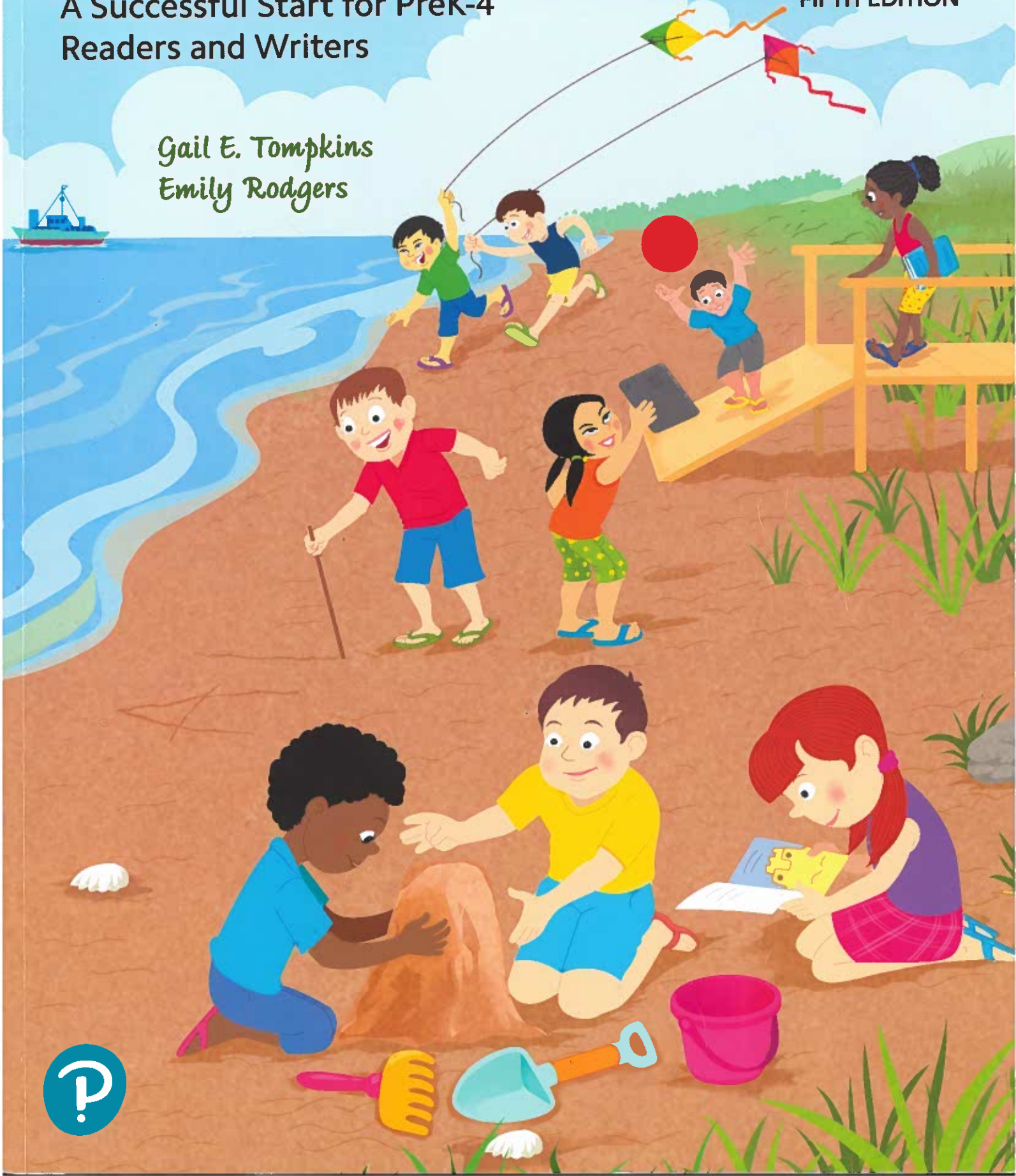


Literacy in the Early Grades

A Successful Start for PreK-4
Readers and Writers

FIFTH EDITION

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Chapter 2

Examining Students' Literacy Development



Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you'll be prepared to:

- 2.1 Explain how teachers promote young students' oral language development.
- 2.2 Discuss the ways teachers build students' interest in written language.
- 2.3 Describe the three stages that students move through as they develop as readers and writers.

Ms. McCloskey's Students Become Readers and Writers



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Kindergarten through third grade students sit on the carpet for a shared reading lesson. They listen intently as Ms. McCloskey prepares to read *Make Way for Ducklings* (McCloskey, 2004), the big-book version of an award-winning story about a family of ducks living in downtown Boston. She reads the title and the author's name, and some students recognize that the author's last name is the same as hers, but she explains that they aren't related. She reads the first page and asks for predictions. During this first reading, Ms. McCloskey reads each page expressively and tracks the text, word by word, with a pointer as she reads. After she finishes, they talk about the story. Some of the English learners are initially hesitant, but others eagerly relate their own experiences to the story.

The next day, Ms. McCloskey rereads *Make Way for Ducklings*. She begins by asking for volunteers to retell the story. Students take turns retelling each page, using the

In this chapter, you'll learn how young students learn to read and write. They move through three developmental levels—emergent, beginning, and fluent—as they become literate. As you read this vignette, notice how Ms. McCloskey teaches young students at each stage in her multigrade classroom by differentiating instruction. She adapts her use of big books, guided reading groups, and literacy centers to address her students' instructional needs.

illustrations as clues. Ms. McCloskey includes this oral language activity because many of her students are English learners. The class is multilingual: Approximately 45% are Asian Americans who speak Hmong, Khmer, or Lao; 45% are Hispanics who speak Spanish or English at home; and the remaining 10% are African American and white students who speak English.

Next, Ms. McCloskey rereads the story, stopping several times to ask the class to think about the characters, draw inferences, and reflect on the theme. Her questions include: Why did the police officer help the ducks? What would have happened to the ducks if the police officer didn't help? Do you think animals should live in cities? What was Robert McCloskey saying to us? On the third day, Ms. McCloskey reads the story again, and the students take turns using the pointer to track the text and join in reading familiar words. After they finish, the students clap because rereading the now familiar story provides a sense of accomplishment.

Ms. McCloskey understands that her students are moving through three developmental stages—emergent, beginning, and fluent—as they learn to read and write. She monitors each student's development to tailor instruction to meet his or her needs. As she reads the big book aloud, she uses a pointer to show the direction of print, from left to right and top to bottom on the page. She also moves the pointer across the lines of text to demonstrate the relationship between the words on the page and the words she's reading. Emergent-stage readers are learning these concepts.

Others are beginning readers who are learning high-frequency words and to decode phonetically regular words. One day after rereading the story, Ms. McCloskey turns to one of the pages and asks these students to identify familiar high-frequency words (e.g., *don't*, *make*) and decode CVC words (e.g., *run*, *big*). She also asks students to isolate individual sentences on the page and note the capital letter at the beginning and the punctuation that marks the end of each sentence.

The students in the third group are fluent readers. Ms. McCloskey addresses their needs as she rereads a page from the story: She asks these students to identify adjectives and notice inflectional endings on verbs. She also rereads the last sentence on the page and asks a student to explain why commas are used in it.

The teacher draws the students' attention to the print as a natural part of **shared reading**: She points out letters, words, and punctuation marks; models strategies; and asks questions about which direction to go when they are reading. As they watch Ms. McCloskey and listen to their classmates, the students learn more about letters, words, sentences, and all about the rules of directionality that must be followed when reading.

Ms. McCloskey and her teaching partner, Mrs. Papaleo, share a large classroom and 40 students; despite the number of students, the room feels spacious. Students' desks are arranged in clusters around the open area in the middle where students meet for whole-class activities. An easel to display big books is placed next to the teacher's chair. Several chart racks stand nearby; one rack holds Ms. McCloskey's morning messages, a second one holds charts with poems that the students use for **choral reading**, and a third rack holds a pocket chart with word cards and sentence strips.

