



Implementing an Effective Writing Program

- Writing Process**
- Writing Workshop**
- Traits of Good Writing**

**A Comprehensive, Integrated Model Drawing
on Today's Best Practices
in Writing and Assessment-Driven
Instruction**





Implementing an Effective Writing Program

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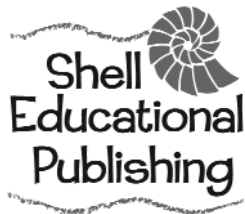
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GETTING STARTED

The First Unit

**Lessons to teach
the writing process
and the traits of good
writing using the
writing workshop format**



The First Unit

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Tips and Tricks

In the first unit, you teach the mechanics of the writing workshop. However, you do so in the midst of the year's first writing project. Thus, in the following lessons, you (generally) alternate between teaching a step of the writing process and teaching a component of the writing workshop. Depending both on the grade level you teach and the speed of your young authors, you may need to adjust the timing of these lessons or even choose to teach workshop components such as Authentic Spelling or peer-group sharing while students work on their second assignment.

The First Unit

Tips and Tricks *(cont.)*

For the remainder of the year, you will be teaching students how to write better. So, during this first unit, focus on setting yourself up for success in that endeavor by spending your time teaching and reinforcing the writing process and the writing workshop.

- By the end of the unit, your day-to-day format should be smooth; students should transition from journaling to a mini lesson, to independent work, to sharing, with minimal prompting.
- By the end of this unit, students should be able to work productively and appropriately through all the aforementioned writing “sections” with minimal prompting.
- In the days after teaching a writing workshop component, refresh and reinforce the mechanics. Don’t shy away from using instructional time to list and quickly remember as a group the lessons you have already covered. Depending on the grade level and general student aptitude, you may even decide to use the last five minutes of every class to revisit the mechanics of your workshop.
- Once you have taught a component such as peer-group sharing, small-group lessons, or worksheet-guided lessons, look for opportunities to use the techniques in the following days.
- Students will need a three-ring binder in which to collect all their writing materials. This binder will be used only in your writing class and most of the time will remain in the classroom. Occasionally, a student may need to take their binder from the classroom. Use the **Writing Notebook Checkout Sheet**, page 19, as a classroom organizer to help students (and you) keep track of their binders.
- Encourage students to include a Quick Information Sheet, page 12, near the front of their three-ring notebooks. Keep your own copy to remind you about the writing workshop and its components.
- While all necessary directions are included on worksheet-guided lessons, you will undoubtedly have students who would rather have you clarify the directions in person. However, your time is better spent instructing small groups or working with individuals. To limit unnecessary questions, you may distribute Question Quota Slips, page 20, at the beginning of each major assignment. Students may use these quota slips as they see fit, but once they run out, they will need to work independently (barring major creative emergency).
- Early in the year you will want to inform families of the strategies you will use in your classroom. Sending an initial Letter to Families, page 36, is especially important if you plan to use adult revision sheets. You might wish to send the letter after you complete the Day 8 lesson, page 32, where you introduce Revision Sheets.
- The Combined Grading Sheet, page 48, allows you to quickly and easily organize in one place all the number grades that you might accumulate through assignment packets, worksheets, participation, Authentic Spelling, and so forth.

The First Day: Journaling/Overview

Lesson Overview

Immediately upon entering the classroom, students journal on a given prompt. The lesson focus is giving an overview of the year's writing program (though you may also choose to implement the program in the middle of a year). You will conclude your first class period by sharing students' writing in a non-threatening, anonymous format.

Objectives

- Set the tone for quiet, independent writing.
- Teach students what to expect from the class for the year.
- Preview the workshop format of journaling, mini lesson, independent work, and sharing.
- Introduce students to the collaborative environment in which their work is shared with the class.

Materials, Time, and Preparation

Materials	Paper, pens/pencils, box or hat for anonymous submission
Time	Approximately 50 minute class period
Preparation	Make paper/pens/pencils easily accessible in your room. Write the day's journaling prompt on the classroom board: "What scares you the most about the first day of school? Why?" If you like, make an overhead of the Quick Information Sheet, page 12.

