Modeling, Mini-Lessons, and More!
Teaching the Traits of Writing Through Read-Aloud and Genre Writing Experiences

Presented by:
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## The Power of Connecting Reading and Writing Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficient Readers</th>
<th>Proficient Writers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop an understanding of how words work.</td>
<td>Apply their growing knowledge of words as they stretch out words and spell them using the sounds they know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Foundational &amp; Language Skills)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrate decoding strategies and self-monitor to figure out unknown words while reading.</td>
<td>Apply strategies (word patterns, words endings, prefixes and suffixes and so on) and utilize resources (word walls, environmental print, personal word banks, and dictionary) to figure out how to spell words while writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activate their schema and build background knowledge for a wide variety of text.</td>
<td>Are active collectors of ideas and insights for writing through careful observation and wide reading.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand the meaning of the vocabulary in the books they read.</td>
<td>Choose precise, interesting words when they write.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct meaning while reading by applying effective reading strategies and searching for text-based evidence.</td>
<td>Convey meaning through writing by knowing their audience, task, purpose, and content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read with fluency and expression.</td>
<td>Write with fluency and expression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjust their reading based on their purpose, the genre, and type of text.</td>
<td>Craft their written work to match their audience, task, purpose, and content.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from *Literature Is Back!* (Fuhler & Walther, 2007)

Revised 4/28/13
The Coordinated Structure of the Common Core Standards
Reading Comprehension Structure

• **Key ideas and Details:** What does the text say?
• **Craft and Structure:** How does the text say it?
• **Integration of Meaning and Ideas:** What does the text mean? What is its value? How does it connect to other texts?

**Mentor Texts to Model the Reading-Writing Connection**

Bratty Lulu wants a brontosaurus for a pet, so she runs away to the forest to find one. The tables turn when the brontosaurus decides he wants Lulu for his pet. Viorst interjects her author’s voice throughout the book and offers readers three different ending options.
**Teaching Ideas:** Reading-Writing Connection; 2013 Monarch Award List

Lulu is back and in desperate need of money to buy something “superspecial.” To this end, she attempts to walk three uncooperative dogs named Brutus, Pookie, and Cordelia. All the while she’s trying to avoid the annoyingly perfect Fleischman. In the end, Lulu learns a lesson about teamwork and respecting others.

Ella wants to write the “prettiest, most exciting, scariest, and funniest book ever” and she believes that in order to accomplish this goal there must be no bears. What Ella doesn’t realize is that a helpful bear that appears in the illustrations saves the day so that they can all live happily ever after. Notice all of the other traditional tale characters in the illustrations!
**Teaching Ideas:** Reading-Writing Connection; Writing Genres—Stories; Traditional Tales; CCSS RL.7

The ugly duckling finds a crocodile in the book he’s reading aloud and with the help of his fellow readers he rocks the crocodile to sleep—but not for long!
**Teaching Ideas:** Reading-Writing Connection; Reading Response—Where does the crocodile go next?

Elephant and Piggie realize that they are, in fact, inside a book and someone is reading them. Together they discover the joy of being read!
**Teaching Ideas:** Reading-Writing Connection; 2013 Monarch Award List

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Using Mentor Texts to Read Aloud Like a Writer

*Reading aloud IS teaching writing, even if no writing activity follows the reading.*

Vicki Spandel, *Creating Young Writers* (2008)

**READ LIKE A WRITER: COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATIONS**

Turn and Talk Teaching Tips:
Before you begin, model "turn and talk" with another adult or student. Emphasize the importance of having a two-way conversation with one person speaking at a time. Assign students a "turn and talk" partner or small group.

During read aloud, stop several times at natural breaking points and pose the following queries for students to "turn and talk" about:

- Where do you think this author got his/her ideas for this book?
- Listen to this! Let me reread the beginning of this book. Did the lead make you want to read the story?
- Did you hear any words that you want to remember and use in your writing?
- Can you picture this setting/character/event in your mind? How did the author help you do that? What words did he or she use?
- Notice the way the sentences flow. Talk about how the author did that.
- Does this writing have voice?
- Who is telling this story? How do you know that?


