



First Ten Days of Writing

Grades 2-5

Writers need to know basic information, skills, and procedures in order for Writers Workshop to run smoothly in your classroom. Each of the following mini-lessons will take approximately ten to fifteen minutes to complete. Some of the lessons have homework and/or bell work extensions, also. These mini-lessons do not take the place of Writers Workshop in your classroom. To really grow as writers, students need to be experiencing full Writers Workshops from the first day of school.

DAY 1: Writing Pledge

Purpose: The pledge serves as reminder of why students are gathered together, and their group commitment to work and learn.

Preparation:

- Provide a copy of the pledge (attached)
- Be ready to use your Elmo and LCD projector

Procedures:

Say: “We will be working and learning together this year as a writing community. Each day we will say together our writing pledge to begin our writing lesson. Soon we will have it memorized. The pledge is our promise to one another.”

Read the pledge to the students. Then invite them to stand, raise their right hands, and say the pledge together.

THE WRITING PLEDGE

I am a writer.

I am here to learn.

I am a writer.

I am here to write.

I am a writer.

I am getting better every day.

I am a good writer today.

**I will become a great writer
one day.**

I am a writer.

LET'S WRITE!

Day 2: Reasons Writers Write

Purpose: Writers can write for many reasons or purposes. Realizing these reasons and purposes for writing can help students see the many different ways they can write.

Preparation:

- ☐ Gather a picture book, a chapter book, a letter to the editor from a newspaper, a magazine non-fiction article, a comic book or graphic novel, and a memoir. Display the resources in the front of your room.
- ☐ Provide chart paper, markers, and tape. At the top of the chart paper write: *Reasons Writers Write*.

Procedures:

Say: “I notice that when I read that writers write for many reasons or purposes.” Point to the books, newspapers, and magazines you displayed. As you show each resource, ask students to tell why the author may have written the piece. Write responses on the anchor chart. Be sure students include the following in their answers and on the chart:

- To tell a story
- To persuade
- To inform
- To entertain
- To record thoughts and feelings

Say: “When we write this year, I want to remember to write with different reasons and purposes in mind. I don’t always have to write a story—sometimes I can write to persuade people to think like I think, or to entertain people, or for another reason. Let’s all write for different reasons and purposes this year.”



REASONS WRITERS WRITE

DAY 3: Making a Writing Portfolio

Purpose: Writers keep a Writing Portfolio to hold their writing resources, drafts, conferencing notes, revisions, and their scored papers.

Preparation:

Each student will need:

- 1½ -inch 3-ring binder with front and back pockets
- Front cover sticker labeled: *Writing Portfolio*
This portfolio belongs to: _____
- Title page labeled: *Writing Portfolio*
This portfolio belongs to: _____
- Dividers labeled: *Lessons and Tools; Word Wall and Lists; My Writing Progress*
- One sticker labeled: *My Writing Drafts*

Procedures:

Say: “As we write each day we need a place to keep our drafts, the things we learn, the tools we gather, and the words we love. Our Writing Portfolios will be the place to keep all that and more. The portfolios will stay in our room and will never leave until the last day of school. That way we will have a collection of our writing here in the room to use every day.”

Distribute binders to students. Give each student a sticker for the front cover, guide him/her to stick it in the center of the portfolio, and write his/her name on the sticker. Next, students may add a set of dividers and the cover page to their portfolios. Each student may write his/her name on the cover page, too. Finally, guide each student to place a *My Writing Drafts* label on the back pocket of the portfolio.

Ask volunteers to collect the portfolios and place them on the shelf you have selected. Discuss the procedure for distributing and collecting portfolios each day.



My Writing Portfolio

This portfolio belongs to:

DAY 4: Writers Gather Ideas

Purpose: Writers need to develop the habit of regularly gathering ideas that can inspire their writing.

Preparation:

☐ Make copies of the “Gathering Writing Ideas” sheet. Three-hole punch the sheets so they can be inserted in Writing Portfolios when completed.

Procedures:

Distribute the “Gathering Writing Ideas” sheets. Say: “Day after day, writers have to find ideas to write about. Today we’re going to start gathering ideas, but we will not ever finish. As writers, we will always be gathering ideas.” Project your sheet using the Elmo. Model for the students one or two ideas you want to add to your sheet. Write an idea on your sheet and briefly tell the story that goes with the idea.

Skip around on the sheet so students can see that the sheet doesn’t have to be completed in any particular order. Ask volunteers to share ideas (as other students hear ideas it can inspire them). Give students a few minutes to add ideas to their sheets. Circulate to conference with students as they work. After a few minutes, ask students to place the sheets in their Writing Portfolios behind the “Lessons and Tools” tab.

COLLECTING WRITING IDEAS

Favorite Places	Best Vacations	Favorite Sports/Hobbies
Favorite Free-time Activities	Favorite Things About School	Favorite Friends
My Heroes	Favorite Time of Year	Big Surprises

DAY 5: Drafting Procedures for Writers Workshop

Purpose: All writers need to know the drafting procedures we follow during Writers Workshop. As with all procedures, practice makes perfect.