Lesson Directions

1. 5–7 MINUTES: JOURNALING

As students enter the classroom, ask them to take a piece of paper and a pencil/pen, to find a seat (assigned/choice is up to you), and to write their thoughts about the prompt on the board. Ask students NOT to put names on their papers as you will be sharing these thoughts anonymously later. Reinforce the fact that this is not a high-pressure assignment—just a way to share their thoughts. If you like, unobtrusively take attendance while students write. Either journal with the students or write a personal response to the prompt before class.

2. 5 MINUTES: GREETING

Greet the class, thank them for their writing efforts, and let them know they will have another couple minutes later in the period to finish writing their thoughts. Introduce yourself and read aloud your writing about the prompt. Explain that in the course of the year everyone will become well acquainted through writing (though reassure students that today's writing will be read anonymously at the end of the period). Explain that today the class will be doing three things: getting to know each other, getting to know the classroom, and (as they have already seen) doing some writing. Have students say their names and either one interesting fact about them, or their favorite thing to do outside school.

3. 20 MINUTES: LESSON

Display the Quick Information Overhead, or simply explain the following:

- The class is a “writing workshop” in which students start every day with journaling, move to a short lesson, to independent work, and finally to sharing/wrap up. Using the writing workshop, students learn by *doing*, having the opportunity to write a lot.
- Authentic Writing: After the first unit, students will mostly choose their own topics. If there is anything in which students are especially interested, they will get to write about the topic and, through research, learn more about the things that interest them.
- The Writing Process: Instead of just plowing through writing, students will use the writing process, which includes planning what they will write, writing it, and revising it with the help of adults and peers. For each assignment, students will turn in not only their finished copy, but also a packet of information showing the steps of the writing process.
- Student three-ring binders: Every student should bring in a three-ring binder for use ONLY in this class (by a defined due-date of your choice). When they do, you will give them their own Quick Information Sheet, and students will keep the binder in the classroom (alternately you can pre-purchase binders and pass them out as students bring money to you).
- There are a bunch of little things the class will figure out as they go—don't worry if the preceding information seems a bit unclear; reinforce the structure of the writing workshop.

4. 5 MINUTES: INDEPENDENT WORK

Ask students to take five minutes to finish writing their thoughts about the prompt and to anonymously submit their sheets to the hat/box.

5. 10 MINUTES: SHARING

Read students' writing aloud. Thank students for a good first day and quickly explain that tomorrow, they will start the first “real” project. Remind them to bring in a three-ring binder ASAP!

Encourage these students to keep writing! Depending on your preference, they may continue writing about the day’s prompt in their writing journals, revisit an ongoing project such as a “book” or compilation of poems, or start/maintain a class newsletter or website. Alternately, you can ask these students to become editing partners for peers or to complete an extra credit (likely Writers’ Toolbox) lesson. However, most often these students finished early due to a desire to *write*—encourage them to continue to do so!

3. 20 MINUTES: INDEPENDENT WORK TIME

Most students should be ready to work on their final, published copy. As resources dictate, you may need to schedule computer time for this period or perhaps ask students to type their papers at home in the evening. If you choose to let students take their writing notebooks home, consider using the Writing Notebook Checkout Sheet to help ensure they come back promptly and in one piece.

4. 10 MINUTES: SHARING/WRAP-UP

Remind students of the upcoming due date and encourage those who are significantly behind to catch up on their work at home. Discuss problems/concerns, reinforce the components of the writing workshop already covered (especially Authentic Spelling, reminding students of the weekly test), and perhaps briefly preview Author’s Chair, which will end every project and is likely coming up within the next few days.

Day 12: Author's Chair

First Unit Lesson Overview

You will transition directly into independent work time (publishing), after which you will explain the procedure for and begin Author's Chair. Be sure to reinforce the way in which today's schedule differs from the standard workshop schedule.

Objectives

- Students will learn the procedure for Author's Chair.

Materials, Time, and Preparation

Materials	none
Time	Approximately 50 minute class period
Preparation	none

Lesson Directions

1. 5 MINUTES: JOURNALING

As students enter the classroom, ask them to find their writing notebook and to write their thoughts about the given prompt. By now all student three-ring binders should be organized. During the first few minutes of class, focus on solidifying the routine of finding binders and starting to journal immediately.

