



Paving the Path to Writing Success



Wonders

Teaching and Learning to Write

An essential part of their literacy journeys, writing empowers students to better understand and communicate with the world around them. Writing instruction can be challenging, though, for both students and educators. There often isn't enough time to address writing in the classroom, and exactly how to facilitate writing success can sometimes be unclear.

The good news is that, just as students can conquer a blank page, you can support their writing effectively. In fact, *you already do*. The work you've done so far is valuable, and the steps you're taking daily are shaping strong, skilled writers.

To build upon the excellent work you're doing, the following pages provide actionable advice and shareable resources to enhance your writing instruction—and to demystify writing overall.

With these options and your continued dedication, the path to writing success has never been clearer. Join us as we get started!



“Writing is thinking on paper.”

— William Zinsser,
On Writing Well



The Reading-Writing Connection

Your school days are busy, and incorporating writing into your literacy block can feel overwhelming. Reading and writing are interconnected, however, and instruction for both can work together to reinforce and uplift essential literacy skills.

Reading and writing are both methods of communication built upon similar skills and knowledge (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Shanahan, 2006; Shanahan, 2016; Tierney & Shanahan, 1991). So what you do to support student reading also supports their writing, and vice versa. Read on for suggestions on how to create effective reading-writing connections in your classroom.

Linking Reading and Writing

- **Incorporate engaging content.** The text students read in the classroom gives them something to write about. Provide relevant, authentic texts to help build content knowledge and inspire student voices.
- **Use writing as a knowledge-building tool.** When students write about something they've read, their comprehension improves. Have students regularly respond to texts in writing, and they'll gain essential skills like summarizing and analyzing.
- **Foster close reading skills.** Close reading prepares students to think critically about complex texts, which boosts their ability to write about them. It also familiarizes students with the facets of high-quality writing.



Discovering Authentic Text

Authentic, inclusive text embraces a variety of perspectives and helps students relate instruction to their own lives. Diversity in text also assures students that their experiences are worthy and important, and can inspire them to tell stories of their own.

Explore the resources below to find diverse, authentic books for your classroom.

- [American Library Association 2023 Youth Media Award Winners](#)
- [American Library Association Inclusive Booklists](#)
- [Every Child a Reader 2022 Kids' Book Choice Award Winners](#)
- [Reading Rockets – Diverse Classroom Libraries for K–6 Students](#)
- [We Need Diverse Books](#)

Wonders also includes suggestions for additional authentic texts in its Extended Unit Bibliographies. Access them online at **Resources > Resource Library > Teacher Resources > Unit Bibliography**.



Literacy skills are either productive or receptive. Writing is a productive process, while reading is receptive. Together, the reading and writing processes form strong communication—and reading and writing instruction helps build strong communicators.

Resources to Connect Reading and Writing

Fostering Close Reading

Wonders offers a variety of resources to cultivate close reading skills. Its **Close Reading Routine**, comprised of Read, Reread, and Integrate steps, supports students as they engage with complex texts, use strategies to think critically, and work to understand a variety of text structures and elements.

More on Close Reading

- **Close Reading Ready-to-Teach Workshop:** This four-session video module offers guidance on delivering effective close reading instruction.

Find it online at **Resources > Professional Development > Ready-to-Teach Workshops**.

- **Close Reading Author & Coach Videos:** In these informative videos, literacy experts discuss close reading elements and best practices. Dr. Timothy Shanahan, Dr. Douglas Fisher, and others provide their insights on the objectives of close reading lessons, what educators have learned about close reading so far, and other topics.

Access them online at **Resources > Professional Development > Author & Coach Videos > Close Reading**.

- **[Close Reading in Elementary Classrooms:](#)** This whitepaper from *Wonders* author Dr. Douglas Fisher discusses key benefits of close reading practice and provides suggestions for strong close reading instruction.

Read it online at **Resources > Professional Development > Overview > Research Base and Whitepapers**.

Close Reading Routine

- 1. READ** The purpose of the first read is to figure out what the selection is about. Students read the text through to identify key ideas and details, take notes, and summarize. Depending upon the needs of your students, you can
 - ask students to read the text silently;
 - read the text together with students;
 - read the text aloud.Model how to take notes, find text evidence, and answer text-dependent questions. At the end of the first read, help students summarize the selection.
- 2. REREAD** With students, reread short chunks of the text to answer deeper level questions about craft and structure. Have them reread to
 - analyze words and phrases the author uses and how these words and phrases affect the text's meaning;
 - work together to find and cite text evidence to text-dependent questions;
 - use the **Reading/Writing Companion** to discuss, cite text evidence, and write short responses to text-dependent questions.
- 3. INTEGRATE** In the Integrate phase, students go back into the texts to critically evaluate and compare them. The goal is to help students make deeper connections within the texts and between texts. Have students use the **Reading/Writing Companion** to
 - talk about and compare the selections they read with a photograph, song, poem, painting, mural, or sketch;
 - be inspired to act.

