are full of interesting characters. Authors think of those special people in their lives and brainstorm small moments that they have shared with them. To organize this information, writers can create a t-chart within their writer’s notebook by listing the people they have brainstormed along with their special memories. Let’s look in my writer’s notebook.

Introduce the anchor chart to your students. Show students an example of your writer’s notebook with the t-chart with a special person. Demonstrate how you brainstorm (empty your brain about) small moments with this person and record your ideas using the t-chart. Model running out of ideas and moving on to another special person and emptying your brain about small moments with that person, etc. Add the strategy to an anchor chart similar to the one below.

Author’s Techniques for Creating a Personal Narrative

- Special people hold special meaning to authors.

So, on my t-chart I list my favorite person on the left and then on the right the small moment and/or the feelings I have when I think of this person. You might have noticed how I relived certain parts of that small moment. Not only did I write about my special person, but I also brainstormed how that person felt and how I felt. Brainstorming feelings will make a fantastic personal narrative. Did you notice that I didn’t tell the whole story? I want to keep my memories to small moments. I can always write another story another time.

Make sure you take time to think aloud how you are envisioning the special people on your list and how the story is unfolding in your mind as you quickly record your memories and/or feelings. Help students recall a certain time in writer’s workshop that they would use this strategy, and how to fully complete the strategy by

not only brainstorming the person, but also the small moment and feelings that go along with the person.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Let’s practice this strategy. Pretend we are in writer’s workshop, and you have no idea what you will write about today.

Point to the anchor chart at this time.

Right now I’m thinking that I should brainstorm people that mean a lot to me. I want you to do that right now. Take a minute to silently brainstorm some people who mean a lot to you. Turn and tell your partner one person you could add to your t-chart and how you can include that person in a personal narrative. Give me a thumbs up when both you and your partner have shared.

Have a t-chart ready to record some of your students’ ideas. Ask for volunteers to share their special person and why they selected them.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Today, and everyday, I want you to go back to your seats and start placing these amazing people and fond memories in your writer’s notebook. Let’s start by creating our people t-charts today. Remember that as writers we choose the stories we want to write, and sometimes we have to use a strategy to help us on our way. So remember that when we can’t think of anything else to write about we can always brainstorm a list of special people that are treasures in our lives.

Possible Conference Questions:

- Who are some special people in your life?
- How have they impacted your life?
- What feelings and/or moments do you share with this person?

Materials:

- *Word After Word After Word* by Patricia MacLachlan
- *Author’s Techniques for Creating a Personal Narrative* anchor chart
- Teacher and student writing notebooks
- Chart paper and markers

Note: This lesson ties directly into the previous lesson. Students will continue to add brainstorming ideas in their writing notebook. You will use the same book and either the chart paper or your writing notebook to model the brainstorming.

Purpose: *Writers create a list of places that hold special memories for them and make personal connections.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Writers, yesterday we learned that when writers don’t know what to write about, they brainstorm a list of special people to help them begin writing about a small moment. Today, we will continue adding to our author’s toolbox with another strategy we can use when we don’t know what to write about.

Show students Patricia MacLachlan’s book, *Word After Word After Word*.

Of course, I was reading last night before I went to bed, and I came across another spot in my book that I wanted to share with you. Remember in this book Ms. Mirabel is always trying to help her students think of things to write about (just like me!). So, I wanted to read this part to you. It might just help you during our writer’s workshop time.

Read pgs. 31 (very bottom) to 33 (stop when you

come to the character part).

I noticed that Ms. Mirabel gave her students examples of special places that other authors have written about. Then I thought, I have a lot of special places that I hold as treasures too! Today, I want to teach you that writers not only think of special people, but also of special places. Let me show you what I mean.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

There may come a time, maybe today, that when you sit down during writer’s workshop time that you may not know what to write about. That is the time we need to use a strategy to help get us started. Let me show you my writer’s notebook. I’ve made a t-chart, but today I’ve labeled it “special places” on the left and “special memories” on the right. Writers don’t only write about people, but they also write about the places they’ve been, too.

Show students an example of your writer’s notebook with the t-chart focused on a special place. Demonstrate how you brainstorm (empty your brain about) small moments at this location and record your ideas using the t-chart. Model running out of ideas and moving on to another special place and emptying your brain about small moments at that place.

See writers, simple places represent special feelings that turn into a small moment.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Let’s try this strategy together. I want you to think of a special place that we might all have in common. For example, one place we all have in common is the playground. Thumbs up if the playground holds small

moments for you. Spend just a minute thinking of some special memories the playground holds for you.

Give your students a little time to think. Then allow them to share with their partner their ideas orally.

Turn to your partner and tell them a small moment you remembered from the playground.

Listen in and then you will be able to add those ideas to the class anchor chart.

Author’s Techniques for Creating a Personal Narrative

- Special people hold special meaning to authors.
- Special places hold special meaning to authors.

I heard one group talk about the time she fell off the swings. I heard another group talk about playing kickball for the first time in the field. These are some great ideas!

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

So today, and everyday, we will go back to our writing spots and begin writing. You may not know what you want to write about right away. If that happens, remember that you can think of a special person to brainstorm (refer back to chart), or you can brainstorm a list of special places that hold special memories to you. Then, zoom in on one of them and begin to write about a small moment in your life. Today, you are going to create a t-chart about special places. Off you go!

Possible Conference Questions:

- What are some special places you have on your list?
- How have these places affected your life?
- Why are these places special to you?
- What kind of feelings do these places make you feel?
- How will you turn this place and these feelings into a small moment?

Materials:

- *Word After Word After Word* by Patricia MacLachlan
- *If You Were a Writer* by Joan Lowery Nixon
- *You Have to Write* by Janet S. Wong
- *Author’s Techniques for Creating a Personal Narrative* anchor chart
- Teacher and student writing notebooks
- Chart paper and markers

Note: This lesson ties directly into the previous lesson. Students will continue to add brainstorming ideas in their writer’s notebook. Just as before, you will use the same book and either the chart paper or your writer’s notebook to model the brainstorming.

Purpose: *Writers use objects to recall special memories associated with them.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Writers, yesterday we learned that writers can brainstorm a list of special places when they don’t know what to write about. Today, we will spend time adding another tool to our toolbox when we don’t know what to write about. Not only do writers brainstorm lists of special people and places, but they also brainstorm special objects too.

Show the book, *Word After Word After Word*. Read the excerpt about memory found on page 35.

Of course I was reading last night and came across the part in Patricia MacLachlan’s book that made me think about our writer’s workshop time. We’ve talked about how we can write about special people and places, and then I thought about some special objects that bring back some very special memories.

Read the excerpt from the book.

After reading that part in the book, I realized that writers can brainstorm objects that hold special memories or feelings for them. Let me show you.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

As we talked about before, there may be times when you go back to your writing spot, and you do not know what to write about. You’ve brainstormed special people and places, but you can also brainstorm special objects that are important to you. Let me show you.

Show students an example of your Writer’s Notebook with the t-chart with a special place. Demonstrate how you brainstorm (empty your brain about) small moments about this object and record your ideas using the t-chart. Model running out of ideas and moving on to another object and emptying your brain about small moments about that item.

I started thinking of objects that mean a lot to me and remembered the blue ribbon that hung in my bedroom when I was in elementary school. I won a poetry contest when I was in first grade and my poem was read in front of the whole school and then given a ribbon. I hung that ribbon on my wall. I was so proud of that accomplishment. That ribbon represented how proud I was of myself, excited that my poem was read in front of the school. See...special objects can turn into small moment stories in an instant. You might be thinking that you haven’t won any awards, but a special toy or special book might remind you of a small moment in your life that you can write about.