2. 20 MINUTES: INDEPENDENT WORK

Explain that at the end of every project, students will share their work aloud during Authors' Chair, and that on these days the workshop schedule will be a bit different. Allow ± 20 minutes for independent work, during which most students will work on writing/typing/decorating a finished product. See the previous lesson for ideas in helping finished students remain productive. You will likely want to solicit volunteers to share their work first in Author's Chair, or at least get a clear picture of who is ready to share. Explain to reluctant readers that sharing their work through Author's Chair is a necessary part of the writing process.

3. 25 MINUTES: AUTHORS' CHAIR

Ask students to clear their desks of everything except finished work (writing notebooks should be re-filed, utensils returned, and everything else should go on the floor). When the class is ready, explain that at the end of every unit, students will share their work aloud during Author's Chair. As everyone put a lot of work into getting the pieces just right through revisions and editing, now is the time to present the finished product to a *supportive* audience.

This is not the time for constructive criticism. In Author’s Chair, every student should feel completely successful. Reinforce that this is not a high-pressure situation—everybody will read to an attentive and supportive audience who will clap at the end of each presentation, and offer three positive comments. Then, simply move on to the next person. (You may, however, offer to read pieces for especially shy authors if you see fit.)

Also let students know that during Author’s Chair you will start to grade papers (instead of saving all assessment for the end, you may choose to listen for one or two of the Traits of Good Writing, likely Word Choice and Sentence Fluency, while students are reading their work aloud). You may again want to review the Packet Grading Coversheet and the components required in a finished assignment packet.

If at all possible, you should start Author’s Chair by reading aloud your own “About the Author” writing (or you may substitute another personal writing of your choice). As you read, demand the same respect for yourself that you demand while students are reading. Ask students to offer three positive comments and then move into student presentations.

At the end of the day, remind students when *finished assignment packets* are due and encourage any students who are behind to finish up at home. Explain that Authors’ Chair will continue as long as necessary for each student to share his or her work, and then you will be moving directly to the next writing project. Congratulate students on nearing the completion of their first assignment in the writing workshop! (All told, you may only get a few readings done during this class period because of time constraints.)

Day 13: Reinforcing the Process

First Unit Lesson Overview

As this is likely the due date for completed assignment packets, you will refresh the components of the writing workshop covered in this first unit and will reinforce the elements needed to get full points on a finished assignment packet. Students will have time to organize their packets, and you will continue with Author's Chair presentations.

Objectives

- Students will reinforce their understanding of writing workshop procedures, focusing on the completion of assignment packets.

Materials, Time, and Preparation

Materials	Packet Grading Coversheets
Time	Approximately 50 minute class period
Preparation	Locate or create an overhead of the Packet Grading Coversheet, page 15.

Lesson Directions

1. 5 MINUTES: JOURNALING

As students enter the classroom, ask them to find their writing notebook and to write their thoughts about the given prompt. By now all student three-ring binders should be organized. During the first few minutes of class, focus on solidifying the routine of finding binders and starting to journal immediately.

2. 10 MINUTES: MINI LESSON

Ask students to remember the lessons from this first unit—what pieces of the writing workshop did they learn? (The steps of the writing process: prewrite, draft, revise, edit, and publish. Also writing workshop components: worksheet-guided lessons, journaling, authentic spelling, peer-group sharing, small-group lessons, and revision sheets.) Discuss any questions students may have about any of these components, and explain that because the basics of the workshop are under control, you will be working on how to make students' writing *better* using the Traits of Good Writing and the writing process.

Also tell students that assignment packets are now due (or due at the beginning of the next class period). Display the overhead of the Packet Grading Coversheet and review *specifically* the pieces that students will have to staple together into a completed assignment packet to receive full credit (you may want to create an example assignment packet).

Reinforce the grading procedure—if you need to, offer a “free pass” for this first unit, allowing students to get full credit even if they forget or lose evidence of *one* piece of the writing process.