We need to marinate students in literature so that, over time, it soaks into their consciousness and, eventually, into their writing.

Collaborative Conversations

Mini-Lesson found on pages 52-53 of Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom (Walther & Phillips, 2012)

BOOKS TO SPARK “READ LIKE A WRITER” CONVERSATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to look for in the books you enjoy reading aloud</th>
<th>What to say . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Various Text Structures</td>
<td>&quot;Oh, I love that line!&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sensory Language</td>
<td>&quot;Did anyone notice any interesting words?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Creative Conventions</td>
<td><em>any new punctuation?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Repetition</td>
<td><em>any new ways of arranging the words on the page?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Word Play</td>
<td>&quot;Are there any favorite words or phrases, or ones you wish you had written?&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Onomatopoeia                                       | "Why would an author do something like that?" "How else could the author have done that?"
| • Interjections                                       | "Why did the author choose that word?" |
| • Illustration Techniques                            | Source: Choice Words by Peter H. Johnston (Stenhouse, 2004) |
Yes Day! (Rosenthal, 2009)

My Very Own Yes Day!—Invite students to write their own Yes Day! book for their families and display their polished books at Open House or Curriculum Night.

Read Like a Writer—Enjoy reading the endpapers that display a calendar of ways that parents say, “No!”

Back Cover Blurbs—After reading this book for enjoyment, point out the humorous back cover blurb. Search the backs of other books for blurbs. (See Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction, Walther & Phillips, 2009 for a mini-lesson on blurbs.)

A Few of My Favorite Mentor Texts for Narrative Writing

Begin reading this boldly illustrated picture book on the front flap and continue to read, notice, and laugh at the young narrator's adventures as he narrowly escapes a tiger again and again!

When a frog, mouse, loris, sun bear, and monkey fall into a hole, the tiger is ready to pounce. Then, elephant comes and saves the animals and tiger falls into the hole. Will the animals help him out? “Oh no!”

Frog is relaxing in the pond (AAHH!) when he finds a rock (AH HA!). Close behind there is a boy with a jar poised to catch him (AH HA!) and the chase begins. Using only four letters, Jeff Mack tells a rollicking tale.

Rocco and his “superfriends” get their superpowers from their hair. Unfortunately, they all have to go to the barber. Will they get their powers back?

Mentor Texts to Model Organization/Craft and Structure

Cookie’s Week (Ward, 1988)—Organization (Days of the Week)

Always in Trouble (Demas, 2009)—Organization (Days of the Week)

Pigs to the Rescue (Himmelman, 2010)—Organization (Days of the Week)

Good News Bad News (Mack, 2012)—Organization (See-Saw Structure)

Scaredy Squirrel Books (Watt)—Organization (Visual)
Mentor Texts for Common Core Language Standards

A playful, colorful, and kid-friendly look at homonyms.
*Multiple-Meaning Words Mini-Lessons (M-by-M Reading pp. 181-182)*

Harvey's mom warns him not to draw on "Doodleday" but he doesn't listen. When his drawings come to life and take over his house and neighborhood his clever mom comes to the rescue.
*Verbs— Shades of Meaning Mini-Lesson (M-by-M Reading p. 122)*

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Math + Literature = Ideas for Writing

Rosenthal uses simple equations to describe moments, manners, friendship, and more! Use this clever book to introduce the concept of equations to your young mathematicians!

"What do you get when you combine a word and a number? A wumber!" You and your students will have a lot of fun reading this creative book by an award-winning author-illustrator team. Written as a tribute to CDB! by William Steig, this book will keep your readers guessing!

The book begins with the math equation 1 + 1 = 3. Upon turning the page, readers discover the answer is 1 unicorn + 1 goat = 3 horns. The book continues with a lot of other unique 1 + 1 equations. Careful readers will notice clues in the illustrations to help them to infer the answer.
Launch a Writing Workshop!