On one side of the classroom is the library with books arranged in crates by topic. One crate has frog books, and others have books about the ocean, plants, and the five senses; additional crates contain books by authors who have been featured in author studies, including Eric Carle, Kevin Henkes, and Paula Danziger. Picture books and chapter books are also arranged in the crates. Sets of leveled books are located on a shelf above the students' reach for the teachers to use in guided reading lessons. A child-size sofa, a table and chairs, pillows, and rugs make the area cozy. A listening center is set up at a nearby table with a tape player and headphones that accommodate six students at a time.

A **word wall** with high-frequency words fills a partition separating instructional areas. It's divided into sections for each letter of the alphabet, and nearly 100 words written on small cards cut into the shape of the words are attached to it. The teachers introduce new words each week and post them on the word wall. The students often

practice reading and writing the words as a center activity, and they refer to the word wall to spell words.

A bank of computers, several iPads, and a printer are located on another side of the classroom. Everyone uses them, even the youngest students; those who have stronger computer skills assist their classmates. They use word processing to publish their writing during writing workshop and monitor their independent reading practice on the computer or the iPad using various commercially available supplemental reading programs. At other times, they search the Internet to find information related to topics they're studying in science and social studies.

Literacy center materials are stored in a corner. Clear plastic boxes hold magnetic letters, puppets and other props, whiteboards and pens, puzzles and games, flash cards, and other manipulatives. The teachers choose materials to use during **minilessons**, and they also set boxes of materials out for students to use during center time.

Ms. McCloskey spends the morning teaching reading and writing using a variety of teacher-directed and student-choice activities. Her daily schedule is shown here. After shared reading and a minilesson, the students participate in reading and writing workshop.

The students write books during writing workshop. While most of them are working independently, Ms. McCloskey brings together a small group for a special activity: She conducts **interactive writing** lessons with emergent writers and teaches the writing process and revision strategies to more fluent writers. Today she's conferencing with six students who are beginning writers. Because they're writing longer compositions, she has decided to introduce revising. After each student reads his or her rough draft aloud to the group, classmates ask questions and offer compliments, and Ms. McCloskey encourages them to make a change in their writing so that their readers will understand it better. Anthony reads aloud a story about his soccer game, and after a classmate asks a question he realizes that he needs to add more about how he scored a goal; he moves back to his desk to revise. The group continues with students sharing their writing and beginning to make revisions. At the end of writing workshop, the students come together for author's chair. Each day, three students sit in the author's chair to share their "published" writing.

During reading workshop, students read independently or with a partner while Ms. McCloskey and her teaching partner conduct guided reading lessons. The students

Ms. McCloskey's Schedule

Time	Activity	Description
8:10–8:20	Class Meeting	Students participate in opening activities, read their teachers' morning message, and talk about plans for the day.
8:20–8:45	Shared Reading	The teachers read big books and poems copied on charts; this activity often serves as a lead-in to the minilesson.
8:45–9:00	Minilesson	The teachers teach minilessons on literacy procedures, strategies, and skills.
9:00–9:45	Writing Workshop	Students write books while the teachers confer with individual students and small groups. They also participate in interactive writing activities and share their published books from the author's chair.
9:45–10:00	Recess	
10:00–11:00	Reading Workshop	Students read self-selected books independently while the teachers teach guided reading lessons with small groups.
11:00–11:30	Literacy Centers	Students work at literacy centers, participating in reading, writing, listening, and other activities.
11:30–12:10	Lunch	
12:10–12:30	Read-Aloud	The teachers read aloud picture books and chapter books, and students discuss them in grand conversations.

have access to books in the classroom library, including predictable books for emergent readers, little leveled books from various publishers for beginning readers, and easy-to-read chapter books for fluent readers. The students know how to choose books that they can read successfully so they're able to spend their time really reading.

Ms. McCloskey is working with a group of four emergent readers, and today they'll read *Playing* (Prince, 1999), a seven-page predictable book with one line of text on each page that uses the pattern "I like to ____." She begins by asking students what they like to do when they're playing. Der says, "I like to play with my brother," and Ms. McCloskey writes this on a strip of paper. Some students say only a word or two, and she expands the words into a sentence for the student to repeat; then she writes the expanded sentence and reads it with the student. Next, she introduces the book, saying, "Now let's see what the students in this story like to do!" Ms. McCloskey reads the title and the author's name, and then, turning the pages of the story, she talks about the picture and names the activity the student is doing - running, jumping, sliding, and so on. She reviews the "I like to ____" pattern pointing to the words on the first page as she says the words. Then the students read the book independently while Ms. McCloskey supervises and provides assistance as needed. The students eagerly reread the book several times, becoming more confident with each reading.

Ms. McCloskey reviews the high-frequency sight words *I*, *like*, and *to*, and the students point them out on the classroom word wall. They use magnetic letters to spell the words and then write sentences that begin with *I like to . . .* on whiteboards. Then Ms. McCloskey cuts apart their sentence strips for them to sequence; afterward the students put their sentences into envelopes to practice another day. At the end of the lesson, the teacher suggests that the students might want to write "I like to" books during writing workshop the next day.

During the last 30 minutes before lunch, the students work at literacy centers. Ms. McCloskey and Mrs. Papaleo have set out 12 centers, and the students are free to work

Literacy Centers

Center	Description
Bag a Story	Students use objects in a paper bag to create a story. They draw pictures or write sentences to tell the story they've created.
Clip Boards	Students search the classroom for words beginning with a particular letter or featuring a spelling pattern and write them on paper attached to clip boards.
Games	Students play alphabet, phonics, and other literacy card and board games with classmates.
Library	Students read books related to a thematic unit and write or draw about the books in reading logs.
Listening	Students listen to a recording of a story or informational book while they follow along in a copy of the book.
Making Words	Students practice a making words activity that they've previously done together as a class with teacher guidance.
Messages	Students write notes to classmates and the teachers and post them on a special "Message Center" bulletin board.
Poetry Frames	Students arrange word cards on a chart-sized poetry frame to create a poem and then practice reading it.
Reading the Room	Students use pointers to reread big books, charts, signs, and other texts posted in the classroom.
Research	Students use the Internet, informational books, photos, and realia to learn more about topics in literature focus units and thematic units.
Story Reenactment	Students use small props, finger puppets, or flannel board figures to reenact familiar stories with classmates.
Word Sorts	Students categorize high-frequency or thematic word cards displayed in a pocket chart.

at any one they choose. The students are familiar with the routine and know what's expected of them at each center. The two teachers circulate around the classroom, monitoring students' work and taking advantage of teachable moments to clarify misunderstandings, reinforce previous lessons, and extend students' learning.

After lunch, Ms. McCloskey reads aloud from picture books and easy-to-read chapter books. Sometimes she reads books by a particular author, but at other times, she reads books related to a thematic unit. She uses these read-alouds to teach predicting, visualizing, and other comprehension strategies. This week, she's reading award-winning books, and today she reads aloud *The Stray Dog* (Simont, 2001), the story of a homeless dog that's taken in by a loving family. She uses the **interactive read-aloud** procedure to involve students in the book as she reads, and afterward they talk about it in a **grand conversation**. Ms. McCloskey asks them to share their connections to the story, which she records on a chart divided into three sections. Most comments are text-to-self connections, but several students make other types of connections. Rosario says, "I'm thinking of a movie. It was *101 Dalmatians*. It was about dogs, too."; that's a text-to-text connection. Angelo offers a text-to-world connection: "You got to stay away from stray dogs. They can bite you, and they might have this bad disease called rabies—it can kill you."