Add the tip to the anchor chart.

Author’s Techniques for Creating a Personal Narrative

- Special people hold special meaning to authors.
- Special places hold special meaning to authors.
- Special objects and memories hold special meaning to authors.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

*Let’s try this strategy together! Take a moment and think about an object that is special to you. It could be a blue ribbon like me, or it might be a pet like Henry in *Word After Word After Word*. Turn and tell your partner what your special object is and how it is special to you.*

Listen in on the conversations and provide coaching as needed. Have your t-chart ready to record some of the brainstorming ideas your students come up with and add them to the chart.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Today, and everyday, I want you to go back to your seats and start placing these outstanding objects and fond memories in your writer’s notebook. Remember that as writers we get to choose the stories we want to write, and sometimes we have to use a strategy to help us on our way. So remember that when we can’t think of anything else to write about we can always brainstorm a list of special objects and memories that are treasures in our lives. Before we go back to our writing spots I want to read one more book to you.

Read Wong’s book *You Have to Write* for an inspirational send off. When students approach you throughout the day with exciting stories to tell you, it might be a good idea to get into the habit of saying, “Ooh! You could write about that! Maybe you can add that to your notebook!”

Possible Conference Questions:

- What is a special object that you’ve thought of?
- Why is that object so special to you?
- How will you make your reader understand how special that object is to you?
- How will you turn that object into a small moment?

Materials:

- *What Makes a Good Personal Narrative?* anchor chart
- Teacher and student writing notebooks
- Chart paper and markers

Note: The anchor chart for this lesson should be used as a checklist when students are determining which topic from their notebook they will turn into a published piece and while they are in the midst of writing it as well. Have your students bring their writer’s notebook down to the floor to use during the active engagement portion of the lesson.

Purpose: *Writers carefully choose an idea to turn into a published piece of writing by using the list of the qualities that makes a good personal narrative.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.19 A

Connection:

- *connect today’s work with our ongoing work*
- *tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point*
- *explicitly state my teaching point*

For the past several days we’ve been brainstorming and recording ideas, places, and people that are special to us. Today, we are going to look through our writer’s notebooks and choose one special idea to turn into a published piece. This is a very big day for our writer’s workshop time! Today, we will choose a topic from our notebooks that we have a lot to say about – a topic that allows us to zoom in on the story action.

Teach:

- *restate my teaching point*
- *think aloud & point out things for students to notice*

Now that we have lots of ideas in our writer’s notebook, we are ready to look back through our notebooks and choose one to turn into a published piece of writing. All of my ideas, when brainstorming, may have seemed like

great ideas to write about, but now we need to pick that one that will be our masterpiece. Let’s look at the first point on our anchor chart. Sometimes when we start to write a topic it is too large for us to write a focused story. For example, I want to write a story about my dog. There are lots of things to write about her. I can write about the things she likes to do, the toys she likes to play with, the food she likes to eat, and the mischief she has created. But that story would be too big like a watermelon. I want to turn my story into a small, focused idea like a watermelon seed. I think I will choose the time my dog and I went for a run, and she chased a squirrel and drug me through the bushes.

Continue to include the anchor chart as your teaching points as you think aloud about the process of choosing a topic.

What Makes a Good Personal Narrative?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a small seed idea, not a large /broad topic like the whole watermelon. • I can zoom in on the most important parts of my story. • I have strong feelings about this idea.

I know I can zoom in on this idea, and I can also choose something this is very special to me, my dog.

Demonstrate how to chose a focused topic that has significance. Explain to students that writers can write a more focused story about something that is truly important to them.

Do you see the difference between a story about my dog that could be a watermelon and one that is more like a seed? I chose a time with my dog that was a small moment in time. I could add lots of details and include the most important parts of my story. This story is also very important to me because my dog is an important part of my life.

Active Engagement:

- *involve students by asking them to turn and talk*
- *listen, observe, and coach active involvement*
- *share an example of what you heard or observed*

Share with students several examples of ideas and help them to discover which are good seed ideas for themselves.

Let’s practice using the strategy. Give me a thumbs up if the idea would be more like a seed, or a thumbs down if it sounds like a story that would not be focused and more like the whole watermelon. I want to write a story about the time I went to the beach (thumbs down). This story is rather broad and large like a watermelon. I want to write about the time I built a sandcastle at the beach, and it was swept away be a huge wave (thumbs up). This small moment would be a very focused story like a tiny seed. I can add lots of details and feelings about this.

Have students look through their writers’ notebooks and share ideas with a partner that they think they would like to write about. Have the partners decide together if the ideas are good seed ideas or if they are too broad. Listen in on the conversations and pull out some good points from those turn and talks to round out your lesson.

Link:

- *restate the teaching point*
- *explain how the learning can be used in the future*

Choosing a topic is a very special and important part of the writing process. Today, and everyday, you will write on a topic that is focused, that has details that you can zoom in on, and one that means a lot to you. So, let’s start this process right now by going back to your writing spots and looking for an idea to turn into a published piece. After you have chosen a seed idea, I want you to tell the story out loud to a partner. Practice telling the story to make sure that it stays focused and doesn’t turn into a watermelon.

Possible Conference Questions:

- *Which idea are you thinking about turning into a published piece?*
- *How will you turn this idea into a small moment, like a watermelon seed, and keep it from turning into a watermelon?*

Materials:

- Class Writing Deadline Calendars - Appendix F
- Specific Class dates for all parts of writing process
- Example of Project Board – Appendix G
- Authors Go through the Writing Process anchor chart
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Note: During this lesson, and the next few weeks, you will explicitly teach the students how to use a calendar to plan their piece of writing from today until the deadline. You will take them step-by-step through the writing process and show them how that correlates with the calendar. If you would like to use a project board in your classroom, this would be a good time to get it going while explicitly teaching students how to use it. This is a strip displaying each step in the writing process. Each student has a clip with his/her name on it. When they move to the next part of the writing process, they move their clip. That way the teacher always knows where each student is in the writing process each day, and the students aren't tempted to skip a step. After today's lesson, you can start the strip by displaying the class calendar as an example of where to begin, followed by a sentence strip to hold the clips. After that, you can have a picture of a watermelon with seeds on it reminding them of the next step followed by another sentence strip to hold the clips. This first time around, all clips will move together. In the future, the students will move at the pace that matches where they are as a writer. After today's lesson, the clips will be on the strip following the seed ideas on the writing process board. Add to the anchor chart each day as students go through another part of the writing process.

Purpose: Writers learn the importance of using a calendar to help plan and revise their plan to write the perfect piece by the project deadline.

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today's work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Writers, during the past few weeks we have studied authors and tried out some things that they do to help us write successful personal

narratives. Yesterday you chose the perfect seed idea to write about. You knew it was the perfect one, because it was focused on one small moment and it was something that you have strong feelings about (refer back to the anchor chart). Great job, writers!

The next step in the writing process is drafting. Drafting is when we get our story out of our minds and write it on paper as it comes to mind— fast, without stopping to worry about punctuation or anything else. Before we can begin drafting, I want to teach you about something else that authors do. Before authors begin writing, they plan their project to make sure it is perfect by the project due date.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Planning our time is very important. Each week the other writing teachers and I sit down with our calendars to think about where you need to be in your writing by the end of the 9-weeks/semester, etc. We plan for how we are going to get you to that point by the end of that time period/deadline. We do this so that time doesn't slip away from us. I love teaching you about the importance of choosing a seed topic, but if that's all I teach you during the week, there's no way I'll get you writing the way I want you to write by the deadline.

Several of your parents may have jobs where their bosses give them a project or a job and tell them when they want it completed. In order to make sure they meet that deadline, they have to plan for it so that time doesn't get away from them.