Preparing for Writing Workshop Using “Little Books”
• Make an assortment of “little books” in various sizes and with varying number of pages. (We begin by giving students 5 “little books” with 4 pages each). If you find that kids are consistently filling 4-page books, then move on to books that contain more pages.

5 1/2” x 8 1/2” (1/2 sheet of copy paper portrait, staple some on top and some on side)
4 1/2” x 11” (1/2 sheet of copy paper landscape, staple some on top and some on side)
4 1/4” x 5 1/2” (1/4 sheet of copy paper)

• Gather pattern books to use as mentor texts for mini-lessons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During your read aloud time or writing workshop mini-lessons, share different types of books students to model the kinds of books students will be creating such as:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Cheeks (Black, 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Like Books (Browne, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots of Dots (Frazier, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things I Like (Browne, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days of the Week Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always in Trouble (Demas, 2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cookie’s Week (Ward, 1988)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pigs to the Rescue (Himmelman, 2010).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seasonal Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Dog, Country Frog (Willems, 2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Village Garage (Karas, 2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>See Saw Pattern</td>
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<tr>
<td>First the Egg (Seeger, 2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fortunately (Charlip, 1964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s Good! That’s Bad! (Cuyler, 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough Boris (Fox, 1994)</td>
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</table>

Mini-Lesson 1: Introduce Writing Workshop/ Writers Make Books!
• Enthusiastically introduce writing workshop.
• Read: Library Mouse by Daniel Kirk
• Model creating the beginning of your own “little book.”
• Pass out students’ 2-pocket folders filled with 5 “little books.”

Students write
Students share
Beginning Writers Who Make Books . . .

- Experience what it is like to live with an idea for a while
- Make the read like a writer connection
- Build an understanding of genre, audience, and purpose
- Develop stamina for writing
- Enhance their understanding of composition and decision making


Tips for “Little Book” Management

- Designate a place (basket) for students to hand in their finished “little books.” We choose not to grade/assess these books in any way.

- I make a “pocket” for their finished books by stapling a file folder on the sides and slipping them in after I’ve given them a quick read (to make sure they are finished).

- I keep the extra books in a basket and give students 5 more when they finish their first 5 and so on.

- What you will notice is that young children have a difficult time remembering to go back to the book they were working on the day before. To help build this routine, model going back to your book each day to reread and/or revise. As you send them off to write, remind them to find the book they were working on yesterday, reread, revise and add any new ideas to it before moving on to a new little book.

- Right now I’m conferring with students using the “honeybee conference” method (buzzing around as quickly as possible) to help students write. I have my clipboard handy and I’m quickly asking “What are you doing as a writer today?” then jotting the title/topic of the book in the space with their name and moving
This way I can use that information the next day as I buzz around quickly saying, “Isabella, how is your book about your two dogs going?” Another way to gather this information is by having the whole class sit in a circle and share the title/topic of their book. I certainly don’t do this everyday but it is a helpful way to spark ideas for other students.

As I’m buzzing around, I try to select 3-4 students to share who have done something noteworthy in their book. (I’m also looking for students who I can elevate in the eyes of the class. I might choose a student who is struggling in other areas of the day or a reluctant writer to boost his/her confidence). Then, during sharing I tell the class that we can all learn from these amazing writers, let’s see what they did today. For example, the first day Madison’s book was entitled “The Story Begins” I thought it was a unique title, so after she shared we talked about titles. The next child was a struggling learner, Yemi, who I had to help write every word but he did a repeated line so I pointed that out. The last was a reluctant writer, Colin, who asked a question to the reader in the middle of his book - clever! I celebrated that. I record the date they shared on my clipboard so that I make sure everyone gets a chance over a 2-3 week period. Some days we share like this, others we share with partners or small groups (and sometimes when I look at the clock I say, “It’s time for lunch, let’s go!”).

