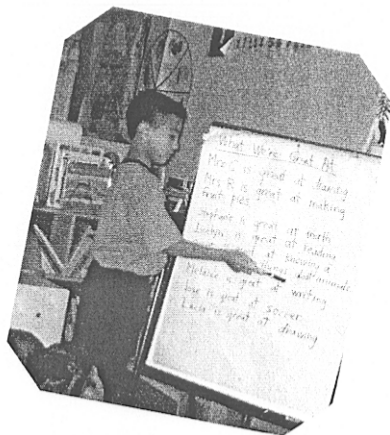


5. Do More Shared Writing



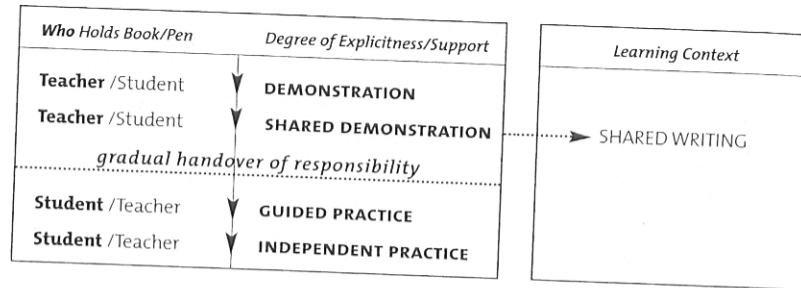
Language, written and oral, is the foundation of learning and school achievement. All I do in the classroom is driven by this belief. This hasn't changed throughout my career, no matter where the proverbial pendulum is at any point in time.

—Karen Sher, kindergarten teacher

Of all the writing I do in classrooms, shared writing is one of my favorites. It's quick, fun, easy, efficient, and it's a great way to teach and engage all students, of all ages, in all aspects of oral and written language. When teachers add shared writing to their daily reading/writing program, students' enjoyment, confidence, and competence in reading and writing increase and their language skills grow.

In shared writing, the teacher and students compose collaboratively, the teacher acting as expert and scribe for her apprentices as she demonstrates, guides, and negotiates the creation of meaningful text, focusing on the craft of writing as well as the conventions. Texts can be short and completed in one session or long and written over several weeks.

Shared writing builds on what the teacher has already modeled through writing aloud and is the important scaffold students need in order to attempt their own successful writing. While shared writing can be done in pairs, in groups, or as a whole class, I use it most often with the whole class. I make sure the topic is engaging to students, and then I keep a lively pace throughout the lesson. The classroom, with all the children in front of me, is easy to manage, and I relish the opportunity to have every child participate and shine.



The Optimal Learning Model's Progression of Responsibility

Apply Principles of Instruction and Learning

Notice how shared writing fits into the optimal learning model. During shared writing you are holding the pen and guiding the writing while acting as an expert for your group of apprentices. Shared writing is the context in which the students gain the skills and confidence to "have a go" on their own, with guidance.

Although you want students to feel free to express themselves and fully participate, you also want to raise the standard by showing them what's possible in all aspects of writing—organization, clarity, word choice, legibility, tone, editing, and so on. It's a delicate balance, seeking and validating students' input while at the same time shaping their thoughts in a respectful, collaborative manner. It's the handholding stage, when you take over just enough to allow and encourage students to participate successfully in the writing process.

One of the most powerful aspects of shared writing (or reading) is that it is here that many students begin to figure out how written language works. Much of that learning occurs through the collaborative opportunities and social interactions that take place, not just through our explicit teaching. "As teachers we have to decide *what* to be explicit about for which students, and *when* to be explicit about it."

In shared writing, the teacher does not place expectations for correctness on the students. He values the students, encourages and welcomes their attempts and responses, and supports their efforts, all of which contribute to the teacher-children bond. The teacher expands on the students' ideas, paraphrases their thinking, and demonstrates what cohesive writing looks like and sounds like.

Regardless of student age, shared writing needs to be a major part of every writing program. Shared writing is just as important in the intermediate grades and middle school as it is in the beginning grades.

Shared Writing Is Ideal for All Learners

For all learners, but especially for our English language learners, challenged learners, and economically underprivileged students, shared writing helps provide the rich oral language modeling that stimulates literacy development. Shared writing taps into students' interests. When work is interesting and students see and value its purpose, they are motivated to work harder.

When students of different ethnicities or nationalities have access to their own language and experiences—in print—the text is immensely meaningful and liberating. Bilingual texts that teacher and students have written together are engaging reading material (see example, page 118 and on DVD). Students not only love writing them, they can always read them easily. Teachers can also focus on phonics, word work, fluency, and other reading skills using these familiar texts.

Shared writing is a safe context in which struggling learners can shine. Students who are weak in organization, structure, and form are often strong in ideas. Receiving validation for their ideas in front of their peers builds students' writing confidence, a necessary prerequisite for becoming a writer.

Understand the Research That Supports Shared Writing

Social context is crucial for learning, and shared writing provides the safe, collaborative setting that promotes cohesive writing. The desire to share ideas and words is the impetus behind writing development.

A large body of research also indirectly supports using shared writing with students for whom English is not their first language. Five generic principles of instruction, all of them part of a shared writing experience, contribute to high levels of language and literacy for these students.

PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTION THAT SUPPORT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

1. Productive, collaborative learning among teachers and students. ("Learning is most effective when novices and experts work together for a common product or goal, and when they have opportunities to converse about what they are doing.")
2. Purposeful conversation rather than drills and decontextualized rules.
3. Contextualized teaching and curriculum that include and value experiences and skills of students' home and community.
4. Intellectually engaging curriculum of complex, challenging work.
5. Instructional conversation in which students question and share their ideas and knowledge.

Link Shared Writing to Reading

Shared writing is a powerful way to connect reading and writing and improve both reading and writing skills. Beginning in kindergarten and in every grade thereafter, we can use shared writing to teach conversation, humor, character development, interesting beginnings—everything authors do. As I scaffold and shape kids' writing, I make connections to reading: *The text we're writing together will become a reading text for us and others, so we want to do our best thinking and writing. Let's think together about all the great things we've noticed that authors do when they write.*

Shared-writing texts, which can take the form of narratives, lists, charts, booklets, poems, pamphlets, newsletters, worksheets, and so on, can become reading texts for:

- ☐ Shared reading.
- ☐ Guided reading.
- ☐ Independent reading.
- ☐ Their intended reader(s).

They can also become classroom resources:

- ☐ Criteria for writing, editing expectations, etc. (for examples, see the charts on page 204)
- ☐ The basis of writing extensions and skills work (see page 94).
- ☐ Springboards for further student writing.

To check whether students are following along with the text (orally, visually, or both), I often ask a student to lead the rereading of our shared writing (see photo page 113). That frees me to notice each student and when necessary, refocus attention with a gentle nudge, look, or hand signal.

Frequent rereading of texts they have taken part in writing is also a terrific strategy for improving the fluency, reading skills, and confidence of developing readers, English language learners, and readers who struggle.

Teachers are often surprised by the power of shared writing. Sheila Pearce, who teaches a combination grade 2/3, found shared writing a perfect vehicle for teaching book reviews (see page 132), which require students to be able to identify the main idea of a story and briefly summarize it. She notes, "I have been so pleased with not only the increase in writing skills, but also the boost in reading comprehension skills."

And sixth-grade teacher Royce Lindner of Brookfield, Wisconsin, found that using shared writing to identify the problem and main character in *Holes*, by Louis Sachar, produced a better example than the one he had first created (and later showed to students for comparison). (Both examples are shown below.) Royce also noted that:

- ☐ Students who rarely participated consistently added their ideas.
- ☐ The shared writing was more detailed than the teacher's writing.
- ☐ All students were engaged.
- ☐ He felt more effective as a teacher. "I was able to capture teachable moments rather than trying to lead students into them."

Use Interactive Writing Wisely

Interactive writing is a form of shared writing in which the teacher and a student or students share the pen. The student writes the letters he or she can write, the teacher writes the rest.

Holes by: Louis Sachar
(teacher created)

In the story, Stanley's main problem is that this great-great grandfather forgot to keep a promise to a lady by the name of Madame Zeroni. This brought a curse to all of the Yelnats men. Stanley fell victim to the curse when he was wrongly accused of stealing a pair of shoes. To serve his sentence he was sent to a miserable place called, Camp Green Lake.

Holes by: Louis Sachar
(shared writing with students)

The main problem in this story began when Stanley's great-great grandfather forgot to keep a promise to Madame Zeroni. In exchange for help in his love life, Stanley's great-great grandfather agreed to carry Madame Zeroni up a mountain and sing to her while she drank from the stream that flowed uphill. Because he forgot to do this, the Yelnat's name was cursed. Stanley's great grandfather was robbed by Kissin' Kate Barlow, and his father is a failure as an inventor. The curse affected Stanley because when he was in the wrong place at the wrong time, he was convicted of stealing a pair of shoes he never really stole. As a punishment, he was sent to Camp Green Lake to work off his "crime."

The power of shared writing—the review created by students through shared writing outshines the teacher's

teaching tip

Even though just one person is designated to write on the class chart, have the others each write on a whiteboard using a dry mark pen and eraser. All the kids are engaged, and you can quickly assess individual students.

Implement Shared Writing

I use interactive writing occasionally with individuals and small groups, when it seems appropriate, but rarely with a whole class, because it's too time consuming and distracting. As a student comes up to the front of the room to write his letters or words, he invariably trips over someone, and I've lost the attention of the class.