I don't want that to happen to any of you, so today and for the next few weeks, I will walk you through the process of planning a project with a deadline in mind. You will find that your plan may change several times throughout the project. Sometimes you might find that you didn't end up needing 3 days for revising – you only needed 2. That's ok. What's important is that you had your plan written down and you didn't skip over or rush through a step in the writing process.

Add the important tip to the anchor chart.

<i>Authors Go through the Writing Process</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan their project to meet the deadline

Pass out calendars. During this first project, give specific dates for their project deadline. Also include dates for planning,

drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. In the future, they will be able to fill in the calendar on their own with more freedom as they learn more about themselves as writers and how long each step takes them. You might have them do one of the following. You might choose to have them draft 2 stories, and then see which one would make a better story to take through the writing process.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Students and teacher fill in calendars together.

Since the first plan on our calendar is to choose a memorable seed moment, I want you to look back over the moment you chose yesterday and make sure it is a seed moment. Make sure you feel deeply about this moment. Turn and talk to your partner about it. Tell them why you think it is a seed moment. Maybe they can help you to make that moment even smaller.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

From now on, writers, I want you to remember that every day before you begin working during independent writing time, always check your calendar to see what you have done and where you are going next. We all want to have the perfect project by the due date!

Since the students are not drafting yet, you might have them add more entries during independent writing today, or you might have them go through their entries and work on turning watermelon ideas into seed ideas.

Possible Conference Questions:

- Did you find that your idea was a seed idea?
- Tell me why this idea means so much to you.
- Are the other ideas in your notebook focused on one small moment?

Materials:

- *Writing Project Deadline Calendar* – Appendix F (in folders)
- *If You Were a Writer* by Joan Lowery Nixon
- *Crafting My Movie Moment-by-Moment* or *Crafting My Story Moment-by-Moment* graphic organizers – Appendix I & J
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Note: Decide if the students will keep their calendars in their notebooks or in separate folders with their draft. At the end of the project deadline, teachers may wish to collect students’ plans and rough drafts to see the entire process.

Purpose: Writers learn that they have choices of what to say and how to say it when storytelling moment by moment.

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Writers, yesterday we planned our first project. We looked at the project deadline and thought about how much time we might need to complete each step in the writing process. We want to make sure that we have the best piece of writing we can possibly have by the deadline. We also want to make sure that each day of writing is focused, so we don’t skip a step in the writing process or rush through our piece of writing. During independent writing time each day, the first thing we should do is look at that day’s date and see what we want to focus on for that day. It’s kind of like our to-do list for that day.

Before we start drafting our story on paper, I want us to practice crafting our story in our minds first. Today, I want to teach you how to an author first plans a story and crafts it moment-by-moment.

Invite students to think about ways they have learned to plan stories in the past.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Personal narratives are almost always organized to tell our readers what happened first, and then next, and after that, and so forth. We want to make sure we are not just telling our readers about what happened in that moment. We also want to make sure that we are showing them what happened by writing in a way that makes them feel like they are right there with us. We want our readers to make a movie in their minds as they read that matches the story we are telling. One strategy we can use to help tell our story the way it really happened is to close your eyes and think back to the very beginning of the moment. Play that movie in slow motion and think about exactly what happened first, next, and after that. Let me show you what I mean.

Show students how one story sounds by telling about it (list-like story without vivid details) compared to when you share the story by showing it with sensory details and your thoughts and feelings. Tell the story across your fingers as it happened, step-by-step. Write those steps on a graphic organizer as a plan for the order of your story. You may also refer to each moment as a scene. Refer back to examples about “showing, not telling” from *If You Were a Writer* by Joan Lowery Nixon.

- “If you were a writer, you would think of words that make pictures.”
- “If you were a writer you wouldn’t tell about what happened in a story. You’d use words that let people see what you see.”

<i>Authors Go through the Writing Process</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan their project to meet the deadline • Craft & plan their story moment-by-moment

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Students will tell the story orally to a partner making sure they include the parts moment by moment or every scene. Listen in on the conversations and provide coaching as needed. Share what you observed students doing that demonstrated “showing, not telling.”

Take a moment to think about the seed moment you chose. Close your eyes and picture exactly what happened in slow motion. What did you see? What did you hear? How did you feel? Turn and tell the story across your fingers step-by-step. Tell it in a way that makes your partner feel as though they are there with you.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Students will write their story in their notebook using a graphic organizer.

Writers, from now on, remember that before drafting a piece of writing, writers first plan what they will write. They don’t just say the things that happen. They show their readers what happened by closing their eyes, making a movie in their mind of exactly what happened, and saying it in a way that makes their readers feel like they are right there in the moment with them. Now that your story is fresh in your mind, go ahead and plan it out on paper so that you have the events carefully crafted out in order in a way that paints a clear picture in the minds of your readers.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What do you want to show your readers when they read your story?
- How will you show them that?

Materials:

- Students' writing folders with paper for drafting
- Student deadline calendars
- Teacher's writing folder with draft to demonstrate
- Sample Project Board – Appendix G
- *Author's Go through the Writing Process* anchor chart

Note: Some teachers like to have students draft in a black ink pen so they are not tempted to spend time erasing. In the next lesson, they will learn the importance of being able to see their previous work after making revisions. After today's lesson, if you are using a project board, you can post DRAFTING as the next step followed by a sentence strip holding clips. Since everyone will start their draft today, they can all move their clips to that section.

Purpose: *Writers will draft their story by writing "fast and long in order to get the whole story down on paper as it comes to mind." **

* Quote from Lucy Calkins' *Launching the Writing Workshop*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today's work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Writers, today is an exciting day, because if you look on your calendar, you'll notice that it's time to start getting the words for your story down on paper to get it ready for others to read! Yesterday you thought through your story. You closed your eyes, made a movie in your mind of exactly what happened in that small moment of your story, and you thought about how it happened moment-by-moment. Then you practiced telling that story to your partner just the way you saw it in slow motion. You tried to tell it in a way that made your partner see the same movie that you were seeing by showing them what happened instead of just telling them. Then you went back to make a plan of how your story would go to make sure you didn't forget any of that

fabulous thinking that was happening! Great job writers! Now that your stories are fresh on your minds, I want to talk to you about the next step in the writing process, drafting.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

When writers draft their story, they think about the first thing that happened (remember the way you thought about it deeply yesterday), and they quickly write those words down on their paper. Then they think about the next thing that happened exactly how it happened and hurry and get those words down on their paper and continue. They write it as it comes out of their brain without stopping, before they can forget the words. When writers draft, they are thinking about how the story happened. They are not worried about having the perfect punctuation or the perfect words. They write knowing they will come back to fix anything that needs to be fixed. Let me show you my draft that I wrote last night.

Show the students your draft from the story you talked about during yesterday's lesson. Read it to them, talking them through your thoughts as you wrote fast. There may be parts that you wanted to change right then and there while you were drafting. Show them how you didn't waste time erasing and laboring over it – you just quickly crossed it out and continued moving. Show them that there were parts where you knew what you wanted to write but didn't know exactly how you wanted to word it, but you didn't stop and worry about it because you knew that you could change it later. Also, show them places where you weren't sure how to spell words, but you didn't let it scare you or stop you. You just quickly got the words down the best way you could because you knew you could come back and figure it out later. Add the writing tip to the anchor chart.