We use “little books” during “student choice” writing time while we are doing mini-lessons about the traits, grammar, and genre awareness. When we begin our first “teacher guided” writing or Genre Exploration on personal narrative at the end of September, I will give each student a separate book to write that piece. Then, during the workshop they will work on writing that book each day. If they finish the section they are working on that day, they can go back to their “little books” while others are finishing. Once that Genre Exploration is finished, we will go back to “student choice” writing and “little books” for a few weeks until we begin the next Genre Exploration.

For more information on Mini-Lessons and Genre Exploration Units see:

*Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction* (Walther & Phillips, Scholastic, 2009)
## Honeybee Conferring: Anecdotal Notes

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>labored writing</td>
<td>limited topics</td>
<td>begins pieces with original ideas</td>
<td>Needs 1:1 assistance to sustain independent writing unique ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>detailed, expressive illustrations</td>
<td>attempting conventions</td>
<td>difficulty with middle and end phonetic speller</td>
<td>pre-phonetic speller</td>
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<tr>
<td>unique ideas</td>
<td>transitional speller</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>pre-phonetic speller</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a lot to share during whole class conversations</td>
<td>able to write quickly and fluently</td>
<td>varied topics unique voice uses a variety of conventions</td>
<td>varied topics detailed illustrations advanced knowledge of conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spends much of writing time “thinking” about ideas</td>
<td>repeats similar ideas</td>
<td>transitional speller</td>
<td>conventional speller</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs 1:1 assistance to match letters/sounds illustrations contain voice</td>
<td>limited ideas writing seems labored advanced use of conventions</td>
<td>ideas are original but conventions of writing make it difficult to read voice-filled illustrations</td>
<td>varied topics creative writer writes easily</td>
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### Guided Writing Groups

**Use information from anecdotal notes to form temporary small groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies for Developmental Spelling</th>
<th>Idea Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katie, Chelsea</td>
<td>Lenny, Larry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan, Jennifer</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The students in this group have a wealth of ideas but lack the sound-letter knowledge or attention to task to put their thoughts into written words.

### Idea Development

This is the "I don’t have any ideas!" group. We’ll talk about their interests and backgrounds to uncover ideas for writing.

### Elaboration

This is the "I’m done!" group. The students have the ability to elaborate and add details; they simply need encouragement to apply their talents.

### Enrichment of Ideas/Writing Techniques

This group quickly picks up on the techniques and ideas shared in mentor texts and mini-lessons and can learn from each other as they write.
What Do I Say When I’m Conferring?
Writing IS Thinking: Language to Guide Young Writers
Compiled by Maria Walther from
Choice Words by Peter H. Johnston (Stenhouse, 2004)
Creating Young Writers by Vicki Spandel (Pearson, 2008)
Writing Essentials by Regie Routman (Heinemann, 2005)

Opening comments…
“What are you doing as a writer today?”
“What are you going with this piece of writing?”

Start with what the writing does, and then move to what the writing has (Routman, 227).
“Your story reminded me of . . .”
“I could picture exactly how . . .”
“When you said ________, I felt . . .”
“You write as if you love words . . .”
“I could follow your story from beginning to end—I never felt lost!”
“Your ending was a real surprise!”

“I notice that you chose to write about this as a poem. How come?”
“I notice that your lead is like ________ in the book _________.”
“I notice that you used the word _________ instead of ________.”
“I notice that you began this sentence a different way. That’s what writers do!”

Use language that encourages and clarifies . . .
“Can you say more about . . .”
“If you were to add information about the _____, where would you put it?
“How are you planning to go about this?”
“You might want to . . .”
“Think about . . .”
“Perhaps you could try . . .”
“You really have me interested in this character [in your writing] because of the things he says, AND if you show me how he says them and what he looks like, I will get an even stronger sense of him.”

Closing comments . . .
“What a talented young poet [nonfiction writer, story writer] you are.”
“How does it feel to have written a piece like that?”
“What would you like to learn next as a writer?”