Use your professional common sense. Choose interactive writing if it's the best way to meet your students' needs. Is it the best use of this time for what you want and need to teach? Or is there another way you can do this faster and more efficiently? Even with a small group, I am more likely to use shared writing, because it's faster and I can accomplish much more writing, teaching, and rereading within a short time.

Using shared writing, with our students around us to offer ideas and support, we can try out writing in a nonthreatening way. The framework below will help you put shared writing into practice. (See *Observe Shared Writing in Action*, pages 99–111.)

CONCISE FRAMEWORK FOR A SHARED WRITING LESSON

- ☐ Alone or collaboratively with your students, choose a meaningful topic.
- ☐ Discuss why you are doing the shared writing and who the audience is.
- ☐ Brainstorm possibilities for what content will be.
- ☐ Write a title.
- ☐ Get started immediately. Ask for or suggest a beginning sentence. *Who has a good beginning sentence? How about if we say it this way?*
- ☐ Say the words as you write them.
- ☐ Shape students' language. Accept everything you can. (Revise later.)
- ☐ Move along quickly so students stay engaged. Stop after ten or fifteen minutes; it's hard to concentrate longer than that. You can continue the next day.
- ☐ Focus on meaningful language and logical organization. *Does this make sense? How can we say this in a way that's clear to the reader? What should we say next?*
- ☐ Look for opportunities for all students to participate.
- ☐ Stop and reread as you go in order to decide what to write next, to hear what you've already written, to make changes that clarify and strengthen the text. Point to the words as you read so students can follow along easily.

Many teachers are terrified of writing. Because our own writing as students focused on its editorial aspects rather than on its creative, composing facets, we emphasize the same with our students and turn them off to writing. Shared writing boosts our confidence, new and experienced teachers alike.

TEACHING TIPS TO GO ALONG WITH SHARED WRITING FRAMEWORK AND LESSONS

- ☐ Choose a Meaningful Topic
 - Show enthusiasm for the topic. Tell why you're excited about it. (See the Teacher Talk entry on page 92.)
 - Write for a real audience. (See the examples on page 201.)
- ☐ Say the Words as You Go
 - Use shared writing to teach phonics and phonemic awareness. As you scribe the words, stretch out the sounds slowly. Clap the number of syllables in a word.
- ☐ Shape Students' Language
 - If a student is faltering with words and having difficulty making herself understood, gently guide and encourage her: *Are you saying . . . ? I want to be sure I am understanding you; try saying that again. What you have to say is important; take your time.*
- ☐ Move Along Quickly
 - To keep kids engaged, pause as you are writing and say "everyone, quickly spell . . ." [choose a word they can spell, like *and* or *going*] or "read this line with me."
 - Decide what's most important to focus on for this lesson: getting ideas down? hearing many students' voices and ideas? rereading and reorganizing? editing? polishing? Choose one or two.
 - Time yourself.
 - Accept ideas from two or three students, then quickly pull things together: *Let's say it like this. . .*
 - When everyone wants to tell a story about pets, moving day, siblings, hobbies, favorite toys, and so on, save time by asking students to write their stories instead. Then create a class book. Write the introductory page together (see the example on page 116.)
- ☐ Look for Opportunities for All Students to Participate
 - Start a story or text together as a class, and then say "what if the story went this way?" or "what do you think is a better [or different] idea for this part?" Have kids continue the class-generated story on their own or with a partner and write their own ending.

teaching tip

Keep Up a Lively Pace

It's easier to keep students engaged if your lesson moves along quickly. I am not talking about keeping a frantic pace but rather about teaching with a sense of urgency—that is, making every moment count by implementing effective teaching and assessing practices. Often, if you ignore initial behavior problems, disruptive students will participate appropriately without being told.

teaching tip

Use Chart Paper

Many teachers, especially of primary grades, find that when they model on large chart paper (with all the children seated on the floor in front of them) students pay better attention than when they project their writing on a screen. It's also easier to keep, find, and reread the chart paper sheets.

- Value all students' language and culture.
- If a student raises his hand to contribute and then doesn't know what to say, say: *I can tell you're thinking about this. Think some more, and I will come back to you.* Later, if he is still unable to speak, try: *Jason, tell us what you're thinking about. Is there anything you'd like to add or change here?* Even if he just shakes his head, you've acknowledged him in a positive way, and he may be ready to speak next time.
- Call on students who don't usually volunteer, and ensure their success:
Valerie, what letter would you expect to see here? It's the same letter that your name starts with.
Satisha, read this with me. What do you think? Should we change this word to [blank] or leave it as it is?
Carl, we need to hear what you think. I know you have good ideas.
Come on, Sam. I know you can add to this. I'll help you.

☐ Stop and Reread as You Go

- Write on large, lined chart paper. While it's slower than writing on a transparency, you'll have a permanent record that is easy to find and refer to during shared reading and independent reading. Sometimes, I have a pad that I use only for shared writing. Other times, I post completed charts on the wall.
- Pay attention to one-to-one word matching. Tell children they have to watch the pointer and listen to your voice: *When I stop, you stop.* The kids love doing this, and it works!
- Before you continue writing, have students partner read the text-in-process. Ask, *Does it make sense? should we change anything?*

Use Shared Writing to Teach Writing Strategies

Having a repertoire of writing strategies is a necessity for writing well. Although we may demonstrate what writers do, that does not guarantee that students will use these techniques in their own writing. The strategies that writers use are constructed, not transmitted. Shared writing is a terrific context in which students can practice and reinforce the strategies we model, making it more likely that they will apply those strategies when they write. (Of course, we want to make sure the writing strategies we are modeling are worth teaching.)

Shared writing is also an ideal social setting in which to get developing language learners to focus on concepts of print, words, rich language, and how stories and texts work. The atmosphere is inviting and nonthreatening. The focus is on enjoyment and making meaning. There is no pressure for the students to contribute before they feel ready, and the teacher is right there to encourage and assist them. Also, because learners, with the teacher's guidance, have a hand in

creating the language of the text, the text is appealing and easier to recall and read than a commercial text. Shared writing jumpstarts students' own writing and reading while modeling and reinforcing the reading/writing process. Jointly creating an interesting story or writing on an engaging topic will keep the attention of even our youngest writers.

Keep the Major Focus on Content

Unless you have a message worth reading, editing doesn't matter very much. While, of course, you will be demonstrating correct form, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, in the act of writing, you don't need to comment much about it (for example, you needn't say, *I'm putting a capital letter here because . . .*). You can't work on everything at once, so save your energy—and the students' as well—and focus on writing a meaningful, interesting message.

Demonstrate How Shared Writing Works

- ☐ Choose a meaningful, engaging topic and narrow the focus.
- ☐ Decide what to say and how to say it—think like a writer.
- ☐ Logically organize the writing so it's easy to follow.
- ☐ Use interesting, lively language.
- ☐ Reread, rethink, and revise.
- ☐ Select a fitting title.
- ☐ Write in the correct form (letter, report, story).
- ☐ Begin with a sentence or paragraph to engage the reader.
- ☐ Be picky about word choice.
- ☐ Craft a conclusion.
- ☐ Pay attention to conventions and the mechanics of writing.
- ☐ Incorporate conversation and other literary devices authors use.
- ☐ Check to make sure the writing is clear and will engage the intended reader.

Watch Your Language

All of us need to feel supported, valued, and respected before we can learn. Therefore, it is very important to be sensitive to students' language and culture. We can compose a text collaboratively, but unless we listen to our students in the context of who they are, the activity will not help them become competent, joyful, independent learners.

If a student offers a response that is confusing or not in standard English, choose your words carefully. Shared writing is not the time to focus on students'

Teacher Talk

English or grammar. It is the time to validate students' ideas and thinking so they will *want* to write and *choose* to write. Phrase questions and comments in inclusive and encouraging language.

Use language that demonstrates respect

- ☐ Thank you for sharing your thinking.
- ☐ That's an interesting idea.
- ☐ Good for you. You knew thus-and-so.
- ☐ I am glad you asked that question.
- ☐ Give it a try. I'll help you.
- ☐ Let's do it together.
- ☐ That's good thinking. Here's another way we can say that.
- ☐ You have a smart brain. I want to know what you are thinking.
- ☐ I never thought of that. Tell me more.
- ☐ Yes, you can say it like that. Here's another way to say that.
- ☐ Let's combine those two thoughts like this.

Use language that affirms and encourages participation

- ☐ How can we begin so the reader knows exactly what this is about?
- ☐ Who has a good beginning sentence?
- ☐ Does someone else have another idea?
- ☐ Okay, let's go with that.
- ☐ How many of you prefer this title? Okay, that's most of you. We'll use that one.
- ☐ Now we need to say something about such-and-such. Who has another idea?
- ☐ I won't let you fail. Give it a try.
- ☐ What's another way we could say this?
- ☐ That's a good idea. How about if we say it this way?
- ☐ What's a different word we could use here that might be clearer to the reader?
- ☐ We need to let the reader know we're changing topics. How can we do that? How about if we say it like this?
- ☐ How can we let the reader know we are ending our writing? Okay, that works, or we could say it this way. What do you think?
- ☐ Let's reread this and see if we want to change anything. Does everything make sense? Is it clear and interesting for the reader? Do we need to move anything around to make it easier to follow?
- ☐ Let's take a look at this again tomorrow to be sure it's exactly the way we want it.

Use Shared Writing to Do Important Word Work

Shared writing texts are ideal for rereading, highlighting features of text, learning high-frequency words, and focusing on parts of words. In particular, when students are actively involved in word work, they enjoy learning and they learn quickly.