Authors Go through the Writing Process

- Plan their project to meet the deadline
- Craft & plan their story moment-by-moment
- Draft fast and long, without stopping

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Turn and tell your partner how you will draft your story today. Tell them the exact process you will go through.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Now, when you come to the end of the draft, I hope I don't hear anyone say, "I'm done!" An author is never "done!" As Lucy Calkins says, "When you're done, you've just begun!" After your story is out, you can go back and reread it and begin crafting it into the perfect story. If you do get the chance to reread your draft today, please don't erase anything! I want to see your original writing and your new writing. Tomorrow we will start talking about why that is so important. Remember, writers, that when you look at your deadline calendar and see that it's your day to draft your story, that means that you will imagine your story just how it happened and get your words down on paper quickly, knowing that you will come back to fix it up later.

As a reminder throughout the year, teachers may want to post something in the classroom that states the workshop expectation such as "A Writer's Poem" from lesson 1 or the phrase, "When you're done, you've just begun!" Add to the visual by listing some of the specific kinds of work that writers do (e.g., revise with sensory details) when they think they're "done."

Possible Conference Questions:

- How's it going?
- What did you think about drafting? Were you tempted to make it perfect? Did it make your words come out easier since you didn't have to stop and make it perfect?
- Is there a place that you felt stuck on and know you need to go back and work on?

Materials:

- Writing Project Deadline Calendar – Appendix F
- Teacher & student drafts
- Teacher’s or class’s story to use daily for practice with new skill
- Mentor Texts to show samples of several different leads
- Word After Word After Word by Patricia MacLachlan
- *Revising Checklist* – Appendix J
- *Sample Project Board* – Appendix G

Note: Some teachers like students to have one color pen for revising (blue) and another color for editing (purple) so they can really see the difference in the two. After today’s lesson, if you are using a project board, you can post the “revising” tip as the next step followed by a sentence strip holding clips. You might want to add a flag that says LEADS. Since everyone will start their draft today, they can all move their clips to that section.

Purpose: *Writers revisit their lead to make sure it grabs their audience and pulls them into the story.*

TEKS: 3.17 C, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Writers, I am so proud of the work you have done on your writing so far! I can tell you are taking every bit of information in and applying it to your writing! That is so important! Everything you learn right now will affect your thinking about writing not only now, but for the rest of your writing lives! Congratulations, Writers!

Yesterday, you wrote fast and long, without stopping to make sure you didn’t forget a single bit of your story. Some of you even got to the end of your draft and had the opportunity to go back and reread your drafts to take a look at those parts that almost made you want to stop and think

about how you could make it better. Today, I want to start by showing you what writers do to fix up, or revise, their draft to make their writing better. When we revise, we re-see or see it again. We rethink, review, reconsider, reorder, reorganize. (Talk about the meaning of the prefix “re” – to do again - and “vise” / “vision” – to see). One thing you can revise to improve your writing is to revise your lead.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

The lead of your story is so very important, because it is the first thing your reader reads when he/she reads your writing. It determines whether or not they will read it. When your readers read your piece of writing, you want them to immediately be grabbed and pulled into the story. You want them to decide they MUST read your writing.

Refer back to a few familiar stories by rereading the leads one at a time. Have the students discover how each author used their lead to grab hook their audience and add it to an anchor chart. You may wish to consider the following examples.

- **Specific Action:** Peter’s Chair by Ezra Jack Keats
- **Dialogue:** Miz Berlin Walks by Jane Yolen
- **Setting:** Word After Word After Word by Patricia MacLachlan. & The Paperboy by Dav Pilkey

Add the tip to the anchor chart.

<i>Authors Go through the Writing Process</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan their project to meet the deadline • Craft & plan their story moment-by-moment • Draft fast and long, without stopping • Revise by fixing it up with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Leads that have action, dialogue, or setting

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Let’s look back at the story I have been working on. I thought that maybe you could help me revise my lead to make sure it grabs my audience’s attention.

Provide a brief summary of your story and reread the lead aloud. Allow students to share a few ideas. Direct students to turn and talk to their partner about different ways the teacher could revise her lead. Listen in on the conversations and share a few of the ideas you overheard.

Next, choose one way to revise the lead in your story. Show the students how you would use your revising pen to draw one line through the part you want to take out (instead of scratching out), and write the new lead right above it. Talk about how important it is for you and for them to be able to see what they previously wrote. You will want to see what they had before revising when you confer with them, and they will want to see it later too. They might decide they preferred their first choice later.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

From now on when you finish your draft, remember that writers always go back and revise revise. They reread their writing and rethink or reconsider changes they might make. When revising your draft, remember that one thing you can revise is your lead. Make sure you have written it in a way that grabs your audience’s attention and makes them decide they must read your writing! I can’t wait to come around and admire your leads!

Possible Conference Questions:

- What are you working on as a writer today?
- How is your writing going?
- How is your lead going?
- How did you decide to grab your reader’s attention?
- What did you have before? What did you change it to?

Materials:

- Writing Project Deadline Calendar – Appendix F
- Teacher’s or class’s story to use daily for practice with new skill
- Scissors and tape
- The Heartbeat graphic organizer - Appendix K
- Fun Ways to Revise – Appendix N
- Teacher & student drafts

Note: After today’s lesson, if you are using a project board, add a flag to the revising section that says, “THE HEART OF THE STORY.” Point out that their clips will stay on this section much longer than when they were drafting. Have students bring their drafts to the minilesson. During the teach portion of the lesson, teachers may demonstrate one or more of the ways to revise using the ideas on the handout – *Fun Ways to Revise* – Appendix N.

Purpose: *Writers revise by developing the most important part of the story.*

TEKS: 3.17 C, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Writers, this week you finished your drafts, and then you went back and reread them with fresh eyes. While your reread your story, you rethought, you reconsidered... you revised! This makes me think of times in my life when I may have said or done something hurtful or embarrassing that I wished I could erase. Has that ever happened to you? Have you ever thought, “I wish I could go back and do that all over again. I know exactly what I’d change to make it better.”

Share a personal story about a moment in time that you wish you could do over and briefly explain why.

You can’t take your words back, can you? The good news, writers, is that when you write, you DO get a second chance! You get as many chances as you need! You can always go back and take what you’ve done and make it better!

Yesterday you began making your writing better by revising your leads. When I came around and admired the work you were doing, I noticed that... (Point out great work observed). Since the first thing our readers read is our lead, we want to make sure it is so amazing that it grabs our readers’ attention and pulls them into our story!

Writers, when our reader decides to read our story, we want to make sure that we not only grab their attention, but that we are able to hold their attention throughout the story. Today, I want to teach you how to fix up your story and make it better by developing the most important part of your story – the heartbeat! That is one way to keep your readers engaged throughout your story!

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Usually in any story there is a very important part where you want your readers to really slow down and understand – that is the heartbeat. Sometimes it is the most emotional part. That is the part that drives your story – it is the reason for your story. It is the most important part. You want to make sure that when your readers get to this part, they have a clear picture in their head and really understand it, so it is very important for us to develop the heartbeat of the story.

To make this point you can have the teacher or class story pre-done, leaving a part blank for the students to try out during the active engagement section. Demonstrate to the class how you identified the most important part of your story, cut a line directly underneath, added more paper and taped it under that part to develop it further. Show students how you added more by using sensory details. Explain how you closed your eyes, created a movie in your mind and imagined exactly what you saw in slow motion by showing what you heard, smelled, saw, etc. Add today’s tip to the anchor chart.