Preparation:

- ☐ Make copies of the “Drafting Procedures for Writers Workshop” sheet. Three-hole punch the sheets so they can be added to Writing Portfolios.
- ☐ Make a poster of the “Drafting Procedures for Writers Workshop” sheet. Display the poster in your classroom before beginning the mini-lesson.

Procedures:

Distribute the “Drafting Procedures for Writers Workshop” to students and ask them to place the sheet in their portfolios behind “Lessons and Tools”. Students may take notes on the sheets as you teach the mini-lesson.

Remind students that in daily Writers Workshop they will be planning and drafting. Say, “Drafting is getting your ideas down on paper.” Call attention to the poster and orient students to each procedure for Writers Workshop. Use the notes below:

- Write your name on every paper. Date and label every piece of writing. This will help you see the different stages of your writing—different drafts, different revisions, and so on.
- No erasing—cross out and keep going. When you erase your idea is gone forever. When we draft, cross out words or ideas. Do **NOT** erase. You may want to use that word or idea somewhere else.
- Try your best to spell words—then circle the word if you’re not sure. We won’t stop during our drafting to get a dictionary, instead sound the word out, spell it the best you can, and keep writing.
- Write on one side of the paper only. Sometimes when we revise we will want to cut and tape pages together, so don’t write on the back.
- Save everything! Everything a writer writes is important. Don’t throw anything away. File everything away in your portfolio.
- Always keep your writing in your Writing Portfolios. File everything away in the back pocket of your portfolio so you can find it and work with it later.
- Raise your hand when you need help or have a question. I’ll be conferencing with students as you write. Raise your hand if you need me, I’ll come to you as soon as possible.
- When writing, speak in whispered voices. Respect others so they can write, too.
- Continue writing—don’t stop. We’re never finished—keep writing, keep elaborating, keep telling more, keep making your writing better.

DRAFTING PROCEDURES FOR WRITERS WORKSHOP

- Write your name on every paper. Date and label every piece of writing.**
- No erasing—cross out and keep going.**
- Try your best to spell words—then circle the word if you're not sure.**
- Write on one side of the paper only.**
- Save everything!**
- Always keep your writing in your Writing Portfolios.**
- Raise your hand when you need help or have a question.**
- When writing, speak in whispered voices.**
- Continue writing—don't stop.**

DAY 6: Crafts We Love

Purpose: Student writers need to remember the writing crafts they have learned and practiced so they can continue to incorporate the crafts into their writing.

Preparation:

Create the bulletin board (or other area) on which you will display the name of each writing craft as it is taught/practiced. Label the bulletin board *Crafts We Love*. (NOTE: You can use other names for this area: Rev Up Your Writing, Crafts We've Learned, and so on.)

Make copies of the "Crafts We Love" sheet to distribute to students. Three-hole punch the sheets so they can be inserted in Writing Portfolios.

Procedures:

Remind students that each day during Writers Workshop they will be learning about and practicing a writing craft that professional writers use. Say, "As we learn about a new writing craft I will add it to the bulletin board and we can also add it to our Writing Portfolios." Point out any crafts that have already been added to the bulletin board.

Distribute the "Crafts We Love" sheets. Ask student to place the sheets in their Writing Portfolios behind the "Lessons and Tools" tab. Guide students to add any crafts already on the bulletin board to their craft lists.

CRAFTS WE LOVE!

WRITING LIKE A PROFESSIONAL WRITER

































DAY 7: Word Wall Procedures

Purpose: The classroom Word Wall and students' individual word walls are resources that can help improve spelling and thus help writing more effectively communicate to readers.

Preparation:

- Create the classroom Word Wall before the mini-lesson by dividing a white board, bulletin board, or the cabinets into sections. Label each section with letters of the alphabet.
- Choose three or four commonly misspelled grade-level words your students are struggling with. Write each word on a separate index card and have the cards ready to display on the Word Wall.

Procedures:

Say: "Writers want their readers to understand what they have written. We all have to work to make sure we spell words correctly." Call attention to the Word Wall. Tell students that each week you will add words to the Word Wall that everyone in the class needs to be responsible for spelling correctly. Say: "When I add a word to the Word Wall we will talk about it and you can add it to your personal word wall. When you are writing, I will expect you to look at the Word Wall and use it to help you spell words in your writing correctly." Add the words you have prepared to the Word Wall and spell them with the students.

DAY 8: Writing Process: Plan, Draft, Revise, Edit, Publish

Purpose: Writers use a specific process for writing. Students need to know this process so they can use it effectively.

Preparation:

- On separate sentence strips print each of the following words: *Plan, Draft, Revise, Edit, Publish* (attached)
- Cut a large arrow from a sheet of construction paper
- Provide tape
- Make copies of “The Writing Process” sheet for students. Three-hole punch the sheets so students can add them to their writing portfolios.

Procedures:

Tell students that writers follow a process as they write. Say, “There are five steps to the writing process.” Tape each of the sentence-strip signs you made to the wall one at a time as you use the information below to describe the writing process.