Cut Up and Reassemble Sentences

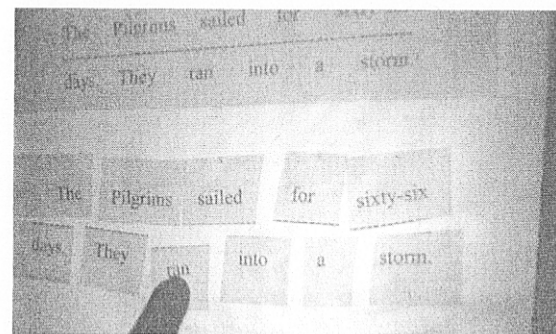
Cutting up sentences and manipulating the words is a great way for students in kindergarten and first and second grade to learn how language works. You can use sentences you have written together while studying a content area or collaboratively write some specifically for this sort of work. Have students sit together in heterogeneous groups of three or four students, so they can collaborate. Even students who don't know all their letters and sounds can put each sentence back together in order and read it, because they have helped create the language and they are working jointly with peers. Let's look at this activity as it plays out in the classroom.



Putting the sentence in order

teaching tip

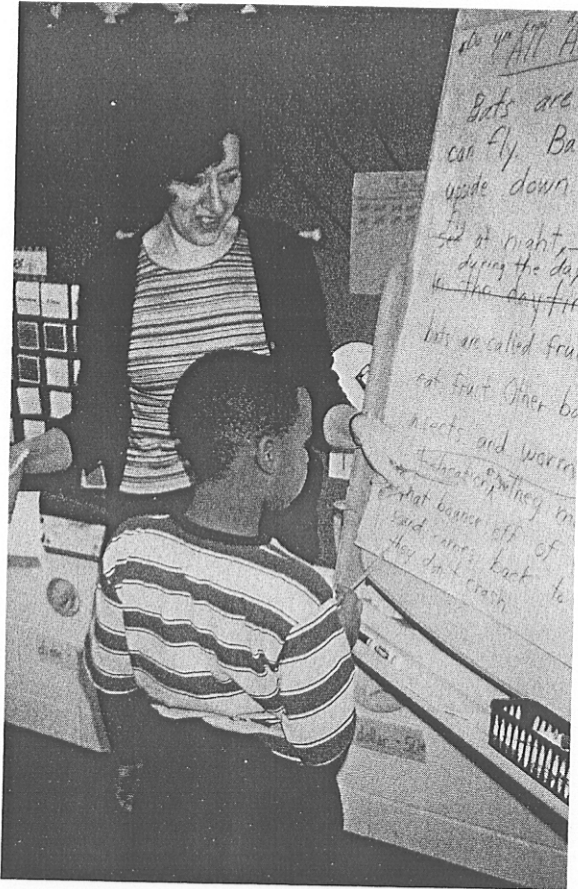
Make your own copies on a transparency—one uncut to project the whole text and one for cutting, manipulating, and encouraging self-checking (see photo to right).



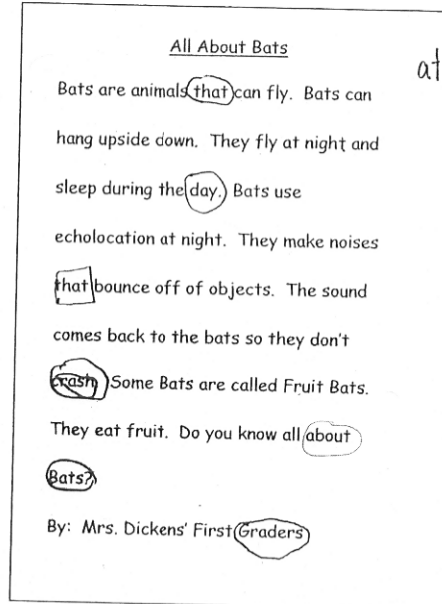
Reassembling the sentence and projecting it

Write the Message

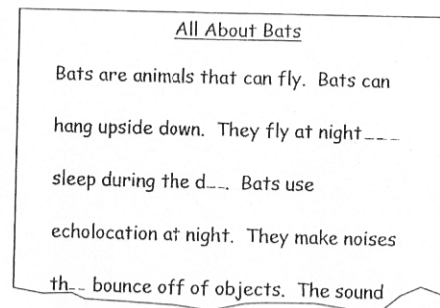
In one first-grade class, we excerpted two sentences from the shared writing we had done on bats: "Bats are animals that can fly. Bats can hang upside down." In another class that was studying bats, I asked, *Tell me something that you know about bats that is very important*, and together we wrote: "Bats eat insects, and they sleep upside down."



Reading our draft, "All About Bats," and noticing features of words



Circling words on the overhead projector



Creating a cloze worksheet

Demonstrate Cutting the Words Apart and Reassembling Them

teaching tip

Use cut-up sentences in kindergarten early in the year. Every student will grasp one-to-one matching and correctly point to words, not letters, when matching speech to print. The physical separateness of each word helps students grasp "wordness."

Type the sentences on a word processor, with an extra space or two between words to make it easier for students to isolate each word visually. You can also draw a line underneath the sentences to make cutting them out easier. Give each student a copy. Keep two copies for yourself (along with a few extras in case students "lose" words). Demonstrate cutting out the sentences and then cutting apart the words, and have each student follow suit. Then reassemble the sentences on an overhead projector. (You could also pin them to a storyboard.) Also project on the overhead or otherwise display the second, uncut copy of the sentences so that students can see the original sequence.

Ask students to put their cut-up sentences back together, aligning the words in order (*Make sure your sentences look like mine*). They can check against the displayed original or consult their peers. Finally, have them read the sentences with you, a partner, or on their own, pointing to each word as they say it.



Helping a student arrange a sentence

teaching tip

Remove One Word

With students looking on, remove one word from your cut-up sentence and leave that space empty. Read the sentence and ask what word would make sense in the empty space. Connect this activity to other reading. I say something like, *Sometimes when you read, you come to a word you don't know. If sounding out doesn't work, reread the sentence, look at the first letters of the hard word, and put in what makes sense in the sentence.*

Make Word Sorts

After giving students time to manipulate the words on their own, demonstrate an open sort, such as putting together all the words that contain the letter *e* or the letter sequence *at* or all the words that represent doing something (*hang, fly, eat*). Have students guess how you sorted the words and then let them try creating their own sorts. (*Now make up your own sort, and let's see if we can guess it.*) Then move on to closed sorts, directing them to find a specific pattern. (*Find all the words that have the short a sound and put them in a list. Check yourself by looking at the original sentence. Let's read those words together.*)

Work with Words

Introduce additional word-manipulation activities:

- ☐ Everyone, find the word down. Reread the original sentence to help you. Check yourself.
- ☐ Find all the words that have the /t/ sound. Read them.
- ☐ Find the words that are the same.
- ☐ Make up a new sentence using the words you have. Read it with your partner.

After four or five minutes, conclude the activity and give each student an envelope with his name on it in which to store the words. You can collect the envelopes and use them again on subsequent days.

Share Cut-Up Sentences with Family Members

On Friday, have students paste their words in order on a sheet of paper. Evaluate their work and let them take the sheet home to show their family members as an example of how they are working with words.

Name Justin Date 5-3-02

Glue your word work sentence below:

Food is nutritious and helps you to grow big and strong.

How can you sort the words? Write 3 ways in the boxes below:

5-1 Food	1-5 nutritious
to you	and helps
grow	

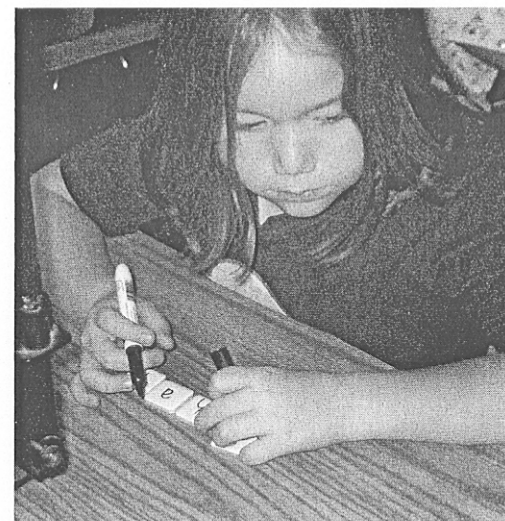
The complete cut-up sentences—with word sorts—with is read with the family at home.

Make Words with Tiles

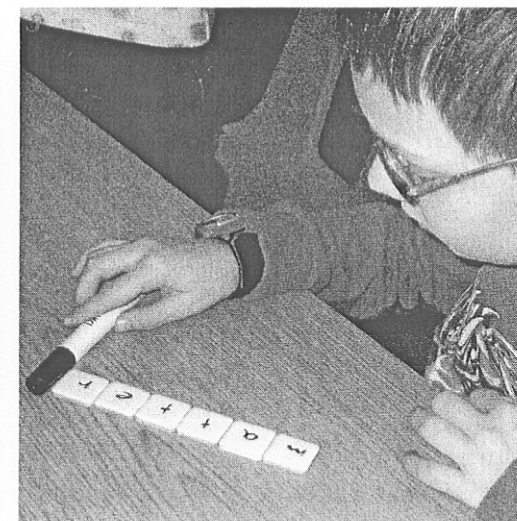
Children's ability to transfer what they know about words to other contexts is not automatic. I often use shiny one-inch-square tiles to help students construct words, learn about onsets and rimes, work on spelling, and practice letter formation. They write letters on the tiles using dry markers. Have students work in small groups, and put a small plastic tub of thirty or forty tiles at each table.