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Student Choice vs. *Teacher-Guided Writing—A Year at a Glance

Note: Opinion Writing takes place during Reading Workshop

Source: Month-by-Month Trait Based Writing Instruction (Walther & Phillips, 2009) Revised 11-10-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Launching Writing Workshop</td>
<td>Launching Writing Workshop</td>
<td>Predictable/Pattern Book Immersion</td>
<td>Predictable/Pattern Book Immersion</td>
<td>Predictable/Pattern Book Immersion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>*Week 9</td>
<td>Week 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictable/Pattern Book Immersion Days of Week</td>
<td>Predictable/Pattern Book Immersion</td>
<td>Predictable/Pattern Book Immersion</td>
<td>Informational Shared Research and Writing</td>
<td>Personal Narrative Immersion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Books/ Writer’s Notebook</td>
<td>Little Books/ Writer’s Notebook</td>
<td>Circular Stories</td>
<td>Cumulative Stories</td>
<td>October Animals Owls, Bats, Spiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>*Week 12</td>
<td>*Week 13</td>
<td>*Week 14</td>
<td>*Week 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Narrative Immersion</td>
<td>Personal Narrative Writing</td>
<td>Personal Narrative Writing</td>
<td>Personal Narrative Reread, Revise, Polish &amp; Celebrate Personal Narrative Paper</td>
<td>Informational Shared Research and Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Week 16</td>
<td>*Week 17</td>
<td>*Week 18</td>
<td>Week 19</td>
<td>*Week 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational Shared Research and Writing TBD</td>
<td>Mini-Lessons</td>
<td>Mini-Lessons</td>
<td>Biography Immersion</td>
<td>Biography Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Week 21</td>
<td>*Week 22</td>
<td>*Week 23</td>
<td>Week 24</td>
<td>Week 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography Writing</td>
<td>Biography Writing</td>
<td>Biography Writing</td>
<td>Mini-Lessons</td>
<td>Mini-Lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography Paper</td>
<td>Biography Paper</td>
<td>Biography Writing Reread, Revise, Polish &amp; Celebrate</td>
<td>Explanatory Writing</td>
<td>Explanatory Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 26</td>
<td>*Week 27</td>
<td>*Week 28</td>
<td>*Week 29</td>
<td>Week 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poetry Immersion</td>
<td>Poetry Writing</td>
<td>Poetry Writing</td>
<td>Poetry Writing</td>
<td>Mini-Lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 31</td>
<td>*Week 32</td>
<td>*Week 33</td>
<td>*Week 34</td>
<td>*Week 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational Immersion</td>
<td>Informational Shared Research and Writing Dash Facts Paper</td>
<td>Informational Shared Research and Writing Nonfiction Paper</td>
<td>Informational Shared Research and Writing Nonfiction Paper</td>
<td>Informational Reread, Revise, Polish &amp; Celebrate Nonfiction Paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Purposes and Types of Nonfiction Writing


To Describe (Sharks by Kristin L. Nelson)
- Scientific reports about animals, plants, and machines
- Reports about countries
- Personal descriptions (missing posters)
- Poetry
- Definitions
- Letters, Illustrations, Captions, Labels

To Explain (Energy Island by Allan Drummond)
- Scientific explanations of how and why a phenomenon occurs
- Personal narratives that explain how and why something happens
- Elaborations
- Letters, Illustrations, Captions, Labels

To Instruct (The Snow Show by Carolyn Fisher)
- Recipes
- Rules & Directions
- Games
- Lists
- Maps
- Letters, Illustrations, Captions, Labels

To Persuade (A Pig Parade Is a Terrible Idea by Michael Ian Black)
- Debates
- Reviews
- Advertisements
- Evaluations
- Book Reports
- Letters, Posters, Poetry, Cartoons, Illustrations

To Retell Information about a Person or Past Event (Nonfiction Narrative)
(Biblioburro by Jeanette Winter)
- Reports
- Autobiographies/Biographies
- Journals
- Scripts
- Historical Retellings
- Letters, Poetry