- Plan. Before a writer can write, he/she has to have an idea and then plan that idea. We will be planning using Beginning, Middle, Middle, End (BMME) this year. (NOTE: Second grade—BME.)
- Draft. Drafting is when we get our ideas down on paper. The draft is our first attempt at writing. Writers draft lots of writing. Sometimes they come back to the draft and make it better. Sometimes they move on to another draft.
- Revise. Revising is making the “meat” of your writing better. This is when writers add more details, change the order of things, make things clearer, remove unneeded things, and so on. Revision is hard work, but it makes your writing better.
- Edit. Editing is making the conventions of our writing better—spelling, punctuation, word choice/usage, capitalization, and so on.
- Publish. Publishing is when a writer gets his/her writing so perfect it is ready for others to read and enjoy. Professional writers don’t get to publish very often. We will only publish once or twice every nine weeks of school.

Tape the arrow so it points to the word *Draft*. Tell students that most of the writing they do this year will be drafting.

Distribute the “The Writing Process” sheets to students and ask them to place the sheets in their Writing Portfolios behind the “Writing Lessons and Tools” tab.

THE WRITING PROCESS

PLAN—Before a writer can write, he/she has to have an idea and then plan that idea. We will be planning using Beginning, Middle, Middle, End (BMME) this year.

DRAFT—Drafting is when we get our ideas down on paper. The draft is our first attempt at writing. Writers draft lots of writing. Sometimes they come back to the draft and make it better. Sometimes they move on to another draft.

REVISE—Revising is making the “meat” of your writing better. This is when writers add more details, change the order of things, make things clearer, remove unneeded things, and so on. Revision is hard work, but it makes your writing better.

EDIT—Editing is making the conventions of our writing better—spelling, punctuation, word chose/usage, capitalization, and so on.

PUBLISH—Publishing is when a writer gets his/her writing so perfect it is ready for others to read and enjoy. Real writers don't get to publish very often. We will only publish once or twice every nine weeks of school.

PLAN

DRAFT

REVISE

EDIT

PUBLISH

DAY 9: Reading like a Writer

Purpose: Writers can learn how to improve their writing by looking at the writing of other. Learning to read like a writer helps writers improve.

Preparation:

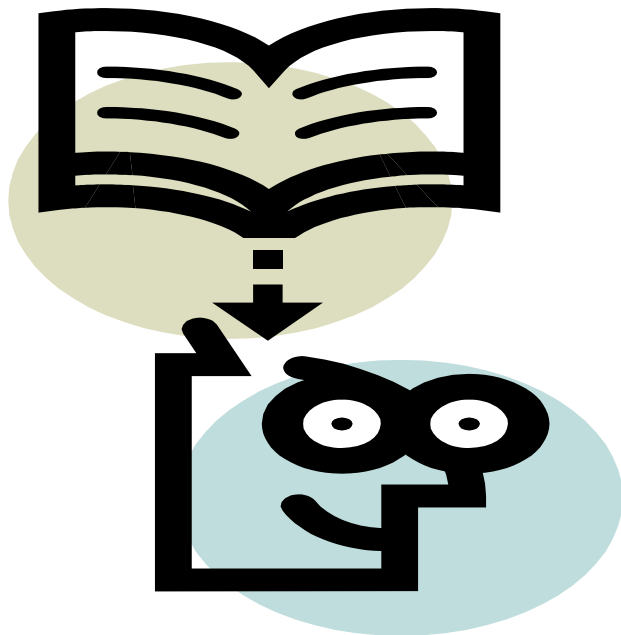
- Make a poster that reads *Read like a Writer!* (attached)
- Provide tape

Procedures:

Remind students that you use a piece of writing each day at the beginning of Writers Workshop. Say: “I use a read aloud each day to help us see what professional writers do so we can become better writers ourselves. The more good writing I read, the better writer I will become.”

Show the poster you prepared and tape it to the wall. Ask the students to read the poster aloud with you. Say: “I have a challenge for you. Each day as you read independently, or listen to a read aloud, or read during class—I challenge you to read like a writer. Look for the writing crafts we have learned about. See what writers are doing in the books you are reading. See what you love. See what you can learn about writing. Then try out what you learn from your reading in your writing.”

READ LIKE A WRITER!



DAY 10: Procedures for Sharing Writing in Writers Workshop

Purpose: Student volunteers will share their writing at the end of daily Writers Workshop. Knowing how to share and how to listen and respond will be necessary for this portion of Writers Workshop to be effective.

Preparation:

- Write each of the facts below on a separate sheet of construction paper. (Attached)
- Provide tape

Procedures:

Remind students that at the end of each Writers Workshop there is a sharing session. Say: “Let’s talk about how we will share and how we listen to sharing. I will read some sharing facts and we all tape them to the wall to remind ourselves of what we should do during the sharing session.”

FACT 1: A few volunteers will share their writing each day.

FACT 2: The writing shared should show the craft that has been taught that day and other good writing crafts.

FACT 3: Everyone should take a turn sharing from time to time.

FACT 4: When someone is sharing, everyone else in the class is the audience and listens.

FACT 5: After sharing, audience members can tell how the writing craft was used and other things they loved about the writing.

FACT 6: If you show respect to others as they share, others will show respect to you when you share.

After all the facts have been read and taped to the wall, allow children to ask questions about sharing.

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