Building on the work you have done with cut-up sentences, you can introduce activities like these:

- ☐ How many tiles do you need to write the word *at*? That's right, two. Take two tiles and write *at*, lowercase letters only. Now, write *hat*. How many tiles do you need to add? *At* doesn't change. Keep it. Check yourself on the screen [if you have cut up a blank transparency into small squares and projected the appropriate letters]. Make some more words that end in *at* [*sat, mat, that, chat, flat*].
- ☐ Do the same for other rimes, such as *an*: *man, ran, pan, than, bran, and so on*.
- ☐ Here's a challenge word. Write *chatter*.
- ☐ In your group create your own challenge word. Everyone has to be able to read and write it.



Changing "mat" to "chat," retaining "at" and adding "ch"



Creating a challenge word and checking spelling

teaching tip

"How Did You Know That?"

Help kids become aware of the strategies they use:

How did you figure that out?

What were you thinking? What do you mean by that?

How did you decide?

Does that make sense? How do you know?

Help students verbalize their thinking:

I think you probably [looked at the chart, word wall, knew it from a book].

I saw you [sound it out, think really hard, talk to your partner].

TRY IT
APPLY IT

Write a "Mystery Message"

Writing a short message related to content and context in front of your students is a great way to introduce word-solving techniques. In a kindergarten class one day my message was: "Today we will be illustrating our story about things we love." (See photo page 113.) I tell students their job is to be detectives and silently figure out the message: *Watch me write but don't say anything. I have to check myself. I have to make sure it makes sense.*

Then I call on students: *Who sees something they know?* I highlight with a yellow marker the letters and words students contribute so they stand out. I ask, *how did you know that?* to make students aware of their thinking. If they don't know how they knew, I say something like *I saw you look at the word wall or it's a letter in your name or it's on our calendar board or I think you might have done such-and-such.* If we want students to be independent problem solvers, they have to be able to articulate the skills and strategies they use.

Who knows something else? A letter, a part of a word, a word? I keep highlighting discovered parts and reading the message with only the sounds and words they've decoded. *Does it make sense yet?* Finally, the combination of decoding and context (*what would make sense here?*) will unlock the sentence. *Now it makes sense.* I often reread the message the next day and add to it.

See the mystery message example shown on page 94.

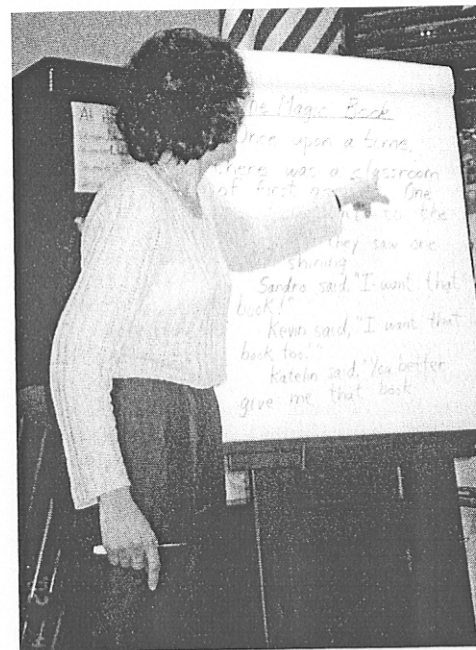
- ✎ Turn your shared writing into a cloze exercise, in which you leave out some words for students to fill in (see example on page 94).
- ✎ Word-process a piece of shared writing and project it on a screen. Have students come up and circle frequently encountered words (see example on page 94). Teach words they don't know.
- ✎ Once a week, have students write five frequently used words quickly, on whiteboards. Choose words from cut-up sentences or the word wall. (Cover the words you use.)
- ✎ Have kindergartners write their best spelling approximations. This carries over into their journal writing and helps them become more confident risk takers.
- ✎ When students do word work in small groups, appoint a "checker" for each group. Kids learn to work with peers and you'll get more accomplished.

Observe Shared Writing in Action

Create a Fiction Story Through Shared Writing

LESSON FOCUS

- ☐ Enjoying writing a story together.
- ☐ Having every child participate in generating story ideas.
- ☐ Learning to write a fiction story.
- ☐ Trying out conversation in a story.
- ☐ Rereading to decide what to say next and what to revise.



Day 2. Rereading our drafts before continuing our story

I conducted this lesson midyear in a first-grade class in Colorado. Much of the schoolwide discussion during my weeklong residency had centered around the high-stakes writing test administered to fourth graders. Fourth-grade teachers, especially, were concerned about how much they needed to teach their students in order for them to be successful on the test. In particular, they were concerned about writing fiction, a required genre. We talked about beginning to teach writing essentials in kindergarten and building on those year by year, thus making the test requirements part of effective everyday teaching. For example, young students can easily learn how to write conversation—part of fiction writing—if we show them how. I decided to demonstrate writing conversation as an integral part of writing fiction. Our story was completed over three days in a fifteen-minute session each day. When I entered the classroom on the second day, students spontaneously got out of their seats and sat down in the reading corner in front of our story chart. It was a magical moment. I had not planned to begin our hour with our story, but they left me no choice.

We continue to reread the story (*Is there anything we want to add or change?*) and complete the story by Day 3 with attention to an ending that gives the reader a sense of closure. See complete text for how the story ended on Day 3.

Note that we did not plan the whole story before we wrote it. Part of the writing excitement is letting the story unfold. My main goal was not to craft the best story ever but rather to have fun creating a fanciful story, to see and consider many possibilities, to experiment with conversation, to model rereading as a powerful writing strategy, and to give kids confidence and joy as writers. The kids loved using their own names in our imaginative story.

Beyond the Lesson

Once the completed story was word-processed it was used:

- ☐ For shared reading.
- ☐ In a cloze exercise (some words or parts of words are whited out).
- ☐ To highlight high-frequency words (on a projected transparency).
- ☐ For word work with tiles and whiteboards: making words from common rimes like "ook"—"book" (in story) plus "took," "shook," and so on; and common phonics generalizations like "ar" ("star," "dark," and "smart" [all in story]).
- ☐ To teach skills (capitalization, punctuation, deleting text, using conversation).
- ☐ As an evaluation tool for checking reading fluency.
- ☐ As a take-home story to read to parents.
- ☐ As a springboard for free-choice writing of other stories.

THE MAGIC BOOK

Once upon time, there was classroom of smart first graders. One day they went to the library and they saw one cover shining.

Sandro said, "I want that book!"

Kevin said, "I want that book too!"

Katelin said, "You better give me that book!"

"Let's all check it out," said Sandro.

"Let's ask Mrs. Haloin if she's seen this book before," said Nicky.

All the kids gathered around the book. Everyone stared at it. The cover had glow-in-the-dark stars and a glow-in-the-dark dragon with shining, breathing fire coming out of his mouth. All of us at once opened the book and gasped.

UHHH!

The words came out of the book and put a magic spell on us. We shrunk and fell into the book. Words talked to us. The words glowed, moved around, and floated. Mrs. Vizyak shut the book and accidentally locked us in. We screamed, "Help! Help!" She didn't hear us.

Mrs. Vizyak picked up the book and took it to read to the kindergarten class. When she got to the last page, the kids in the book held up letters to spell HELP!! The kindergartners saw the kids in the book and said, "Your first grade class is in the book!"

Mrs. Vizyak shook the book up and down. Her class and a Wizard fell out of the book. Mrs. Vizyak asked the Wizard to make her class regular size. Jamie picked up the tiny Wizard and put him back in the book. We decided to never read a magic book again.

What I Do...

I gather the children in front of me in the reading corner. I sit in the big comfortable chair, and there is a large lined flipchart next to me.

I solicit story ideas from students, and we list them on the chart.

I call on students who raise their hand.

I tally the results by a show of hands, and *The Magic Book* gets the most votes by far. Next, we begin to brainstorm what could happen in the book (see chart).

I want to maintain kids' attention so we immediately begin to write the story. I write the title and underline it.

I slowly say the words as I write them.

What I Say...

DAY 1

Setting the Purpose, Getting Started

You know what I was thinking, kids, I was thinking it would be great if we could write our own fiction story. We've been reading lots of fiction, and you know a lot about how stories work. Who has an idea?

Sandro: I know, it could be about a magic carpet.

That's a possibility. Thank you. Who has another idea?

Jason: I know what we could call it, *The Magic Carpet*.

Let's get some more ideas before we decide.

Marie: How about a book about insects?

Vaughn: Let's write a book on space.

Those are all good possibilities. Does anyone else have an idea?

How about a story about a fire department?

We could write a story about a magic book.

Okay, we have some great ideas. Let's vote and choose the one most people want. You can only vote once.

What's going to happen in this story?

Pictures could move and pop out.

Words glow in the dark.

Words go right to your brain.

Words talk to you.

Okay, you have some good ideas. Who's going to be the main character?

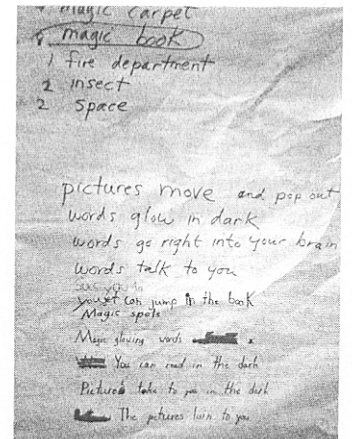
It could be about us!