Literacy is a process that begins in infancy and continues throughout life. It used to be that five-year-olds came to kindergarten to be "readied" for reading and writing instruction, which formally began in first grade. The implication was that there's a point in students' development when it's time to teach them to read and write; for those not ready, a variety of "readiness" activities would prepare them. Since the 1970s, this view has been discredited because preschoolers have demonstrated that they could recognize signs and other environmental print, retell stories, scribble letters, invent printlike writing, and listen to stories read aloud (Morrow, Tracey, & Del Nero, 2011). Some young students even arrive at school already knowing how to read!

This perspective on how students learn to read and write is known as **emergent literacy**, a term that New Zealand professor Marie Clay coined in her dissertation research. Studies from 1966 on have shaped the current outlook (McGee & Richgels, 2003): Now, researchers are looking at literacy learning from the student's point of view. Literacy development has been broadened to incorporate the cultural and social aspects of language learning, and students' experiences with and understandings about language—including oral language, reading, and writing—are included as part of emergent literacy.

Promoting Students' Oral Language Development

Young students develop oral language through everyday experiences and interactions with parents and others; they learn words at the grocery store, on the playground, during swimming lessons, and at the zoo, for example. Students who go fishing or plant gardens with their caregivers, or collect Thomas trains or Disney princesses learn new words along the way, too. They learn even more words while listening to adults read aloud from picture books and when watching *Blue's Clues*, *Dora the Explorer*, and other TV programs designed for young students.

Through these experiences, students develop expertise in all four language modes:

Phonology. Preschoolers learn to produce the sounds of English and to manipulate language in playful ways.

Syntax. Students learn to combine words into different types of sentences and to use irregular verb forms, pronouns, plural markers, and other inflectional endings.

Semantics. Four- and five-year-olds acquire knowledge about the meanings of words and add approximately 2,000 words to their vocabularies each year.

Pragmatics. Students learn to use language socially—to carry on a conversation, tell stories, and use social conventions, including “hello” and “goodbye” and “please” and “thank you.”

By age four or five, students have acquired the oral language of their home culture. They learn to converse with individuals and in groups, to tell stories, and to listen to and follow directions, and they acquire vocabulary related to concepts they’re learning.

Oral Language Activities

Students continue to develop oral language competence at school, especially as they participate in literacy activities. Probably the most valuable activity is the instructional procedure teachers use to read stories and other books aloud that’s known as **interactive read-alouds**. As they listen, students learn new vocabulary and acquire more sophisticated sentence structures. The Booklist: Books That Develop Oral Language presents popular picture books that introduce new vocabulary and develop young students’ talking and listening abilities. Afterward, they talk about the story in **grand conversations** and participate in **story retelling** and activities using **story boards**.

Figure 2–1 lists literacy activities that develop students’ oral language; these activities are described in the Compendium of Instructional Procedures, which follows Chapter 12. In addition, whenever students work together in small groups, they have opportunities to use new vocabulary to talk about things they’re learning.

English Learners

All young students, by definition, are English learners, but some students come to school learning English as an additional language to the one they have already learned at home. Both processes, learning English as the first or as an additional language, are developmental processes that require both time and opportunity. Young students learn English as an additional language best in a classroom where talk is encouraged and where the teacher and classmates serve as English language models. They hear English spoken in meaningful contexts and associated with physical actions, artifacts, and pictures. Students acquire conversational English, known as **Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS)** quickly—in two years or less—but academic English, known as **Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)**, can take seven or eight years to

Check the Compendium of Instructional Procedures, which follows Chapter 12. These **green** terms also show a brief description of each procedure.

Figure 2–1 Literacy Activities to Develop Oral Language

COMPONENT	PREK–KINDERGARTEN	FIRST–SECOND GRADES	THIRD–FOURTH GRADES
Expanding Oral Language Expressiveness	Grand conversations Interactive read-alouds Interactive writing Language Experience Approach Story boards Story retelling	Book talks Grand conversations Interactive read-alouds Interactive writing Story boards Story retelling	Book talks Grand conversations Hot seat Interactive read-alouds
Playing With Words	Interactive read-alouds Shared reading	Choral reading Interactive read-alouds Shared reading	Choral reading Interactive read-alouds
Increasing Word Knowledge	Interactive read-alouds Interactive writing	Interactive read-alouds KWL charts Semantic feature analysis Word sorts Word walls	Interactive read-alouds KWL charts Semantic feature analysis Word sorts Word walls

acquire (Cummins, 1979). Even though English learners in third or fourth grade may appear fluent in conversational settings, they may still struggle academically because they haven't learned more formal, academic English.

Societal and cultural factors influence language acquisition; students' personalities, the attitudes of their cultural group, and teacher expectations all play a role (Otto, 2014; Samway & McKeon, 2007). Students' level of proficiency in their first language also affects their additional language development: Those who continue to develop their first language proficiency become better English speakers than those who stop learning their native language (Tabors, 2008).

The Link Between Oral Language and Literacy

Developing students' oral language is essential because it provides the foundation for literacy learning (Roskos, Tabors, & Lenhart, 2009). Students who don't develop strong oral language before first grade have difficulty keeping pace with classmates (Hart & Risley, 2003; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Researchers have found that vocabulary knowledge is an important predictor of beginning reading success (Roth, Speece, & Cooper, 2002). Interestingly, students' ability to orally define words was found to be an important predictor of how well they'd be able to decode words and comprehend text in the primary grades. Other significant factors, such as phonemic awareness and letter knowledge, are related to students' ability to decode words, but not to their comprehension.



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Video Example 2.1

In this video, professor MaryEllen Vogt discusses the distinguishing features of English learners' literacy needs. How does Dr. Vogt differentiate conversational and academic language?

Booklist Books That Develop Oral Language

GRADE	BOOKS
PreK	Carle, E. (2002). <i>The very hungry caterpillar</i> . Cowley, J. (2002). <i>The hungry giant's soup</i> . Henkes, K. (2000). <i>Wemberly worried</i> . Litwin, E. (2008). <i>Pete the cat: I love my white shoes</i> . Martin, B., Jr., & Archambault, J. (2009). <i>Chicka chicka boom boom</i> . Willems, M. (2004). <i>Knuffle bunny: A cautionary tale</i> .
K	Fleming, D. (2007). <i>In the small, small pond</i> . Hoban, T. (2008). <i>Over, under, and through</i> . Logue, M. (2012). <i>Sleep like a tiger</i> . Root, P. (2004). <i>Rattletrap car</i> . Taback, S. (1997). <i>There was an old lady who swallowed a fly</i> . Wood, A., & Wood, D. (2000). <i>The napping house</i> .
1	Gray, M. (1995). <i>My mama had a dancing heart</i> . Most, B. (1996). <i>Cock-a-doodle-moo!</i> Rathmann, P. (1995). <i>Officer Buckle and Gloria</i> . Reynolds, A. (2012). <i>Creepy carrots</i> . Wilson, K. (2002). <i>Bear snores on</i> . Seeger, L. V. (2012). <i>Green</i> .
2	Bunting, E. (1999). <i>Smoky night</i> . Fosberry, J. (2010). <i>My name is not Isabella</i> . Fox, M. (1998). <i>Tough Boris</i> . Hurd, T. (2003). <i>Moo cow kaboom</i> . St. George, J. (2004). <i>So you want to be president?</i> Yolen, J. (1987). <i>Owl moon</i> .
3	Obama, B. (2010). <i>Of thee I sing: A letter to my daughters</i> . Ryan, P. M. (1999). <i>Amelia and Eleanor go for a ride</i> . Scieszka, J. (1995). <i>Math curse</i> . Steig, W. (2009). <i>Amos & Boris</i> . Van Allsburg, C. (1986). <i>The stranger</i> . Zelinsky, P. O. (1997). <i>Rapunzel</i> .
4	Burleigh, R. (2002). <i>Pandora</i> . Floca, B. (2009). <i>Moonshot: The flight of Apollo 11</i> . King, M. L., Jr. (1997). <i>I have a dream</i> . Polacco, P. (1994). <i>Pink & Say</i> . Say, A. (1993). <i>Grandfather's journey</i> . Van Allsburg, C. (1991). <i>The wretched stone</i> .

