

Living the Life  
of a Writer  
✧  
Fifth Grade

The Noyce Foundation  
*Every Child a Reader & Writer*  
Fall 2004

# *Living the Life of a Writer*

## *Launching Writing Workshop*

### **Writing Workshop Overview**

Writing Workshop nurtures children as writers, giving them time and space to learn how to write for a variety of audiences and purposes. To ensure that each writer can write to the best of his or her abilities throughout the Workshop we systematically teach the rituals and routines which facilitate our behavioral and academic expectations. In Writing Workshop students are supported as they choose topics and carry their writing through the writing process towards publication. To ensure that each writer flourishes we deliberately and thoughtfully teach them the skills, strategies and craft they need to grow.

Several features are essential to this model of Writing Workshop. They are:

- a daily, one-hour block that is devoted to Writing Workshop
- a classroom environment that supports productive student work
- reading and writing as complementary activities
- student choice
- differentiated instruction to ensure that the needs of all students are met

### **The Structure of Writing Workshop**

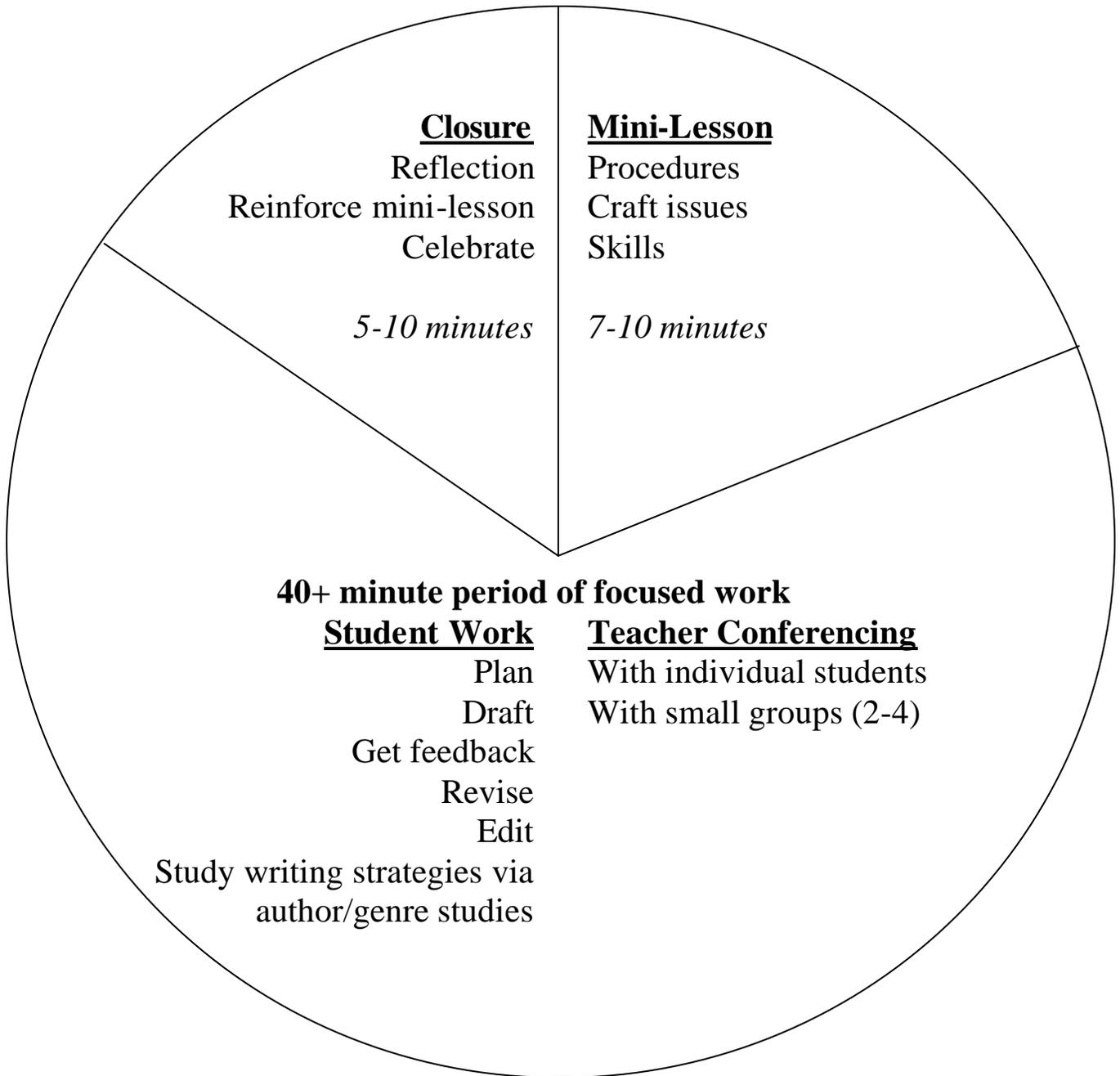
The structure of Writing Workshop is one of predictability. At the same time each day, teacher and students gather for a mini-lesson. This is followed by independent work time, which allows students to write on their own or in a variety of collaborative groupings, while the teacher confers with students. During the last five to ten minutes of the Writing Workshop, everyone comes back together to share the day's work and learning. [See Figure 1]

### **Mini-lessons**

A *mini-lesson* is a period of direct instruction which focuses on a quality of good writing, a skill or strategy, or a management expectation. Management lessons establish the rituals and routines of the classroom. Skill and strategy lessons and qualities of good writing lessons, which teach craft and structure, equip children to develop as writers. Lessons are taught based on students' needs, which are continually assessed during conferences and sharing.

The *mini-lesson* is brief, approximately ten minutes long, and has a single teaching objective. A variety of strategies can be used in mini-lessons: the teacher can model using his or her own writing, that of a published author, or a student; can provide guided practice; can enter into a brief inquiry with students; or can explain and give examples.

**Figure 1**



At the beginning of the year *mini-lessons* focus on how students can work as a member of a writing community. At first, many lessons revolve around management and setting up rituals, and routines. Later, as routines are established, lessons shift more to strategies and craft.

Many teachers have come to value the predictable structure known as The Architecture of the Mini-lesson, which was developed by Lucy Calkins and her colleagues (The Art of Teaching Reading). This structure supports having a clear objective for the mini-lesson, an awareness of instructional language, and helps keep the lesson “mini”. The Architecture of the Mini-lesson is composed of the following parts:

The *Connection* facilitates students accessing their prior knowledge by the teacher briefly stating what was previously taught in the unit and what today’s teaching point will be.

The *Teaching* is the actual instruction of the day’s lesson. One focused point is taught through modeling or direct instruction.

The *Active Involvement* engages students in a brief opportunity to process or attempt the concept or strategy taught. The teacher listens in to monitor students’ understanding.

The *Link* restates the teaching point and quickly connects the day’s instruction to the students’ continuing independent work. Students are sometimes invited, sometimes required to “try-it”.

See Appendix III for a daily planning template of the Architecture of the Mini-lesson.

### **Work Time**

*Work time*, the largest block of time during the Writing Workshop, is when students work independently on their own writing, or with a writing partner or a response group. Students learn to write by writing and giving them adequate time helps them develop the discipline of daily writing.

While the students are writing independently during *work time*, the teacher is able to devote his or her time to conferring with individuals or small groups of students with common needs. This valuable time offers teachers the opportunity to assess and meet the individual needs of each student writer in a structured and purposeful conversation.