What would be a good first sentence to start our story?

Once upon a time there was a classroom of first graders.

That's a great first sentence. Watch me write it. All eyes up here.

"Once upon a time there was a classroom of first graders."



The completed and revised story: created in three 15-minute sessions

I move quickly because I don't want to lose the children's attention.

I encourage written dialogue so I can demonstrate it as part of effective fiction writing.

Again, I say the words as I write them.

I make an exclamation mark.

I keep up a fast pace as we reread

I want them to be thinking about writing even when we're not writing

I point to and read aloud some of the ideas students have listed on our chart.

I ask a volunteer to lead rereading so I can be sure that all students are reading and following along. (Rereading is a powerful strategy for struggling readers and writers.)

I insert a caret and add the word "smart."

I want students to know writers are always rereading to check how the writing sounds and looks on the page.

What do they do? Who has an idea? Make sure it goes with our magic book story.

One day they went to the library and they saw one cover shining.

That sounds great! Let's go with that.

Okay, so when the kids see this shining cover what do they say? Conversation makes a story more interesting.

Sandro: I want that book.

What else do they say?

Kevin: I want that book too.

Katelin: You better give me that book!

Katelin, I love the way you said that. I'm going to put this mark here to show that.

Let's reread what we have so far and see how it sounds. All eyes up here.

If you get some ideas for our story later, jot them down on the chart (see on p. 100).

DAY 2

Affirming Their Ideas, Rereading, Continuing the Story

Wow, I can tell by the way you all came right up to our chart you're ready to continue our story. And, look at all these good ideas you have jotted down. You were thinking about our story even when we weren't writing it. That's what good writers do. They think about their writing all the time.

Okay, let's read our story so far and see how it sounds before we continue. Who wants to come up and point to each word as you read and lead the class in rereading?

Abbie leads the class in rereading.

Is there anything we want to change or add? What kind of first graders were they?

Several kids: Smart!

"Once upon a time there was a classroom of smart first graders." I like the way that sounds. Let's hear from a few more students. What else might someone say?

Let's all check it out.

That's good thinking.

Watch me write it. "Let's all check it out" I'm going to add "said Sandro" so the reader knows who said it. Watch how I do it.

Let's get Mrs. Haloin, our librarian, involved. What might we ask her?

Nicky: Let's ask Mrs. Haloin if she's seen this book before.

Good idea, Nicky. Everyone, watch me write. I want to be sure I'm doing my best spelling and not leaving out any words.

Let's read our story from the beginning and see what we want to say next. Rereading is a good way to get ideas.

Now let's bring the whole class back together in the story. We need to have some girls helping to write this story too.

Sarah: All the kids looked at the book.

That's fine. Does someone have another way to say that?

All the kids gathered around the book.

I love that word "gathered."

"All the kids gathered around the book." I can picture everyone looking at the book. How can we say that so it sounds like a story? Michael, what do you think? What should we say next?

Everyone stared at it.

What do the kids see? What does the cover look like? Take a look at our chart for some ideas. Marissa, what do they see?

Marissa: Glow-in-the-dark-stars.

The cover had glow-in-the-dark stars...

What else?

... and a glow-in-the-dark dragon ...

I make a specific suggestion to shape the story and move it along.

I say each word as I write Nicky's sentence and add "said Nicky."

I want to encourage rereading when kids do their own writing.

I want to optimize participation.

I say the words as I write them.

As I help shape the story, I call on volunteers and also encourage participation from those we haven't heard from.

I write the sentence

I point to their listing of ideas

I supply the beginning of the sentence ("The cover had") and then write Marissa's words.

I add it to the sentence as I say it aloud.

I take the first response as it makes sense and I want to keep the story moving along

I want rereading-while-writing to become a habit.

I direct their attention back to some of their ideas and encourage everyone to talk. I want to be sure they stick with our story's main idea. They talk for about a minute or two.

I write it as stated.

I write it.

I reread, starting with "Words came out of the book..."

I guide students to leave out a line that may lead them off track.

What did this dragon look like?

He had shiny, breathing fire coming out of his mouth.

"... with shiny, breathing fire coming out of his mouth."

That sounds great. Now what do the smart first graders do? Kelsie, give it a try. You see this glow-in-the-dark cover. Do you pick up the book?

Kelsie: All of us at once opened the book...

And then what?

Kelsie: ... and gasped, "UHHH!"

You said that so loud. I'm going to write it with big letters and an exclamation point to show how to read that. Okay, let's read the story from the beginning before we go on.

Look at our chart, turn and talk to your partner, what do you want to happen next? Make sure your ideas make sense. There are no witches in our story. We're writing about a magic book that glows in the dark.

What's going to happen now? Who came up with a good idea?

Words came out of the book and put a magic spell on us.

Interesting idea. Then what happened?

We shrunk and fell into the book. Words talked to us.

The words were big...

... and had funny faces on them.

Let's read this part again and see how it works with our story.

What do you think? How about if we cross out the last line. I don't think it adds to our story.

Let's cross it out.

Let's read it again and see what should come next.

The words glowed...

... moved around, and floated.

Okay, that works. What happens now?

Observe Shared Writing in Action

Teach Informational Writing Through Shared Writing

LESSON FOCUS

- ☐ Enjoying writing and feeling successful as writers.
- ☐ Learning how to write an informational essay.
- ☐ Establishing meaningful purpose and audience.
- ☐ Brainstorming ideas before writing.
- ☐ Applying criteria to writing.
- ☐ Writing with specificity.
- ☐ Including a satisfying lead and ending.

This fifteen-minute shared writing lesson took place in December during a writing residency in Sue Mikulecky's fifth-grade class (see page 221). Following the lesson framework on page 293, we had already established a

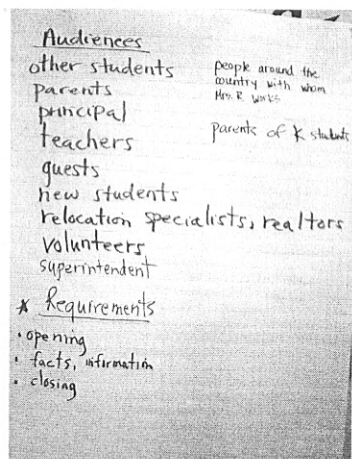


Celebrating a students writing in whole-class share

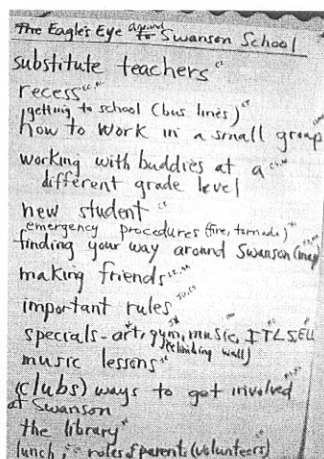
genuine purpose and audience: creating a guide to the school ("The Eagle's Eye Around Swanson School") that could be used by new students, new teachers, and visitors (see audiences chart below). Next we brainstormed the topics to be included (see topics chart [again, below]; students initialed the topic they chose). To guarantee writing success, including when to paragraph, I established criteria—a simple rubric—ahead of time (see requirements below).

So that students would remain attentive and interested and have enough time to complete their initial drafts, this shared writing, "How to Work in a Small Group" (a topic from our brainstormed list), was completed in fifteen minutes. After the draft was written, we reviewed it against our criteria and numbered each requirement we had included (see the copy of the draft below).

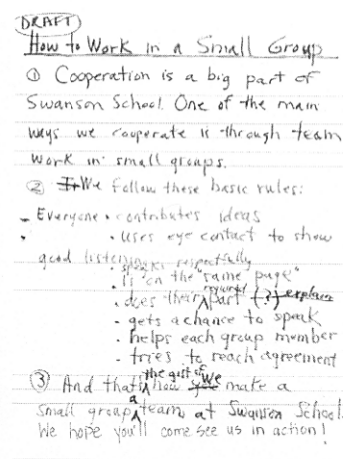
The next day the students and I reviewed the draft and slightly revised it. The biggest challenge was to prompt the students who were not used to writing for a real audience to see the necessity for a closing that considers the reader. It took some nudging (*Have we concluded this so that our reader feels satisfied?*) before they came to that understanding. (See last line of draft for that addition.) (The accompanying DVD includes some pages from the final publication.)



Our audience chart and our writing requirements (simple criteria)



Our topics chart with students' initials (indicating their writing topic)



Our draft, "How to Work in a Small Group"

What I Do...

I explain why we're doing the shared writing.

I validate the student's response and prod with a question for more.

I call on Victoria who raises her hand.

I want kids' attention focused on our writing. I say each word in the sentence as I write it.

I point to each word as we read aloud together.

I want to encourage specific, detailed information.

I want to keep things moving and build on the structure Kayla has suggested.

What I Say...

Setting the Purpose, Getting Started

We're going to write one part of our guidebook together so when you go to write on your own, you'll know exactly what to do.

Take a look at the criteria we've established for our writing. Our opening needs to let the reader know what our piece is about. Who has a good first sentence?

Colin: We work in small groups at our school.

That's a possibility. Colin, thank you for sharing your thinking. Kids, why is it important to be able to work in a small group?

Victoria: Cooperation is a big part of Swanson School.

That's an interesting way to start. Let's go with that. It tells the reader right away something important about our school.

"Cooperation is a big part of Swanson School." All eyes up here. Make sure I'm getting it right.