Assessing Students' Oral Language

Early childhood education teachers monitor students' oral language development because they understand its importance for academic achievement. They use informal assessment techniques to check that students demonstrate these language skills:

- Speak clearly in complete sentences
- Respond to questions
- Initiate conversations
- Take turns
- Ask questions
- Participate in discussions
- Sing songs and recite fingerplays
- Tell about experiences



MyLab Education Video Example 2.2

Teachers often notice that language is developmental in some of the four- and five-year olds they work with, and this problem interferes with literacy progress. Why do you think students' language development may interfere with learning emergent literacy concepts?

Teachers use observations, anecdotal notes, checklists, and video clips (Otto, 2014). They also monitor that young students listen during conversations and discussions as well as to stories teachers are reading and that they can follow directions. They notice whether students play with words (e.g., rhyming words and alliterations), connect new words to concepts they're learning, and use new words appropriately as they talk.

Teachers also use classroom tests to evaluate four- and five-year-olds' oral language development, especially when they suspect that a student may have receptive or expressive language difficulties. The Assessment Tools feature describes tests that provide normative data so teachers can compare their student's score against national benchmarks.

Assessment Tools

Oral Language

Teachers use these classroom tests to screen prekindergartners' and kindergartners' oral language development and identify students with possible language problems:

- **Assessment of Literacy and Language (ALL)**

Preschool, kindergarten, and first grade teachers use ALL to assess students who they believe are at risk for reading difficulties because of an underlying language disorder. It assesses listening comprehension, semantics and syntax, phonological awareness, understanding of the alphabetic principle, and concepts about print. This test is time-consuming, so teachers use it selectively; it's administered individually in 60 minutes or less. ALL is available for purchase from Pearson.

- **Kindergarten Language Screening Test, 2nd Edition (KLST-2)**

KLST-2 is an individually administered assessment that's used to quickly identify students who may have language problems that will interfere with their reading and writing development. It assesses four- to seven-year-olds' receptive and expressive language—to understand questions, follow directions, repeat sentences, and use spontaneous speech. KLST-2 is available for purchase from Pearson.

- **Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy (TROLL)**

Prekindergarten teachers use TROLL to assess three-, four-, and five-year-olds' oral language, reading, and writing. This individual assessment is easy to use and can be completed in 5 to 10 minutes. Teachers judge students' language competence using a 25-item rating scale; 8 of the items focus on oral language, including asking questions, sharing personal experiences, and identifying rhyming words. TROLL is available free of charge from the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement at the University of Michigan (<http://www.ciera.org>).

These tests provide normative data so teachers can compare students against national benchmarks as well as chart their growth over the school year.

Building Students' Interest in Written Language

Young students' introduction to written language begins at home, long before they come to school. Parents and other caregivers read to them, and they learn to read signs and other environmental print in their community. They experiment with writing and have their parents write messages for them; they also observe adults writing. When young students come to school, their knowledge about written language expands quickly as they learn concepts about print and participate in meaningful experiences with reading and writing. The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (2010) emphasize the importance of fostering students' interest in reading and writing and developing their understanding of concepts about written language. Check the Common Core State Standards box: Concepts About Written Language to learn more about the Standards for young readers and writers.

Concepts About Written Language

Through experiences in their homes and communities, young students learn that print carries meaning, that letters and words represent spoken language, and that reading and writing are used for a variety of purposes (Clay, 2017). They notice menus in restaurants; write and receive email messages, texts, and cards to communicate with friends and relatives; and listen to stories read aloud for enjoyment. Students also observe parents and teachers using written language for all these reasons.

Students' understanding about the purposes of reading and writing reflects how written language is used in their community. Although reading and writing are part of daily life for almost every family, families use written language in different ways (Heath, 1983). Young students have a wide range of literacy experiences in both middle-class and working-class families, even though those experiences might not be the same (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1987). In some communities, written language is used mainly as a tool for practical purposes such as paying bills, and in others, reading and writing are also used for leisure-time activities. In still other communities, written language serves even wider functions, such as debating social and political issues.

Preschool and kindergarten teachers demonstrate the purposes of written language and provide opportunities for students to experiment with reading and writing in these ways:

- Posting signs in the classroom
- Integrating reading and writing materials into literacy play centers
- Exchanging messages with classmates
- Reading and writing stories
- Labeling classroom items
- Drawing and writing in journals
- Writing notes to parents

Through these activities, young students learn the following concepts about how to look at print:

Book Orientation Concepts. Students learn how to hold a book and turn pages, and where to start reading on a page. They also understand that the words, not the illustrations, carry the message.

Common Core State Standards

Concepts About Written Language

The Reading: Foundational Skills Standards explain that young students learn concepts of print, the alphabetic principle, and other conventions of the English writing system as part of a comprehensive literacy program. Kindergartners and first graders are expected to develop these written language concepts in preparation for learning to read and spell words:

- Students demonstrate the progression of print, from left to right and top to bottom.
- Students recognize letters, words, and sentences in print.
- Students name the upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.

The Standards emphasize that instruction should be differentiated because young students vary in their knowledge about and experiences with reading and writing. To learn more about the Standards, go to <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>, or check your state's educational standards website.

Directionality Concepts. Students learn that print is written and read from left to right and from top to bottom on a page. They learn about return sweep; the idea that at the end of a line they have to go all the way over to the left and start again from there. They also learn to match one-to-one, meaning they learn to match the reader's voice to print, pointing word by word to the text as it's read aloud. Students also learn the concepts of "first" and "last."

Letter and Word Concepts. Students acquire concepts of what a letter is, what a word is, and what a sentence is; with this understanding, they can identify letters, words, and sentences on a page of text. They also develop awareness of capital letters and punctuation marks and why they're used.

As young students develop these concepts, they apply their knowledge in both reading and writing. For instance, they open books and point to where their teachers or parents should begin reading and pick out familiar letters and words that they notice in the text. Preschoolers also begin to make letterlike forms and add them to their pictures as labels.

Concepts About Words

At first, young students have only vague notions of literacy terms, such as *word*, *letter*, *sound*, and *sentence*, that teachers use in talking about reading and writing, but students develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of what they mean. Students learn that words have different appearances: they can be spoken, listened to, read, and written.

Students develop concepts about words through active participation in literacy activities. They watch as teachers point to words in big books during **shared reading**, and they mimic the teacher and point to words as they reread familiar texts. After many shared reading experiences, students notice that word boundaries are marked with spaces, and they pick out familiar words. Their pointing becomes increasingly exact, and they get better at picking out specific words in the text, noticing that words at the beginnings of sentences are marked with capital letters and words at the ends are followed with punctuation marks.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT. Young students begin reading by recognizing logos on fast-food restaurants, department stores, grocery stores, and commonly used household items within familiar contexts (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984). They recognize the golden arches of McDonald's and say "McDonald's," but when they're shown the word

McDonald's written on a sheet of paper without the familiar sign and restaurant setting, they can't read the word. At first, students depend on context to read familiar words and memorized texts, but slowly, they develop relationships linking form and meaning as they gain more reading and writing experience.

LITERACY PLAY CENTERS. Young students learn about the purposes of reading and writing as they use written language in their play: While constructing block buildings, students write signs and tape them on the buildings; as they play doctor, students write prescriptions on slips of paper; and as they play teacher, students read stories aloud to stuffed animal "students" (McGee, 2007). Young students use these activities to reenact familiar, everyday activities and to pretend to be someone else. Through these literacy play activities, students use reading and writing for a variety of purposes.

