

Launching Writer's Workshop: Creating Your Own Writing Culture

The First 15-20 days of Writing Workshop

(3-5)

Creating a culture in a classroom where everyone feels like a writer is the most powerful way to get started when teaching writing workshop. Yes, you have units with many teaching points, but first and foremost we need to get kids to believe in themselves and the work. Taking the time to do this will pay off big for the entire year. You may even notice it spilling over into areas of instruction. Here are a few tips I learned along the way to create this magic of building confidence as well as craft, and most importantly, empowered writers with a voice.

BIG GOALS these first 20 days:

- Building a community of writers where children see themselves as a writer building confidence and TRUST
- Taking writers through the writing process
- Volume, stamina, and independence
- Establishing YOUR rituals for writing workshop music, writing with your writers, partnership work, fluid structures of walking back and forth to the gathering area

***Writers are writing small moment narratives (although that is just the container we are focused much more on the above goals than the quality of writing for this unit).

***If you teach THIRD GRADE OR YOUR WRITERS HAVE NEVER USED A WRITER'S NOTEBOOK, then during this unit be sure to emphasize the power of the notebook. It is a rite of passage in third grade and should not be given until writers reach third grade. Therefore it is HUGE! Say things throughout the first few weeks like...*Writers live differently because they now have a notebook. This is special to third grade...second graders don't get one. Writers see things others don't. Carry it with you and write things you see, feel, notice, think about. Your writer's notebook is a precious gift.*

TO PREPARE:

- Create your own writers notebook: see day 4
- Create a space for a writing center with draft paper, special black pens for all writing and purple and green for revision and editing, mentor text, inspirational writing quotes, scissors, tape, staples
- Create space for your gathering area and writing charts
- All writers use black and white composition books, pocket folders for drafts
- Gather mentor text: *Ralph Tells a Story* by Abby Hanlon, *The Best Story* by Eileen Spinelli, *Kitchen Dance*, *The Writers Notebook: Unlocking the Writer Within* by Ralph Fletcher

Day 1: 5 min. ML 5 min. IW 5 min. share Total WW Time: 15 Min	Day 2: 5-7 min. ML 5-8 min. IW 5 min. share Total WW Time: 15-20 Min	Day 3: 5-8 min. ML 5-10 min. IW 5 min. share Total WW Time: 15-23 Min.	Day 4: 5-10 min. ML 5-10 min. IW 5 min. share Total WW Time: 15-25 Min.	Day 5: 10 min. ML 5-10 min. IW 5 min. share Total WW Time: 20-25 Min.
Lesson: <i>Generate ideas by thinking of every day things you DID over the summer.</i>	Lesson: <i>Generate ideas by thinking of people and moments</i>	Lesson: <i>Writers Generate ideas from the heart (create a heart map that can go on notebook or folder. Teachers use different color construction paper and draw lines to create parts in the of the heart. Each part writers can write or sketch something close to them)</i>	Lesson: ON DEMAND <i>Use prompt from Pathways Assessment pg.182</i>	Lesson: <i>Writers generate ideas by revisiting past strategies...do, people, close to your heart</i>
Independent Writing Looks Like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ritual (writing w your writers at their desk, playing music or singing to transition to writing time) • Be sure to include the 3 parts of workshop (mini lesson in gathering area, independent writing at desks, and teaching share back at gathering area) • Highlighting the positive in the teaching share. It will be quick so anything you 	Independent Writing Looks Like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention the 3 Ss (seated, silent and self-reliant in a way that feels essential to workshop. For ex. <i>Wasn't workshop beautiful—I think it was because everyone was working their hardest from their seat, not bothering anyone and kept themselves going—so important...</i>) • Encourage writers to write on the back of notebook and draw a line under the old entry and start new 	Independent Writing Looks Like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention the importance of using the “magic” pens • In teaching share may create a list of my job and your job during WW. Have the kids turn and talk to help you generate and then record on chart paper. May become the writers “Commitments” • Read <i>Ralph Tells a Story?</i> By Abby Hanlon ahead of time and discuss 	Independent Writing Looks Like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher give no support other than referring to prompt • Have the prompt up or typed up for all to see. • Read aloud exactly as given • Tell the writers to do the best they can. It is information that will help you • Allow 45 min. but stop when the last writer is done. <p>Afterward you may spend 30 min. decorating the writer’s notebook. Include four big</p>	Independent Writing Looks Like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue writing with the kids, noticing the positive and the rituals • In Teaching share or mid workshop interruption mention the importance of volume have the kids count their words and set a little goal. Also start numbering their pages in their notebook. • Also, have kids select a seed idea to bring to publication