You may wish to use the “Combined Grading Sheet,” page 48, to record all the scores you may give your students.

3. 10 MINUTES: INDEPENDENT WORK

Allow students 10 minutes to organize and staple together the sheets of their completed assignment packet. If students are not yet finished, they should finish at home (you may set class norms for point loss due to late work, for example, subtracting 10 points for every day a packet is late).

4. 25 MINUTES: AUTHORS’ CHAIR

Continue Author’s Chair presentations, being especially aware of the previous day’s procedure including clearing off desks, remaining an attentive and supportive audience, applauding when finished, and offering three positive comments before moving on to the next presentation.

At the end of the class period, remind students of the next Authentic Spelling day (especially if it’s tomorrow!). Also, let students know that tomorrow you will start a new project, using the same writing workshop format everyone just learned. Congratulate students on learning so much in such a short time!

Large-Group Lesson: Voice—4

“Adding Emotion”

Mini-Lesson Overview

Through guided writing and discussion, students will learn to manipulate emotion, adding *Voice* to their writing.

Objectives

- Students will begin to learn how to write for emotional purpose.

Materials, Time, and Preparation

Materials	Overhead of page 212, projector
Time	15 minutes
Preparation	None

Outline

1. Discuss how one event can be written to evoke a number of different emotions. For example, if you were writing about winning your soccer game, you could choose to detail your emotions of triumph or you could choose to focus on the feelings of your friend who plays for the other team. (“Though I was happy to win, I couldn’t help but notice Carry crying on the sidelines—she had dedicated the game to the memory of her grandmother, but it did not affect the outcome”.) This one event can be portrayed with many different emotions, adding *Voice* to the writing.
2. Ask students to brainstorm other topics and suggest what one could focus on to evoke different emotions.
3. Display the overhead and work through the exercises as a group, writing sentences that convey the desired emotion.
4. Ask students for examples of how they could add emotion to their own writing.

Adding Emotion

For each event below, write a sentence or two that makes readers feel the listed emotion. Be creative!

1. Event: Getting an "A" on a paper

Happy: _____

Proud: _____

2. Event: Waiting by the phone for your friend to call

Patient: _____

Impatient: _____

Mad: _____

3. Event: Your dog ran away and has been missing for two days.

Confident: _____

Worried: _____

Large-Group Lesson: Word Choice—1

“Nixing Nowhere Nouns”

Mini-Lesson Overview

After defining *noun*, students will learn to replace non-specific nouns with ones that describe as well as define.

Objectives

- Imbedded Grammar: Students will be able to define *noun* and recognize nouns in writing.
- Students will learn that noun choice is important in their own writing.
- Students will learn how to choose good nouns.

Materials, Time, and Preparation

Materials	Overhead of page 214, projector
Time	10-15 minutes
Preparation	None

Outline

1. Define *noun* as person, place, or thing (older students can also include “idea”).
2. Give examples of nouns and ask students to provide their own examples.
3. Discuss what makes a “good” noun (specific) and why you would want to write with specific nouns (gives clear mental picture).
4. Display overhead and work through the questions as a class.
5. Use the new, specific nouns in sentences.
6. Ask if students can find examples in their writing journals where they used either a “good” noun or one they would now like to replace.

Nixing Nowhere Nouns

First, find all the nouns in the sentences below. Then, replace the underlined noun with one of the given choices. Why is this the best choice?

1. Michelle spent all her spare time playing the game.

Choices: the board game, Monopoly

2. On an average boat there are more than 500 rats!

Choices: tanker, motorboat

How many specific nouns can you think of for the nowhere nouns below?

Dog	Sport	Toy
<p>Labrador</p> <p>Beagle</p> <p>German Shepherd Dog</p>	<p>Cricket</p> <p>Football</p> <p>Basketball</p> <p>Soccer</p>	<p>Doll</p> <p>Car Track</p> <p>Model Airplane</p>

Can you use any of the new nouns in a sentence?

Large-Group Lesson: Word Choice—2

“Voicing Volatile Verbs”

Mini-Lesson Overview

After defining *verb*, students will learn to replace non-specific verbs with ones that not only tell what happened, but also show *how* it happened.