Preschool and kindergarten teachers add literacy materials to play centers to enhance their value for literacy learning (Sluss, 2005). Housekeeping centers are probably the most common play centers; they can easily be transformed into grocery stores, post offices, or medical centers by changing the props. They become literacy play centers when reading and writing materials are included: Food packages, price stickers, and play money are props in grocery store centers; letters, stamps, and mailboxes are props in post office centers; and appointment books, prescription pads, and folders for patient records are props in medical centers. Literacy play centers can be set up in classrooms and coordinated with literature focus units and thematic units. Ideas for eight literacy play centers are presented in Figure 2-2; each center includes authentic literacy materials that young students can experiment with to learn more about the purposes of written language.



MyLab Education

Video Example 2.3

Creating a print-rich environment in your classroom can help students become familiar with the purpose of literacy. What are some ways PreK-4 teachers can set up print-rich classroom environments?

Figure 2-2 Literacy Play Centers

CENTER	MATERIALS			
Bank	teller window checks	play money roll papers for coins	deposit slips money bags	signs receipts
Grocery Store	food packages artificial foods	grocery cart cash register	money grocery bags	cents-off coupons advertisements
Hairdresser	hair rollers brush and comb mirror	empty shampoo bottle towel posters of hair styles	wig and wig stand hairdryer (remove cord) curling iron (remove cord)	ribbons, barrettes, clips appointment book open/closed sign
Medical	appointment book white shirt/jacket medical bag	hypodermic syringe (play) thermometer stethoscope	prescription pad folders (for patient records)	bandages prescription bottles and labels
Office	computer calculator paper	stapler file folders in/out boxes	pens and pencils envelopes and stamps telephone	message pad rubber stamps stamp pad
Post Office	mailboxes envelopes stamps (stickers)	pens wrapping paper tape	packages scale package seals	address labels cash register money
Restaurant	tablecloth dishes glasses	silverware napkins menus	tray order pad and pencil apron for waitress	vest for waiter hat and apron for chef
Veterinarian	stuffed animals cages (cardboard boxes) pet information cards	white shirt/jacket medical bag stethoscope	medicine bottles prescription labels bandages	popsicle stick splints hypodermic syringe (play) open/closed sign

Concepts About the Alphabet

Young students also develop concepts about the alphabet and how letters are used to represent phonemes. Pinnell and Fountas (1998) identified these components of letter knowledge:

- The letter's name
- The formation of the upper- and lowercase letter in manuscript handwriting
- The features of the letter that distinguish it from other letters
- The direction the letter must be turned to distinguish it from other letters (e.g., *b* and *d*)
- The use of the letter in known words (e.g., names and common words)
- The sound the letter represents in isolation
- The sound the letter represents in combination with others (e.g., *ch*, *th*)
- The sound the letter represents in the context of a word (e.g., the *c* sounds in *cat*, *city*, and *chair*)

Students use this knowledge to decode unfamiliar words as they read and to create spellings for words as they write.

The most basic information students learn about the alphabet is how to identify and form the letters. They notice letters in environmental print and learn to sing the ABC song. By the time students enter kindergarten, they usually recognize many letters and can name them—especially those letters in their own names, names of family members and pets, and common words. Students also write some of these familiar letters.

Research suggests that students don't learn alphabet letter names in any particular order or by isolating letters from meaningful written language in skill-and-drill activities. McGee and Richgels (2012) conclude that learning letters of the alphabet requires many, many experiences with meaningful written language and recommend that teachers take these steps to encourage alphabet learning:

Capitalize on students' interests. Teachers provide letter activities that students enjoy, and they talk about letters when students are interested in talking about them. Teachers know what features to comment on because they observe students during reading and writing activities to find out which letters or features of letters they're exploring.

Talk about the role of letters in reading and writing. Teachers talk about how letters represent sounds, how letters combine to spell words, and point out capital letters and lowercase letters. They often talk about the role of letters as they write with students.

Provide a variety of opportunities for alphabet learning. Teachers use students' names and environmental print in literacy activities, use **interactive writing**, and allow students to use invented spelling in their own writing, share alphabet books, and play letter games.

Teachers begin teaching letters of the alphabet using two sources of words—students' own names and environmental print. They teach the ABC song to provide students with a strategy for identifying the name of an unknown letter. Students learn to sing this song and point to each letter on an alphabet chart until they reach the unfamiliar one; this is a very useful strategy because it gives them a real sense of independence in identifying letters. Teachers also provide routines, activities, and games for talking about and manipulating letters. During these familiar, predictable activities, teachers and students say letter names, manipulate magnetic letters, and write letters on whiteboards. At first, the teacher structures and guides the activities, but with experience, the students internalize the routine and do it independently, often at a literacy center. Figure 2-3 presents 10 routines to teach the letters of the alphabet; one of the routines involves using alphabet books. The Booklist called *Alphabet Books* presents a list of these books.

Figure 2–3 Routines to Teach the Letters of the Alphabet

ROUTINE	DESCRIPTION
Environmental Print	Students sort food labels, toy traffic signs, store names cut from advertisements, and other environmental print to find examples of a letter being studied.
Alphabet Books	Teachers read aloud alphabet books to build vocabulary, and later, students reread the books to find words when making books about a letter.
Magnetic Letters	Students pick all examples of one letter from a collection of magnetic letters or match upper- and lowercase letterforms using magnetic letters. They also arrange the letters in alphabetical order and use them to spell familiar words.
Letter Stamps	Students use letter stamps and ink pads to print letters on paper or in booklets. They also use letter-shaped sponges to paint letters and letter-shaped cookie cutters to cut out clay letters.
Alphabet Chart	Students point to letters and pictures on the alphabet chart as they recite the alphabet and say the names of the pictures, such as “A-airplane, B-baby, C-cat,” and so on.
Letter Containers	Teachers collect coffee cans or shoe boxes, one for each letter, and place several familiar objects that represent the letter in each container. Teachers use these containers to introduce the letters, and students use them for sorting and matching activities.
Letter Frames	Teachers make circle-shaped letter frames from tagboard, collect large plastic bracelets, or shape pipe cleaners or Wikki-Stix (pipe cleaners covered in wax) into circles for students to use to highlight particular letters on charts or in big books.
Letter Books	Students make letter books with pictures of objects beginning with a particular letter on each page. They add letter stamps, stickers, or pictures cut from magazines.
Posters	Teachers draw a large letterform on a chart and students add pictures, stickers, and letter stamps.
Letter Sorts	Students sort objects and pictures representing two or more letters and place them in containers marked with the specific letters.
Whiteboards	Students practice writing upper- and lowercase forms of a letter and familiar words on whiteboards.

Being able to name the letters of the alphabet is a good predictor of beginning reading achievement, even though knowing the names of the letters doesn't directly affect a student's ability to read (Adams, 1990; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). A more likely explanation for this relationship is that students who have been actively involved in literacy activities before first grade know the names of the letters, and they're more likely to begin reading quickly. Simply teaching students to name the letters without the accompanying reading and writing experiences doesn't have this effect.

Manuscript Handwriting

Students enter kindergarten with different backgrounds of handwriting experience. Some five-year-olds have never held a pencil, but many others have written cursive-like scribbles or manuscript letterlike lines and circles. Some have learned to print their names and even a few other letters. Handwriting instruction in kindergarten typically includes developing students' ability to hold pencils, refining their fine-motor control, and focusing on letter formation. Some people might argue that kindergartners are too young to learn handwriting skills, but young students should be encouraged to write from the first day of school. They write letters and words on labels, draw and write stories, keep journals, and write other types of messages. The more students write, the greater their need becomes for instruction in handwriting. Instruction is necessary so that students don't learn bad habits that later must be broken.