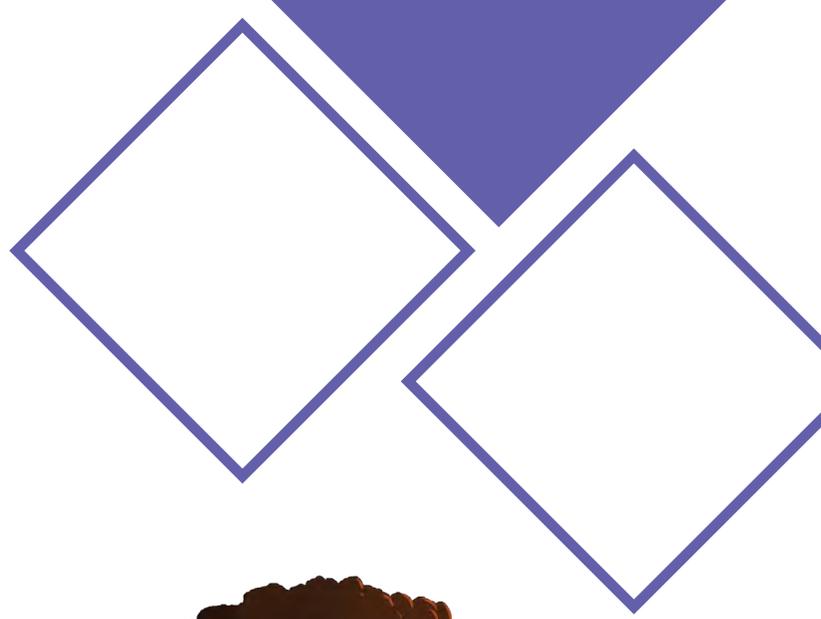


Responding to Text

Wonders resources and routines also guide students as they learn to respond to texts in writing. The Analytical Writing Routine—which asks students to analyze a writing prompt, state a topic or opinion, cite text evidence, and provide a conclusion—helps students explore texts more deeply.

Respond to Reading prompts also follow *Wonders* Shared Read and Anchor Texts. Within their Reading/Writing Companions, students write about what they’ve read, citing evidence and using their notes to support their ideas. This practice is strongly linked to the close reading skills fostered elsewhere in *Wonders*—as students engage in close reading, they’re prepared to answer higher-level DOK Respond to Reading prompts.

Extended Writing Projects for Grades 2–5 build upon these skills as they invite students to write to multiple sources.



Reread | **SHARED READ**

Respond to Reading

My Goal I can use text evidence to respond to a drama and myth.

Collaborate Talk about the prompt below. Use your notes and text evidence to support your response.

How does the theme of the play develop from the dialogue of the characters?

Quick Tip
Use these sentence starters to help you organize your text evidence.
Aster and the vendors...
Zeus and Aster...
The narrator says...

Grammar Connections
Remember to use an **apostrophe (’)** with a contraction to show where a letter or letters are missing.
For example:
I’m = I am
you’re = you are
It’s = It is
they’re = they are

CHECK IN 1 2 3 4

48 Unit 6 • Text Set 2

Analytical Writing Sentence Starters

When new writers are faced with responding to text in writing, getting started can feel daunting. Supporting students with sentence construction from the beginning of their writing journeys can help ease this intimidation and launch their analytical writing skills, including the ability to cite text evidence.

Sentence starters and stems are invaluable tools to help students put pencil to paper and respond to text effectively. These resources provide a “springboard” to organize and communicate thoughts, while also offering examples of diverse vocabulary and sentence structure.

The sentence stems below support students as they learn to cite evidence in their responses to text.

When Citing Something Explicitly Stated in the Text, Use...

- In the text, it says _____.
- I know that _____ because it's stated in the text.
- According to the text, _____.
- The author states, “_____.”
- The graphic/illustration shows _____.

When Drawing Inferences from the Text, Use...

- In the text it states _____, and I know _____, so I can infer _____.
- I think that _____ because in the story _____.
- When _____ says, “_____,” I can infer that _____.
- When the text says _____, I think _____.
- My inference is that _____ because the text states _____.
- It's obvious that _____, because in the text, _____.
- Based on the information from _____, I can conclude that _____ when _____.

You can also share these sentence stems with your students using this [printable resource](#).

The Wonders Way

Respond to Reading sections in the Reading/Writing Companion feature content-specific sentence starters to help students with writing tasks.

Quick Tip

Use these sentence starters to help you organize your text evidence.

Aster and the vendors...

Zeus and Aster...

The narrator says...

McGraw Hill **Sentence Stems for Citing Evidence**

IMPLICIT/IMPLIED	EXPLICIT/EXACT
In the text it states _____, and I know _____, so I can infer _____.	In the text, it says _____.
I think that _____ because in the story _____.	I know that _____ because it is stated in the text.
When _____ says, “_____,” I can infer that _____.	According to the text, _____.
When the text says _____, I think _____.	The author states, “_____.”
My inference is that _____ because the text states _____.	The graphic/illustration shows _____.
It's obvious that _____, because in the text, _____.	
Based on the information from _____, I can conclude that _____ when _____.	