Okay, now connect that thought to working in small groups. How do cooperation and small groups go together?

Joe, you've got your hand up. Give us the next sentence.

Joe: One of the main ways we cooperate is through team work in small groups.

Great. Thank you, Joe. Let's read what we have so far.

How does that sound?

Several students respond, "It sounds good."

Getting the Facts Down

Let's go back to our criteria. We have our opening. Now we need the facts and information that tell how to work in a small group. If a visitor came to our school, what exactly would he see? What do you do that makes small-group work go well?

Kayla: Well, we have some rules.

It would be important to include those. How about if we say it like this: "We follow these basic rules:"

I don't worry about labeling paragraphing at this time. My focus is on getting the information down.

I write the words as I say them aloud.

I write down their suggestions without commenting that I am listing items. I want to keep the focus on getting ideas down quickly.

Responses come rapidly from various students who volunteer, and I jot them down.

I want everyone's attention; I want to emphasize the importance of rereading.

Because no one has brought it up, I prod with a question.

I have the students stop talking after a minute to get back on track.

I'm going to write on a new line because we're done with our opening. Now we're moving to the factual part.

"We follow these basic rules."

What are the main rules you follow? Becky? (Her hand is up.)

Becky: Everyone contributes ideas.

Good beginning. What else?

Clair: Everyone uses eye contact to show good listening.

Clair, that's an important one.

Speaks respectfully.

Is on the same page.

Does their part.

Gets a chance to speak.

Helps each group member.

Tries to reach agreement.

Wow! I can tell you've done a lot of work in small groups. You know a lot about how to participate so the group works well. Good for you.

Rereading and Rethinking

Let's reread this part to be sure it makes sense before we move to the closing. Read it aloud with me or follow silently with your eyes.

Ariel: I like it.

Juliana: Me too.

I'm not sure about "does their part." Explain that; it feels like something is missing.

A conversation ensues about what the phrase means.

How about if we say "does their required part"? I think that makes it a little clearer.

I am aware that our list is a bit superficial but this is our first attempt. I want students to be successful and enjoy writing.

I encourage participation from reluctant students.

I wait five seconds

I'm thinking that it's not a great last line, but it works so I take it. We read it together.

I add a caret and write a.

I am aware that our facts are not specific enough for the reader to "visualize" small-group work. However, I want to bring our piece to an end while excitement is high. I decide to accept what we have by adding one qualification.

Writing an Ending

Okay, let's wrap it up. Let's pull everything together in an interesting way without repeating our beginning.

Caitlin, we haven't heard from you. Give it a try. I'll help you. What have we told the reader in this second part?

Caitlin: And that's how you make a small group . . .

That's a good start. Thank you. Someone finish that thought.

Eric, how could we add on to "And that's how we make a small group . . ."

I won't let you fail. Give it a try.

Eric: And that's how you make a small group team at Swanson School.

Thanks Eric. That works fine. Watch me write it.

Okay, anyone want to add anything else? Does it sound like it's ended for the reader? Let's read our last line: "And that's how you make a small group team at Swanson."

Something doesn't sound right.

Chase: And that's how we make . . .

Thanks Chase. Good noticing. I'll cross out "you" and put "we" here.

Anything else?

Kelsey: I think we need to add "a" after group.

"And that's how we make a small group a team . . ."

Thanks Kelsey. That makes more sense now for the reader.

You know what, I'm thinking we need to say, "And that's the gist of how we make a small group. . . ." We've told how a small group works but in general terms, so we need to let the reader know that. What do you think? Gist means the general idea.

Lots of nods and yeses.

Okay, I'm going to add that. Let's read that together: "And that's the gist of how we make a small group work as a team at Swanson School."

Now, let's read the whole thing through and see if we want to change anything.

Students like it as is.

I am hoping to add another line that is directed to the audience, but students are not ready for this yet.

I want everyone to have time to draft their own piece.

If I want students to end their own writing with a line that acknowledges the readers, I have to first demonstrate that. The next day I say:

What about our ending? Are we happy with it?

They are.

We'll revisit this again tomorrow. Right now, I want you to get started writing the part you signed up for. Some of you signed up for the same topic. That's fine. We can combine those together later.

Check to be sure you do all three parts of the writing that are listed on our chart. Check yourself when you're done by numbering them.

I think we need another line that invites the reader to see a small group.

Students respond: We hope you'll come see us in action.

Beyond the Lesson

After the shared writing, we followed the five-day lesson framework on page 317 to produce drafts, final copies, and a class publication. See also pages 316–322 and DVD for final publication—table of contents and several pages.

Victoria
Dressing for WI
It's important to dress right in WI
1. different weather - snow, rain, sun... winter-shorts
2. summer-hot- 70-90° ...
winter-cold-freezing - 10 below zero
dress warm- layers, cover face (stings), hood, sweatshirt, heavy jacket, pants, boots, heavy thick socks, gloves, hat, ear muffs, etc.
If you're a girl... show
3. fun in winter if you're dressed right appropriately
If you dress you can have a lot of fun in WI in winter.

I chart my public scaffolded conversation with Victoria (Vikki)

Victoria's
12/2/18
It's important to dress right in WI. There are so many different types of weather here. Like snow, rain, and sun. During them all it's important to have fun. You don't want to do something like dress in shorts in winter.
2. Summer can get hot from 70-90° F. In winter it can get cold freezing to about 10 below zero. In winter dress warm. Here are some tips that may help: wear layers, cover your face (it can sting). In school I would wear a sweatshirt, heavy jacket, long pants (leg warmers), lined boots, heavy thick socks. Even hats, gloves, and mitts, and a scarf. If you're a girl and plan on wearing tights under it. Some winters there can be a lot of snow. Others not so much. So if you follow these tips & you won't need a goodby to outdoors will be fun.
3. It can be fun in winter if you're dressed appropriately. If you're dressed right you can have a lot of fun in WI in winter. So come to our school winter or summer and check us out. I hope you enjoy it.

Victoria writes her draft on dressing for Wisconsin

WI weather
Wisconsin has different weather than other states. You see here in Wisconsin we have ~~lot~~ some ~~add~~ winters. If you're not used to that then it can otherwise go away.
Winter coats, snow pants, boots, hats, gloves for winter. Shorts, tank tops, sandals are things we're used to. I'm not so sure you're used to it. Let me put it this way: unless you want to be a popsicle and only I'd consider dressing like according to the time of year.
I hope this helped to make it easier to understand our goofy weather here. Just to make sure I didn't scare you. I wanted to tell you that if you dress right during the correct seasons than everything's going to be so-so. In fact I hope that some day you might get to experience Wisconsin's fun weather.

Nathan also chooses to write about WI weather

Dressing for Wisconsin

It's important to dress right in Wisconsin. There are so many different types of weather like snow, rain, and sunshine. During them all it's important to have fun. You don't want to do something like dress in shorts during winter. You need winter coats, snow pants, boots, hats, and gloves for winter to stay warm. Shorts, tank tops, short sleeve shirts, and sandals are things we're used to for summer, but I'm not so sure you're used to it. Let me put it this way, unless you want to be a popsicle in winter and salsa in summer, I'd consider dressing right according to the time of the year.

Wisconsin can be fun in winter and summer. Follow these tips and hopefully dressing yourself for Wisconsin will be easier. So come on over and experience Wisconsin's interesting weather at Swanson School. Hope to see you soon!

Victoria and Nathan collaborate on their page in "Eagle's Eye" around Swanson School

After students finish their drafts and final copies, we brainstorm ideas for free choice writing. Now that students know how to write a straightforward informational piece, they can easily do so on their own.

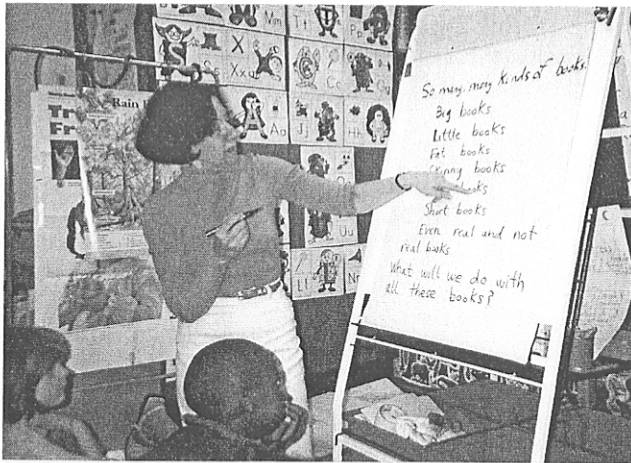
Ideas for Free-Choice Writing

1. What every 5th grader needs to know
2. School ed etiquette
3. School rules
4. All about teachers
5. How to make friends
6. Poetry
7. Lunchroom