To teach students how to form letters, many kindergarten and first grade teachers create brief directions for forming letters and sing the directions using a familiar tune. For example, to form a lowercase *a*, expand the direction “All around and make a tail” into a verse and sing it to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” As teachers sing the directions, they model the formation of the letter in the air or on a whiteboard using

Booklist Alphabet Books

GRADE	BOOKS
PreK	Carle, E. (2007). <i>Eric Carle's ABC</i> . Dorling Kindersley. (2012). <i>Touch and feel: ABC</i> . Hoban, T. (1995). <i>26 letters and 99 cents</i> . Jay, A. (2003). <i>ABC: A child's first alphabet book</i> . Munari, B. (2006). <i>Bruno Munari's ABC</i> . Seuss, Dr. (1996). <i>Dr. Seuss's ABC: An amazing alphabet book!</i> Zuckerman, A. (2009). <i>Creature ABC</i> .
K	Baker, K. (2010). <i>LMNOPeas</i> . Bingham, K. (2012). <i>Z is for moose</i> . Ehlert, L. (1993). <i>Eating the alphabet: Fruits and vegetables from A to Z</i> . Kontis, A. (2012). <i>AlphaOops! The day Z went first</i> . Martin, B., Jr., & Archambault, J. (2009). <i>Chicka chicka boom boom</i> . McLeod, B. (2008). <i>SuperHero ABC</i> . Sobel, J. (2006). <i>B is for bulldozer: A construction ABC</i> . Wood, A. (2001). <i>Alphabet adventure</i> . (And others in the series.)
1-2	Bayer, J. E. (1992). <i>A, my name is Alice</i> . Elting, M., & Folsom, M. (2005). <i>Q is for duck</i> . Pinto, S. (2003). <i>The alphabet room</i> . Rose, D. L. (2000). <i>Into the A, B, sea: An ocean alphabet book</i> . Shannon, G. (1999). <i>Tomorrow's alphabet</i> . Shoulders, M. (2008). <i>The ABC book of American homes</i> . Sobel, J. (2009). <i>Shiver me letters: A pirate ABC</i> .
3-4	Ernst, L. C. (2004). <i>The turn-around, upside-down alphabet book</i> . Grover, M. (1997). <i>The accidental zucchini: An unexpected alphabet</i> . Johnson, S. T. (1999). <i>Alphabet city</i> . Johnson, S. T. (2008). <i>A is for art: An abstract alphabet</i> . Kratzer, P. (2006). <i>The living rain forest: An animal alphabet</i> . Palotta, J. (2002). <i>The jet alphabet book</i> . Van Allsburg, C. (1998). <i>The Z was zapped: A play in 26 acts</i> .

large arm motions. Then students sing along and practice forming the letter in the air, in a small tray of sand (bright blue aquarium sand is best!), or on the outside of sealed plastic baggies that have been filled with a gel or foam.

Moving models are much more effective than still models in teaching students how to handwrite, so worksheets on the letters aren't very useful because students may not form the letters correctly. It's important that students watch teachers form letters and then practice forming them themselves. Also, teachers supervise students as they write so that they can correct those who form letters incorrectly. Students must learn to write circles counterclockwise, starting from 1:00, and to form most lines from top to bottom and left to right across the page. When students follow these guidelines, they're less likely to tear their paper, and they'll have an easier transition to cursive handwriting.

Teaching Students About Written Language

Teachers develop young students' concepts about written language as they demonstrate how reading and writing work and involve students in shared and interactive reading and writing activities. In addition, teachers often use previously read texts in minilessons about written language concepts because students are already familiar with them.

MORNING MESSAGE. Teachers write a brief friendly letter, called a morning message, each day to share with students (Payne & Schulman, 1999). Before students arrive, they write a message on chart paper about what will happen that day; then they read the message aloud at the beginning of the school day, pointing at each word as they read. Afterward, students reread it and count the letters, words, and sentences in the message. Depending on their developmental level, they also pick out familiar letters and words, words illustrating a particular phonics concept, or capital letters and punctuation marks.

Teachers usually follow a predictable pattern in their messages each day to make it easier for students to read, as these two morning messages show:

Dear Kindergartners,
 Today is Monday.
 We will plant seeds.
 We will make books
 about plants.

Love,
 Ms. Thao

Dear Kindergartners,
 Today is Thursday.
 We will measure the plants.
 We will write about how
 plants grow.

Love,
 Ms. Thao

The morning messages that teachers write for first and second graders become gradually more complex, as this second grade teacher's message demonstrates:

Good Morning!

Today is Monday, February 5, 2018.

New literature circles begin on Wednesday.

I'll tell you about the new book choices this morning, and then you can sign up for your favorite book. Who remembers what a synonym is? Can you give an example?

Love,
 Mrs. Salazar

Teachers usually choose students to take the messages home to share with their families, either day by day or at the end of each week.

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH. Teachers demonstrate how written language works in the **Language Experience Approach (LEA)** (Ashton-Warner, 1986). Students dictate sentences about an experience, and the teacher records their dictation on chart paper. As they write, teachers demonstrate how to write from left to right on a page, how to form letters and to space between words, and how to use capital letters and punctuation marks. Then the completed text becomes the reading material; students practice rereading the text and picking out letters and words. Because the language comes from the students and because the content is based on shared experiences, the text can usually be read easily.

Teachers often use LEA to create collaborative books, where each student creates one page to be added to a class book. For example, as part of a unit on bears, a kindergarten class made a collaborative book on bears. Students each chose a fact about bears for their pages; they drew an illustration and dictated the text for their teacher to record. One page from the class book is shown in Figure 2-4. The teacher took the students' dictation because she wanted the book to be written in conventional spelling so that students and their parents could read it.

INTERACTIVE WRITING. Students and the teacher create a text together using **interactive writing** (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000; Tompkins & Collom, 2004). The students compose the message together, and then the teacher guides them as they write it word by word on chart paper. Students take turns writing known letters and familiar words, adding punctuation marks, and leaving spaces between words. Everyone participates in creating and writing the text on chart paper, and they also write the text on small whiteboards or on paper as it's written on chart paper. Afterward, students read and reread the text together with classmates and on their own.

Figure 2-4 One Page From a Class Book



*Polar bears live in
 ice and snow*

Assessment Tools

Concepts About Written Language

Teachers monitor students' growing awareness of written language as they observe them during shared reading and other literacy activities. The most widely used assessment is Marie Clay's Concepts About Print:

- **Concepts About Print (CAP)**

- CAP (Clay, 2017) assesses young students' understanding of three concepts about written language: book orientation concepts, directionality concepts, and letter and word concepts. The test has 24 items and is administered individually in about 10 minutes. The teacher reads a short book aloud while a student looks on. The student is asked to open the book, turn pages, and point out particular print features as the text is read. Four forms of the CAP booklet are available: *Sand* (Clay, 2015), *Stones* (Clay, 2014), *Follow Me, Moon* (Clay, 2000), and *No Shoes* (Clay, 2016), as well as a Spanish version. Teachers carefully observe students as they respond, and then mark their responses on a scoring sheet. CAP is included with five other literacy assessment tasks in *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2013), or in a stand-alone version called *Concepts About Print* (Clay, 2017) both of which are available for purchase from Heinemann Books.

Instead of using the test booklets, teachers can also assess a student's understandings about print by using books available in the classroom and the scoring sheet in the Assessment Snapshot: Print Awareness.

Assessment Snapshot Print Awareness

Scoring Sheet

Name Adele Date Jan. 10

Title of Book First the Egg

Check the items that the student demonstrates.