STRONG EVIDENCE IS:

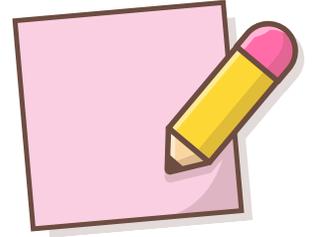
- ✓ Valid
- ✓ Sufficient
- ✓ Relevant

ELA Standard RL.1.2
Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Wonders

Who, What, When, Where, and Why

You may also be looking for a way to show students how to form varied, complete sentences overall. Try this helpful step-by-step activity from writing expert Bernadette Lambert:



1. Begin by giving your students five small pieces of paper. These can be index cards, sticky notes, or cut-up papers formerly headed for the recycling bin. You can use the backs of old practice pages or worksheets, for example.
2. Have your students pick an animal and write “the [animal]” on their first sticky note. If a student chooses a koala, for example, they’ll write “the koala.” This will be the sentence’s subject, or *who*.
3. On the second sticky note, ask your students to write what their animal is doing using a verb. For example, if they want their koala to read a book, they can write “reads a book.” This is the sentence’s *what*.
4. Next, on the third sticky note, have students write *when* their animal does this activity. It may be helpful to provide examples here, such as “at sunrise,” “after school,” “at bedtime,” etc.
5. On the fourth sticky note, students should write *where* the animal completes this activity. Again, examples may be beneficial here.
6. Finally, on the last sticky note, ask students to write *why* the animal carries out this activity. Examples would be “because he needs to study” or “because he is bored.”
7. Ask students to lay their sticky notes out in order of who, what, when, where, and why. Emphasize to them that they have a full sentence.



8. Then ask your students to flip the sentence elements around. Instead of beginning with who, for example, have students start with when, then where, then who, then what, and why. They’ll find these versions make sense, too.
9. Allow students to continue to rearrange their sentence elements to make different combinations.

This activity demonstrates that sentences can start in diverse ways and still be accurate. It also illuminates different sentence elements with its focus on who, what, when, where, and why.



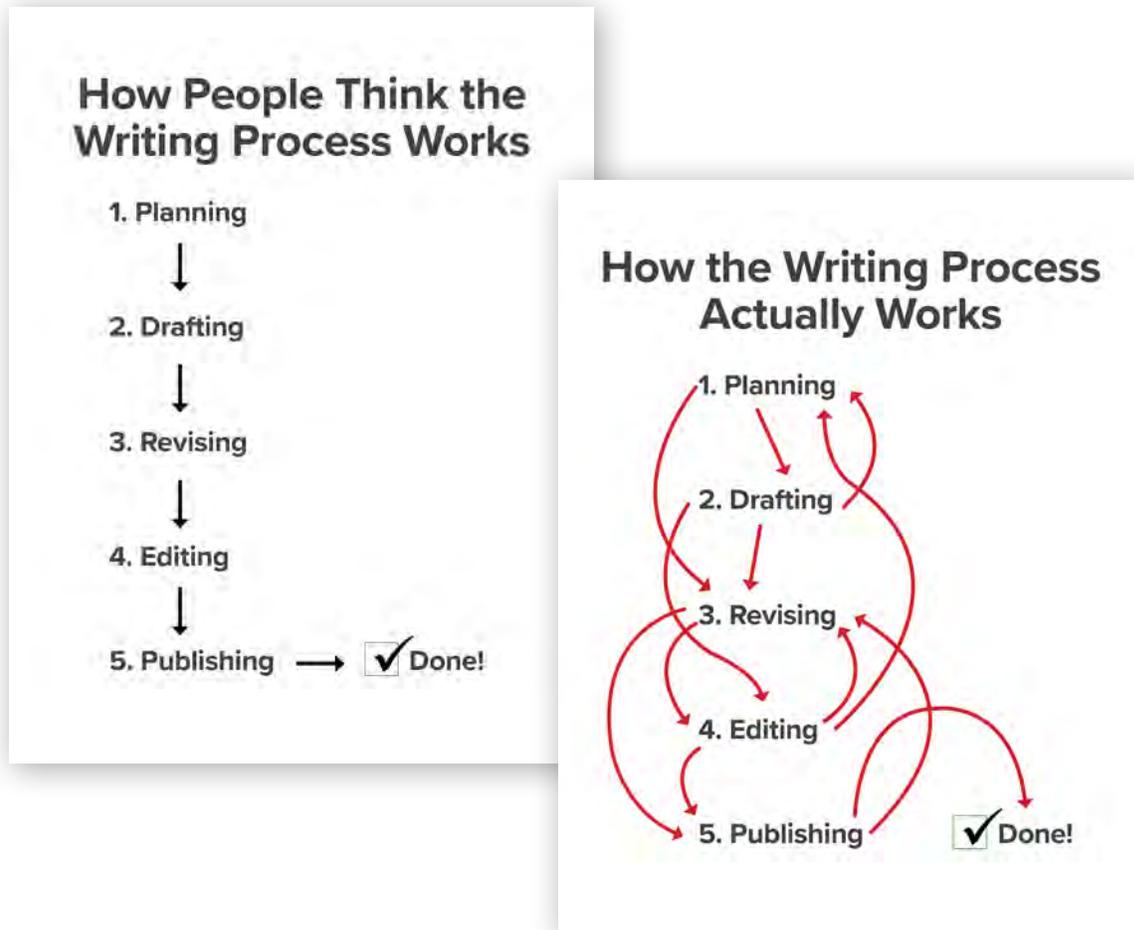
Teacher Tip!

If needed, you can adjust this activity based on students’ abilities and interests. For example, you can start with who, what, and where or have students include pictures on their sticky notes instead of words. They’ll still develop powerful sentence knowledge.