Objectives

- Imbedded Grammar: Students will be able to define verb and recognize verbs in writing.
- Students will learn that verb choice is important in their own writing.
- Students will learn how to choose good verbs.

Materials, Time, and Preparation

Materials	Overhead of page 216, projector
Time	10-15 minutes
Preparation	None

Outline

1. Define *verb* as an action word (older students can also include “state of being”).
2. Give examples of verbs and ask students to provide their own examples.
3. Discuss what makes a “good” verb (specific) and why you would want to write with specific verbs (shows *how* something is done: running and sprinting mean almost the same thing, but give a much different mental picture).
4. Display overhead and work through the questions as a class. You may need to prompt students to define *how* an action was done. For example, “If you were running from a bear, how would you run? Would you jog or sprint?”
5. Use the new, specific verbs in sentences.
6. Ask if students can find examples in their writing journals where they used either a “good” verb or one they would now like to replace.

Writing Process—39: Stand-Alone

Setting Is Successfully Introduced

Imagine a conversation between a skateboarder and a college professor. What would the conversation be like if they were standing at a downtown bus stop? What would the conversation be like if they were in a stuffy library? The “setting” of a story (*where* it happens) can be just as important as *what* happens.

The key to describing a setting is to notice the details that other people might not notice. For example, instead of writing, “The bus stop was gross,” you could write, “Nobody sat on the benches for fear of getting stuck on melted bubble gum and pigeon droppings.”

Directions: Write one paragraph to describe each of the settings below. Remember—include details other people might not notice. Details can come from any of the five senses: See, Hear, Smell, Touch, Taste.

1. Setting: In your bedroom with a lightning storm outside.

Description: _____

2. Setting: The school cafeteria

Description: _____

Writing Process—40: Revision

The conflict or change is made clear to the reader

What are your characters trying to do? The “conflict” in your story might be as obvious as trying to find hidden treasure or trying to find friends at a new school. Whatever it is, every story needs a “conflict” or a point. Maybe your story is an adventure where a character has to pass many dangerous trials in her journey. Without knowing WHY she is journeying, the story would be only a random string of events.

Make sure the reader knows what your characters are trying to do.

1. Write your Topic/Audience/Purpose as one sentence.

Example: I will write **TO** my class **ABOUT** learning to read **SO THAT** they will learn something new about me.

2. What is the “conflict” in your story (what are the characters trying to *do*)?

Example: My character is trying to learn how to read even though it is hard for him.

3. How do readers know this is the conflict in your story? Look for places you could revise your story to make the conflict CLEAR. Write three new sentences that you will add to your writing.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Writing Process—40: Stand-Alone

The Conflict or Change is Made Clear to the Reader

Every good story needs conflict or change—something has to *happen*.

Directions: For the conflicts below, pretend that you are starting to write in the middle of a story—what happens during each conflict? Use your imagination and be creative.

1. Conflict: Cathy is trying to build the ultimate treehouse, but the squirrels living in the tree do their best to stop her.

What Happens? _____

2. Conflict: Brandon learns lessons about life when his pet pig dies.

What Happens? _____

3. Conflict: Malik is an awesome athlete, but he would rather spend his time writing.

What Happens? _____

Writing Process—41: Revision

Conflict or Change Is Resolved

Have you ever read a book or seen a T.V. show that did not have an ending? Maybe you saw a show that was *To Be Continued...* Argh! It's so frustrating! You want to know what happens and you do not want to wait until next week's episode!

The most important thing to do in an ending is to "resolve the conflict." In every good story, characters face some challenge—there's something they are trying to do. Maybe the challenge is something obvious like finding lost treasure, and maybe the challenge is something harder to spot like learning to fit in at a new school. Either way, if we do not know if the character is successful, then the story is not really over.

1. Write your Topic/Audience/Purpose as one sentence.

Example: I will write **TO** my class **ABOUT** learning to read **SO THAT** they will learn something new about me.

2. What is the "conflict" in your story (what are the characters trying to do?)

Example: My character is trying to learn how to read even though it is hard for him.