1. Book Orientation Concepts
 - Shows the front of a book.
 - Turns to the first page of the story.
 - Shows where to start reading on a page.
2. Directionality Concepts
 - Shows the direction of print across a line of text.
 - Shows the direction of print on a page with more than one line of print.
 - Points to individual words as the teacher reads.
3. Letter and Word Concepts
 - Points to any letter on a page.
 - Points to a particular letter on a page.
 - Puts fingers around any word on a page.
 - Puts fingers around a particular word on a page.
 - Puts fingers around any sentence on a page.
 - Points to the first and last letters of a word.
 - Points to a period or other punctuation mark.
 - Points to a capital letter.

TEACHER'S NOTE
Adele is familiar with books and has book orientation concepts. It's January and she's just reached the point where most of her classmates were in September. She's working on tracking words and needs to learn more about letters, words, and sentences.

Assessing Students' Knowledge About Written Language

Teachers observe students as they look at books and reread familiar ones. They also watch as students do pretend writing and write their names and other familiar words. They notice which concepts students understand and which ones they need to continue to talk about and demonstrate during shared reading.

As students read aloud, teachers ask the student to point out book orientation concepts, directionality concepts, and letter and word concepts. They can use the scoring sheet shown in the Assessment Snapshot: Print Awareness or develop one of their own to monitor students' growing knowledge about these concepts. Keep in mind that older students who are English learners may also need to learn about print concepts in English if they are literate in another language that is written down differently; Arabic, for example, reads from right to left instead of left to right.

MyLab Education Self-Check 2.2

How Students Develop as Readers and Writers

Students move through three stages as they learn to read and write: emergent, beginning, and fluent (Juel, 1991). During the emergent stage, young students gain an understanding of the communicative purpose of print, and they move from pretend reading to reading predictable books and from using scribbles to simulate writing to writing patterned sentences, such as *I see a bird. I see a tree. I see a car.* The focus of the second stage, beginning reading and writing, is on students' growing ability to use phonics to "crack the alphabetic code" in order to decode and spell words. Students also learn to read and write many high-frequency words and write several sentences to develop a story or other composition. In the fluent stage, students are automatic, fluent readers. In writing, they develop good handwriting skills, spell many high-frequency words correctly, and organize their writing into multiple-paragraph compositions. Figure 2-5 presents an overview of students' literacy accomplishments at each stage.

Stage 1: Emergent Reading and Writing

Students gain an understanding of the communicative purpose of print and develop an interest in reading and writing. They notice **environmental print** and develop concepts about print as teachers read and write with them. As students dictate stories for the teacher to record, for example, they learn that their speech can be written down, and they observe how teachers write from left to right and top to bottom.

Students grow in these ways during the first stage:

- Develop an interest in reading and writing
- Acquire concepts about print
- Develop book handling skills
- Identify the letters of the alphabet
- Develop handwriting skills
- Learn to read and write some high-frequency words

Figure 2-5 Students' Literacy Development

STAGE	READING	WRITING
Emergent	Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> notice environmental print show interest in books pretend to read use picture cues and predictable patterns in books to retell the story reread familiar books with predictable patterns identify some letter names recognize 5–20 familiar or high-frequency words 	Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> distinguish between writing and drawing write letters and letterlike forms or scribble randomly on the page develop an understanding of directionality show interest in writing write their first and last names write 5–20 familiar or high-frequency words use sentence frames to write a sentence
Beginning	Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify letter names and sounds match spoken words to written words recognize 20–100 high-frequency words use beginning, middle, and ending sounds to decode words apply knowledge of the cueing systems to monitor reading self-correct while reading read slowly, word by word read orally point to words when reading make reasonable predictions 	Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> write from left to right print the upper- and lowercase letters write one or more sentences add a title spell many words phonetically spell 20–50 high-frequency words correctly write single-draft compositions use capital letters to begin sentences use periods, question marks, and exclamation points to mark the ends of sentences can reread their writing
Fluent	Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify most words automatically read with expression read at a rate of 100 words per minute or more prefer to read silently identify unfamiliar words using the cueing systems recognize 100–300 high-frequency words use a variety of strategies effectively often read independently use knowledge of text structure and genre to support comprehension make inferences 	Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use the writing process to write drafts and final copies write compositions with more than one paragraph indent paragraphs spell most of the 100 high-frequency words use sophisticated and technical vocabulary apply vowel patterns to spell words add inflectional endings to words apply capitalization rules use commas, quotation marks, and other punctuation marks

Four- and five-year-olds are usually emergent readers and writers, but some students whose parents have read to them every day and provided a variety of literacy experiences do learn how to read before they come to school. Caroline, a five-year-old emergent reader and writer in Ms. McCloskey's classroom, is presented in the Literacy Portraits on the following pages.

READING. Emergent readers are interested in books and are developing concepts about written language. Students develop book orientation skills as they listen to teachers read aloud, and they imitate the teacher's behavior as they look at books—locating the cover, turning pages, and pretending to read. They learn that text moves from top to bottom on a page and from left to right across a line. At the same time, emergent readers are learning to name the letters of the alphabet and sing the ABC song to identify unfamiliar letters. They can recognize their own name and some classmates' names and, through lots of reading experiences, they can read *Mom*, *Dad*, *love*, *cat*, *dog*, and a few high-frequency words, including *the*, *you*, *I*, and *is*.

WRITING Young students make scribbles to represent writing. They may appear randomly on a page at first, but with experience, students line up the marks from left to right on a page and from top to bottom on a page. Students also begin to "read," or tell what their writing says (Schickedanz & Casbergue, 2009). At first, they can reread it only immediately after writing, but with experience, they learn to remember what their writing says and, as their writing becomes more conventional, they're able to decipher it more easily.

Portrait of an Emergent Reader and Writer



Five-year-old Caroline is a friendly, eager student who is learning to speak English as she learns to read and write. Her grandparents emigrated from Thailand to the United States; her family speaks Hmong at home, and she speaks English only at school. When Caroline's Hmong-speaking classmates start to talk in their native language, she admonishes them to speak English because "we learn English school."

When she came to kindergarten, Caroline didn't know any letters of the alphabet and had never held a pencil. She had not listened to stories read aloud and had no book handling experience.

She spoke very few words of English. The classroom culture and language were very different than those of her home, but Caroline was eager to learn. For the first few days, she stood back, observing her classmates; then she said "I do" and joined them.

Reading

Caroline has shown remarkable growth in five months. She has been reading books with repetitive sentences on each page, but now at level 3 she's beginning to use phonics to sound out unfamiliar words. She knows the names of most letters and the sounds that the letters represent. She can read about 20 high-frequency words. She has developed good book handling skills and follows the line of words on a page. She reads word by word and points at the text as she reads. She's learning consonant and vowel sounds, but she has difficulty decoding words because of her pronunciation of English sounds and low vocabulary.

Caroline demonstrates that she understands the books she reads, and she makes text-to-self connections. Recently, she was reading a book about a child having a birthday, and she pointed to the picture of a young, blonde mother wrapping a child's

Emergent Reader and Writer Characteristics that Caroline Exemplifies

READING

- Shows great interest in reading
- Has developed book handling skills
- Identifies most of the letters of the alphabet
- Knows some letter sounds
- Sounds out a few CVC words
- Reads 20 high-frequency words
- Rereads familiar books with predictable patterns
- Makes text-to-self connections

WRITING

- Shows great interest in writing
- Writes from left to right and top to bottom on a page
- Prints most of the letters of the alphabet
- Writes 20 high-frequency words
- Leaves spaces between words
- Writes sentences
- Begins sentences with a capital letter
- Puts periods at the ends of sentences
- Rereads what she has written immediately afterward

birthday present. She looked up at Ms. McCloskey and said, "She no mom, she sister. This wrong." The woman in the picture looks nothing like her mother.