To Explore and Maintain Relationships with Others (Amazing Faces by Lee Bennett Hopkins)
- Cards, Letters
- Questionnaires, Interviews
- Poetry
A Few of My Favorite Mentor Texts for Nonfiction/Research Writing

If you have not discovered Scholastic's True or False series, take a look! Each book has 22 content-related true-or-false questions. The question is followed by a page turn with the answer found on the next page. The books are ideal for partner reading and are available on many topics in the primary grade science curriculum, including storms, planets, rocks and minerals, and butterflies and caterpillars.
Teaching Ideas: Morning Message (M-by-M Reading p. 198); Reading Response

Nic Bishop draws his readers into the world of snakes through stunning photographs and interesting, well-written information. I usually read his books a few pages at a time, like a chapter book, so we can enjoy the experience! Nic Bishop's informational texts have earned him many awards and include the following Spiders, Frogs, Butterflies and Moths, Marsupials, and Lizards.
Teaching Ideas: CCSS Grade 1 RL.5 Comparing Fiction/Nonfiction Pair with My Snake Blake by Randy Siegel

This picture book is based on the true story of a young lion that was purchased from Harrod's department store in London by two men named John and Ace, who cared for him and eventually set him free in Africa. The story is presented in a scrapbook style with captioned photographs throughout, making it ideal for teaching students how to write captions!
Teaching Ideas: Caption Writing

Join Lucy Cooke, founder of the Sloth Appreciation Society, and visit Slothville, a sanctuary in Costa Rica for orphaned and injured sloths to learn more about sloth's mellow ways.
Teaching Ideas: Create a multi-genre text set using: "Slow Sloth's Slow Song" (p. 65) from Jack Prelutsky's book Something Big Has Been Here (1990) and Let's Look at Sloths (Piehl, 2011); Fluency Fun Lesson (M-by-M Reading p. 71)

In this poetic nonfiction book, Singer begins with a poem, and then continues to use each line of the poem on a separate page to describe the lives and life cycles of caterpillars. Singer uses photographs, labels, and captions to enhance the information in the running text.
Teaching Ideas: Unique ways to craft informational texts
**Throughout the genre exploration, point out and discuss the nonfiction features you notice in the books you read aloud. As you model your own writing, include nonfiction features. You can even add features to your morning messages!**

**Exploring The Features of Nonfiction Texts**

**Mini-Lesson 1:**
- Read aloud part of a nonfiction big book or other text that is brimming with features. Pause to point out and discuss a feature, its purpose, and how it helps readers better understand the text.
- Begin an anchor chart of nonfiction features and their purposes (see sample chart later in the handout).

**Mini-Lesson 2:**
- Read aloud another part of a nonfiction big book or other text that is brimming with features. Pause to point out and discuss the feature, its purpose, and how it helps readers better understand the text.
- Reread, revise, and add to your anchor chart of nonfiction features and their purposes (see sample chart later in the handout).

**Mini-Lesson 3:**
- Once students are familiar with nonfiction features, divide them into partners or small groups and give each pair or group 3-4 sticky notes.
- Send them on a scavenger hunt through a few nonfiction books to look for additional features.
- Share and discuss the features and their purposes as you add to the anchor chart.
Creating a Nonfiction Features Booklet

Materials Needed:

• Blank Nonfiction Features Page(s) for Each Child (Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction (Walther & Phillips, p. 187)

• Scholastic Newspapers

Mini-Lessons 1 – 5 (The number of mini-lessons will depend on how many features you want to highlight with your students):

• Review the nonfiction feature anchor chart

• Target one specific feature and invite students to locate that feature in the Scholastic Newspaper and cut it out or create their own.

• Students will glue or draw the feature on the nonfiction feature page, add the name of feature and its specific purpose.

• If you choose, compile the pages in a booklet of nonfiction features complete with a table of contents. Students can use the booklet as a reference as they write their own nonfiction piece.

More Mini-Lessons to Highlight Nonfiction Features!

• If a nonfiction text does not have a table of contents, work together with your students to write one.