<i>Authors Go through the Writing Process</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan their project to meet the deadline • Craft & plan their story moment-by-moment • Draft fast and long, without stopping • Revise by fixing it up with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Leads that have action, dialogue, or setting – Strengthening the heart of the story

Teachers may choose to demonstrate how to cut and add paper to their story using ideas from the *Fun Ways to Revise* handout. After the lesson on revising by moving, adding, or deleting, teachers can show students how to how to use numbers or arrows to mark their revisions within the draft and link them to revision efforts in their notebooks or on separate papers.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Allow students a few moments to review their draft in search of the “heartbeat” moment – a pivotal place in the story that highlights the main character’s struggle. Have students give a thumbs up when they have found their “heartbeat.” Ask them to turn and talk to their partners about why they feel this part is the heartbeat. Listen in on the conversations and provide coaching as needed. Next, explain that you would like students to share one way that they might slow their action down. Students may need to read the part aloud to their partner and then talk about a way to add more imagery or feeling.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Writers, when going back and revisiting your draft to see what you can change to make it better, remember that finding the heartbeat, or the most important part of the story, is the place to start. You can paint a colorful picture of the scene with sensory detail and adding thoughts and feelings so that your readers really know to listen up and pay close attention, because this is the most important part!

Possible Conference Questions:

- What is the heart of your story?
- Why is that the heart of your story?
- What have you done to develop that part?
- What sensory details can you use to develop that part further?

Materials:

- Writing Project Deadline Calendar – Appendix F
- *Fireflies* by Julie Brinkloe (just the ending either written on chart paper or displayed under the document camera) or another text
- Teacher and student writing notebooks
- Chart paper and markers
- *Authors Go through the Writing Process* anchor chart

Authors Go through the Writing Process

- Plan their project to meet the deadline
- Craft & plan their story moment-by-moment
- Draft fast and long, without stopping
- Revise by fixing it up with:
 - Leads that have action, dialogue, or setting
 - Strengthening the heart of the story
 - Using action, dialogue, images, & feelings in the ending

Note: Teachers may use *Fireflies* or a similar mentor text that uses an ending that matches your teaching point – an ending that exhibits strong feeling. After today’s lesson, if you are using a project board, add a flag to the revising section that says ENDINGS. Point out that their clips will stay on this section much longer than when they were drafting. Have students bring their notebooks to the floor for the minilesson.

Purpose: *Writers create endings with purpose that stay with their readers and use ideas from mentor texts to make the writing come alive through vivid images, dialogue, and strong emotion.*

TEKS: 3.17 C, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Writers, today is such a great day because today you get to reread your ending and make them even better! We learned a few days ago that writers revise and change their leads in order to “hook” their reader. Writers do the same thing with their

endings. Endings are very important to a story because it is the one part of the story that stays with the reader for a long time, even after the story is over. Let me show you.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Read the following passage to students from *Fireflies* by Julie Brickloe or the ending from the mentor text.

“I flung off the covers. I went to the window, opened the jar, and aimed at the stars. “Fly!” Then the jar began to glow, green, then gold, then white as the moon, And the fireflies poured out into the night. Fireflies! Blinking on, blinking off, dipping low, soaring high above my head, making circles around the moon like stars dancing. I held the jar, dark and empty, in my hands. The moonlight and the fireflies swam in my tears, but I could feel myself smiling.”

*Endings are the last thing your reader will read and it is the one part of the story that will stay with them for a long time. This makes your ending a very important part of your story. In the book *Fireflies*, the author chose specific words to create an image in our head. Ms. Brickloe included everything on our strategy chart for endings.*

Refer to the anchor chart and the addition of endings.

Notice that she starts off with an action - flung the covers. The character didn’t just get out of bed, he flung the covers off. The author used dialogue, but just one word. How important that one word is to the ending of this book. The author creates images by using colors and smilies like “...then white as the moon.” I can picture this in my head; like it is happening in my room. Finally, the author ends with a feeling. She shows her reader how the character seems sad because of the tears, but smiling because the fireflies have been set free. That really stays with me! It makes me think of a time where maybe I was sad to leave, but ready to start something new like...leaving 2nd grade and moving onto 3rd. When writing an ending, we need to make sure that our ending fits the story that we are writing, but also will stay with the reader for a long time.

Reread the ending to *Fireflies* or the mentor text several times pointing out and discussing how Brickloe uses all

of the techniques for writing a good ending.

Did you notice how each time I read the ending I studied it closely to see what the author did to make this a lasting ending? I want to include these techniques in my writing!

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Allow students to help you revise your teacher / class story ending for practice.

How excited are you to reread your ending, revise it, and make it better? Take a minute or two to reread your ending on the draft you’ve been working on. While you are reading, I want you to notice where you could add one of the techniques we talked about today. Think to yourself, “What do I want my reader to remember about my story? How can I make them feel what I was feeling at the end of my story!” Turn and share one place with your partner how you will revise your ending today. Maybe your partner could even help you out with that idea. Writers, I heard some great ways you will be revising your endings. I can’t wait to read them!

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Writers, today, and everyday, when you are considering the ending of your story or revising an ending you’ve already written, remember that authors create an ending that stays with their readers for a long time by adding action, images, dialogue, and strong, true feelings. As you go back to your writing spots, look over your endings and consider ways you can revise.

Possible Conference Questions:

- How did you revise your ending today?
- What made you revise your ending in that way?
- What did you want your reader to feel when they finished your story?

Materials:

- Writing Project Deadline Calendar – Appendix F
- Revising Checklist – Appendix J
- A sample of a former student’s writing or your own to model the editing checklist
- Teacher and student writing notebooks
- Chart paper and markers

Note: In this lesson, you will demonstrate how to use a checklist, and teach students how to refocus their personal narratives by moving, adding, or deleting parts of text. Only part of the revising checklist will be used in this lesson. The remainder will be introduced in the next lesson. After today’s lesson, if you are using a project board, add a flag to the Revising section that says, “MOVING, ADDING, DELETING.” Point out that their clips will stay on this section much longer than when they were drafting. Teachers may choose to provide an extra day to revisit the other items on the revising checklist.

Purpose: *Writers revise their stories by moving, adding, and deleting parts of text to improve the flow of ideas.*

TEKS: 3.17 C, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Writers, we’ve been talking about making our leads and endings better. We’ve also been talking about how we can move, add, or delete ideas to clarify the ideas in our stories. Today, we are adding another tool to our toolbox by using a revising checklist. Authors want to make sure that their stories are clear to the reader and their scenes are organized into paragraphs. Today, we are going to focus in on making sure our stories are clear, and we can do this by moving details around, adding a little more detail, and/or deleting details that do not belong..

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Display the *Revising Checklist* either on an anchor chart or under

the document camera.

I really love this part of the writing process because this is the time where I get to make my story even better than it was before. But, I’ve always found that it is easier for me to revise my story when I have a checklist. A checklist keeps me on track as an author, and it also helps me when I am working with a partner who is trying to make his story better, too. I use each part of my checklist as a magnifying glass to focus on only one section of the checklist at a time. Let me show you what I mean. Take a look at the second box: “Are there parts of the story that need to be moved, added, or deleted to make the ideas more clear?” This is where you think to yourself, “Does this make sense?” You also reread your story and find parts that make you wonder what is really happening. You also look for parts where making a movie in your mind is very difficult, and then you rewrite them to make them clear.

Demonstrate this with either a student’s piece or your own that you’ve written. Display a part of the piece where the episode (scene) and/or words seem confusing or awkward. Share examples of confusing parts that include: 1) the story is not unfolding in a step-by-step manner, 2) events are left out, and 3) characters or ideas are never introduced. Once you’ve displayed or demonstrated a part of a story that is confusing, show how to rewrite it so the story unfolds.

Here is a piece of writing from one of my students last year. This part was a little confusing to me, so we had to revise it in order for me to make a movie in my mind. “One morning I jumped out of bed. I saw my brother and shouted, ‘Stop!’ I couldn’t believe what he was doing. Then I ran downstairs for breakfast.”