### **Possible mid-workshop teaching point**

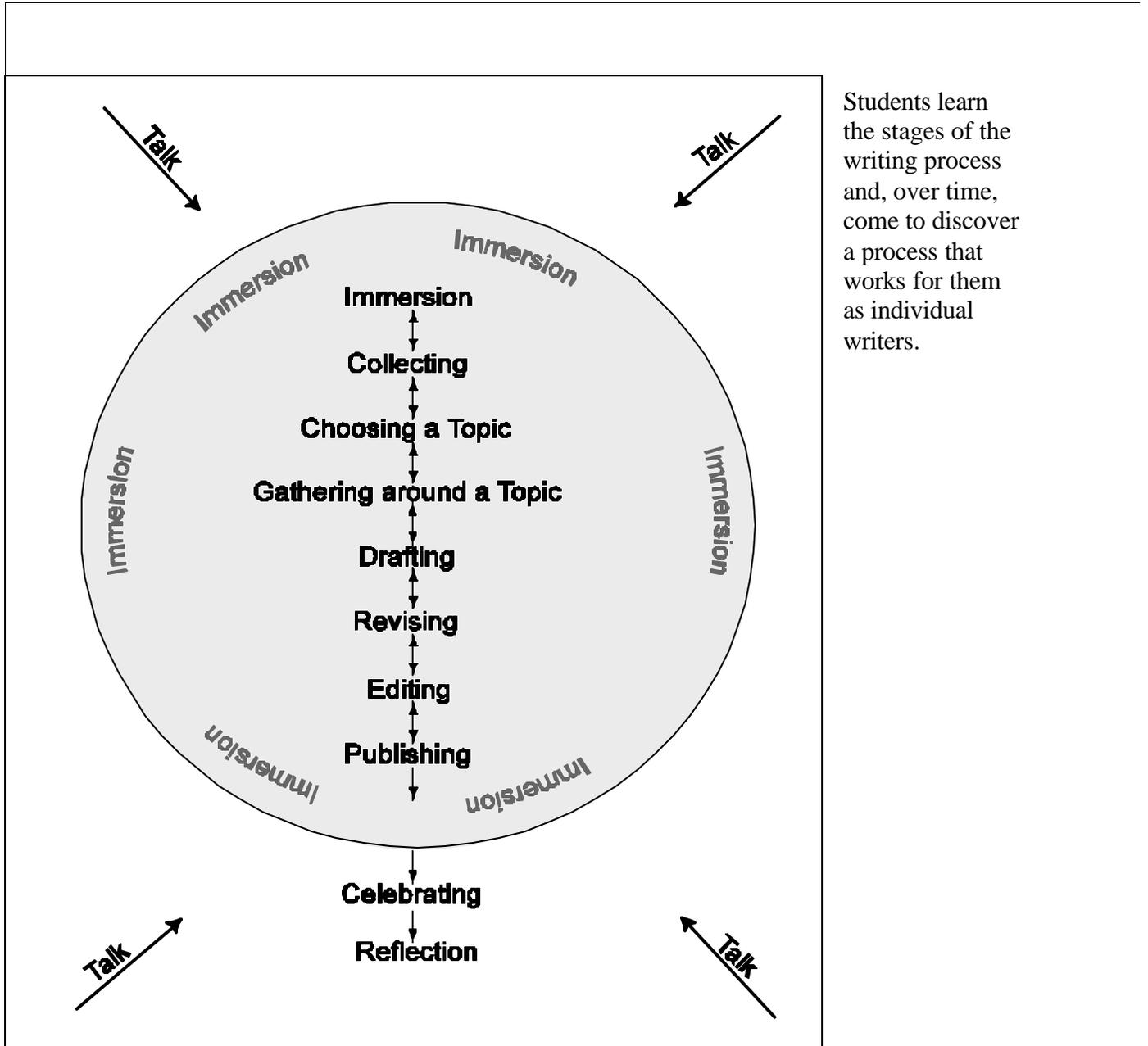
Sometimes teachers speak to the class in the middle of *work time* to show an example of good work, share with the whole class something from a conference, invite students to work with their writing partners or briefly return focus to a teaching point.

### **Share**

At the end of Writing Workshop the class gathers together for a reflective sharing session. The teacher may select a few students to share parts of their writing or to talk about their process in achieving their writing goals that day. Alternatively, students may “partner share” or all students may share a word or a line in turn around the circle or randomly, “popcorn” style. To wrap up teachers often facilitate students’ responses to their peers’ writing. The *share* reinforces the teaching of the mini-lesson.

## The Writing Process

The writing process, the notion that a writer takes a piece of writing from a thought through a recursive process of drafting, revising and editing towards publication, is central to Writing Workshop.



### Immersion

Immersion is an important part of any unit of study. Students read and investigate many published examples of the genre or feature. Throughout the Living the Life of a Writer Study students are immersed in good literature and the habits of good writers.

### Collecting

Students write throughout all genre studies. At this stage they are collecting writing in their folders or notebooks. During the Living the Life of a Writer Unit students learn how writers live their lives, constantly aware of the world around them as subject matter for their writing which they record in their notebooks. Students begin to learn about themselves as writers and to form their own writing identities (“I’m the type of writer who…”).

### Choosing a topic

Students reread their writing and thoughtfully choose a piece they want to “make big” and publish. They select a piece or topic that they care about and that they can stick with and develop over time.

### Gathering

Students develop their topic by “writing around it”, researching, writing more and adding new meaning to it.

### Drafting

Students learn how to envision what their published writing will look like. They re-read their gatherings, craft a plan to begin to draft, and write a draft.

### Revising

Students re-see their first draft and polish their writing using a variety of revision strategies, including craft strategies they are beginning to learn from mentor authors.

### Editing

Students come to understand the need to make their writing easy for their reader to comprehend. Most writers edit as they go along and also do a final edit. Editing includes reading for sense, punctuation and spelling.

### Publishing and celebrating

Students enjoy the opportunity to share their finished pieces with an audience. For their first piece this is usually their own writing community. Later in the year, audiences may include the principal, another class or parents but it is important to remember that not all celebrations need to be on a grand scale. It is also important to celebrate process as well as product – posting treasured words or sharing examples of students adopting aspects of the life of the writer.

### Reflecting

Students need the opportunity to reflect at the end of a unit of study about what they have learned during this particular study and how it has enabled them to grow as a writer.

## **Building Community in the Writing Workshop**

A community of writers will flourish in a classroom environment that supports its members' independence and interaction. Intentional arrangement of the furniture and supplies is important in helping the community run smoothly. Explicitly teaching behavioral rituals and routines ensures that students work purposefully together in a learning-centered environment.

### **Room arrangement**

A large rug serves as the meeting area to bring the learning community together for *read alouds*, *mini-lessons*, *shares* at various times throughout the day. Easy access to a chart stand, overhead projector, writing supplies, etc., makes this an ideal teaching place.

Desks are clustered to encourage accountable talk and, in addition to spaces where they can work alone quietly, students also need room to work in partnerships or small groups, at tables or on the floor.

### **Supplies**

Easy access to writing supplies is essential. A central writing center with a selection of paper, pencils, pens, staplers, date stamps etc. can be established or table-top mini-writing centers also work well for some writing communities.

Management mini-lessons teach student writers the procedures for collecting and returning supplies each day and the importance of treating the community's writing tools with respect.

### **Rituals and routines**

Consistency is a key ingredient in building community. Students come to expect a predictable structure to the Writing Workshop. Expectations about behavior are explicitly taught and modeled in the first few days of school. These include expectations about such things as, how to come to the rug and how materials will be distributed after the mini-lesson. Transitions are marked by a signal such as a chime or a chant which alerts the students to a predictable change of activity.

### **Storytelling**

Sharing the stories of our lives is an important element in building community for both teachers and students. We honor the contributions of each and every student by listening to the stories they choose to bring into the classroom and students come to see the similarities and differences in their classmates' lives. In addition, oral storytelling often serves as a rehearsal for writing, an essential precursor for many young writers.

### **Reading Aloud**

Filling their classroom with the sound of wonderful children's literature is such a priority for many teachers that they rise to the challenge of finding time for many *read alouds* throughout the day. *Read alouds* help build community by providing shared experiences of enjoying beautiful language and important stories.

## **Informing our instruction through assessment and reflection**

Writing Workshop provides us with many opportunities to informally assess our students so that we can tailor our daily instruction to meet their needs. Sometimes, simply stopping to “read the room” during *work time* is a valuable assessment tool. We can observe whether students are purposefully engaged in their writing or whether our gaze meets with a sea of perplexed little faces, in which case we can stop and regroup by reiterating our teaching objective.

Through conferences and daily shares we can see how well our students have taken on the instruction of the *mini-lesson* and whether we need to repeat or extend it on another day. Talking to individual students about their “try-it” and asking students to do “process shares”, for example, often reveal their depth of understanding of the mini-lesson’s objective. Keeping notes of our conferences is essential for monitoring individual and class patterns of strengths and needs. Throughout the year there will be many opportunities to add to these notes and maintain a profile of each student writer as they progress towards mastery of grade-level standards.

Becoming reflective on our practice is the most effective way of growing as a Writing Workshop teacher. Taking time to make notes on the effectiveness of our mini-lessons, as manifested in our students’ writing, is a useful habit.

Schools participating in the Noyce sponsored Every Child a Reader and Writer Initiative will give their class an on-demand writing prompt at the beginning of the school year which will provide a baseline assessment for each student. (Other schools may give a simple prompt such as asking their students to write or draw about something that happened to them.) Analysis of these papers will form an important part of your student assessment which will be augmented by mid and end of year on-demand writing samples.

## Our First Unit of Study: Living the Life of a Writer

As we begin the school year and introduce or re-introduce our students to Writing Workshop we establish the behavioral and academic expectations for the year. During Writing Workshop we work together as a community of writers with shared goals. These shared goals are the product of systematic teaching through direct instruction in mini-lessons. During the first month of school we invest in establishing the classroom rituals and routines which enable our students to become independent writers for the rest of the school year... and beyond.

The Living the Life of a Writer Unit is organized around five interrelated themes:

- **Building a community of writers** : establishing the rituals and routines which facilitate trust and shared expectations within our writing community
- **Telling the stories of our lives**: sharing the power of storytelling with our students, both orally and in writing
- **Becoming independent writers**: equipping our students with the strategies and skills they need to become independent writers
- **Learning from other writers** : ensuring that we immerse students in the craft of published authors through ample opportunities for read alouds and independent reading
- **Publishing and reflecting**: introducing the power of the writing process and taking time to reflect on our learning

In this first unit of study our students develop the habits of writers such as collecting notebook entries with variety, volume and thoughtfulness and “reading like a writer”. With literature playing a focal role in Workshop, students read, and are read to, and begin to gain an understanding of structure and craft. The importance of talk as a tool for learning is acknowledged and we nurture our students as speakers and listeners, establishing structures for sharing ideas within the parameters of accountable talk.