3. Think of three ways your conflict could be "resolved" (what could happen in the conflict?)

Example: 1. My character could become the best reader in the class

Resolution #1: _____

Resolution #2: _____

Resolution #3: _____

Pick one of these "resolutions" and revise your story to use it as the ending.

Writing Process—41: Stand-Alone

Conflict or change is resolved

Have you ever read a book or seen a T.V. show that did not have an ending? Maybe you saw a show that was *To Be Continued...* Argh! It is so frustrating! You want to know what happens and you do not want to wait until next week's episode!

The most important thing to do when ending a paper or story is to “resolve the conflict.” In every good story, characters face some challenge—there is something they are trying to do. Maybe the challenge is something obvious like finding lost treasure, and maybe the challenge is something harder to spot like learning to fit in at a new school. Either way, if we do not know if the character is successful, the story is not really over.

Directions: For each of the stories below, write a short ending that “resolves the conflict” in whatever way you like. Be creative!

1. Conflict: Characters are trying to find a shortcut to school, cutting through alleys and backyards.

Resolution: _____

2. Conflict: Characters are trying to grow sugar beets.

Resolution: _____

3. Conflict: Characters are trying to buy a house.

Resolution: _____

4. Conflict: Characters are skipping rocks in a river and trying to decide whether or not to go in for lunch.

Resolution: _____

Writing Process—42: Revision

Smooth Ending—No “Then I woke up” or Abrupt Halts

We are going to learn how to write a strong ending, even when you are short on time.

Directions: Below are four ways to end a story. Complete the questions below as shown in the examples.

What is your Topic/Audience/Purpose? _____

Example Topic/Audience/Purpose: “I will write about the time I fell in the river for my classmates so that they will be scared and excited.”

Ending Method #1: Remember a Feeling

1. What is a main feeling in your writing? Make this feeling into an ending sentence.

Example: In the end, all I ended up with was a set of soaked clothes and a slightly bruised ego, **but it was a scary and exciting experience** I do not need to repeat.

Ending Method #2: Describe the Setting

2. Where does your story end? Describe the scene as an ending sentence.

Example: The water kept churning and I sat on the bank hugging my wet knees.

Ending Method #3: Moral of the Story

3. What lesson did your characters learn. Write the lesson as an ending sentence.

Example: Soaked to the bone, I decided I would never try to catch fish with my hands ever again.

Ending Method #4: Restate your Point

4. Look at your Topic/Audience/Purpose. What is your main purpose? Write it as an ending sentence.

Example: As you can see, falling in the river was scary and exciting.

Writing Process—52: Stand-Alone

Includes Enough Information to Prove Point

To prove something, you want to list as many reasons why you are right as possible, and make sure you do not leave anything for readers to say against your argument. It is easy to list points, but it is hard to make sure that readers believe them!

1. Pretend that you are writing **TO** your teacher **ABOUT** chewing gum **SO THAT** your teacher will let you chew gum in class. Below are some of the points you might make. Now all you have to do is explain why your points are true.

Fill in the chart to make your teacher believe your points.

Topic/Audience/Purpose: I will write TO our teacher ABOUT chewing gum SO THAT she/he will let me chew gum in class.	
Main Points	Details/Proof/Explanation
Chewing gum helps me focus.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sometimes I have to fidget. 2. Chewing gum lets me fidget without distracting myself or others.
After eating snack, chewing sugar-free gum cleans my teeth.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2.
By collecting gum wrappers, we can raise money for the school library.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2.
Chewing gum keeps me from chewing on pencils and pens.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2.

Writing Process—53: Revision

Topic Sentences Are Positively Stated

Readers want to hear what they *should* do or think, not what they *shouldn't*. Luckily even when you want to say, "Don't do that," you can usually think of a way to say it positively instead.

1. Read the sentences below and write a "+" next to the examples that are stated positively and a "-" next to the ones that are stated negatively.