Wait! I’m a little confused. Are you? I’m wondering why she shouted, “Stop!” to her brother. What was he doing that caused her to shout at him? When I conferred with this writer, I explained that she needed to unfold her story, step by step, so I could make a movie in my mind of what was happening in the story. I told her I was really curious about what her brother was doing that would make her shout at him. This would be a perfect spot to make your story clear. Here is how she revised her story by deleting some and adding a little more.

“I jumped out of bed to the ringing of my alarm clock. I realized it must have been going off for awhile, and I was running late. I threw my covers on the floor and ran to get ready for school. I got dressed in a hurry, but I couldn’t find my shoes. Just then I turned around to see my little brother swinging my shoes by the shoelaces over his head. He had a sneaky smile on his face. He flashed that smile at me, and then took off running. I shouted, “Stop!” and stomped my bare feet at him. He giggled as I ran after him. I tackled him on his bed, grabbed my shoes,

and ran downstairs for breakfast. I was running late! I had no time for games.”

Writers, do you see the difference? After she revised her story, I could actually see a sneaky little brother running around with her shoes trying to make her mad. That made me think of things I used to do to my brother and the things my kids do to each other now. I could see the events unfolding right before my eyes. When you want to delete something just draw one line through it. You can also add right below it if there is room or at the end. To move an episode, just draw an arrow where you want the part to go. Now you are making your story even better!

Add the line, “Moving, adding, & deleting parts of text” to the *Authors Go through the Writing Process* anchor chart.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Let’s try out our new strategy. Take a couple of minutes to meet with your partner. Partner 1, show a draft that you’ve been working on and read through it with your partner. Partner 2, you are looking for parts that you might be wondering what is really happening or parts where making a movie in your mind is difficult. Then switch and read the other partner’s writing. Remember, we are practicing using our revising checklist like a magnifying glass.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Today, and everyday, as we revise our stories, I want you to remember to get really close up to your story and find those places where the story doesn’t unfold step by step. There may be some things you need to add to make your story clear. You may also find extra information that you need to add. If your events are out of order, don’t hesitate to move those around.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What part of your story did you find confusing or didn’t unfold step by step?
- How did you revise it to make it less confusing?
- Did you move, add, or delete anything from your story?

Materials:

- Mentor text for students
- *Writing Project Deadline Calendar* – Appendix F
- *Revising Checklist* - Appendix K
- A sample of a former student’s writing or your own to model the editing checklist
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Note: Continue with the revising checklist from the previous minilesson. Reinforce the idea of authors rereading their stories from beginning to end when they are in the revision stage of the writing process. Prior to the lesson, locate an example of a draft that needs improvement in the organization of the paragraphs. If possible, use an example that also has dialogue. Otherwise, use a mentor text to show how authors start new paragraphs when a character is talking.

Purpose: *Writers reread their drafts in search of places where new ideas or events are introduced to help them decide when to begin and indent a new paragraph.*

TEKS: 3.17 C, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Relate a personal story about watching a movie or listening to someone relay a story that did not make sense, because the ideas were presented in a disorderly way. Explain the confusion and frustration you experienced as the audience in trying to follow the movie or the storyteller’s ideas. Connect this idea to the importance of helping a reader follow the ideas in our story. Tell students that new paragraphs signal a change in the story events or ideas, which help the reader move from one event/idea to the next.

Writers, we have been exercising our revising muscles by re-envisioning parts of our story and making changes to better help our readers understand and experience the

story as though they were right there in the story with us. We will continue using our revising checklist. Today, we are going to look at how we separated the scenes or episodes of our story into paragraphs and make sure that they help the reader easily move from one event to the next.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Paragraphs are an important part of our stories. Not only does paragraphing make our stories easier to read and understand, but it also makes them more organized. Paragraphs can be placed in sequential order from the beginning to end. Let me show you.

Using some of the mentor text you have used throughout the unit, show specific examples of paragraphing. Talk out loud about the reasons why the author likely chose to start a new paragraph. Remind students that a new paragraph could be used to start a new scene.

When authors write a personal narrative, they use paragraphs to signal the start of a new episode or event in their stories. They also place their paragraphs in the order that the events occurred. This makes it easier for the reader to see the movie in their mind and understand the flow of the story. Paragraphs are also used when people are speaking. Authors start a new paragraph when a different character is talking. This helps the reader follow a conversation between characters, and it also makes the story action stand out as well. Let me show you!

Display either a former student’s paper or a draft from your own writer’s notebook. Briefly summarize the story, so that students understand the flow of events. Explain the paragraphing decisions you would make to sequence the scenes or episodes in a story by sequential events. Additionally, model or point out in a mentor text how dialogue is written in new paragraphs when new speakers talk. Point out that when the dialogue is finished and the narration of the story events continues that an author begins a new paragraph.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Allow students to look at other mentor text to find paragraphs with a partner. Have them locate a new paragraph and decide why the new paragraph was started. Listen in on the conversations and share a few of the ideas you heard.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Writers, today and everyday, as we revise our stories, I want you to remember to always reread your story from the beginning to the end. As you read, look for those opportunities to rework your paragraphs. If your paragraphs seem out of order, don’t worry. You can move them or rework the events to make your story flow more easily from one idea to the next. This is why revising is one of my favorite parts of the writing process because I get to make my story even better than it was before. Remember to use your checklist as a magnifying glass by zooming in on each part and transforming your story from good to great!

Have students work with a partner during independent writing to review their story by checking to see that they have correctly chunked their writing into paragraphs based on the scenes and dialogue.

Possible Conference Questions:

- Did you find a part in your story where you had to move or rework you paragraphs?
- How did this help the clarity or read ability of your story?
- Did you use paragraphing to help with you dialogue in your story?
- How do you think making a different paragraph for your dialogue will help your read understand your story better?

Materials:

- *Writing Project Deadline Calendar* – Appendix F
- *Editing Checklist* – Appendix L
- A sample of a former student’s writing or your own to model the editing checklist
- *Grade 3 Core Words* list (1 per student)
- Excerpts from favorite authors that demonstrate the use of different punctuation techniques like dialogue, ellipses, etc.
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Note: Introduce the editing checklist with this lesson. Reinforce the idea that authors reread their stories from beginning to end when they are in the editing stage of the writing process. After today’s lesson, if you are using a project board, add a section labeled EDITING followed by a sentence strip for the students’ clips. Move all clips together while explicitly teaching this part. Teachers may wish to split this lesson into two parts by focusing on a couple of conventions from the checklist at a time.

Purpose: *Writers utilize an editing checklist to polish the story for the reader by correcting errors in capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling.*

TEKS: 3.17 D, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Relate a personal story about the importance of editing.

Writers, I love how yesterday you began rereading your stories and finding places where you could move things around, add a little detail to make it clearer, or even taking details out! You are making your great stories fantastic! Now it’s time to polish our writing by editing our stories, so that the readers can easily follow the ideas in our story. Using an editing checklist helps us to keep track of our work by paying attention to different conventions, one at a time. Today, we will focus on the conventions of punctuation and spelling.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Writers, spelling and punctuation are important pieces to writing a story. Correctly spelled and punctuated sentences add to the clarity of my writing by making the story easier to read. Let’s talk about punctuation. Punctuation is like a road map in your story. It tells your reader how to read the sentences, where to stop, where to slow down, and where they should pause and think. Punctuation doesn’t just end an idea, it tells your reader how they should read and think about the story in front of them.

Display and demonstrate, with the use of mentors or your own narrative, the use of punctuation.

For example, periods end a thought or an idea and tell the reader to stop completely at the end of a sentence. Sometimes I notice in your writing that the sentences are so long I’ve forgotten what the beginning of the sentence was talking about. That probably means you forgot to add a period, and you have 2 thoughts that are combined. Let me show you.