Putting all these elements together during the Living the Life of a Writer Unit, students demonstrate their growing capacity for independent work by taking at least one piece of writing of their choice from their notebook to a draft, through revision to publication. It is important to remember, however, that the quality of this piece of writing may well be lower than we might hope because the students’ energies are focused on gaining independence and acquiring the habits of a writer at this point rather than on learning writers’ craft.

**This unit of study is intended for the first month of school. The lesson sequence is merely a guide and should be adapted to meet the needs of your particular class of developing writers. It is strongly advised that you read the entire unit before starting to teach in order to get “the big picture” and be able to envision what you and you students are working towards in this unit.**

There are five suggested lessons each week but you may want to add or repeat some lessons and skip others depending on your students’ needs. Each week there are two or three lessons written in full. They are not intended as a script, but rather as models of Writing Workshop content and the tone and language of instruction. The content of the other lessons is suggested and you can fill in your own language to help you become more familiar with mini-lesson planning.

The purpose of the reflections at the end of each lesson is to illustrate how continually assessing our teaching and our students' learning informs and improves our Workshop practice. Many of the reflections refer to layers and nuances of practice that we may not be able to take on when implementing Writing Workshop for the first time but which may extend our thinking if we are launching Workshop for the second or third time.

*“Creating Writing Workshop is enjoyable and challenging. It requires passion, creativity, hard work, a certain stick-to-itiveness, and talent. Writers create habits of mind as collectors, talkers, listeners and readers. In Writing Workshop classrooms, teachers and students come together to explore their worlds in new ways. Go for it!”*

*Brenda Wallace and Susan Radley Brown, Every Child a Reader & Writer Writing Consultants*

## Living the Life of a Writer – Grade 5

- Building a community of writers
- **Telling the stories of our lives**
- **Becoming independent writers**
- **Learning from other writers**
- **Publishing and reflecting**

### Week 1: Getting started

Lesson 1: Introducing Writing Workshop: telling the stories of our lives

Lesson 2: Generating a variety of notebook entries

Lesson 3: Working independently: managing our writers' tools

Lesson 4: Learning from other writers: Touchstone Texts

Lesson 5: Beginning of the year on-demand writing assessment

### Week 2: Collecting notebook entries

Lesson 6: Collecting notebook entries: everyday life as a source of writing ideas

Lesson 7: Collecting notebook entries: using objects to evoke memories

Lesson 8: Sustaining our effort during work time

Lesson 9: Collecting notebook entries: re-reading our notebooks

Lesson 10: Choosing a topic

### Week 3: Opening up the possibilities for writing

Lesson 11: Gathering around a topic

Lesson 12: Understanding what “craft” means

Lesson 13: Learning from other writers: mentor authors and mentor texts

Lesson 14: Determining a focus for our published pieces: writing small

Lesson 15: Writing a first draft

### Week 4: Putting it all together

Lesson 16: Improving our drafts by revision

Lesson 17: Working with a partner to aid revision

Lesson 18: Editing our writing

Lesson 19: Writing and illustrating our final draft

Lesson 20: Going public and reflecting on ourselves as writers

## **Week 1: Getting started**

*This week we will begin to establish the rituals and routines that will enable our students to work independently as members of a community of writers. We will read aloud some wonderful literature and introduce the concept of a Touchstone Text. We will start some charts that serve to record and remind students of the content of our mini-lessons. Students will live the life of a writer by writing a variety of entries in their notebooks both in class and at home. Students will write an on-demand baseline assessment which we will analyze. In conferences we are enjoying conversations with our students about their writing and recording our observations.*

**Lesson 1: Introducing Writing Workshop: telling the stories of our lives**

**Lesson 2: Generating a variety of notebook entries**

**Lesson 3: Working independently: managing our writers' tools**

**Lesson 4: Learning from other writers: Touchstone Texts**

**Lesson 5: Beginning of the year on-demand writing assessment**

### Suggested literature

- *The Relatives Came*: Cynthia Rylant (memories)
- *Best Wishes*: Cynthia Rylant (writers' habits)
- *Max Makes A Million*: Maira Kalman (writers' habits)
- *A Writer's Notebook: Unlocking the Writer Within You*: Ralph Fletcher (writers' habits)
- See Appendix I for suggestions of Touchstone Books

### Charts

- *The Structure of Writing Workshop* - graphic
- *Good writers...* (habits of good writers)
- *Types of notebook entries*

Observe your students during this week to assess how well they:

- understand the purpose and the behavioral expectations of the mini-lesson, work time and share
- manage accountable talk
- are becoming aware of the importance of their notebooks as a writer's tool
- understand that there are opportunities for writing all around us in our daily lives
- are writing a variety of different types of entries in their notebooks
- know where to find the necessary tools for writing: pencils, dictionaries etc.
- respond in a conference
- write to an on-demand prompt

**Teaching Point:** *Introducing Writing Workshop: telling the stories of our lives*

**Method:**     demonstration     guided practice     inquiry     explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *student notebooks, teacher's notebook, pre-made chart with graphic of The Structure of Writing Workshop*

### **CONNECTION**

*Students; I want you all to come quietly to the rug. Leave your tables, push your chairs under and come and sit in rows on the rug. Sit cross-legged. You need to be aware of the space between you and the people around you. So let's try that.*

*We'll begin each day in Writing Workshop on the rug with a short lesson. Then you'll go off and write while I come around and talk with you individually. At the end of our Workshop we'll all come together again to talk about our writing. (Show The Structure of Writing Workshop chart). Today we're going to be telling and writing stories- stories of our lives.*

### **TEACH**

*I want to tell you about something that happened to me last month. (Briefly tell an anecdote of a small but interesting incident). I decided to write about it in my notebook. Let me read to you what I wrote. (Read entry). We all have stories to tell and today I want you to tell the story of something that you did, a story from your life.*

### **ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

*Take a moment and think of something you'd like to write about. I chose a summer memory but you can write about anything you like. Now you are going to turn and talk to the person sitting next to you. Decide who will go first, then after a minute I'll signal that it is the other person's turn to talk. ... I heard some writers say they are going to write about going to the beach, Jason said he just got an iguana and he wants to write about that. You've all got such great ideas!*

## LINK

*Writers, today I'm going to give you each a notebook. This will be a very special place for you to write in. We'll have lots of time this year to write memories, poems, information... all sorts of things. So let's get started today. When you get back to your seats, neatly write your name on the cover, open to the first page and write today's date just like I did. (Show dated entry) Then begin to write about the idea you just shared.*

## **Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Move during the workshop and talk to students about their writing. Pull a chair alongside students to engage in short, quiet conversations about their writing or topic selection by asking, "What are you writing about?" Make notes of their responses, such as, "Miguel is writing about baseball camp. He got started right away."

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** *Writers. One of the things we'll learn this year is what Writing Workshop sounds like: what noise level is best for us to write. It feels too noisy in here right now so let's feel and hear what silence is like for a few minutes as we write.*

## SHARE

*I'm going to stop you now and ask you to come quietly back to the rug. Chairs under. Sitting in rows. Be aware of the space around you. So we'll come back together at the end of Writing Workshop each day to think about and share our writing. (Point to Structure chart). I was impressed today how everyone has something in their notebook. Some of us were able to start writing right away. Some of us took time to think. And now we all have our first notebook entry. We are all writers! Maya can you tell us how you felt when you started writing today?... And Alex, how about you?*

*This is what we'll do every day in Writing Workshop: meet together for a short lesson about writing, spend time writing and talking about writing and then come back together again to share what we have been doing.*

## REFLECTIONS

- *I think the students did quite well coming to the rug given that it was their first time. Maybe I'll need to split up a few students but I think I'll give them a chance first.*
- *I was really pleased how most students started writing straight away. A couple didn't know what to write but were OK after a brief conversation. I'm a bit worried about Jorge since he is so new to our school and has little experience with English. I need to talk to my colleagues about what strategies they use to support their English language learners in Writing Workshop.*
- *I need to think more about the noise level during work time. There should be a quiet hum; we definitely need practice!*

**Teaching Point:** *Generating a variety of notebook entries*

**Method:** \_\_\_demonstration \_\_\_guided practice \_\_\_inquiry  explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *student notebooks, teacher's notebook, pre-made Good writers... chart, chart paper*

### CONNECTION

*Yesterday, on our first day of Writing Workshop, I noticed many of you doing things good writers do and I wrote them on this chart.*

### Good writers...

- sometimes start writing right away
- sometimes think for a few minutes before starting to write
- write about what they know

We're going to add to this chart over the next few weeks as we learn together the habits of good writers. Today I want to show you some of the different types of entries you can write in your notebook.