The Writing Process

When it comes to fostering student writing success, it's important to emphasize that writing is rarely linear. No piece of writing will be perfect from the beginning (even for experienced writers), and helping students understand that they have freedom with their writing choices is key.

This is where the **writing process** comes in—which involves elements of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. According to What Works Clearinghouse, teachers can bolster writing ability by giving students strategies to move through the writing process effectively (Graham et al., 2012).



Wonders offers a writing process routine that guides students through its stages, including consideration of an expert model. This routine can be used to support all types of student writing.

Wonders Writing Process Routine

- 1. Study the Expert Model.** Analyze and discuss the features of an expert model of the genre students will be writing in. These are models that students have already read, discussed, written about, and analyzed during reading lessons.
- 2. Plan the Writing.** Brainstorm and choose a topic, discuss purpose and audience, and gather relevant information.
- 3. Write a Draft.** Discuss how to develop the topic, organize the writing, and write a draft.
- 4. Revise and Peer Conference.** Revise the writing using checklists and partner feedback. (Example checklists are available on pages [14](#) and [15](#)).
- 5. Edit and Proofread.** Edit and proofread revised drafts using editing checklists.
- 6. Publish, Present, and Evaluate.** Publish and present the writing. Use a rubric to self-evaluate.



Teacher Tip!

Graphic organizers can help students in the planning phase of the writing process. With these organizers, students take notes, record ideas, and sort categories of related information to refer to as they develop their writing. Graphic organizers can also be tailored for different writing types, like expository writing and poetry, so students can collate information for specific writing tasks.

Wonders has a collection of graphic organizers available at [Resources > Resource Library > Graphic Organizers](#).

Central Idea
Detail
Detail
Detail

Copyright © McGraw-Hill Education. All rights reserved. www.mheducation.com

Central Idea	Supporting Ideas	Relevant Evidence		
		Source 1	Source 2	Source 3

Copyright © McGraw-Hill Education. All rights reserved. www.mheducation.com

Supporting the Writing Process

Writer's Toolkit

Available for Grades 2–5, *Wonders'* Writer's Toolkit includes a variety of useful multimedia tools to support students as they engage in the writing process. Resources are curated to help students research, plan, revise, edit, and present a piece of writing. Examples of available resources include:

- brief videos
- notetaking templates
- checklists
- project idea lists
- rubrics
- student models

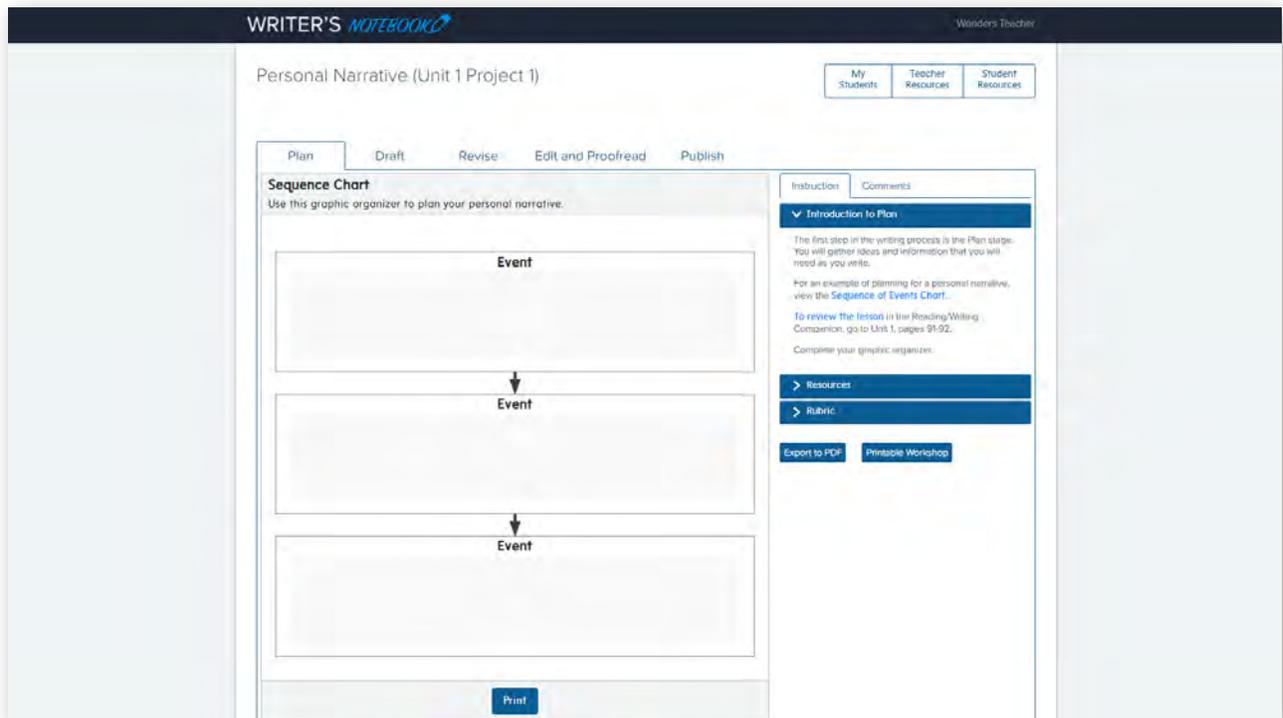
Access the Writer's Toolkit online at **Resources > Resource Library > Writing**.