<p>see...<i>Wow did ALL of you keep your pen moving the entire time? Impressive!</i></p>	<p>ones (if time)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the teaching share have writers do a bit of writing identity answer this in their notebook when has writing been easy and when has it been hard and why for both? 	<p>some ways in which you want your classroom to look like that writing classroom.</p>	<p>things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. writerly quotes, 2. A writerly title created with puffy paint or letter cut out of a magazine. Brainstorm titles such as <i>Live differently. Write OR Live Like a Writer,</i> 3. Add a picture or two of family or friends. If they don't bring one in, take a picture out a recess with their bff. 4. A map with their heart from yesterday 	<p>as HW. Tell them this is an important decision. Think hard because you will live with this idea for a while. Be sure you care about it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do some writing identity work here: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Form an inner and outer circle -Have writers bring their notebook and prepare to share a possible entry they may bring to publication -Play “getting to know you” from the KING and I. when the music stops the writers share with a partner. You might have the inner circle move counter clockwise and the outer move clockwise. <p>***The song is significant because a HUGE goal is helping kids see themselves as writers. In order to do that you have to get to know them and they each other. Critical in building their confidence, and trust.</p>
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<p>Day 6: 10 min. ML 7-12 min. IW 5 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 22-27 min</p>	<p>Day 7: 10-12 min. ML 7-15 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 22-37 min</p>	<p>Day 8: 10-12 min. ML 7-15 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 22-37 min.</p>	<p>Day 9: 10-12 min. ML 7-15 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 22-37 min.</p>	<p>Day 10: 10-12 min. ML 7-15 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 22-37 min</p>
<p>Lesson: <i>Writers select and develop their idea by asking what is it really, really, really about? Answer with could it be's three times. Could it be about ...</i> OR <i>Could it be about...</i> OR <i>Could it be about...</i></p>	<p>Lesson: <i>Writers plan and draft their stories using a timeline and separate sheets of paper for drafting.</i></p>	<p>Lesson: <i>Writers put their drafts aside and go back into your notebooks and generate more ideas. You can do this by trying on old strategies or this new one of issues and moments. Issues like bullying, fitting in, moving, sibling rivalry, loss, racial tension, and divorce.</i></p>	<p>Lesson: <i>Writers understand your role and my role when conferring. Then go off and generate more ideas using any strategy that works for you.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model this with a student • Then chart out what the kids notice Entitle it: Conferring: Teacher's Role, Writer's Role 	<p>Lesson: <i>Writers develop their seed idea by asking what might this moment be teaching me about me, others, life? Answer with could it be...</i></p>
<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers go off and try to find deeper meaning around their topic hard. • Some may need to decide on a seed still • You may have them re-see their seed once they know their heart and write with more 	<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may be a longer lesson helping kids create a timeline and then giving them half sheets or whole sheets of loose-leaf paper to draft. Be sure they have their heart at the top of their timeline (this 	<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go back to emphasizing the rituals, be sure to write, be sure to mention aloud when kids are taking risks (especially any reluctant writers) • Encourage writers to start a new entry. 	<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring out stamina chart and share the goal for today 17 min. • Practice conferring with one or two writers. Remember 5-7 min. long, and at eye level with the writer. Start with 	<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again writers will approximate. Try to meet with as many writers as you can to support with this lesson but also allow for very simplistic themes • In the mid-workshop