### TEACH

*I'm going to give you a walkthrough of my notebook and show you some of the things I write about and the different ways I write about them. Here's the memory I read to you yesterday. Here are some lines I wrote after observing the worms in my compost bin. Here's a list of color words I found when I was deciding what color to paint my kitchen. Here's where I wrote down my thoughts when my neighbor died. Here's a conversation I overheard when I was in line at the supermarket - I thought it was funny and decided to write it down. I might use it in a story one day. Here's a photo of my nephews and my wonderings about what they will be like when they grow up. Here's where I went back and re-read my thoughts about my neighbor and added a story I remembered about her. Here's... You can see I write about many different things in my notebook and I write about them in different ways. Let's start a chart of types of entries we can do:*

### Types of notebook entries

- memories
- observations
- lists
- thoughts, wonderings
- overheard conversations
- writing again about a previous entry

*Sometimes we write about the same topic in different ways. Did you notice that I showed you my thoughts and a memory about my neighbor?*

### **ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

*Take a moment to think about what you would like to write about today. You might want to continue with what you started yesterday or you might want to start something new. If you want to do something new, you might want to think about a different type of entry from our chart. Turn and tell your neighbor what you are planning to write about today. I heard a good variety of types of entries that you're planning to write about – lists, wonderings...*

### **LINK**

*So I'd like you to go back to your seats and before you start writing, re-read what you wrote yesterday. Then write today's date and if you're continuing yesterday's memory keep on writing, if you're starting a new entry, just skip a line and then continue.*

**Work Time:** As you circulate the room, watch those students who you feel struggle to get started or you may want to keep a small group on the rug immediately after the mini-lesson to ensure they know what to do.

**Conferring:** Reinforce the mini-lesson by making comments about good writer habits e.g. “I see you doing what good writers do, you are...”

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** *I really like the way many of you took time to re-read yesterday's entry before starting to write today.*

## SHARE

*You are such good writers! I think it would be a good idea for us to share some of our writing. I had a chance to talk to Mareva today and I'd like for you to hear what she wrote... So what did you think of Mareva's memory about when her sister was born? I'd like someone to pay her a compliment about her writing... And does anyone have a question for Mareva about her writing? Thank you so much. Often, when we respond to someone's writing, we first pay them a compliment and then ask a question to clarify our understanding of what they are saying.*

*Thinking about our Workshop today we can add four bullets to our Good writers... chart:*

- write every day
- re-read their writing
- write a variety of types of entries
- share their writing with fellow writers

*Writers! Writing isn't just something that we do in the classroom. We write at home too. I'm going to ask you to take your notebooks home and write another entry tonight. I expect you to write for at least twenty minutes. I know you understand now just how important your notebooks are and that it is essential for them to be here in school for Writing Workshop every day so I know I can trust you all to bring them back tomorrow.*

Note: Unless otherwise stated, homework will be notebook entries of the students' choice.

## REFLECTIONS

- *Most of the students seemed to settle well to writing today. Sustaining for the whole 40 minutes is obviously difficult for some of them and so we'll have to work on building stamina for writing.*
- *This is helpful because it shows what the students have had experience of in previous years. Some had obviously done work on word choice and started to write lists of favorite words. We'll obviously have to revisit this to expand the range of options but this is a good start.*
- *I think it would be a good idea to have a lesson tomorrow about managing our writers' tools independently. I see a lot of time being wasted sharpening pencils etc.*

**Teaching Point:** *Working independently: managing our writers' tools*

**Method:**    \_\_\_demonstration    \_\_\_guided practice    \_\_\_inquiry     explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *writers' tools e.g. pencils, sticky notes, dictionaries*

### **CONNECTION**

Remind students that they are learning to work independently and as part of a writing community. Today they will learn how to manage the writers' tools in the classroom so they can sustain their writing independently.

### **TEACH**

Tell students that writers' tools are very important to them: they are the tools of their trade. Part of working independently in Writing Workshop is taking care of one's writing tools. Show students where writing tools e.g. sharp pencils, sticky notes etc. are kept. Show students where resources for spelling e.g. dictionaries and word choice e.g. thesauri are kept. Explain to students that as a community of writers we share responsibility for these tools and their safekeeping.

### **ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

Ask students to look around the room and do a mental check to ensure they know where everything is kept.

### **LINK**

Tell students that while you are conferring you cannot be interrupted. Explain that they need to be self-reliant or ask a fellow writer. Tell them that today they are going to write another entry in their notebook or continue one they have already started. Bring their attention to the Types of entries chart. Tell them that there is another important writers' tool: *time*. We need to use our time wisely; we can't waste time sharpening pencils, looking for a dictionary etc...

**Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Take notes on your conferences. Note the type of entries students are writing. Aim to talk to four or five students each day.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Comment on a student's self-reliance in managing their writing tools e.g. getting a sharpened pencil rather than wasting time sharpening one.

**SHARE**

Partner share: Ask students to turn and sit facing their partner knee to knee. Give students a few minutes to share their writing with their partner. Tell them to respond as they have done previously with one compliment and one question.

**REFLECTIONS**

- Observing the students, does it seem that the writing resources are well placed for ease of access?
- Do students seem to understand the importance of not interrupting during conferences?

**Teaching Point:** *Learning from other writers: Touchstone Texts***Method:** \_\_\_demonstration \_\_\_guided practice ✓inquiry \_\_\_explain & give examples**Materials Needed:** *Touchstone Text, sentence strips***CONNECTION**

Remind students that they have been working hard writing entries in their notebooks; day by day they are becoming more independent writers. Tell them that as well as working independently, writers also learn from each other. Today you will teach them one of the ways that writers learn from other writers: they read!

**TEACH**

Tell the students that at different times during the day you read aloud to them and they have time to read to themselves. We obviously read for pleasure and to learn things but reading also helps us to become better writers. Show them one of your favorite books (which you have already read to them) which you consider to be well written and which you will be able to use many times throughout the year to teach various aspects of writing. Tell the students why you think this is a great book. Talk not only about the story but how it is written. Read some extracts which illustrate some of the things the author has done which impress you e.g. the author's choice of topic, the word choice, the characterization,. Tell the students that this is a Touchstone Text, an important book for our class that we will re-read many times and use as a model for our own thinking, talking and writing. We will learn a lot about writing from this author.

**ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

Tell the students that one of the things we can learn by listening to and reading our favorite authors is how to use beautiful language in our writing. Tell them that you are going to read aloud a book they have heard before. They know what happens in this book and so when they listen this time, they should listen for the author's use of beautiful language. Ask them to write in their notebooks a phrase or sentence they hear that moves them or that they just love the sound of. Invite all the students to share the words they choose, filling the room with the sound of beautiful language.

**LINK**

Ask the students to write their phrase on a sentence strip in their best handwriting and tell them that, as they finish, you will post the strips on the wall as another way of filling our Workshop with beautiful language. Then they should write another entry in their notebooks. It might be something that the Touchstone Text made them think about or it could be another type of entry from the chart. Remind them to be thinking about using beautiful language in their own writing.

## **Work Time:**

**Conferring:** As you confer each day you will be looking for students who are doing well at carrying out the work of the mini-lesson. These students can be invited to share their writing during our end of Workshop Share, so today be on the look out for students using beautiful language.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point :** Name students who go to look at or re-read the Touchstone Text which you have displayed at the whiteboard.

## **SHARE**

Comment on the variety of entries the students experimented with today and how many students tried to use beautiful language in their writing. Tell the students that today we will do a popcorn share of a line from our own writing. In a popcorn share everyone has a chance to share. Not in turn around the room but randomly just as kernels of corn pop in the microwave. So, anyone can start and then someone follows, then someone else... If two people start to speak at the same time then one student stops and lets the other go first. Give the students time to reread their entry and choose a line to share. Tell the students that just as we learn from published authors by studying our Touchstone Texts, we also learn from each other by sharing our writing.

## **REFLECTIONS**

- How well did the students do with the popcorn share? This type of share takes some practice. Students need to learn the give and take necessary for it to run smoothly!
- Over the course of the year you will choose about ten Touchstone Texts for your Workshop. How was this one received by the students?

**Teaching Point:** *Beginning of the year on-demand writing assessment*

**Method:** \_\_\_demonstration \_\_\_guided practice \_\_\_inquiry \_\_\_explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *ECRW prompt from the Noyce Foundation, binder paper*

- Tell students that Writing Workshop will be different today. Explain that you want to see how well they write and so you are going to ask them to do a piece of writing that you will collect and look at.
- Tell the students that they are going to write a narrative (a story). They just have today's Writing Workshop time to do it and so it will be first draft writing, they will not have time to revise or recopy. They should, however, allow time to proofread and edit.
- Read the students the prompt. Ask students if they have any questions.
- Give students the rest of the hour to write to the prompt.
- Collect the students' writing and analyze them in a way that will inform your instruction. Look at and make notes on what the students are able to do, what they are almost able to do and what habitual errors they are making. Think about content, structure, craft and conventions.
- Put the students' writing in their portfolios as a base-line assessment.

**Note:** For homework students can decorate their notebooks using photos, stickers, drawings etc. Use your notebook as a model, showing how you used things that are important in your life (e.g. a family photo, a ticket stub from a play, a quote from your favorite author.)

