

**Every Child a Reader & Writer**  
**Writing Workshop Implementation Scale: MINI-LESSONS**

<b>Description</b>	<p>Teachers open the daily writing workshop with mini lessons to teach writing craft/strategies, genre attributes, rituals and routines, conventions and skills. Mini-lessons provide direct instruction that moves students toward attainment of standards at their grade level. The teacher determines the focus and content of the mini-lesson based on observed needs of students informed by knowledge of writing development, curriculum focus and standards. On any given day, the teacher specifies whether the students will be expected to try-it that day or whether the strategy might be applied to future writing. The architecture of the mini-lesson is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Connection:</b> specifically states the objective of the lesson and specifies the connection to where students are in their work as writers (how is work part of ongoing development as writers)</li> <li>▪ <b>Teach:</b> demonstrates, provides a model, or gathers information from students (inquiry)</li> <li>▪ <b>Active involvement (try-it):</b> provides students with an opportunity for a short guided practice of an aspect of the work (optional)</li> <li>▪ <b>Link:</b> sets the expectations for the day's work that links the mini-lesson to on-going work</li> </ul>
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Getting started	Effective	Highly effective	Creative adaptations	Misconceptions
<p>The mini lesson may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the architecture of the mini-lesson</li> <li>• be routinely longer than 10 minutes</li> <li>• have unclear or multiple objectives</li> <li>• follow a prescribed sequence of lessons without regard to student needs</li> <li>• not be part of a planned sequence of lessons</li> <li>• contain no new learning for students</li> <li>• occasionally incorporate examples of writing (e.g. touchstones and mentor texts, student writing, teacher writing)</li> <li>• contain few references to language reflected in charts and rubrics</li> <li>• include inauthentic questions which confuse the focus of the mini lesson</li> <li>• result in student work which essentially copies the teacher's model without real understanding of the lesson's objective</li> </ul>	<p>The mini-lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has one appropriately rigorous teaching objective reflected in all parts of the mini-lesson (connect, teach, link and sometimes active involvement or try-its)</li> <li>• is 5-10 minutes long</li> <li>• may not be tied to a larger sequence of lessons</li> <li>• is characterized by intentional, planned delivery that uses language cues to emphasize teaching points</li> <li>• contains new learning for students</li> <li>• incorporates a variety of models of writing from day to day (e.g. from touchstone texts, student and teacher writing)</li> <li>• reinforces the specific language of writing (aligned with charts and rubrics)</li> <li>• provides support (through material-selection and instruction) so students have access to appropriately rigorous writing concepts and skills</li> <li>• includes authentic questions when inquiring into student thinking and processes</li> <li>• results in student work that represents some understanding of the writing concept</li> <li>• results in engagement and motivation for some students</li> </ul>	<p>The mini-lesson meets all the criteria for <i>EFFECTIVE</i> and in addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• addresses a clear and appropriately rigorous outcome; teacher is able to describe the specific student work and learning that will result if the lesson is successful</li> <li>• is part of a planned sequence of lessons based on the observed needs of students informed by knowledge of writing development and the standards</li> <li>• when modeling, the teacher not only demonstrates a process, concept, craft or strategy, but also explains the writer's thinking while constructing the model</li> <li>• contains intentional use of precise language to discuss writing</li> <li>• consistently provides support (through material-selection or instruction) so students have access to appropriately rigorous concepts and skills</li> <li>• when conducting inquiry, contains strategic and authentic questions to gather information from students</li> <li>• balances invitation to try it with expectation that everyone will take on the lesson</li> <li>• motivates students to engage in activities that promote ongoing writing development</li> <li>• results in observable new learning for all students (perhaps not immediately apparent) that is evidenced in their written work or behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The content of the lessons varies, depending on the teacher's judgment of student needs and the purpose of the lesson.</i></li> <li>• <i>Occasionally, the lesson may exceed 10 minutes by design, based on the specific objective and desired outcome.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mini-lessons occur only once or twice a week.</i></li> <li>• <i>The mini-lesson takes most of the writing period</i></li> <li>• <i>Mini-lessons are planned without regard for observed student needs</i></li> <li>• <i>The objective of the mini-lesson is not clear to the students</i></li> <li>• <i>Everyday, all students are expected to work on the mini-lesson topic during the writing block, regardless of where they are in the writing process.</i></li> <li>• <i>Portions of the mini-lesson are only tangentially related to the objective</i></li> <li>• <i>Some students are rarely expected to take on the mini lesson</i></li> </ul>