Examples:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> + Always wear your seatbelt. | <input type="checkbox"/> - Do not ride in a car without your seatbelt. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + Eat five servings of vegetables per day. | <input type="checkbox"/> - Do not just eat junk food. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do not write messy. | <input type="checkbox"/> Write neatly! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keep your eye on the ball. | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not take your eye off the ball. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> If you are not sure, just do your best. | <input type="checkbox"/> If you are not sure, do not give up. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Act now before it is too late! | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not let this valuable offer slip away. |

2. Write the first sentence from each paragraph of your draft (if your draft is one paragraph long, write every sentence). If you need more space, use the back of this page.

- 1) _____

- 2) _____

- 3) _____

- 4) _____

3. Write "+" or "-" next to your sentences (find at least one that could be "-").

4. Revise your "-" sentence(s) to make them "+" (look at question 1 for examples).

Writing Process—56: Revision

Has Listed Appropriate Number of Supporting Descriptive Details

1. What is the thing, place, or event that you described?

2. List three details about your thing, place, or event.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

3. Now write these details in the chart below and think of as many descriptive words or phrases as you can that describe each detail (at least four each).

Detail	Descriptive words or phrases
<p>Example: The sky is cloudy</p>	<p>Grey, rain clouds No breaks, just one big cloud Can't even see where the sun should be Not raining yet, but feels like it will soon</p>
<p>Detail #1:</p>	
<p>Detail #2:</p>	
<p>Detail #3:</p>	

Writing Process—56: Stand-Alone

Has Listed Appropriate Number of Supporting Descriptive Details

Pretend you are from another planet and have never seen anything like the scene described below. Using half of the back of this page, draw a picture of the scene, but ONLY draw the details that are described in words.

1. A family of four is having a picnic in a park. They have spread a checkered blanket under a big tree that has many leaves. They can hear birds chirping in the tree and can smell the freshly-cut grass baking in the sun. The two kids are throwing a Frisbee back and forth while Dad spreads peanut butter and jelly on bread and Mom snores with her head resting against the tree trunk. There are many other people picnicking and playing in and around the park enjoying the sunshine.

On the other half of the back of this page, draw a picture of the next paragraph, again ONLY drawing the details that are described in words.

2. People are on a dock. They are doing stuff. It is nice.

You probably had difficulties drawing the second paragraph. There aren't enough details! What questions would you want to ask the author that would make drawing a picture of the paragraph easier? List four questions below. (**Example:** How many people are on the dock?)

- 1) _____

- 2) _____

- 3) _____

- 4) _____

Writers' Toolbox: Hyphenated Modifiers

Whenever you use two or more words as one adjective, you should put a hyphen (-) between the words (remember, an *adjective* is a describing word).

Example: On her trip to Montana, Cecil saw a **big-horned** sheep.

In this sentence "big-horned" describes "sheep" just like a single adjective.

Example: John's cockeyed smile revealed his **fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants** attitude.

In the example, "fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants" describes John's attitude and replaces an adjective such as "reckless."

Sometimes, you can even add words to an adjective that is already there.

Example: She stepped out into the **cold** night—> She stepped out into the **cold-as-the-North-Pole** night.

Directions: Write in a "hyphenated modifier" of your choice above each underlined adjective.

Example: John sat at the barbershop, embarrassed by his ^{too-long} scraggly hair.

Example: Four hours after eating the oysters, she started to get that ^{not-so-good} bad feeling.

1. His heart skipped a beat as he watched the fast horse streak around the track.
2. After staying up all night studying, Chantell started to get that tired feeling.
3. The neighbor's big cat yowling on the back fence made it hard to sleep.
4. He tripped, bashing his elbow into the hard pavement.
5. She wrote a letter to the paper about the government's bad policies.

This is hard! Take your time and do your best. Be creative!

Writers' Toolbox: Personification

Have you ever seen sunshine smile? Have you heard a dog speak? What if a tree looked like an old man?

Sometimes the best way to explain something is to make it seem human. This is called *personification* (to make into a person). Any time a thing or an animal does something in a piece of writing that is like a human, the writer has used personification.

Personify the following "things" by making each of them do something human. This is hard! Do your best and be creative.

Examples: The moon: The moon wrapped the night forest in her arms.

A chair: The chair sat in the middle of the floor, surveying the room.