Online Writer's Notebook

A Writer's Notebook can be a beneficial classroom tool because you can have students write to prompts, revise, respond to reading, and more—all in one place. A paper notebook works well, and an Online Writer's Notebook is also available within *Wonders* for Grades 2–5. This innovative digital tool offers guided support as students move through the steps of the writing process.

Explore the Online Writer's Notebook at **Writing & Research > Writer's Notebook**.



To learn more about our Online Writer's Notebook, check out [this video](#) from *Wonders* Curriculum Specialist Christina Quarelli.



Name _____

My Writer's Checklist

Nonfiction

Use the checklists below as you write.

Revising Checklist

Do I tell about real people, places, things, or events?	
Do I focus on one idea?	
Do I include a concluding statement?	

Editing Checklist

Do I spell words correctly?	
Do I use verbs correctly?	
Do I have end punctuation?	

Copyright © McGraw Hill. Permission is granted to reproduce for classroom use.

Teacher: See also online Proofreading Marks.

Revise Checklist: Expository

Directions: Use this checklist as you work with peers and work alone to revise your draft.

Revise Checklist

- Is the draft focused on a single topic?
- Does the draft have an introduction that clearly introduces the topic?
- Does the draft include relevant evidence such as facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic?
- Does the draft present information in a logical text structure?
- Does the draft include precise language? Academic and domain-specific language?
- Does the draft have a strong conclusion that relates to the topic?

The Power of Mentor Texts

Mentor texts serve as models of success as students attempt their own writing. Providing strong examples of different genres, these helpful texts illustrate various elements of writing craft and structure. As with rubrics and checklists, they can also help students define and achieve their writing goals.

- **Share a variety of mentor texts.** Providing a mix of mentor texts broadens students' understanding of genres and helps them apply this to their own writing. Additional mentor texts can also appeal to different student interests and create excitement around a writing task. (Hint: Our [recommended resources](#) for selecting authentic texts can also help with mentor texts.)
- **Consider mentor texts part by part.** In addition to making mentor texts available, viewing these texts through the eyes of a writer can be beneficial. Analyze the components of a mentor text with your students to help them understand and tackle a type of writing in smaller chunks.

For example, start with a text's introduction and discuss the details that make it successful. Then have your students try crafting their own introductions. Teaching writing components in this way can help if a student is worried about writing an entire piece at once.

- **Highlight genre features.** Being explicit about genre elements can advance students' knowledge more effectively. When teaching a specific genre, discuss its purpose, audience, and characteristics to support student understanding of learning goals.

The Wonders Way

Each writing lesson in *Wonders Teacher's Editions* includes a review of the genre students will be writing in—helping you guide students as they work on writing tasks across genres.

The screenshot shows a page from the Wonders Teacher's Edition, Unit 4 Writing Project 2, titled "Analyze the Prompt". The page includes sections for Learning Goals, Objectives, ELA Academic Language, Digital Tools, and a main section for "Analyze the Prompt" with a "Writing Prompt" and "Anchor Chart". A circular callout highlights the following text:

Analyze the Prompt

Writing Prompt

Follow the Analyze the Prompt Routine on page T250. Read the prompt aloud: *Write an expository essay on the positive impacts of technology.* Guide students to identify the purpose and audience. Then ask: *What is the prompt asking you to do? (to write an expository essay on the positive impacts of technology.)*

Anchor Chart Review the features of an expository essay with students and add any new points to the Expository Essay anchor chart.

- It includes facts and ideas that effectively support the central idea.
- It uses elaborative techniques, such as examples, definitions, and quotations taken from sources.

Purpose, Audience, and Task

Explain to students that thinking about their purpose and audience helps them plan and organize their writing. Ask students to identify the purpose and audience of the prompt. Have them think about who will read what they write.

Building Word Banks

Just as content helps students generate ideas, word banks can make writing about texts more accessible. A collection of words students can use to build a piece of writing, word banks empower students by giving them somewhere to begin.

You can generate word banks yourself and share them with students, or you can guide them as they create their own. Having students build word banks can also lead to rich discussions around text, and you can read more about facilitating this process below.

Student-Generated Word Banks

- **Brainstorm words using the text as inspiration.** When launching your next writing task around a text, ask your students: “What are 7–10 of the most important words in the text we’ve just read?” Let them share suggestions as a class.
- **Encourage them to justify their suggestions.** After sharing suggestions, have students explain why their chosen words might be a good fit. For example, does the word recur across the text? Does it relate to a key theme? This explanation helps students take their reading comprehension to the next level.
- **Build your bank.** Narrow down suggestions to a list of 7–10 words, and display them in a word bank (see our templates on the [next pages](#)). Students can easily refer to this helpful collection of words as they develop their piece of writing.



Teacher Tip!

Students can use as many or as few words from the word bank as they like. The choice is theirs!