## Week 2: Collecting notebook entries

*This week, as we bear in mind our analysis of the on-demand writing, students will be taught different ways to increase the volume and variety of entries in their notebooks. Our students will learn strategies for sustaining effort and writing fluently during Work Time and choose a topic for their published piece. In conferences we are focusing on listening to our students and thinking about “teaching the writer, not the writing”.*

**Lesson 6: Collecting notebook entries: everyday life as a source of writing ideas**

**Lesson 7: Collecting notebook entries: using objects to evoke memories**

**Lesson 8: Sustaining our effort during work time**

**Lesson 9: Collecting notebook entries: re-reading our notebooks**

**Lesson 10: Choosing a topic**

### Suggested literature

- The House on Mango Street: Sandra Cisneros (everyday life as a source of writing ideas)
- Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge: Mem Fox (memories from objects)

### Charts

- *What to do when you think you're done...*
- *The Writing Process*
- *Our topics*
- Add to existing charts: *Good writers...* and *Types of notebook entries...*

Observe your students during this week to assess how well they:

- understand the behavioral expectations of the mini-lesson, independent work time and share
- are able to sustain their independent work for longer periods of time
- are self-managing their writing tools
- are able to talk and listen about their writing with the teacher and a peer
- have written a variety of entries in their notebooks and have selected a topic to take to publication
- are writing at home for 20+ minutes daily and are beginning to see the value of their notebooks beyond the classroom

**Teaching Point:** *Collecting entries: everyday life as a source of writing ideas*

**Method:**     demonstration     guided practice     inquiry     explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *teacher's notebook, overhead transparency of the contents page of The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros*

**CONNECTION**

Remind students that they have been writing a variety of notebook entries and generally doing very well but sometimes some students say they have nothing to write about. Today you are going to teach them that there are ideas for writing all around us.

**TEACH**

Show on the overhead projector the Contents page of The House on Mango Street. Sandra Cisneros sees the people and the things that happen on Mango Street as ideas for her writing. Writers write about every day things not just the big events and celebrations. Tell students to watch as you show them how Sandra Cisneros helps you think about the everyday things in your life as ideas to write about. Think aloud as you scan the contents, weighing how you might use some of the topics to inspire your own notebook writing.

**ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

Ask students to partner read the contents page from the overhead projector. Give them time to discuss what ideas it gives them for their own “every day” writing. Share a few examples with the whole group.

**LINK**

Ask students to write about the “every day life” idea they shared.

**Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Although it is difficult at first, try to focus on the student as a writer rather than “fixing” their current writing. Think more about what the student is trying to communicate rather than correcting spelling or convention errors.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Name students who chose to take a look at The House on Mango Street. Learning from other writers is such an important part of living the life of a writer.

**SHARE**

Ask three pre-selected students to share today’s notebook entry. Discuss where their ideas came from e.g. their family, their neighborhood.

Homework: Tell students that you would like them to find a special object at home tonight that they can bring to school. Not so special though that if they lost it they would be upset. We are going to tell each other stories from our lives using the objects to help us think about some special memories.

**REFLECTIONS**

- How well do students listen to their classmates during the share?
- How is your record keeping of conferences working for you? Are you jotting something down after each conference?

**Teaching Point:** *Collecting notebook entries: using objects to evoke memories*

**Method:** \_\_\_demonstration    guided practice    \_\_\_inquiry    \_\_\_explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *treasured objects*

### **CONNECTION**

*Yesterday we thought and wrote notebook entries about our everyday lives. Today we're going to do a different type of notebook entry using the objects you brought from home. We are going to use these objects to evoke memories.*

### **TEACH**

*Objects often bring special memories back into our minds. We are not going to describe the objects you have brought but tell stories about them. Anna and Hugo have volunteered to fishbowl what sharing a story with a partner looks and sounds like. They are sitting facing each other, close enough to hear each other's quiet voices. Anna you go first and tell Hugo what special memory your seashell makes you think of. Hugo listen carefully so that you can respond to Anna... Good. I like the way you complimented Anna and asked her clarifying questions that made her think more deeply about what she wants to say.*

### **ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

*We are going to take longer today with our "turn and talk" so that you can each tell your entire story that your special object makes you think about and then respond like Hugo did with a compliment and a question. I want to see the listener paying close attention to the storyteller. Make eye contact, nod your head... show that you are listening attentively.*

### **LINK**

*So now you've rehearsed your story about your object by telling it to someone, you'll probably find it easier to write your story. Take your time; remember to include some interesting details. I can't wait to read today'*

**Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Encourage students to write longer entries, telling them they do not need to feel rushed to finish each day.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** *Today we're going to have a popcorn share. Take some time to re-read your work and decide which lines you want to share.*

**SHARE**

*Wow! You all have so many interesting stories to tell. Let's just hear a little bit from everyone today. Let's popcorn share one or two lines each. Let's begin.*

**REFLECTIONS**

- *They really did seem to be listening more intently to each other which is great.*
- *We need to work on why we pay compliments and ask questions so that the listener's responses are more purposeful and the speaker actually considers them.*
- *I think this worked well having something tangible to write from. Their entries are more defined.*

**Teaching Point:** *Sustaining our effort during independent work time*

**Method:**     demonstration     guided practice     inquiry     explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *overhead transparency*

**CONNECTION**

Remind students of our goal of becoming independent writers within a writing community. Today we will focus on sustaining our effort by thinking about the different things we can do during *work time* and developing a plan so that we use our time well.

**TEACH**

Tell the students they must become responsible for planning their own work during the forty minutes of work time to ensure they are using their time well.

Think aloud as you write a plan for the day on the overhead. For example:

- re-read yesterday's entry
- continue working on it
- add some details to make it more interesting

Then using your notebook, think aloud the options for "what to do when you think you're done". For example, write another entry, re-read old entries, find an old entry and "play with" that idea. The basic message is keep on writing! (This chart will grow throughout the year to include such activities as partner shares and using Touchstone Texts but each of those activities needs to be modeled in a mini-lesson before we can expect the student to do them independently).

**ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

Ask students to write their plan for the day in their notebook while they are on the rug. Ask a few students to share what they are going to do today.

**LINK**

Remind students to use their plan to help them keep writing for the whole of the Work Time. Tell them that at any time they think they have finished, they can refer to the chart to help them decide what to do next.

**Work Time:** Take a break from conferring to "read the room" to gauge how well students are using their time. How many are writing? How many are "thinking"? How many talking? Are they on/off topic?

**Conferring:** Always be on the look out for examples of student work or behavior that you observe during conferences that you can share with the whole class during sharing

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Name a student who started out with a plan and who is following it with interest and stamina.

### **SHARE**

Tell students how impressed you were by how well they sustained their effort for the whole work time today. Add to Good writers... chart:

- develop a plan
- work hard during writing time and produce their best work

Ask students to think about what they have learned so far in Writing Workshop. Refer to the charts, add to the charts. Tell them we often call looking back and thinking about what we have done "reflecting".

Add to chart:

- reflect

### **REFLECTIONS**

- How productively are students using their work time?
- How well were they able to reflect on what they have learned so far?

**Teaching Point:** *Collecting notebook entries: re-reading our notebooks*

**Method:**     demonstration     guided practice     inquiry     explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *teacher's notebook*

### CONNECTION

*Every day we have been writing more and more notebook entries and I want to teach you today a way you can use the entries you have already written in your notebook to generate even more entries.*

### TEACH

*Today I'm going to show you a "notebook dig". Just as an archaeologist digs to discover buried treasures, so you can find treasures within your notebook. Watch me as I look through my notebook, re-reading to remind myself of the entries I have written. Here's where I wrote about going to the dentist... I don't want to revisit that! Ah, here's that conversation I overheard in Safeway a couple of weeks ago. Here's where I wrote a memory about my neighbor. I'm going to re-read that entry... (Read entry aloud and Think Aloud as you "lift a line"). You know, I like that line, "Alice's tomatoes were always the sweetest on the street, her roses the most fragrant." I'm going to take that line and re-write it at the top of the next page in my notebook and as I'm writing it, I'm thinking not just about Alice, but about gardening in general and it leads me to thinking about a question I've been pondering lately. "What makes a good gardener?" So I'm going to write that question and now just free write all my thinking around that question... (Model writing first few sentences of free write). Isn't it interesting that re-reading my entry about Alice led me into writing about something completely different? Where your re-reading leads you is often a pleasant surprise!*

### ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

*You have your notebooks with you on the rug. Let's take some time to re-read our entries and see if we can find an interesting line... Share your line with your partner and tell her where you think your line is going to lead you in your writing today. (Share a few examples)*

## LINK

*Writers, you are all so smart! What we are doing today is called “lifting a line”. Re-reading your entries has sparked lots of new ideas for you and so now you can go and write them down in your notebooks as I did. I can see that we’re going to have a fabulous Workshop today!*

## **Work Time:**

**Conferring:** This may be a day when you need to do a small group conference with students who are not clear on the expectations of the mini-lesson.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** *I am so impressed with how conscientiously you are all writing off your lifted line. You are being courageous about trying something new!*

## SHARE

*I have asked Andy to talk us through what he did today. How he re-read his notebook entries and lifted a line and what he wrote about today as a result...What do you think? What can we say to Andy about his hard work today that will help him continue with this tomorrow?*

## REFLECTIONS

- I think many students were pleased to see how many entries they already have and they seemed to understand how to use them to generate even more writing. This was harder for the students who don't have many entries but hopefully it helped them understand why we need to sustain our effort during Work Time and do our homework entries too.*
- There are other re-reading strategies that I can model at another time e.g. circling a word, writing questions in the margin, looking for connections between entries, but modeling one at a time is best.*

**Teaching Point:** *Choosing a topic*

**Method:**     demonstration     guided practice     inquiry     explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *student notebooks, teacher's notebook, sticky notes, pre-made chart of The Writing Process, chart "Our topics..."*

### **CONNECTION**

Tell students they have been writing in Writing Workshop for several days at home and at school and so they have a good number and variety of entries. Today they are going to choose one of their entries which, over the next two weeks, they will draft, revise, edit and recopy as a published piece of writing.

