

It was while I was walking home that the thought came to me: If I am to make this claim I must be certain of all the facts.

WRITING IS REALLY A COPYCAT EXPERIENCE

WHAT GOES IN THE

COMES OUT THE

EYE  **PEN***

TO GET BETTER AT WRITING YOU MUST

READ MORE

IT'S HARD
TO WRITE
COMPLEX
SENTENCES

UNLESS 
**YOU HAVE
READ 'EM**

HOW WOULD YOU DRAW A COW IF YOU'D NEVER SEEN ONE?



Tips for Parents/Caregivers: Writing

What can I do to help my children learn to write?

- Let your children watch when you:
 - Fill in forms, or pay bills.
 - Write birthday cards.
 - Write letters and notes.
 - Write shopping lists

Let your children help when you are writing by:

- Putting a scribble or drawing round their hand on a greeting card.
- Helping with a shopping list.
- Drawing a picture that goes with what you are writing. Let your children scribble and draw. This is the beginning stage of writing. Pretending to write is OK too. **Start early!**

What materials will I need to encourage writing at home?

- Make sure you always have writing materials available:
 - Lots of paper.
 - Pens, pencils, crayons and markers.
 - Scissors and glue.
 - Old envelopes or greeting cards for kids to copy.
 - Little blank books for children to make their stories.
 - A box to keep all the materials in.

Consider the following from Regie Routman's book, *Transitions*:

Children learn to write by writing, and we are most helpful to them when we appreciate and encourage their best attempts.

Tips for Parents/Caregivers to Encourage Student Writing

- Coach – don't write – for your child. Question, listen, and talk about their writing together. Children need to do their own drafting, revising, and editing with you serving as coach on the sidelines.
- Always look first for what is done well in the writing and offer lots of praise. Writing, thinking on paper, is a most challenging task. Children need encouragement to be successful.
- When working with your young author, focus on ideas and content first. Save editing until the ideas are clear, complete and focused.
- Listen attentively as your children read their writing to you. Be eager to hear more and to be enthusiastic about their efforts.
- Encourage even the youngest writers to “read” their writing aloud whether it is scribbles, drawings, or stings of letters. Talk together about the story.
- Read aloud to your children – NO MATTER WHAT THEIR AGE. Discuss good examples of writing which might include newspaper or magazine articles, poetry, descriptions from travel brochures, instructions on toys and games as well as fiction and non-fiction.
- Share your own writing with your children. Ask for their feedback on your efforts.
- Turn off the TV and visit your local library on a regular basis. Talk with your children about their thoughts and feelings.
- Subscribe to the newspaper and share articles with your children.
- Read, read, read! Better readers always make better writers.

Suggested Writing Activities for Use at Home

- Provide writing materials of all kinds, colors, textures, and sizes: pens, pencils, felt tip pens, calligraphy pens, post-its. Whatever will invite your student writer to explore writing in original, colorful ways is appropriate.
- To encourage revision, add highlighting pens, scissors, and glue or tape to your list of writing materials. These materials facilitate adding, deleting, cutting apart and putting together ideas in different ways.
- Create a photo album or scrapbook representing “a year in the life of...” Work with your children to create a short introduction along with labels and captions that portray strong Voice and Word Choice.
- Provide a print-rich environment in your home with magazine subscriptions, books, maps direction manuals, e-mail and cookbooks.
- Encourage letter writing for developing a sense of voice, audience, and purpose. Letters to relatives, sports figures, celebrities, businesses and organizations are some examples. Receiving responses will promote even more letter writing!
- Encourage the writing and addressing of personal greeting cards, invitations and thank-you notes.
- Have your children help in writing grocery lists and encourage them to write down clear phone messages.
- Work with your children to keep a writer’s notebook of observations, quotes, favorite words, and future writing ideas.
- To strengthen Word Choice, play an alliteration game. The first person begins a sentence and everyone else must continue the sentence using the same beginning letter or sound. For example, if you begin, “California condors” then the next person could say, “California condors can’t,” and the next person could say, “California condors can’t count,” etc.
- Play a simile game. The first person begins by saying a phrase such as, “I’m as thirsty as...” The others must complete the simile. A sample completion could be “I’m as thirsty as an 18-wheeler on empty.”
- Create poetry together; both free verse and rhyming. Read it aloud and share with family and friends.
- Encourage your child to keep a journal. This is excellent writing practice as well as a great outlet for sharing all kinds of feelings.
- Word games such as Scrabble or Boggle can help increase your children’s Word Choice and improving spelling.
- Write and mail post cards to your children once in a while. Children love personal mail.