Wonders Word Bank

Text: _____

Writing Prompt: _____



Words I Can Write With



(pencil)Catalyst Labs/Shutterstock



Wonders Word Bank



We're Working On: _____

Word Type #1:

Word Type #2:

Word Type #3:

Word Type #4:



Writing Assessment

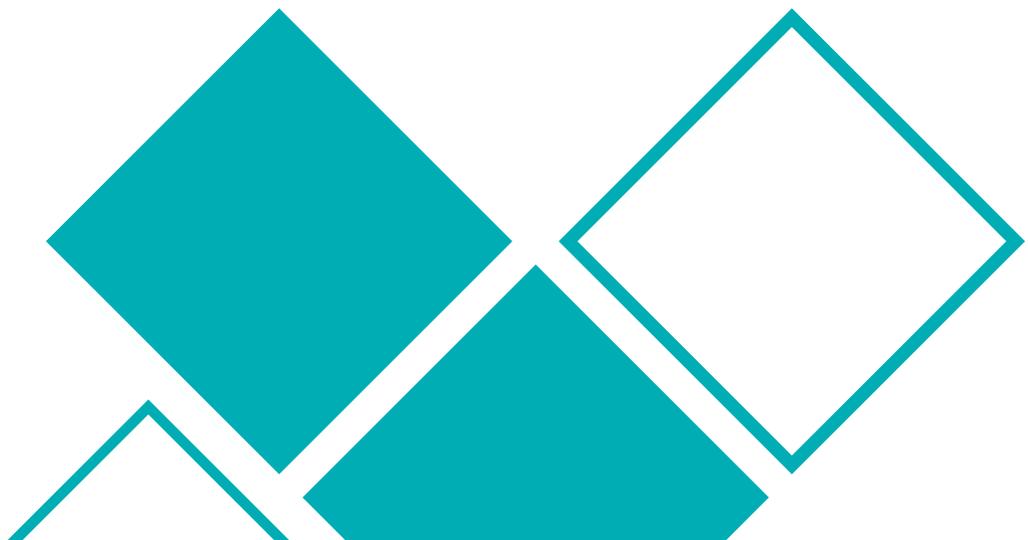
Straightforward assessment is also a helpful writing tool, letting students know what's expected and how they can be successful, and taking some of the guesswork out of a writing task. It also helps you understand and guide student writing progress.

The best part is that assessment doesn't have to be overly complicated. Rubrics and checklists are two assessment options that make it easy to support student writing. A rubric helps evaluate the quality of student writing by listing criteria for different levels of achievement, while a checklist determines whether students have addressed specific elements of a writing task.

Most literacy curricula will include a variety of assessments, but you can also design one customized to your desired skills, standards, or task. Suggested tips for rubric generation are below, and you'll also find strong example rubrics on the [following pages](#).

Tips for Creating and Using Effective Rubrics

- **Look at language.** Consider the language used in your lessons and include similar phrases and keywords in your rubrics. This similarity will help students make connections between what they're learning and how they can apply it to their writing tasks.
- **Break down criteria clearly.** Make sure that criteria for each part of a writing task is clear and accessible. For example, are you evaluating students on the focus of their writing piece? Outline what varying levels of focus might look like to show students where they are—and how far they can go.
- **Start at the beginning.** Share rubrics with your students before they try a writing task. This will ensure they understand expectations and can move forward most effectively.
- **Differentiate accordingly.** Detailed rubrics show you which writing skills your students have grasped and which elements might require further support. Use rubric results to customize instruction for individuals or small groups, and you'll be able to enhance your students' understanding, no matter their writing needs.



Name _____

Unit _____ Week _____

Writing Rubric for Expository Text: Nonfiction

4	3	2	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully tells about real people, places, things or events. Strong introduction of an idea at the beginning and focuses on it throughout the writing. Includes a very strong concluding statement. Uses verbs correctly all the time. All sentences have end punctuation. Spells all words correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tells about a real person, place, thing, or event. Introduces one idea at the beginning and focuses on it for most of the writing. Includes a strong concluding statement. Uses verbs correctly most of the time. Most sentences have end punctuation. Spells most words correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides vague information about real people, places, things, or events. Introduces two different ideas at the beginning. Includes a concluding statement. Uses verbs correctly some of the time. Some sentences have end punctuation. Spells some words correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tells about an imaginary or fictional person, place, thing, or event. Jumps from one idea to the next throughout the writing. Does not include a concluding statement. Does not use verbs correctly. No sentences have end punctuation. Spells no words correctly.

Copyright ©McGraw Hill. Permission is granted to reproduce for classroom use.

Writing Rubric: Informative

	Focus	Organization	Support	Conventions
4 Excellent	Clearly focuses on a central topic. Provides a strong beginning that clearly introduces the topic and a concluding statement that sums up ideas.	Groups related information and ideas in paragraphs and sections. Uses linking words and phrases to effectively connect ideas.	Develops topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic. Uses a formal style and is free of slang and contractions. Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary throughout the report.	Demonstrates a strong command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage. Varies sentence structure, enhancing the overall flow and effectiveness of the writing.
3 Good	Generally focuses on a central topic. Has an acceptable beginning that introduces a topic and a concluding statement that relates to the information presented.	Generally groups related information and ideas in paragraphs and sections. Uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas effectively.	Develops topic with some facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic. Often uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary. Uses a style that is mostly formal.	Demonstrates good command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage. Punctuation errors do not interfere with comprehension. There is some variety in sentence structure.