### **TEACH**

Show students the chart of The Writing Process and tell them we will learn about each stage as we move along. Today we are going to select the topic for our published piece. Model by choosing three of your notebook entries which you would consider as possibilities for publication. Think aloud deciding which one you would like to work on more. Place a sticky note on that page telling the students that you chose it because it is a topic that is important to you and you are willing to spend more time on it.

### **ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

As you distribute sticky notes, ask students to start looking through their notebooks for some entries that have publication potential. Give a few moments for comments and questions on this process.

### **LINK**

Tell the students to spend more time re-reading their entries and deciding upon their topic. When they have decided they should write it beside their name on the "Our topics..." chart paper. If students decide quickly and have time, they should consult the What to do when you think you're done chart.

**Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Use conferences as an opportunity to clarify the mini-lesson's teaching point. If some students seem unclear on how to choose their topic, work with a small group of them to guide their decision.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Stress the importance of re-reading notebook entries and taking time over topic choice.

**SHARE**

Ask a few pre-selected students to talk about the process of re-reading and choosing their topic. How did they make their final decision? Point out the range of topics on the class chart.

**REFLECTIONS**

- How much time did students take actually re-reading and making a considered topic choice?

## Week 3: Opening up the possibilities for writing

*This week we focus on students gathering around their chosen topics to develop their ideas. Making explicit to our students the connections between reading and writing, we take an initial look at craft and the concept of mentor authors and texts. We model how to determine a focus for our published piece and then move into drafting. In our conferences we begin to use literature and to see conferring as an opportunity for assessment.*

**Lesson 11: Gathering around a topic**

**Lesson 12: Understanding what “craft” means**

**Lesson 13: Learning from other writers: mentor authors and mentor texts**

**Lesson 14: Determining a focus for our published pieces: writing small**

**Lesson 15: Writing a first draft**

### Suggested literature

- **Come on, Rain!: Karen Hesse (craft)**
- Love that dog: Sharon Creech (mentor authors)
- Hairs/Pelitos: Sandra Cisneros (writing small)

### Charts

- *Ways to gather around our topic*
- ***Writers’ Craft: structure/ways with words***
- Add to existing charts: *Good writers...* and *Types of notebook entries...*

Observe your students during this week to assess how well they:

- have a rudimentary understanding of what writer’s craft is and are able to give a few examples
- understand the idea of “reading like a writer”
- understand the concept of a mentor author and a mentor text and whether any students with previous experience are trying it
- are able to determine a focus for their published piece
- manage new writing tools i.e. Work In Progress folders and drafting pads
- have thought about the process of moving to a draft

**Teaching Point:** *Gathering around a topic*

**Method:**     demonstration     guided practice     inquiry     explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *teacher's notebook, overhead transparency*

**CONNECTION**

Using the Our topics... chart, remind students of the topic they chose. Show them The Writing Process chart and tell them they are going to start to gather around that topic today.

**TEACH**

Tell students that when we choose to write about a topic we need to do a lot of thinking, researching and “writing around” the idea before we can move to a draft. Using the overhead, model writing your topic as a title on a new page in your notebook then listing everything you can think of that is associated with that idea. Brainstorm as much as you can and then highlight one association, and model beginning to write about that idea.

**ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

Ask students to discuss with their partner the process you went through to generate ideas around your seed idea. Share some observations with the whole group.

**LINK**

Tell students to gather around their topic in the way you did, starting a new page and listing everything they can think of about their topic. Then pick something from the list and write more about it. Remind them that thinking about and writing a plan for how they will spend their time today helps them stay focused and sustain their effort.

## **Work Time:**

**Conferring:** As you confer with students, try to informally assess what the student is able to do and what she is almost able to do. Be sure to make note on your observations.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Name and praise students who seem to be thinking hard to generate long lists of associations.

## **SHARE**

Invite two pre-selected students to share their lists and today's writing. Tell students there are many other ways to gather around a topic and that is what they will be doing during *work time* and for homework over the next few days. Show pre-made chart of

Ways to gather around our topic...

- write everything that comes to mind when you think of your topic
- make a really long list of words that come to mind
- choose one word and write a lot about it
- draw a sketch that makes you think of your topic
- look at photos or objects that generate memories about your topic
- observe closely
- talk to people and ask questions about your topic
- research in books or on the Internet about your topic

## **REFLECTIONS**

- How well did the students seem to understand the concept of “gathering”?
- How many students remembered to write (or obviously think about) a plan for their independent work today?
- During conferences are you remembering the importance of *listening* to your students?

**Teaching Point:** *Understanding what “craft” means*

**Method:** \_\_\_demonstration \_\_\_guided practice inquiry \_\_\_explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *copies of text of Come On, Rain! by Karen Hesse, other books by Karen Hesse*

### **CONNECTION**

*Yesterday we started to generate more writing around our topic. Today I'm going to teach you about something that writers do to make their writing more engaging for us to read. Authors use craft.*

### **TEACH**

*Authors work hard at their writing, carefully thinking about how to organize their ideas and what language they can use to best communicate their ideas to the reader. This is called writer's craft. Good writers don't just write things down in the first way they come into their heads, they work hard to craft their writing into something special. I love Karen Hesse's books. I think she is a brilliant writer and this year we will read many of her books together. I love the way she uses different structures to tell her stories - sometimes diary format (Stowaway), sometimes a prose poem (Out of the Dust), sometimes a simple picture book (Come on, Rain!), and sometimes using very experimental structure like (The Music of the Dolphins). (Show books to the students). And then, in addition to that, she uses wonderful language - fascinating words, engaging sentences, courageous punctuation. She experiments and practices with language until she can communicate her fascinating ideas to the reader in a captivating way. She crafts her writing like a skilled carpenter crafts a piece of furniture, working little by little, paying attention to the details to make something beautiful. Let's look again at Come On, Rain! together. We're familiar with this book and I know we all had lots of fun yesterday when we did a choral reading of it in Reading Workshop.*

## ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

*Look at the text. Read it over and then turn to a partner and talk about what you notice that Karen Hesse did that makes this book such a joy to read. What did you notice? (Chart everything the students say. They will become more sophisticated in their noticings as the year goes on but for now acknowledge and record on the chart what they say. Use the students' language and list the observations in two columns, structure and ways with words.*

Writers' craft

Structure

Ways With Words.

## LINK

*Craft is what turns boring sentences into interesting ones. You said that Karen Hesse used "good word choice" like "shimmies and sparkles and streaks like night lightning". What would her sentence sound like if she used boring words instead of carefully chosen ones?... During work time today take a few minutes to re-read what you wrote yesterday and pick a few sentences that sound flat and boring. Then try crafting them. Rewrite them so that they are more interesting... you might want to add an adjective or change a "tired" word into something more unusual. Give it a try! Be brave! Then continue gathering around the topic you chose for publication. Use yesterday's chart Ways to gather around our topics... to help you think of different ways to gather more writing. You might want to try something different today or continue working on what you started yesterday.*

### **Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Some students will be more ready than others to take on the idea of "reading like a writer" in order to learn craft. This may be an opportunity to work with a small group of more able writers to get them to talk about craft.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Bring to everyone's attention students who go up to the charts and actively study them.

## SHARE

*Writers! You all worked really hard today. I saw lots of you working very hard to develop your topics and many of you crafting your sentences. David can you share with us your topic and describe the different ways you have been gathering around it, please... Thank you and now I'm going to ask Tamara to share something from her notebook. I loved the way Tamara really worked at today's "Try-it" crafting some sentences from the entry she wrote yesterday into something she's now really proud of. Will you read your "before" and "after" to us, please Tamara? I want you to start thinking about craft when you read. Slow your reading down so you're not just reading to find out what happens next but you're noticing what the author did to tell her story in such an engaging way. You'll be reading like a writer, beginning to learn craft from the authors you love and admire.*

## REFLECTIONS

- Craft is a complex concept but I think this was a good start. We'll continue tomorrow and delve deeper.*
- Gathering around the topic is important; they'll have lots of ideas to work with when we move into drafting.*
- This share was good because it showed the students that in Writing Workshop we are not all working on the same thing at the same time.*
- I'm really happy with the way the students are able to write independently for longer periods of time and they look as if they are more engaged now.*

**Teaching Point:** *Learning from other writers: mentor authors and mentor texts*

**Method:**     demonstration     guided practice     inquiry     explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *teacher notebook, Come On, Rain! by Karen Hesse*

### **CONNECTION**

*Yesterday we talked about craft and how wonderful authors like Karen Hesse use craft in their writing. Today I'm going to show you how we can practice using craft in our writing by using other writers as our mentors. A mentor is someone whom we look up to, whom we respect, whom we want to be like.*