• Choose one feature such as a map, graph, or chart. Encourage students to look at it carefully to tell you “What They Can See and Prove.”

• Bring in all types of nonfiction texts to read and discuss such as magazines, newspapers, biographies, directions, recipes, brochures, textbooks, explanations, and persuasive pieces.

References:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonfiction Feature</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullets</td>
<td>Draw the reader's eye to a list of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captions</td>
<td>Help the reader better understand a picture or photograph. Captions can summarize, elaborate, add information beyond the text, connect to a chart or diagram, or explain a chart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charts</td>
<td>A visual way to share information with the reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-ups</td>
<td>Help the reader see details in something small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparisons</td>
<td>Help the reader understand the size of one thing by comparing it to the size of something familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutaways/Cross-section Illustrations</td>
<td>Help the reader understand something by looking at it from the inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagrams (web, tree, flow, scale, Venn)</td>
<td>Help the reader see how something moves, works, is created, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawings/Illustrations</td>
<td>Help the reader better understand what something looks like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>Helps the reader understand the meaning of key words that appear in the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphs (bar, column, line, pie)</td>
<td>Help the reader understand mathematical information like numbers or amounts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heading Subheading</td>
<td>Tells the reader what the chapter or entire section of the book will be about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tells the reader the specific topic that a smaller section (within the chapter or entire section) of text will be about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperlink</td>
<td>An electronic link (word, phrase, or image) that the reader can click on to jump to a new document or new section of the document that contains additional information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icon</td>
<td>A small picture or symbol that represents something on the reader's computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>An alphabetical list of almost everything covered in the text, with page numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labels</td>
<td>Help the reader identify a picture or photograph and/or its parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lists</td>
<td>A quick and organized way to share information with the reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>Help the reader understand where things are in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>Help the reader understand exactly what something looks like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print types (bold, colored, italics)</td>
<td>Help the reader by signaling, “Look at me! I'm important!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidebar</td>
<td>Tells the reader more about the information that appears in the text, it is usually in a box next to the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>Helps the reader identify key topics in the book in the order they are presented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Fabulous Features Of Nonfiction

Collected by:

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Table of Contents
Putting It All Together: Creating a Nonfiction Piece

Preparation: Collect nonfiction books, magazines, or other information sources about a topic of interest to your students. ZOObOOkS magazines work well for studying animals.

Materials:
• Unlined paper divided into fourths for collecting “dash facts”
• Lined booklet for writing complete sentences
• Nonfiction resources (see above)
• Chart paper or overhead projector