1) The sun: _____

2) A cat: _____

3) The ocean: _____

4) A violin: _____

5) A field of grass: _____

Now, either find a place in your writing journal where you can revise a piece to add personification, or use one of your personifications above as the first sentence of a new paragraph. Write about whatever you like, and be creative!

Writers' Toolbox: Noun+Verb+"ing"

Remember math formulas? Bet you didn't think there was such thing as a writing formula. Check out the way this formula adds immediate details to sentences:

Noun+Verb+"ing"

Example: Teeth glinting, the rats scurried out of their hole.
Noun+verb+ing

Eyes shining, cheeks glowing, she twirled in circles under the moon.
Noun+verb+ing Noun+verb+ing

1. Use the noun and verb below (plus "ing") to start a sentence. Be creative with the writing that follows your verb+ing's!

Example: Knees, knock: Knees knocking, he stood on the end of the high dive.

1) Pencil, smoke: _____

2) Shoe, squeak: _____

3) Bird, chirp: _____

4) Fingers, fly: _____

2. Make up your own noun+verb+ing that could start the sentences below. These are hard! Take your time and be creative!

Example: Stomach turning, she looked at the food in the school cafeteria.

1). _____, the birds flew low overhead.

2). _____, the snowman melted into the grass.

3). _____, he heaved the logs into the truck.

4). _____, the elephants stomped across the grassland.

3. Write one sentence below that starts with a noun+verb+ing.

Daily Journal Prompts

Start the majority of your writing workshop days with five minutes of silent journal writing. Display one of the prompts below or use your own idea starter to set the mood for a day of writing. If you like, check the boxes (or write dates) next to each prompt as you use them to avoid duplication.

				Is television good?					I wish I did not have to...
				How do you feel about your appearance?					What do you do for exercise?
				My idea of a fun weekend is					What parts of nature do you like best?
				What would you do if someone told you a joke that you did not think is funny?					What do you think someone your age can do to help reduce the amount of pollution in our environment?
				What four things are most important in your life?					What would you invent to make life better?
				What are some examples of prejudice?					What do you think the world will be like when you are a grown-up?
				If you could do whatever you wanted to right now, what would you do?					What would you do if you wanted to be friends with someone who did not speak English?
				What would you do if your friend had a broken leg? How would you cheer him or her up?					What would you do if you were in the middle of the lake and your boat began to leak?
				What if cows gave root beer instead of milk?					What is something that makes you feel sad?
				What would happen if you found gold in your backyard?					What would happen if children ruled the world?
				What would happen if there were no cars, buses, trains, boats, or planes? How would this change your life?					What would you do if you woke up in another country and no one could understand you?
				What would happen if you threw a piece of trash on the ground? What if everyone did?					What would happen if you could fly whenever you wanted? When would you use this ability?
				What if all the streets were rivers? What would be different?					What is the worst thing parents can do to their children?
				Sometimes, adults seem . . .					What is a good neighbor?
				A dedicated teacher or coach is someone who . . .					What is something you dislike about yourself?

Daily Journal Prompts *(cont.)*

			My first encounter with a bully				I could not believe that my mother volunteered me for that job.
			What do I worry about?				Why are soap operas so popular?
			What things do you think are beautiful?				A visit to a relative's house
			Rights that kids in my grade should have				What I have broken or lost that belongs to someone else
			We all make mistakes.				What animals can teach humans
			A meaningful gift I have given or received				What would happen if you grew taller than trees? How would this change your life?
			What is under my bed?				Something I do not understand
			Sometimes I wish . . .				The most fun I have had recently
			An unforgettable dream				I am happy when . . .
			I wonder why . . .				One thing I want to do by the time I finish 8th grade
			My worst vacation				Things that could be better in my neighborhood
			The hardest thing I have ever done				If I could be someone else, I would be . . .
			What I know about the ocean				Good things about my neighborhood
			A typical lunch hour				A song that means a lot to me
			I don't understand why . . .				What if we suddenly had to move?
			What is important to me?				My most embarrassing moment
			Things I'd like to change				What if I were the teacher?
			My best day				Book characters I'd like to meet
			A place I'd like to visit				I'm principal for the day
			My first school memories				What would you do if you found a magic wand?