### **TEACH**

*As I told you yesterday, I love Karen Hesse's books and I would love to be able to write like she does. I can read her books carefully, study her craft and experiment in my writing with some of the things she does in her writing. Karen Hesse can be my writing teacher, my mentor author. Let me show you how, in my notebook, I tried to write part of my memory of staying with my Great Aunt in the same way that Karen Hesse wrote in Come On, Rain! (Display on the overhead, extract of your own writing modeled on Karen Hesse's e.g. dialogue echo). Can you hear how I tried to use dialogue in the same way that Karen Hesse does? Come On, Rain! is my mentor text, I am trying to use craft in my story in the way that my mentor, Karen Hesse, uses it in hers.*

### **ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

*Look again at the chart we made yesterday about Karen Hesse's craft. Is there anything there that you would like to try in your writing? Find an example of it in the text and turn and share your idea with your partner.*

### **LINK**

*When you go back to your seat today. Think carefully how you might try to write around your topic using the craft you just discussed with your partner.*

## **Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Take a copy of the book with you as you move from child to child, constantly bringing their attention to Karen Hesse's words and reiterating the concept of a mentor.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** *Writers! This is hard work, isn't it? Don't worry though, we're just giving it a try today. We'll have lots of time throughout the year to practice our craft.*

## **SHARE**

*We have made such a great start in Writing Workshop and I know we're going to have so much fun this year. I'm just so impressed about how hard you all worked today trying to write like Karen Hesse! I'd like you and your writing partner to share what craft you tried today...*

*Excellent! We can add to our "gathering" chart:*

- try to write about your topic like one of your favorite authors

## **REFLECTIONS**

- *Lots of the students really got into this and seem to understand the concept of "craft". Obviously we will need to spend a lot of time on this throughout the year but this is a good start.*
- *This really stretched Jon today and he certainly needs ways in which to push himself or I can see he could easily be tempted to settle for less than he is capable of.*

**Teaching Point:** *Determining a focus for our published pieces: writing small*

**Method:** \_\_\_demonstration    guided practice    \_\_\_inquiry    \_\_\_explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *sticky notes*

### **CONNECTION**

Tell the students that over the past few days they have written several notebook entries gathering around their topic. Today they are going to re-read these entries to decide what the focus of their published piece will be. Refer to some familiar literature that has a small focus e.g. Hairs/Pelitos by Sandra Cisneros.

### **TEACH**

Select a student who has done a good job of gathering. Discuss with him what his topic is and what he did to develop it. Ask him, "So what exactly is it that you want to write about?" Push him beyond the broad topic (e.g. Mexico) to a smaller, more personal idea that he has also written about (e.g. his abuela), push him further to say what connects these ideas (e.g. I miss my abuela, she is in Mexico and I am here). Celebrate that the student has found an important focus for his writing. He moved from a big topic to a small focus. Help the student to go through and put stickies on the entries that relate just to this focus.

### **ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

Ask the students to turn and retell the process of finding a focus i.e. the student reread his entries, thought about what was really important, decided on a focus, put stickies on all those entries that relate to his focus.

### **LINK**

Tell students to go ahead and re-read their entries to determine the focus of their published piece. Tell them to put stickies on the entries they will use in their drafts.

**Work Time:**

**Conferring:** You have by now worked out a system to ensure that you conference with all students on a regular basis. Sometimes students want to confer with you before their “turn”, You will want to discuss with your students a way of addressing this e.g. students write their names on the board (maximum of three), have a “Help” card on their desk.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Tell the students that you understand how difficult it is to let go of some of their entries but assure them that those ideas will stay in their notebooks and so they might be able to use them later for another piece of writing. Writers recycle their ideas.

**SHARE**

Tell the students they have done a lot of very important thinking today. Ask a few pre-selected students to share how they determined the focus of the writing they are going to take to publication.

**REFLECTIONS**

- Was it difficult for the students to move from thinking of their published piece as “everything I know about...” to something smaller?
- How is the tone of the Workshop? Are students managing their tools better now? What about the noise level? Is talk in the classroom purposeful?

**Teaching Point:** *Writing a first draft***Method:**    \_\_\_demonstration    \_\_\_guided practice    \_\_\_inquiry     explain & give examples**Materials Needed:** *Work In Progress folders, drafting pads***CONNECTION**

Remind students of the Writing Process and show them on the chart that today they are ready to start drafting. Tell the students they are going to get some important new writing tools today: drafting pads and Work in Progress folders.

**TEACH**

Tell students that writers move from their notebooks to their drafts in many different ways. Some do a great deal of planning while others simply start writing and see what happens. Remind students of techniques they have used in the past like outlines, webs etc. by sketching them on the overhead projector. Another method is to re-read all of the entries you are thinking of using, to fill your head with thinking about the topic and then set aside your notebook before starting to draft. Using your notebook and the overhead projector, model moving to a draft using one of these methods. Model writing on every other line, on one side of the page only.

**ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

Write this quote on the overhead, “*Whatever prewriting you do should build your energy to write, not deflate that energy.*” Ralph Fletcher. Ask the students to discuss the quote with a partner thinking about what planning strategies they have used in the past and whether or not they have been helpful. Debrief as a group.

**LINK**

Show students the drafting pads and tell them to write on every other line, on one side of the page only so they can make changes and additions. Invite the students to start their draft in whichever way they prefer. Tell the students they must not just copy their notebook entries

**Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Remember that listening is very important in conferences. As the year goes on your conferences will have a research-decide-teach structure. Listening is part of the research and determines the success of your conference. Listen to your students describe how they are thinking of moving to a draft rather than suggest how they should do it.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Praise students who quietly and purposefully discuss their work with a classmate. Learning from other writers is one of our key objectives.

**SHARE**

Ask students to share with a partner the process they used to move to a draft. Listen in and share some ideas with the whole group.

**REFLECTIONS**

- How much experience have students had with drafting techniques? How many students chose to use graphic organizers?

## Week 4: Putting it all together

*This week we will work on revising and editing our writing to prepare it for publication. We will look at grade level standards to set appropriate editing goals. We will revise with writing partners and share our published work within our writing community. We will conclude the Living the Life of a Writer unit of study by reflecting on what we have learned about ourselves as writers who work productively within a community of writers. Much of our time in conferences this week will be assisting students with revision and editing, showing students how to make their writing easy to read.*

**Lesson 16: Improving our drafts by revision**

**Lesson 17: Working with a partner to aid revision**

**Lesson 18: Editing our writing**

**Lesson 19: Writing and illustrating our final draft**

**Lesson 20: Going public and reflecting on ourselves as writers**

### Suggested literature

- Ring! Yo?: Christopher Raschka

### Charts

- Revision strategies
- Fifth grade conventions

Observe your students during this week to assess how well they:

- recall revision strategies they have used in the past and make minor revisions to their first draft
- are able to give and receive feedback on their writing and use it to improve their writing
- edit for conventions, spelling etc.
- understand the importance of presentation and try to make their published piece visually pleasing
- can reflect upon and articulate what strategies work for them as a writer

**Teaching Point:** *Improving our first drafts by revision*

**Method:**     demonstration     guided practice     inquiry     explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *Work In Progress folders, drafting pads, pre-made Revision Strategies chart, overhead transparency of teacher's draft*

**CONNECTION**

Last time we wrote our drafts. Today we are going to improve our drafts by doing some revision.

**TEACH**

Show the students how the word “revision” means looking at again (re-vision). Today we are going to look at our drafts again and work to improve them. Show them a chart of revision strategies e.g.

Revision strategies

- adding on
- deleting
- reorganizing “cut and paste”
- incorporating craft “try-its”

Remind them that they may have revised their writing in the past using some of these strategies. Model revising part of your draft on the overhead using one or two of the revision strategies. Delete, add in, use arrows etc. to demonstrate that revision is a messy process!

**ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

Ask the students to work in pairs to re-read the next part of your draft and suggest some possible revisions. Listen in and try some of the suggestions on the overhead.

**LINK**

Tell the students that most writers do a lot of revision before they are satisfied with their writing. Later in the year you will be doing a unit of study on revision and learn lots of strategies but for now we are going to make just a few changes to improve our draft.

**Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Many students take time to understand the importance of revision and at first simply copy over from their notebook to their draft to their published piece without making any changes. Pull aside as a group the students whom you see doing this and demonstrate for them the power of revision using your own draft.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Validate all students' attempts at revision. Assure them that all writers spend a lot of time revising their draft; no one gets it right first time.

**SHARE**

Select one student to do a “before and after” reading of part of their writing to show the benefits of revision.

**REFLECTIONS**

- How much experience do the students seem to have had with revision? Take some notes to start your thinking about what revision strategies you need to teach this year.
- How are you feeling about “letting go” during this phase of the writing process? Are you tempted to “fix the writing” rather than “teach the writer”?