<p>dialogue don't worry much about quality they will be approximating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize stamina and bring out a "tracking stamina chart" in the teaching share 	<p>can be in the notebook still so they keep the heart at the forefront while planning)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When they draft they come out of the notebook on loose-leaf paper so they can later revise and edit. They don't write on the back on loose -leaf. Point out that writers go through a process. You can bring out a graphic to show where they are and even to place their name somewhere on the graphic so they can see where they are. Some teaches use clothespins with names on them for kids to move along the process. Point out the writing center with the draft paper is kept along with mentor text, special pens, etc. 	<p>You can do this at the mid workshop interruption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start one-to one conferring (may have started earlier but definitely start by now Have writers meet with a partner (anyone) to share their writing at the teaching share 	<p>compliment conferences just for this first month of school. These should be shorter 3-5 min.</p> <p>Research the Writer: <i>What work are you doing as a writer? What's your goal? What are you proud of in your writing?</i></p> <p>Then Compliment the Writer:</p> <p>3 parts: 1. Name what the writer is doing or trying to do. 2. Say WHY that's important. 3. Remind the writer to use it again and again in any piece</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also, tell writers that you will select another seed as a possibility for HW 	<p>interruption, <i>teach how to PLAN their story using a timeline</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new set of partners meet to share their writing work for the day. The teacher goes around coaches around engagement and respect and real listening to each other, and then assesses how well the partners are matched since the teacher will have to decide by the end of the unit the long-term partnerships. Take notes as you do this. Move fast, getting to as many as you can.
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<p>Day 11: 10-12 min. ML 10-20 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 25-42 min</p>	<p>Day 12: 10-12 min. ML 10-20 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 25-42 min</p>	<p>Day 13: 10-12 min. ML 10-20 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 25-42 min</p>	<p>Day 14: 10-12 min. ML 10-20 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 25-42 min</p>	<p>Day 15: 10-12 min. ML 10-20 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 25-42 min</p>
<p>Lesson: <i>Writers take their timeline and draft across pages.</i></p>	<p>Lesson: <i>Writers look across both of their drafts (the one from day 7) and decide which one they will bring to publication and revise and edit. Teach how to write in the moment vs. a summary.</i></p>	<p>Lesson: <i>Writers revise. They do this by stretching out the heart, using external or internal dialogue that emphasizes the heart</i></p>	<p>Lesson: <i>Writers revise by crafting a lead and ending that matches the heart. You might start with setting, internal or external dialogue, or action. You might end full circle repeating place or something from lead. Check out the book "Kitchen Dance" by Maurice J. Manning for a circular ending.</i></p>	<p>Lesson: <i>Writers revise by looking at finding the precise word. They can do this by finding any passive verbs and revising them to be active. Such as "is, are, was, were, had, have, etc and change to active—dart, glide, stack, twirls, spins, clang.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit "Kitchen Dance" to highlight active verbs
<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may need to revisit planning using a time line from yesterday's share. Have writers bring their notebook to the rug so you can peek at their timeline. Also have them write the heart above the timeline. Hopefully saying it in a sentence. They can even put a box around the heart for 	<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confer (You should be up 2-3 writers per day with compliment conferring stop after the compliment. It will pay off!) • You may be ready to take some records on your conferring. Make your system work for you. It is to inform your instruction, keep 	<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the mid-workshop interruption highlight a writer who tries the TP either by writing in the margin or getting a half sheet of paper to revise that section of the heart • Write with the kids at the start like always and don't forget the music. 	<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You might decide this is too much and save teaching the ending for the teaching share or tomorrow's lesson. Totally fine. • Encourage writers to "try on" several leads before committing to one. • They can practice leads in their notebook and may even want to 	<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to hold compliment conferences, highlight writers in a positive light especially the writer who doesn't see himself as a writer yet...building confidence is the most important thing in this first unit • Highlight any writer who took a chance