1. Begin by choosing a topic you want to research and write about in front of students. Create four categories to organize your information.
2. Model how to collect “dash facts” on a piece of chart paper folded into fourths. “Dash facts” are simply quick facts written in short phrases. You may want to model 1-2 categories each day. See example:

```
Owls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Looks Like</th>
<th>Things They Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- feathers</td>
<td>- hoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pointy beak</td>
<td>- hunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 4 talons</td>
<td>- fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 2 legs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- long wings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- round eyes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favorite Foods</th>
<th>Fun Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- mice</td>
<td>- heads turn almost all the way around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- small rodents</td>
<td>- owl pellets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- unfriendly animals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

3. Students collect their own dash facts by using the information found in the illustrations and text. This may take a few days!
4. Model how to turn dash facts into complete sentences. I did one category each day and purposefully modeled the use of the traits of good writing.
5. Students use dash facts to write complete sentences.
6. Revise, edit and publish if you choose!

Genre Exploration: Poetry
Teaching Students to Write Free Verse and List Poems
Sources: Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction (Walther & Phillips, 2009)
Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom (Walther & Phillips, 2012)

Immerse Your Students in Poetry

Notice Poetic Devices

Alliteration
Mentor Texts:
A My Name is Alice (Bayer, 1984)
“Batty” found in Laugh-eteria (Florian, 1999)
Four Famished Foxes and Fosdyke (Edwards, 1995)

Onomatopoeia
Mentor Texts:
Poems Go Clang (Gliori, 1997) *Out of print
Clang! Clang! Beep! Beep! Listen to the City (Burleigh, 2009) Picture book written with rhyming couplets
“Clatter” found in Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry p. 73

Rhythm—Repetition of Words, Phrases, or Lines
Mentor Text:
I Love Our Earth (Martin & Sampson, 2006)

Shape—Concrete Poems
Mentor Text:
Come to My Party and Other Shape Poems (Roemer, 2004)

Rhyme
Mentor Text:
Billy & Milly: Short & Silly (Feldman, 2009)

Sensory Images
Mentor Text:
The Black Book of Colors (Cottin 2006/2008)
Teacher Resource: Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction pp. 139-140

Comparison

Creative Conventions
“Coprolite” found in Can You Dig It? and Other Poems (Weinstock, 2010)
Once I Ate a Pie (MacLachlan & MacLachlan Charest, 2006)
Teacher Resource: Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction pp. 140-141
**Chart Your Findings**

**Kid-Friendly Definition of Genre:** A poem is a special way to write about a topic using a small amount of powerful words. The ideas for poetry come from your life or from your imagination.

**Characteristics of Genre:**
- Plays with the sounds of words and rhythmic language patterns
- Uses vivid language to create sensory images
- Condenses ideas into a shorter format than prose
- Presented in various shapes, sizes, and forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Falling Down the Page: A Book of List Poems</strong> (Heard, 2009)</th>
<th>This treasure trove of poems about life inside and outside school includes perfect poems for introducing various science topics, such as “Things to Do If You Are the Sun” by Bobbi Katz, or “Tree Song” by George Ella Lyon.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Mini-Lesson**

**Preparation:** Cut white drawing paper into about 50 3-by-8-inch strips for brainstorming words as a whole group and about 25 small strips per child for individual learners’ words. Because our students bring index cards as a school supply, we use 3-x-5 cards cut in half so that they are 1 1/2 inches x 5 inches for students’ paper strips/word cards. Keep a basket of extra word cards handy for students who need more than 25. If you have an interactive whiteboard, prepare an interactive whiteboard document to record students’ words.

**Explanation:** In this mini-lesson, we’ll share the process that we use to guide students in writing free form or list poems.

**Demonstration:** Select a specific book or a topic that you and your students have read about. Invite students to share words or phrases about that topic, and record their responses on the 3-x-8-inch strips for use in the pocket chart or in your interactive whiteboard document. Then demonstrate how you can “play with the words,” moving them around and adding other words, if needed, to create a poem. Once you’ve created one poem, mix up the words and try again. Continue with this demonstration until you feel that students are ready to try it on their own.

At that time, give learners a bag of 25 1 1/2-x-5-inch small paper strips. Invite them to record
words about a book they've read, and then play with them until they've made a poem, adding additional words as needed.

**Invitation:** "Poets play with words to create a poem that tells about a specific topic or idea. Today you are going to create a poem about the book you've just read. If you need more paper strips, they are in this basket. Have fun playing with words!"

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**Let's Write a Book Review**

• Introduce the book to your readers—Don't give away the ending!
• Talk about what you liked (or didn’t like) about the book. Explain your reasons.
• Recommend this book (if you liked it) to your readers.

**Connecting Words and Phrases that Help Writers Explain More Than One Reason**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For example,</th>
<th>For instance,</th>
<th>Also,</th>
<th>In addition,</th>
<th>Furthermore,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similarly,</td>
<td>Likewise,</td>
<td>Lastly,</td>
<td>Finally,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:**

*Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom* (Walther & Phillips, 2012)
*Transforming Literacy Teaching for the Common Core K-2* (Walther, In Press, 2014)

**Mentor Texts for Book Reviews**

[http://www.spaghettibookclub.org](http://www.spaghettibookclub.org)

Reading Rainbow Book Reviews
Bibliography of Superb Resources for Teaching Budding Writers


Jacobson, J. (2010). *No more, I'm done!* Fostering independent writers in the primary grades. Stenhouse. 