**Teaching Point:** *Discussing our drafts with a partner to aid revision*

**Method:**     demonstration     guided practice     inquiry     explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *Work In Progress folders, drafting pads, sticky notes*

### CONNECTION

*Last time, writers, we started to improve our writing by revising and today we are going to work with a partner to see how talking over our work with a reader helps us improve our writing even more.*

### TEACH

*As you remember from our chart, we can revise in a variety of ways. The important thing to bear in mind when we are revising is, "Is my writing clear for my reader? What can I do to make sure my reader understands what I want to say?"*

*Most professional writers have a group of people whom they share their drafts with and who help them with their revisions. CJ has kindly offered to be my writing partner today and he's going to listen as I read him part of my draft and he's going to be thinking of questions he has about what I am trying to say... Wow! CJ is really helping me here. I thought it was obvious what I was saying but he has lots of questions! I'm going to write on stickies a couple of CJ's questions that really show me where I need to do some revision to make my writing clearer for the reader.*

### ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

*Turn to your partner and talk about any other questions you had about my writing that CJ didn't ask. Take a few more questions from the group.*

### LINK

*So find a good spot to work with your writing partner. You don't have to read your whole piece, you could just ask for feedback on your introduction, for example. Make notes of some of your partner's questions on your stickies. Then you will do the same for your partner. After that go back to your writing and revise so your writing is easier to understand. Listen carefully to each other and ask helpful, constructive questions like CJ did. You will all be finishing at different times so be sure to speak quietly so your fellow writers can concentrate on their revisions when they start writing.*

**Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Listen in on conversations and comment on the quality of students' questions and how the writer responds to them.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Praise the students for how their talking about writing has improved.

**SHARE**

*Today I'd like you to go back and work with your writing partner. Show your partners the revisions you made based on their feedback and ask them if they think that it is easier to understand now.*

**REFLECTIONS**

- *I think working regularly with the same writing partner would help the students talk become more accountable. I'm going to assign writing partners for the whole of the next unit of study and also move into Response Groups where students talk about their writing in groups of three or four.*
- *They could spend a lot more time on revision but this is fine for now. They obviously need some instruction on different revision strategies and so a short unit of study on revision later in the year will be useful.*
- *I know some teachers give students blue pencils for revising so their changes are more evident. Perhaps I'll try that next time.*
- *Paragraphs! We definitely need work on paragraphs!*

**Teaching Point:** *Editing our writing*

**Method:** \_\_\_demonstration    guided practice    \_\_\_inquiry    \_\_\_explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *Work In Progress folders, drafting pads, pre-made chart of 5<sup>th</sup> grade conventions standards, overhead of student's draft*

### CONNECTION

*For the past two days, writers, we have been revising our work. Although we could spend much more time revising, since our publication date is just two days away, we're going to move on to editing today (refer to Writing Process chart).*

### TEACH

*Ever since you began writing you've known the importance of spelling and punctuation and other conventions of writing and year by year you are able to use conventions more skillfully to make your writing more sophisticated. By the end of fifth grade you should be able to use all of these conventions in your writing (show chart of fifth grade conventions standards).*

*Some you know already. Let's highlight those... Others we will need to learn how to use throughout the year and it will be fun for us to do a unit of study on conventions. Today, let's focus on those you know. I want you to re-read your work (we do a lot of re-reading, don't we!) and correct for spelling, capitalization and commas, periods and apostrophes.*

*Let's look on the overhead at Misha's revised draft. Misha is going to do some editing to show us how it should be done! When he spots a mistake, he's just going to cross out and write the correct version over the top - we don't erase, we want to see evidence of our editing... OK so now Misha has come across a word that he thinks is spelled wrongly. So Misha, what are your options here? That's right, try it again... ask a friend... look it up in the dictionary ... and then, that's right, cross it out and write it correctly over the top.*

### ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

*So, let's help Misha out a bit here. Read the next couple of sentences and see if you can spot anything that he needs to edit. Turn and talk to your partner about what you notice. (Share group's suggestions).*

### LINK

*So, writers, today is editing day. Each of you can take a red pencil and go ahead and edit your work. Use our classroom resources to help: dictionaries, thesauri, your fellow writers...*

### **Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Be sure to help students edit rather than do it for them! Use a different color pen for your “editor-in-chief” edits to distinguish from what the student is able to notice alone. For some students it is better to focus on just one thing e.g. punctuation.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point :** *You are all working so hard at your editing. I love the way you are using our writers' tools so responsibly.*

## SHARE

*It's interesting that some people seem to be natural spellers and others of us have to work at it. Some people struggle with punctuation. Think carefully what type of corrections you seemed to be doing most of today and then set yourself a goal to work on improving that this year. Let's quickly go around and share what our goals are - spelling, commas, apostrophes...*

## REFLECTIONS

- I'm glad I made the decision to make time for a Skills/ Word Work block this year. They definitely need some systematic spelling instruction! It's interesting to see how aware they are of their needs.*
- I need to make a decision for each publication about what is acceptable for "going public" in terms of conventions errors. Some teachers act as "editor-in-chief" to ensure that all students' beginning and end punctuation is correct, for example, others allow self-edited work to be displayed. At this point of the year I think it's fine to post the work with student's self-edits only and I'll post a note on the display for visitors saying "Student edited work."*
- Obviously everyone wants an editing conference! I need to discuss with colleagues how they handle this stage of the process to avoid students having to wait.*

**Teaching Point:** *Writing and illustrating our final draft*

**Method:** \_\_\_demonstration \_\_\_guided practice \_\_\_inquiry explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *Work In Progress folders, drafting pads, examples of well presented student work, selection of types of paper*

**CONNECTION**

Show students how far they have progressed through the writing process. Remind them that tomorrow they will “go public” with their first piece of fifth grade writing and celebrate! Today we are going to write our final draft.

**TEACH**

Tell students that today they will recopy and, if they have time, illustrate their piece. Show examples of students’ published work which have a high standard of presentation. Point out neat handwriting, how the writing looks on the page, use of side and top-bottom margins, paragraphs, careful editing, appropriate illustrations etc.

**ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

Invite students to turn and talk about what impresses them about how these published pieces look. Ask them to decide what they feel they need to focus on in making their own published piece look like something they are proud to share.

**LINK**

Show students choices of paper and tell them they should work hard today to make sure their published piece is the best they can do.

**Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Much of your time today will be spent encouraging individual students to work conscientiously so they finish in time.

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Encouragement and praise: we are working to a deadline like published authors do!

**SHARE**

Praise students for their hard work. Invite their comments about the process of preparing to “go public”.

**REFLECTIONS**

- Do you feel overwhelmed? Do your students feel overwhelmed? We have moved through this unit at quite a pace in order to establish the rituals and routines which make our Workshop run smoothly and take the students through the writing process towards a published piece. We have introduced many concepts which will be revisited and reinforced throughout the year so don't worry if your students haven't got it all yet. They will... in time!

**Teaching Point:** *Going public and reflecting on ourselves as writers*

**Method:** \_\_\_demonstration    guided practice    \_\_\_inquiry    \_\_\_explain & give examples

**Materials Needed:** *published pieces, sticky notes, binder paper*

**CONNECTION**

Show students how far they have come in the writing process. Tell students that authors celebrate their published books with book signings and publishing parties and that today they are going to do the same.

**TEACH**

Select four students to fishbowl a group share. Ask one student to read his piece aloud, slowly and with expression. Tell the listeners to listen attentively and, when he has finished, to take a few moments to write some responses on a sticky note to give to the author. Tell them this is different from responding to a draft as the author will not be making any further revisions: usually we respond to the strengths of the piece. Help them make specific responses. Rather than just writing, “Great job!”, comments like, “I really like the way you took an everyday topic like going to the store and made it interesting.” or “I can tell you tried hard with your word choice.” are more helpful. Explain to the class that the other three authors will then take turns to share their writing and receive responses in the same way.

**ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT**

**LINK**

Divide the students into groups of four and ask them to find a spot in the room where they can comfortably see and hear each other and then begin to share their writing.

## **Work Time:**

**Conferring:** Listen in to your students sharing their writing. Be aware that the quality of this first piece of writing will probably not be great! You have been supporting your students in building community and becoming independent writers rather than spending a lot of time on the craft of writing. You have the rest of the year to work on the quality of your students' writing!

**Possible mid-workshop teaching point:** Give students a time check to ensure everyone has a chance to share.

## **SHARE**

Congratulate your students on their hard work which resulted in such great published pieces! Tell them that when we come to the end of something it is important to look back and reflect on what we have learned before moving on to something new. Using the charts remind the students of how much they have learned over the past few weeks: the rituals and routines which enable them to work together as a community of writers, how we all have stories to tell and how we can collect those stories (and much more) in our notebooks, how we can learn from other writers, how we can develop our ideas in our notebooks and how we can improve our writing through revision.

Ask them to think back and consider some of the things they have learned. What was easy? What was challenging? What do they need to work on? What do they need more time to practice? Tell students that reflection is essentially personal, we all respond in different ways. Today we will use the remaining time in Writing Workshop to write some of their reflections on paper. Reflection will be an important part of our learning throughout the year and so we will keep these reflections in our portfolios. Popcorn share one or two sentences from their reflections as a closing.

## **REFLECTIONS**

- Take time to write your own reflection on how this opening unit of Writing Workshop has gone. Feel good about how far you and your students have come in a short period of time and think about how you will be able to reinforce this foundational learning throughout the year.