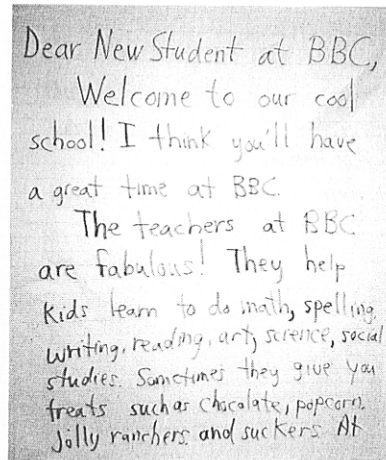
Tried and True Ideas for Shared Writing

Shared Writing Shared Reading Independent Reading

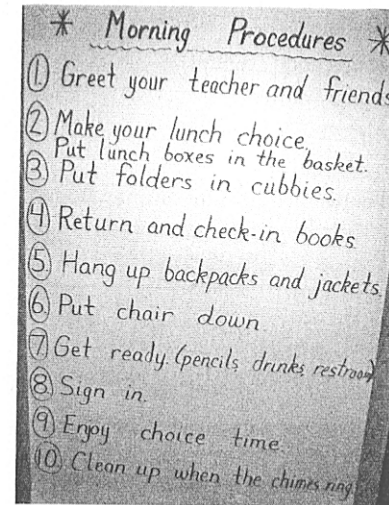
- ☐ Welcome letter (to a new student, to kindergartners, to a new person in the neighborhood, to a tourist in your state).
- ☐ Procedures for classroom, lunchroom, and playground activities (see page 113; page 106 contains a list of procedures to follow when there is a substitute teacher).
- ☐ School alphabet book.
- ☐ Visitor's guide (to the school, classroom, city). (See pages 105–110 and DVD.)
- ☐ "All about" books (all about our classroom, our school, our science experiment, a special person see photo, page 116).
- ☐ Class journal (daily happenings, major things learned).
- ☐ What is special about us (our school, our neighborhood); What We Love (see page 113).
- ☐ Letter to the principal requesting something or inviting her to a learning celebration.
- ☐ A fictional story (see pages 74, 99–104).
- ☐ Poems (see pages 305–315).
- ☐ Summary of a picture book to assess understanding or share with other classrooms.



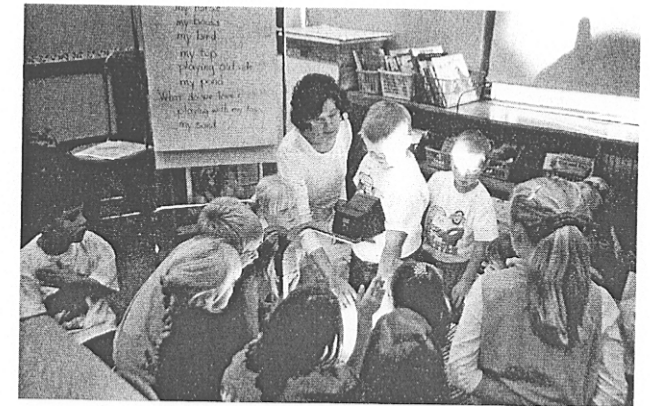
Poetry writing in kindergarten



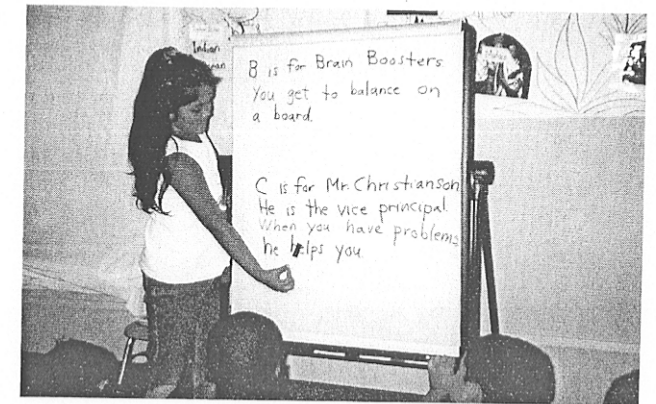
Welcome Letter



Procedures



What we love



School alphabet book

- ☐ A research report (see page 114).
- ☐ Advice (to parents of new babies, to next year's students, to teachers).
- ☐ What to do if (you see a spider, bee, or wasp; when you're bored; when you've done something hurtful or wrong).
- ☐ Recipes (real or fanciful).
- ☐ Favorite foods (hobbies, places, people).
- ☐ Book reviews (see page 132).
- ☐ Profiles and biographies (of authors, neighbors, people in history).
- ☐ Predictable books (pattern books) (see page 136).
- ☐ Student survival handbook/guide (for a grade level or the whole school).
- ☐ New student handbook

- ☐ Class newspaper, newsletter for parents, daily news.
- ☐ How to be (a big brother or sister, a friend, a good student).
- ☐ How to take care of a (pet, a plant, toys, your room).
- ☐ How to (make a meal, select a book, get ready for school).
- ☐ What to expect in second (third, fourth, etc.) grade.
- ☐ Summaries of nonfiction studies (see below "All About the Human Body;" see DVD for published book).

HOW TO MAKE A CLASS NEWSPAPER

Do you know how to make a class newspaper? We'll show you how if you read along with us.

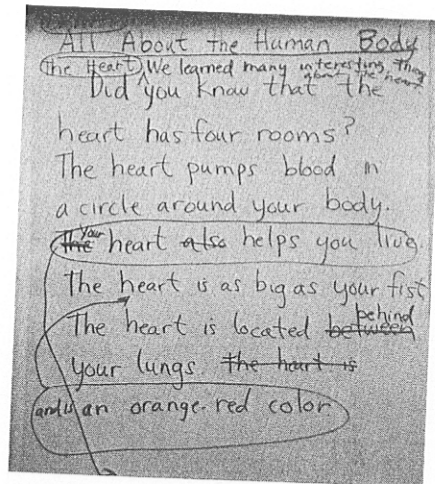
First, we get into 4 or 5 groups, and each group has one page about a category or theme such as, soccer, science, or favorite books.

Next, we split up the jobs which are writing poems, taking photos, making drawings, writing the stories, finding games, and having interviews and surveys using a tape recorder.

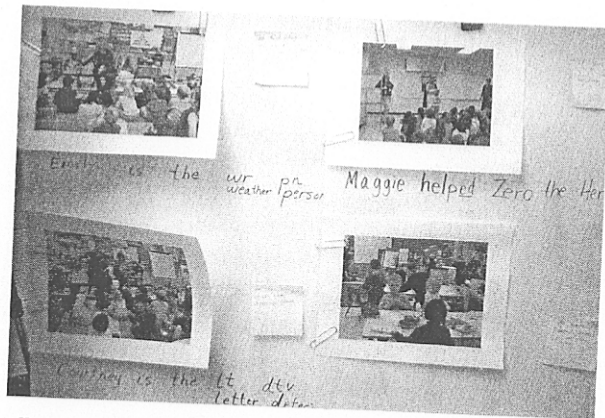
Then, we take our finished writing and bring it up to Ms. Leggett. She prints it out and we reread it and revise it and make corrections on the computer.

Then, we lay out all the pieces on a medium size paper.

Last, but not least, we staple all the sheets together and add our title, *The Cougar Mountain News*. We make enough copies, 500, for everyone at our school.



Summary of content-area study



All About Our Kindergarten Classroom

- ☐ How to act on the bus, on the playground, in the lunchroom, etc.
- ☐ What to do when there's a fire drill or an emergency.
- ☐ A pamphlet explaining to younger students why they need to read.
- ☐ What We Have Learned About . . .
- ☐ Rubrics (see pages 240–242; Appendices F and I).

ALL ABOUT INSECTS

You are about to read amazing facts

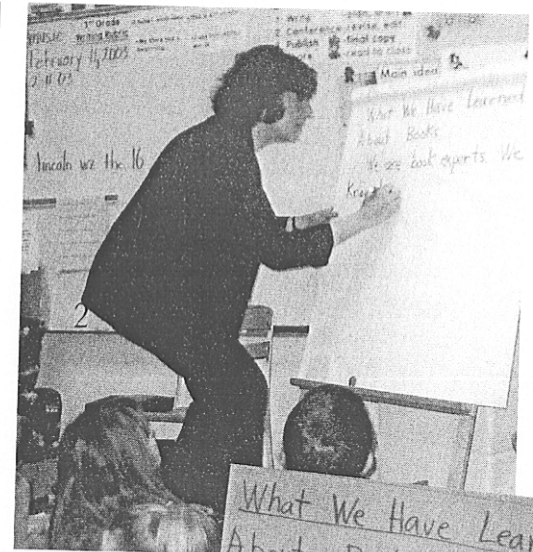
about insects! Did you know that they have three body parts?

The queen termite can live up to 15 years and lays one egg every 3 seconds. She must be exhausted!

Some bugs can walk on water.

The monarch butterfly eats milkweed to protect itself. Butterfly wings are made up of tiny scales. Aren't INSECTS amazing?

Grade 4 summary of study of insects



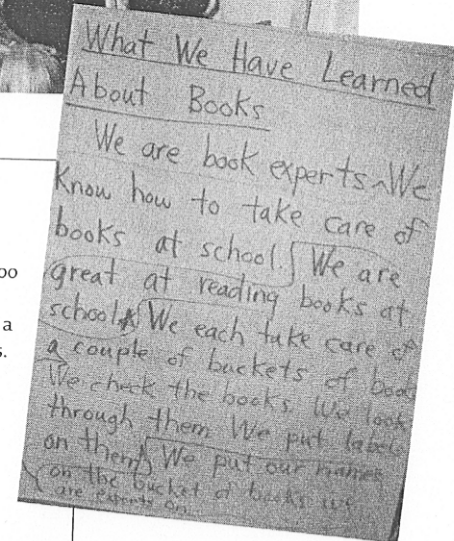
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT BOOKS

We are book experts. We are great at reading books at school. We find just right books to read. If we can't read five words, the book is too hard and we put it back. Sometimes we read easy books.

We know how to take care of books at school. We each take care of a couple of buckets of books. We put our names on the bucket of books. We put our names on the bucket of books we are experts on. We check the books. We look through them. We put labels on them. We put our names on the bucket of books we are experts on.

