

# Writing Overview

**What the skill is:** Writing is communicating in a written form.



Writing is a complex skill that relies on many foundational skills.

- Composing is putting the words together into sentences and paragraphs.
- Handwriting is forming the letters, first printed then in cursive.
- Punctuation helps us make sense of the sentences.
- Spelling is important so that the reader knows what we were trying to communicate.
- Vocabulary is using the best words to help the reader “see” what we are saying in our writing.

We write for a wide range of purposes, from giving directions to writing a story. Each type of writing requires different skills.

**What it’s not:** Writing is not just spelling, or handwriting, or being able to tell a creative story on paper. Writing is a combination of many skills.

**Why it’s important:** Students will write often during their school careers. Beyond school, most careers require at least some written communication and many require a lot of writing. Writing is a life skill.

## KINDERGARTEN

In KINDERGARTEN, children are using a combination of drawing, dictating (saying the words while an adult writes), and their own writing to tell about an event, including their reaction to it. They are writing to state an opinion or preference about a topic or a book.

## GRADE ONE

In GRADE ONE, children are writing about a topic, supplying some facts, and including an opening and closing. They are working with others, including adults, to do shared writing projects such as writing a “how-to” book.

## GRADE TWO

In GRADE TWO, children are writing an opinion about a book they have read, using important details from the book to support their opinion. They are writing stories that have a short sequence of events and include a clear beginning, middle, and end. They are working together with others to write a research report.

# GRADE THREE

In GRADE THREE, children are writing opinions or explanations in an organized way and write about topics using facts and details. They are writing stories that have a situation and include details and clear sequences of events. They describe the actions, thoughts, and feelings of the characters. They independently conduct short research projects, searching for and reading relevant information about a variety of topics, and then writing about them.

**Ways to help your child:** The best way to help your child is to find **meaningful reasons** for them to write each day and then provide **support with strategies** as they write. Writing is the most challenging literacy task children learn to do, so making the writing rewarding will help when it gets hard or your child gets frustrated. Starting in Kindergarten with short and personal writing, and becoming longer and more complex with each grade, your child can improve their writing with your help.



**Meaningful reasons for writing** – Help your child write every day at home for real and meaningful reasons. Offer choices for writing topics. Below are Kindergarten through Grade 3 purposes for writing and some examples of the types of writing your child can do.

## **To Share Information –**

- Add items to the family grocery list.
- Make cards for holidays and special occasions.
- Write the directions for how to get to someone's house.
- Create a scavenger hunt for parents and siblings with clues hidden around the house.
- Describe what happened at school today.
- Describe in detail how to... (make a pbj sandwich, make a paper airplane, win a certain video game, bake a cake, wrap a present, play baseball, play hopscotch).



## **Share an Opinion or Make an Argument –**

- Make a wish list of games they would like to play as a family.
- Write about a favorite topic (best video games, hardest objects to build with Legos, comparing Batman and Superman, dance class) and share with a sibling or friend.
- Tell about a book they think others should read, and why.
- Write about where they would like to go as a family and why it would be a good idea, whether it is a family vacation up North or a trip to a restaurant for a birthday.
- Create a flyer for the public library to hang telling why they recommend a certain book.



### **Sharing an experience – real or pretend**

- Send a thank you note for a gift that explains why they like it and how they will use it.
- Write a story about themselves to add to a baby book.
- Write a story for a family member to cheer them up.
- Write about a family event to add to a scrapbook.
- Write to a relative or friend to tell them about their school, pet, a book they're reading, a recent family event, or anything they are interested in.



**Honor the Author** - Talk about the author's skills and strategies while enjoying books with your child. Take a moment to point out what makes it great writing. For example:

"The author used the word humungous, that's a more interesting way of saying really big, isn't it?"

"I noticed the first paragraph said there were three fascinating facts about spiders and then each paragraph after that talked about one of those facts. It made it easy to remember what we read."

"The author used words to describe the house so clearly, I could picture it in my mind."



**Support while writing** – Figure out what part or parts of writing are most difficult for your child and provide support in those areas. Your child's teacher can help you identify the areas that are stumbling blocks and provide additional ideas.

Common difficulties include:

- Writing sentence fragments (sentences that are not complete)
- Writing run-on sentences (too many ideas in one sentence)
- Limited sentence types (lacking variety in sentence types)
- Using words that are not interesting and accurate (limited vocabulary)
  
- Thinking of what to write
- Staying on topic
- Organizing their writing so it makes sense for the reader
- Writing with a plan
- Writing paragraphs
- Writing reports
- Writing opinions
- Writing personal stories (telling about something that happened to them)
- Writing make-believe stories
  
- Handwriting (not being fluent with handwriting makes composing very difficult)
- Using punctuation marks correctly
- Capitalizing the first word in each sentence and names of people and places
- Spelling

The best way is to help your child use STRATEGIES. There are strategies for helping your child write better sentences, plan and organize their writing so it makes sense and is easy to understand, help for spelling and punctuation errors, and suggestions for handwriting. Your child's teacher can provide information for each area.

## References

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