Display an example of a run on sentence.

All you need to do to fix this is to find where one thought ends and another begins. Then add a period to the end of the first thought, and capitalize the first letter of the next sentence. Don’t forget about other types of punctuation like question marks and exclamation marks. These punctuation marks can add a lot of voice to your story. You can also use ellipses and quotation marks in your story. Check to make sure that you’ve used them correctly. Dialogue gives the exact words to your characters, which makes it more personal, and ellipses can add suspense and excitement to your story. Let me show you!

Display either a mentor text or an example from your story of dialogue and ellipses and point out how they are used.

Spelling is another part of our editing checklist. Some words we spell incorrectly come from our core list of spelling words. These are the words that we, as 3rd graders, should be able to read and spell with ease. I’ve placed several of copies in your table buckets for you to use as you write and as you edit your stories. We can also use our word wall as a resource to help us spell words correctly. Tricky or fancy words like “tremendous” are words we don’t want to be afraid to use, but sometimes we just don’t know how to spell them. That’s okay – still use them in your stories! I always think to myself that if the word doesn’t look right, it probably isn’t. So, when I’m editing and checking for spelling I can circle a word I think is misspelled and either check with

my writing partner and/or use a dictionary to look up the spelling. Display a mentor text featuring the use of capitalization and remind students that writers also use the editing checklist to make sure proper nouns, sentence beginnings, and the pronoun “I” are correctly capitalized.

Display a copy of a text that has errors in subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and/or the use of different parts of speech. Model how to correct the errors in usage.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Let’s try our new strategy. Take a couple of minutes to meet with your partner. Partner 1, show a draft you’ve been working on and read through it with your partner. Partner 2, you are looking for parts that might have missing punctuation or opportunities to use other types of punctuation. Also read through for misspelled words. Then switch and read the other partner’s writing. Remember, we are practicing using our editing checklist like a magnifying glass.

Add the line, “Edit for capitalization, usage, punctuation, & spelling” to the *Authors Go through the Writing Process* anchor chart.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Writers, today and everyday, as we edit our stories, I want you to remember to always reread your story from beginning to end. As you read, look for those opportunities to use different types of punctuation or where you’ve missed using a piece of punctuation. Also, be on the look out for misspelled words, ca

Possible Conference Questions:

- Where did you find some opportunities to use different types of punctuation?
- How did using a piece of punctuation change the sound or message in your story?
- What resource did you, or will you, use to help with your spelling?

Materials:

- Student drafts and writing folders
- Writing Project Deadline Calendar – Appendix F
- New paper, gel pens, publishing tools

Note: What an important and exciting day this is for the writers in your class! They have worked so hard on their writing throughout this unit, and now it's time to celebrate that hard work. The more you build up this moment, the more excited the students will be to realize the benefit of all the hard work and begin the next project! Now that you have taken them through each part of the writing process, the students have a great foundation to build upon throughout the year. Not only do they understand the expectations in your classroom, but they understand how the project board works and can use it more independently with each project!

In this lesson, teachers will teach students that a few days before each project due date, they will want to stop and look over the pieces of writing they have worked on, revised, and edited. They will want to decide which piece to take to publishing and turn in for a grade.

After today's lesson, if you are using a project board, add a section labeled "PUBLISHING" followed by a sentence strip for the students' clips. Move all clips together while explicitly teaching this part. Reinforce the fact that no clips should be on this section until a few days before the project due date. After revising and editing a piece, students will skip this part and return to choosing a seed moment, continuing through the writing process until publishing time. Remind students that writers don't publish all of their work – only their very best pieces that they want to show the world. You may also want to celebrate by adding their newly published pieces to the author board created early in this unit. Be sure to celebrate growth in everyone – not just fantastic writing. Each published piece should demonstrate their best work to date – like a timeline throughout the year.

Purpose: *Writers choose their best piece to publish, take out into the world for others to read, and celebrate.*

TEKS: 3.17 E, 3.19 A

Connection:

- connect today's work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Have student bring writing folders to the floor with them for the minilesson.

Writers, today is a very special and exciting day in our writing lives! Today is the day that all of our hard work, sweat, and tears will pay off! If you've ever participated in a big, difficult project, then you know exactly what I'm talking about. Has anyone ever helped their parents paint their bedroom, or has your room ever been so messy that you just don't know where to start? Sometimes you don't even FEEL like starting at all. You'd rather spend time relaxing with your friends. Some of the time when you are cleaning, you just feel so miserable - like you will never finish or make it good enough, especially when you are tired, right? But doesn't it feel so good when you finally DO finish?? When I finish cleaning my room on a big day like that, I love to walk out of my room for a little bit, and then walk back in and take it all in – noticing how nice and neat it all looks and smells, and how easy it is to find what I need! I want to spend all of my time there, and I want to invite all of my friends over to see how nice it looks!

That is exactly how I feel today! During the past few days, we have been through so much together! We have been through the entire writing process together! We have spent each day writing, adding, deleting, and changing our writing over and over to make it perfect for everyone to see! Just when we thought our writing was perfect, our partner pointed out something that we could do to make it even better, and that made us work even harder! I have watched you grow so much as writers in just a few weeks, and I can't imagine what amazing writers you will be by the end of the year! WOW! It is almost time to "invite all of our friends over to see how nice it looks!" If you look at your Writing Project Deadline Calendar, you will notice that our project due date is quickly approaching, so today I want to teach you what writers do when they notice this.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

The last thing writers do before the project due date is publish their very best writing to turn in to their publishers and get it ready for the world to see. This is kind of like cleaning your room to get

ready for your friends to come over. Writers don't publish every piece they write. They only publish their very best writing that they want to share with everyone.

The project due date is the date your final piece of writing will be turned in to be graded. When you notice there are only two days until the project due date, you will want to stop everything and look over the pieces of writing you have completely revised, edited, and perfected. You will want to look to see which piece you want to turn in – which would earn the best grade.

Students will only spend time rewriting the piece they will publish and turn in. If you will display the published work for everyone to see, be sure to let the students know. The more excited they are, the better their writing will be! Show them your final published piece of writing that you have worked on throughout this unit.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement

Give students a moment to look over their writing and talk to their partner about which piece of writing they are thinking about publishing and why. Ask them to make a pledge to focus carefully on their work while they are publishing the story.

Link

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Writers, as you go off to independent writing to begin publishing your stories, I want you to think about your readers. Think about how amazed they will be with your writing. Imagine them laughing at the funny parts. Imagine how excited they will be to read your writing. That's what writers do. You should be so proud of yourselves!

Have students move their clips to PUBLISHING on their way back to their seats to begin independent writing.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What are you working on as a writer?
- Which piece will you publish?

Materials:

- *Colorful Language Colorful Language of Six Traits + 1* slide show or a teacher-made *Six Traits +1* anchor chart
- Books representing the work of favorite authors whose work showcases 1 or more of the traits
- Creating Six Traits Metaphors - Appendix
- Chart paper and markers

Note: Teachers may opt to use the overview of Six Traits +1 Writing with the information found in the first part of the minilesson. It is recommended that teachers review each trait in greater depth by focusing on one trait at a time in multiple sessions spread out over a period of several days. The traits can be taught as mid-workshop teaching points for other minilessons during the *Launching Writing Workshop* unit, or they can be incorporated into an interactive read aloud focused on “reading like a writer.” It is recommended that teachers give a quick review of the traits on the day that they introduce writing conferences and use the remaining trait information in subsequent lessons.

Teachers may create an anchor chart or use the *Colorful Language of Six Traits + 1* slide show to review the traits of writing. To deepen students’ understanding of the Six Traits + 1 Writing, have them create a visual metaphor of the traits as an extension activity. Refer to the examples found in the appendix from the web site: <http://writingfix.com/traits.htm>. For more ideas about the Six Traits + 1 Writing, go to the web site: <http://educationnorthwest.org/>.