February 12, 2003—Written by

Ms. Thompson's 1st Grade class with Mrs. Routman

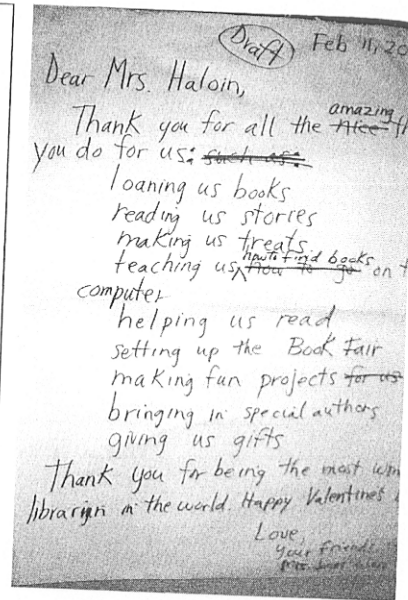


What We Have Learned About Books: beginning draft and final copy

Our Pets

This is a book about our fantastic, wonderful pets. Our pets are funny, silly, and cute. They are all different shapes, sizes, colors, and kinds. Some are small; some are medium, and some are big. We have dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, fish, guinea pigs, hamsters, lizards, and snakes. Many of our pets are good thinkers.

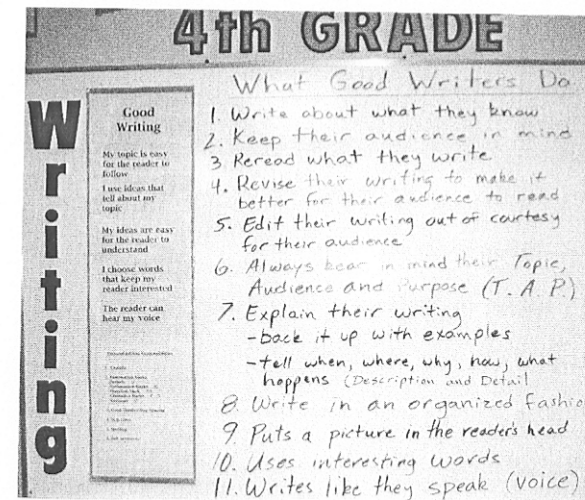
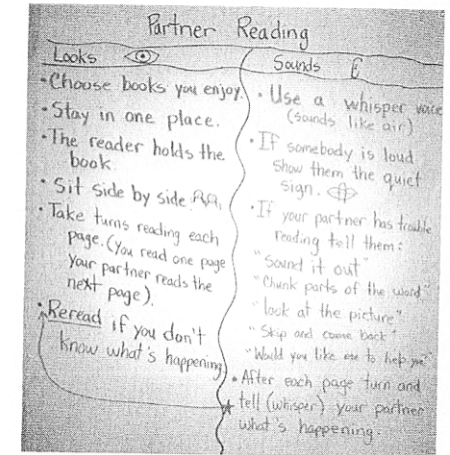
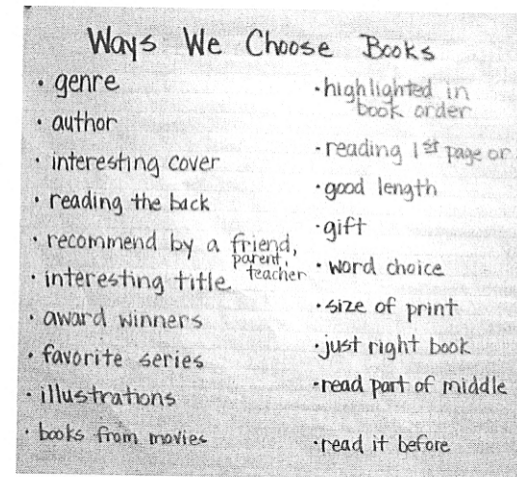
Introductory page to class book



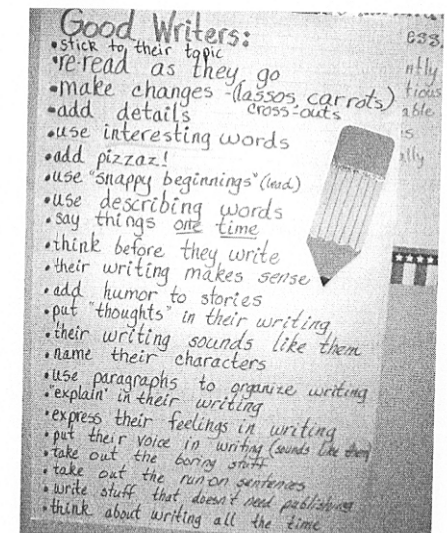
Thank-you letter to school librarian

- ☐ Classroom routines and procedures (for daily jobs, recess, independent reading). See pages 113, 316–322.
- ☐ Charts to assess students' knowledge (of content area, authors, reading strategies, writing strategies, spelling strategies). See charts on page 117.
- ☐ Letter to student council or principal (what we'd like in an assembly, school improvement) (see pages 279, 289).
- ☐ Thank-you notes (to volunteers, visitors, crossing guards, custodians, previous teachers, school secretaries, librarians see above).
- ☐ Invitations to school performances.
- ☐ Letters of encouragement (to students taking high-stakes tests, sick people, soldiers).
- ☐ A book about the teachers at our school.
- ☐ Keepsake memory book of school year.
- ☐ Appreciation writing (to custodian, parent, visitor, friend) (see gratitude letters, pages 201–203).
- ☐ Class books (our pets, siblings, favorite toys, hobbies, what we're experts at)
- ☐ Observations of class pet, plant, science experiment (science logs).
- ☐ Short plays.

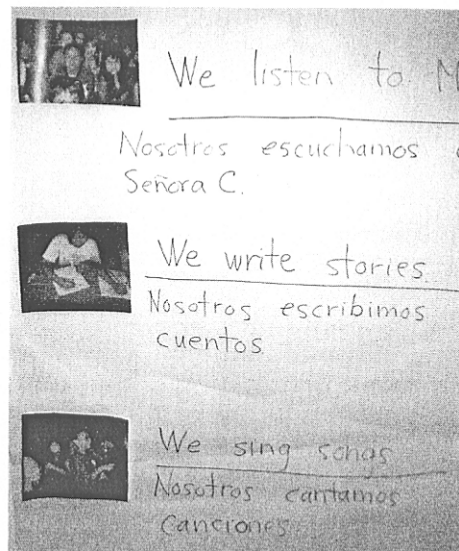
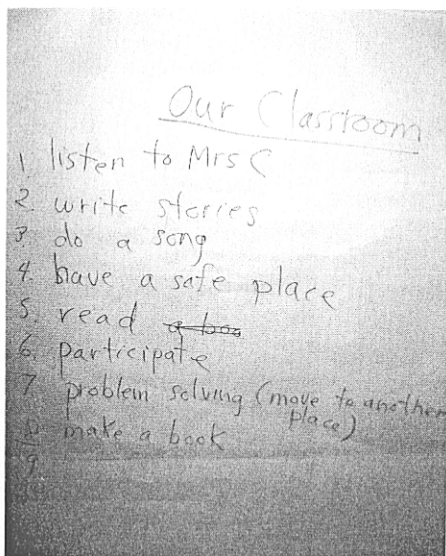
- ☐ Literacy charts (when to abandon books, how to partner-read, what good readers do, what good writers do, reading tips, writing tips, editing expectations, how to "fix up" misspelled words). (See pages 129 and 131.)
- ☐ Innovations on familiar texts. (See page 122.)
- ☐ Classroom job descriptions (for new and future students).
- ☐ Book of school records.



Literacy charts

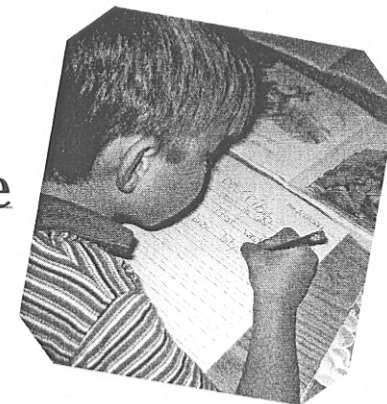


- ☐ Rules of games
- ☐ Texts for younger readers (science, social studies, adventure).
- ☐ Retelling a story.
- ☐ Explanation of school or family traditions.
- ☐ Classroom highlights (field trips, visitors, learning experiences). See below.
- ☐ Songs, raps, chants, jump-rope rhymes.
- ☐ Persuasive letters (to businesses, teachers, community members).
- ☐ What parents need to know about open house, field trip).



Organizing a bilingual book in a grade 1-2-3 classroom. (See DVD for published book)

6. Capitalize on the Reading-Writing Connection



I'm still studying writing as a reader.

—Jhumpa Lahiri

Although research strongly supports the positive impact writing has on reading comprehension and enjoyment, in reality, this connection is often ignored in classrooms. This is not surprising, given that writing is *not* routinely linked with reading in our current professional literature. In a recent popular annual survey, in which twenty-five literacy leaders examined close to thirty “key topics” that are “hot” or “not hot” in reading research and practice, neither writing nor the reading-writing connection was considered.

Yet the division between reading and writing is artificial. Research has clearly shown that reading and writing are interactive, closely connected processes that support each other and that participation in strong writing programs clearly benefits both reading and writing development. In classrooms—including those in high-poverty schools—where student achievement

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*For my father, Emanuel
And for Peter and Claudine*