Writing Rubric: Informative

	Focus	Organization	Support	Conventions
2 Fair	Somewhat focuses on a central topic. Has a weak introduction and a conclusion that may not relate to the information presented.	Related information is grouped into paragraphs, but the paragraphs are not fully developed.	Develops topic with few facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic. Presents details through language that is only sometimes precise. Occasionally uses a formal tone, but some contractions and slang are present.	Demonstrates limited command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage. Errors do not interfere with comprehension. There is little variety in sentence structure.
1 Unsatisfactory	Frequently wanders from the topic. There is no clear introduction or conclusion.	Information and ideas are not organized logically. The lack of linking words makes it difficult for the reader to connect ideas.	Topic is not developed. Uses only basic vocabulary. Uses a style that is largely informal. Writing is not based on any solid research.	Demonstrates little or no command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage. Significant errors interfere with comprehension. Includes incomplete and run-on sentences.

Fostering Collaboration

As part of effective writing instruction, research from What Works Clearinghouse recommends creating a supportive writing community within your classroom. A positive community can guide and elevate student writing, and encourage students to take necessary risks as they finetune their writing abilities (Graham et al., 2012).

Follow the steps below to build your community of student writers:

- **Encourage effective peer conferencing.** Having students provide feedback about each other's writing can be an effective, collaborative way for them to learn. This can be a vulnerable process, however, so it's important to instruct students on sensitive, supportive feedback (Graham et al., 2012). Find out more about peer conferencing on [page 26](#).
- **Extend the conversation.** Regularly meeting with students about their writing keeps development of their writing skills at the forefront (Graham et al., 2012). Through teacher conferences, you can provide students with frequent, timely feedback, as well as check in on student progress and differentiate instruction as needed.
- **Inspire motivation.** Generating excitement and motivation around writing is also an important part of creating a successful writing community. One way to boost motivation is to have students choose their own writing topic (Graham et al., 2012). Allowing students to write about something that interests them can help them see the relevance of writing to their lives—both in and out of the classroom.



Teacher Tip!

Every step you take with writing instruction helps boost student confidence and cultivate community.

As you continue to shape writers through explicit instruction, straightforward assessment, and differentiation, their excitement for writing will grow. Well done!

Teacher Conferences

Teacher-student conferences provide unique opportunities to check in on student progress and offer feedback in an informal, low-pressure setting. During independent writing time, walk around your classroom to conduct brief check-ins with students as you view their work. Note what a student is doing well, ask about their writing choices, make suggestions for next steps, and provide additional support as needed.

Not sure what to focus on? These example conferencing prompts can help you get started:

- How are you finding this writing task?
- What inspired this writing choice?
- What writing strategies are you using? What do you need help with?
- _____ is a great idea! Next time, you can also _____.
- When working on this type of writing task, make sure to _____.

The Wonders Way

Wonders Teacher's Editions also feature resources for effective teacher conferencing. The Conferring Toolkit section in Craft Minilessons shares tips for guiding students through writing tasks and strengthening their craft overall—and the Teacher Conferences feature offers step-by-step suggestions for meeting with students as they tackle different types of writing.

TEACHER CONFERENCES

As students revise, hold teacher conferences with individual students.

Step 1: Talk About Strengths

Point out strengths in the essay: *The evidence you paraphrased from your sources is relevant and fully supports your central idea.*

Step 2: Focus on Skills

Give feedback on how the student uses linking words: *Add a stronger linking word or phrase between these two paragraphs to show the connection between the ideas.*

Step 3: Make Concrete Suggestions

Provide specific direction to help students revise: *Use academic language to make your writing more formal. Instead of saying "He talked to someone about the problem," you could say "He consulted with an environmental expert to resolve the*

Conferring Toolkit

Establish a Purpose Remind children why having a clear purpose is important: *If you set a clear purpose for your essay, it's easier to know what facts you will need to teach readers about your topic. This can help guide your research. Can you tell your purpose in one sentence?*

Elaborate with Explanations Review that paraphrasing means saying something in your own words. Help children include relevant details from a source by paraphrasing the information in their explanation.

Elaborate with Definitions Guide children to circle any words in their writing that might be unfamiliar to readers. Have them choose one and add a definition.

Maintain Consistent Verb Tense Ask children to explain if the events in their writing took place in the past or are happening now. Guide them to check their verbs, determine if they are in the correct tense, and make corrections if needed.

Choose Relevant Details To help children determine whether a piece of information is relevant, say: *Ask yourself if you would understand the topic without this information. If the answer is no, then it is relevant.*

Peer Conferencing Essentials

Building Routines

When it comes to effective peer conferencing, establishing routines is key, because it will help guide students through productive, positive conversations about writing. To ensure students understand proposed routines, you can demonstrate them through modeling and guided practice. A visual guide to display on students' desks or at the front of the classroom can also help, and you'll find a good example of this on the [next page](#).

Setting Expectations

Setting rules and expectations for peer conferences will also help maximize effectiveness. Guided by clear expectations, students will know how to conduct themselves appropriately and get the most out of their conferences.



Teacher Tip!

In addition to modeling peer conferencing routines, it's also beneficial to give examples of effective and kind language—which will help students provide each other with the most supportive and constructive feedback.