Purpose: *Writers use the shared language of the traits of good writing to provide one another with feedback on what works and does not work in their writing.*

TEKS: 5.15 A, B, C, D, E

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- explicitly state my teaching point

Relate a time when you had trouble communicating what you wanted to say to someone because you did not have a shared language. Discuss the frustration you and the other individual

experienced trying to communicate your ideas. Tell students that we can avoid this frustrating during writing workshop by using the shared language of Six Traits +1.

Writers, when we work together as a class or with our partners, we need a common language to use to talk about our writing. Six Traits + 1 is a way to study our writing and to notice what work works well and what parts need reworking. It was created by a group of teachers from Oregon back in 1983 as a way to assess student writing. Since that time, it has become a powerful teaching tool that pushes writers to grow by using the qualities of good writing to revise and improve our pieces. Originally, there were six different qualities of writing, including ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions. Later, the quality of presentation was added to help writers be more conscious showing their best work during the publishing phase of the writing process.

This year, we want to continue to grow as writers. To help us achieve this goal, we will use the shared language of Six Traits +1 to help us talk about our writing and to study what authors do well in the books we read. Let’s take a look at the traits of writing.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Use an anchor chart or the *Colorful Language of Six Traits + 1* slide show to review the traits of writing. Discuss the traits one by one and give an example of a favorite author that uses the trait well in their writing.

Six Traits + 1 Writing Checklist or Anchor Chart

Ideas: “The heart of my message is woven throughout the piece.”
Organization: “My ideas are arranged in a thoughtful manner that is easy to follow.”
Word Choice: “My carefully-chosen words sparkle vividly and precisely.”
Sentence Fluency: “My sentences flow with rhythm and variety.”
Voice: “My personality shines through my words and ideas.”
Conventions: “My language usage and mechanics are polished.”

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Ask students to turn and talk to a partner about a favorite author of theirs and ask them to share an example of a trait that the author uses well in his writing. Listen in on the conversations. Debrief by sharing a few of the ideas you overheard students discuss.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Writers, today and every day when you write, you can use what you know about the traits of good writing to make your ideas sizzle and sparkle with life as you show the world the unique writing voice that is yours alone.

During independent writing, ask students to focus on using one of the traits in their writing. Alternatively, you may ask students to study the work of different authors and draw conclusions about the traits that they use well. Another suggestion is having students develop a classroom metaphor for the traits that they can refer to throughout the year as a way to talk about their writing. Refer to the information from the web site: <http://writingfix.com/>.

Possible Conference Questions:

- How can you use your knowledge of the traits of writing to improve your writing?
- Which trait do you feel is the strongest in your writing? Why? Show me an example of where you have used this trait.
- Which trait do you feel you need to work on more? Why? Show me a place in your writing where you could improve this trait.
- Tell me about a favorite author. What trait do they use well?

Materials:

- *Colorful Language of Six Traits + 1* slide show or a teacher-made *Six Traits +1* anchor chart
- Books representing the work of favorite authors whose work showcases 1 or more of the traits

Note: Teachers may revisit the traits one at a time as mid-workshop teaching points during other Launching Writing Workshop minilessons or as interactive “read like a writer” read alouds. Point out the craft of authors who have used the various traits well in a mentor text and encourage students to focus on using the trait during independent writing.

Mid-Workshop Teaching Point: IDEAS

Suggested Use: *Use with Idea-Generating Minilessons*

Writers, ideas are the main message we want to convey to our writers. Without a strong, focused idea our writing may ramble on and on, and we risk losing the interest of our readers as they struggle to make sense of what we are trying to say. Good writing does not “tell” readers things they already know. Rather, it “shows” the reader what is happening in the story by revealing the interesting bits and pieces of life that make our writing lively and thoughtful. Ideas are the common thread that runs throughout a piece of writing, which is strengthened by rich, supporting details.

Provide students with an example of an author who uses the trait of ideas well. It is recommended that you use a different author for each trait to help students make stronger associations for each of the traits. Hold up the book and briefly discuss how the author uses the trait of ideas as a thread for weaving their story together tightly.

Mid-Workshop Teaching Point: ORGANIZATION

Suggested Use: *Use with Pre-writing/Planning Minilessons Focused on Organization*

Writers, organization is the internal structure of a piece of writing. When the organization is strong, the piece begins meaningfully and creates a sense of anticipation that is fulfilled with a well-planned, thoughtful ending. Throughout the piece, the events and information move the reader along by connecting one idea to the next. The piece closes by tying up any loose ends and answering important questions while still leaving the reader something to think about.

Provide students with a different example of an author who uses the trait of organization well. Show students a book by the author and briefly explain how the author uses the trait of organization to engage and lead the reader along throughout the piece.

Mid-Workshop Teaching Point: WORD CHOICE

Suggested Use: *Use with the Drafting or Revision Minilessons*

Writers, word choice is the use of rich, colorful, precise language that communicates in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. Powerful word choice creates sensory images that allow the reader to experience the writing using his senses. Figurative language such as metaphors, similes and analogies enhance and enrich the ideas of a piece. Strong word choice is the ability to use everyday words well.

Show students a book by an author who uses well-chosen words. Briefly explain how the author uses the trait of word choice to paint rich mental pictures that help the reader experience the writing through their senses.

Mid-Workshop Teaching Point: SENTENCE FLUENCY

Suggested Use: *Use with Revision Minilessons*

Writers, sentence fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just to the eye. Fluent writing is free of awkward word patterns that slow the reader’s progress. Sentences vary in length, beginnings, structure, and style. They are so well crafted that the writer moves and “dances” through the piece with ease.

Share an example of a book by an author who has strong sentence fluency. Highlight different ways the author varies his sentence structure and length to create writing that flows to create a tone that matches the style of the piece.

Mid-Workshop Teaching Point: VOICE

Suggested Use: *Use with Revision Minilessons*

Writers, voice is the writer coming through the words, the sense that a real person is speaking to us and cares about the message. It is the heart and soul of the writing, the magic, the wit, the feeling, the life and breath. When the writer is personally engaged with the topic, his personal tone and flavor shines through. The unique, one-of-a-kind

fingerprint distinguishes his writing from all others.

Show students a book by an author with strong voice. Point out ways the author creates voice through his word choice and sentence fluency, which work together to create the unique style or voice of the author.

Mid-Workshop Teaching Point: CONVENTIONS

Suggested Use: *Use with Editing Minilessons*

Writers, the conventions trait is the mechanical correctness of the piece. It is the way we use spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar/usage, and paragraphing. Writing that is strong in conventions has been proofread and edited with care. It helps the reader easily move through a piece of writing and allows them to focus on our message.

Explain that all authors use similar conventions to help readers follow their train of ideas. Show students an example of an author who uses conventions in an interesting way or to create a special effect. Explain how the author uses the convention to make an impact or convey an idea in a unique manner.

Mid-Workshop Teaching Point: PRESENTATION

Suggested Use: *Use Prior to the Publishing Minilesson*

Writers, presentation is the way we show our message on paper through our words and visual layout. Even if our ideas, words, and sentences are vivid, precise, and well constructed, the writing will not be inviting to read unless we create a visual presentation that invites our readers to explore our ideas. Presentation includes a balance of white space with visuals and text, neatness, handwriting, font choice, borders, and overall appearance.

Show students an example of a picture book such as a Caldecott book that displays an effective layout and presentation of the text and visuals. Point out specific qualities that show how the text and visuals work together with white space to create visually pleasing stories.