<p>emphasis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new set of partners meet in the teaching share. They share their heart and the part of their draft that REALLY shows it. Teacher goes around and coaches for engagement and assesses how well the partnership is working. <p>OR have writers jot in their notebook “what do I need/want in a writing partner and share some of that. This goes with earlier writing identity work and can go in a section labeled such in the back of the notebook later it will become more around goal setting</p>	<p>track of you have seen and you haven’t and can be great information to share with parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a mid-workshop highlighting someone in a positive light • Have a teaching share around “living like a writer.” Use ralph Fletcher’s <i>A Writer’s Notebook: Unlocking the Writer Within You</i>. I like the chapter on “Fierce Wonderings” but any will do and you definitely want to read from this from time to time. <p>Invite writers to write at home. Yes we have a piece we a re working on but we are always living like a writer finding things that matter to write about. Invite your writers to take their notebook home and be sure to check first thing in the AM to see who did. (also remind before they leave that they MAY want to take their notebook home).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be looking for writers who seem well matched as a partner • Highlight any writer who wrote in their notebook at home in the teaching share and invite others to do the same. 	<p>practice at home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once they decide on their lead, revise it is on their draft. • Highlight any writer who revised. Make a BIG fuss over this. Like this is the GREATEST thing you’ve ever seen 	<p>and revised their writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with a new partner and share revisions you made. Be on the look out for partners that work. You are really looking for personalities that work a quiet writer with one more who is outgoing.
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<p>Day 16: 10-12 min. ML 15-25 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 30-47 min</p>	<p>Day 17: 10-12 min. ML 15-25 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 30-47 min</p>	<p>Day 18: 10-12 min. ML 15-25 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 30-47 min</p>	<p>Day 19: 10-12 min. ML 15-25 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 30-47 min</p>	<p>Day 20: 10-12 min. ML 15-25 min. IW 5-10 min. share Total WW Workshop Time: 30-47 min</p>
<p>Lesson: <i>Writers edit their writing specifically for capitalization and end punctuation.</i></p>	<p>Lesson: <i>Writers edit to punctuate dialogue.</i></p>	<p><i>Writers fancy up their writing by reading it over and to a partner. Also, they reflect on the writing process. They write on an index card. What part of the process was easy and what was hard. What are they proud of that they feel better around as a writer now? Also what goals are they setting for themselves for the next unit.. Goals around volume in their notebook, stamina, writing more, revising or editing more</i></p>	<p><i>Writers celebrate! Share how that goes. Possible Chart:</i> Writers Celebrate! -Meet partner and thank them for being your partner—shake hand. -Give literary gift -Share writer’s notebook and why you included what you did on it -Interview your partner and take notes! -Take notebook, draft, and reflection card and meet with another partnership and share one of the items</p>	<p><i>Writers may do an on demand</i></p>
<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some writers will be ready to edit while others may be drafting and revising. That’s ok. Just remind writers that we have a 	<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You might want writers to use a color pen for this. I recommend green or purple. Stay away from RED! You might have introduced this 	<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This day is here for any last minute touches. Remember writers don’t need to copy over their piece. Practice reading and preparing for 	<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <p>***Teacher goes around and takes picture of writers with their notebook to later put on bulleting board. Teacher can also display a Xeroxed copy of the notebook entry, timeline, and the draft in a pocket folder</p>	<p>Independent Writing Looks Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at first on demand and share with your partner ways in which you’ve grown Write a bit around how much you have grown and feel now

<p>deadline and we want to be ready for that.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try not to make a BIG deal on the <i>look</i> of writing. They will be reading it aloud for celebration so it is fine if there are errors. <p>REMEMBER our GOALS for this first unit! And always keep in mind what Calkins says, TEACH THE WRITER NOT THE WRITING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have partners (a new set of writers) work together to share out what changes they've made. 	<p>yesterday too. You also may introduce the writing center where materials are stored. This may have happened earlier when introducing mentor text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with a new partner to share any edits you made. Teacher continues to go around and coach and assess. 	<p>celebration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have writers mark pages with a post it or flag entries that started the draft, the page with “what’s it really about”, the timeline to prepare for celebration • Prepare a literary gift for tomorrow’s celebration and the unveiling of the partnerships – a writing quote on construction paper, a poem about writing, a bookmark. Write something on the back thanking them for being your partner. 	<p>on the bulletin board. The index card and picture of partner somewhere posted near that folder and then a title and short explanation of the goals of the unit posted.</p> <p>Possible Interview Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where do you like to write? 2. When do you like to write? 3. What family rituals do you have? 4. What do you like to do after school? ON the weekends? 5. Do you have any siblings? What are their ages? 	<p>as a writer (In notebook in identity section)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an “about the author” page with your partner. Teacher will hang on bulletin board near published work folder.
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