Peer Conferencing Checklists

To help promote productive conversations, *Wonders* includes a collection of peer conferencing checklists for different types of writing at Grades 2–5. Find them online at [Resources > Resource Library > Writing > Toolkit: Revise and Edit](#).

Peer Conferencing: Opinion

Directions: Read the Peer Review Routine below. Then use the checklist as you review your partner's writing.

Peer Review Routine

- Step 1: Listen carefully as the writer reads his or her work.
- Step 2: Begin by telling what you liked about the writing.
- Step 3: Ask questions that will help the writer think more about the writing.
- Step 4: Make suggestions that will make the writing stronger.

Peer Review Checklist

- Does the opinion essay clearly tell the writer's opinion about a topic?
- Does the writer try to convince readers to think a certain way about something?
- Is the writer's opinion supported by reasons and relevant evidence, or facts and other details?
- Does the writer use transitional words and phrases, such as *because* and *for example*, to connect ideas?
- Is the draft organized in a logical way?
- Is there a strong conclusion?

Peer Conferencing: Narrative

Directions: Read the Peer Review Routine below. Then use the checklist as you review your partner's writing.

Peer Review Routine

- Step 1: Listen carefully as the writer reads his or her work.
- Step 2: Begin by telling what you liked about the writing.
- Step 3: Ask questions that will help the writer think more about the writing.
- Step 4: Make suggestions that will make the writing stronger.

Peer Review Checklist

- Does the narrative have a clear beginning, middle, and end?
- Does the beginning introduce the character, the setting, and a conflict, or problem that must be solved?
- Are there descriptive details to help readers picture the characters, the setting, and the events?
- Does the writer include dialogue and descriptions of how a character thinks or feels to help develop the characters and plot?
- Are events told in a logical order?
- Does the writer use signal words like *after*, *then*, *before*, *meanwhile*, or *next* to show the order of events?
- Does the story end with a clear and satisfying resolution to the conflict, or problem?

Wonders

Peer Conferencing Routine and Rules



In each conversation we will...

- Read the piece of writing
- Share one thing the writer did well
- Ask a question
- Give a suggestion

Always remember to...

- Stay in one place during your conference
- Make eye contact
- Focus on the writing, not the writer!

Examples of Positive Peer Feedback to Share

- Your main character is interesting, but I'd like to know more about him.
- It really held my interest; however, I think it might be a little better if...
- Can you explain your thinking behind your writing approach?
- I understand what you're trying to say. What if you tried this?
- Another thought you might add is...



Works Cited

- Fitzgerald, J., & Shanahan, T. (2000). Reading and writing relations and their development. *Educational Psychologist, 35*(1), 39-50. doi:10.1207/s15326985ep3501_5
- Graham, S. (2020). The sciences of reading and writing must become more fully integrated. *Reading Research Quarterly, 55*(S1), S35-S44. doi:10.1002/rrq.332
- Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N. (2012). *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers: A practice guide* (NCEE 2012-4058). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx#pubsearch
- Graham, S., & Hebert, M. (2011). Writing to read: A meta-analysis of the impact of writing and writing instruction on reading. *Harvard Educational Review, 81*(4), 710-744. doi:10.17763/haer.81.4.t2k0m13756113566
- Shanahan, T. (2006). Relations among Oral Language, Reading, and Writing Development. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of Writing Research* (pp. 171-183). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Shanahan, T. (2016). Relationships between Reading and Writing Development. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of Writing Research* (2nd ed., pp. 194-210). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Tierney, R., & Shanahan, T. (1991). Reading-writing relationships: Processes, transactions, outcomes. In P. D. Pearson, R. Barr, M. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research* (vol. 2, pp. 246–280). New York: Longman.
- Zinsser, W. (2016). *On writing well: The classic guide to writing nonfiction*. New York, NY: Collins.

Further Reading on Writing

- [Changing how writing is taught](#), Steve Graham, *Review of Research in Education*, Sage Publications, 2019
- [How to Give Students Helpful Feedback on Writing](#), McGraw Hill *Inspired Ideas* Blog, 2022
- [How to Teach Writing, According to Research](#), McGraw Hill *Inspired Ideas* Blog, 2022
- [Keys to Early Writing](#), Joan Sedita, *Keys to Literacy*, 2020
- [Overcoming barriers and paradigm wars: Powerful evidence-based writing instruction](#), Karen R. Harris and Debra McKeown, *Theory Into Practice*, Taylor & Francis, 2022
- [The Writing Revolution: A Guide to Advancing Thinking Through Writing in All Subjects and Grades](#), Judith C. Hochman and Natalie Wexler, Jossey-Bass, 2017
- [The Writing Rope: A Framework for Explicit Writing Instruction in All Subjects](#), Joan Sedita, Brookes Publishing, 2022
- [What's Next for the Science of Reading: Focus on the Science of Writing](#), McGraw Hill *Inspired Ideas* Blog, 2022
- *Writing Better: Effective Strategies for Teaching Students with Learning Difficulties*, Steve Graham and Karen Harris, Brookes Publishing, 2005
- [Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading. Carnegie Corporation Time to Act Report](#), Steve Graham and Michael Hebert, Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010





For more information, please visit:
mheonline.com/GoWonders

RD23 M 22376