Writing

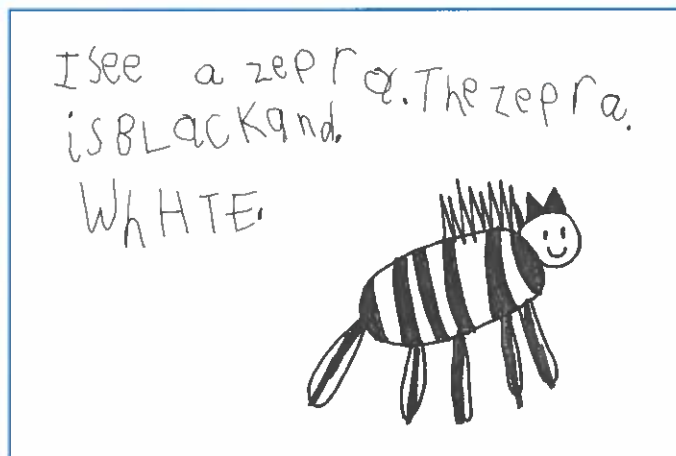
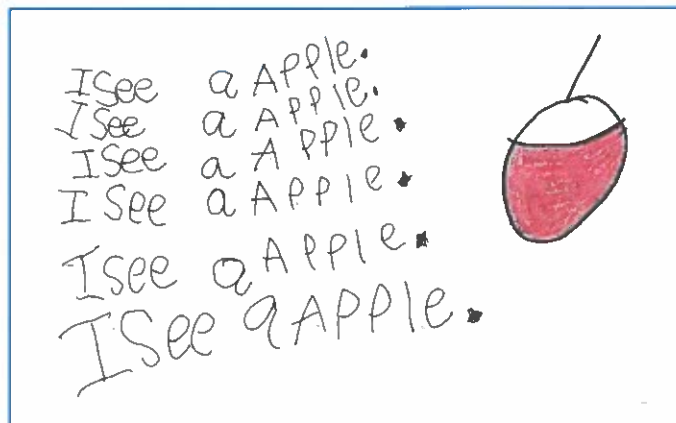
Caroline began participating in writing workshop on the first day of school and, for several weeks, she scribbled. Within a month, she learned how to print some letters because she wanted her writing to look like her classmates'. Soon she wrote her own name, copied classmates' names, and wrote words she saw posted in the classroom.

A month ago, Ms. McCloskey gave Caroline a ring for key words. Every few days, Caroline chooses a new word to add to her ring. Ms. McCloskey writes the word on a word card that Caroline puts on her ring. She has 31 words now, including *you* and *birthday*. She flips through the cards to practice reading, and she uses the words when she writes sentences.

After four months of instruction, Caroline began writing sentences. Ms. McCloskey introduced the frame "I see a . . ." and Caroline wrote sentences using familiar words, including some from her key words ring. Then, to make her writing longer, she wrote the same sentence over and over, as shown in the "Apple" writing sample.

Next, she began reading and writing color words, and she expanded her writing to two sentences. Her two-sentence writing sample, "Zebra," also is shown here. Most of the words that Caroline writes are spelled correctly because she uses key words and words she locates in a picture dictionary. Notice that Caroline puts a period at the end of each sentence; but recently she has seen that some of her classmates put a period at the end of each line, so she also added one at the end of each line in the "Zebra" sample. When she draws a picture to accompany a sentence, Caroline can usually read her writing immediately after she has written it, but by the next day she often doesn't remember what she has written.

Caroline has one of the thickest writing folders in the classroom, and she's very proud of her writing. Nearly 100 pages of writing are stuffed into the folder, tracing her development as a writer since the beginning of the school year.



Instructional Implications

Ms. McCloskey explains, "Caroline is an emergent-stage reader and writer. She's making excellent progress because she can read books with repetitive patterns, is learning phonics and high-frequency words, and can write words and craft sentences."

Now Ms. McCloskey is beginning to ask Caroline to read books without repetitive patterns during guided reading; in these books, she has to recognize high-frequency words and use phonics to identify unfamiliar words rather than rely on repetitive sentence patterns. Similarly, during writing workshop, Ms. McCloskey is encouraging Caroline to write books about events in her life without using repetitive patterns. Working without the support the patterns provide is difficult for Caroline because her knowledge of English is limited. Ms. McCloskey concludes, "Even though Caroline is learning to speak English at the same time she's learning to read and write, I'm confident that she's up to the challenge."

Portrait of a Beginning Reader and Writer

Monart Design/Fotolia



Anthony, a first grader with a ready smile, is a beginning reader and writer. He's six years old, and he says that he likes to read and write. He's a well-behaved student who's extremely competitive. He reads at level 12 now, and recently he announced to Ms. McCloskey that he wants to read at level 15. She explained that to do this, Anthony needs to practice reading at home with his mom, so he's been taking several books home each night to practice. Ms. McCloskey predicts that Anthony will be reading at level 18 by the end of the year; level 18 is the school's benchmark for the end of first grade.

Reading

According to Ms. McCloskey's assessment of Anthony's reading at the end of the second quarter, he recognizes 80 of the 100 high-frequency words taught in first grade, and he can decode most one-syllable words with short and long vowel sounds, including words with consonant blends and digraphs, such as *shock*, *chest*, and *spike*. He's beginning to sound out some of the more complex vowel digraphs and diphthongs (e.g., *loud*, *boil*, *soon*) and *r*-controlled vowels (e.g., *chart*, *snore*), and in the past month, Ms. McCloskey has noticed that Anthony's ability to decode words is growing, and that about two thirds of the time he can identify these words with more complex vowel sounds in the context of a sentence. He is also decoding some two- and three-syllable words, such as *dinner*, *parents*, and *hospital*, in books he's reading.

Anthony reads orally and points only when he reads challenging texts. He's beginning to chunk words into phrases as he reads, and he notices when something he's reading doesn't make sense. He uses the cross-checking strategy to make corrections and get back on track.

Beginning Reader and Writer Characteristics that Anthony Exemplifies

READING	WRITING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes to read • Reads orally • Points to words when he reads challenging text • Recognizes 80 high-frequency words • Uses phonics knowledge to decode unfamiliar words • Makes good predictions • Uses the cross-checking strategy • Retells what he reads • Makes text-to-self and text-to-world connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes to write • Writes single-draft compositions • Adds a title • Writes organized compositions on a single topic • Writes more than five sentences in a composition • Has a beginning, middle, and end in his stories • Refers to the word wall to spell high-frequency words • Uses his knowledge of phonics to spell words • Uses capital letters to mark the beginnings of sentences • Uses periods to mark the ends of sentences • Reads his writing to classmates

Anthony has read 17 books this month, according to his reading workshop log. He's increasingly choosing easy-to-read chapter books, including Syd Hoff's *Sammy the Seal* (2000a) and *Oliver* (2000b). After he reads, he often shares his books with his friend Angel, and they reread them together and talk about their favorite parts. He regularly uses the connecting strategy and shares his text-to-self and text-to-world connections with Angel and Ms. McCloskey. When he reads two or more books by the same author, he shares text-to-text comparisons and can explain to his teacher how these comparisons make him a better reader: "Now I think and read at the same time," he explains.

Writing

Anthony likes to write during writing workshop. He identified his "I Got Sick" story as the very best one he's written, and Ms. McCloskey agrees. Anthony tells an interesting and complete story; you can hear his voice clearly in the story. Anthony's story is shown in the box, and here is a translation of it:

I Got Sick

I went outside with no! jacket on and my throat started to hurt. It really hurt and I was getting sick. I went to find my Mom and I told her I was sick. My Mom gave me some medicine and she made Campbell's chicken noodle soup for me to eat. Then I got all better.

I Got Sick

I went out sid with no! Jacket on and my throt started to hrt. It rele hrt and I was geting Sick. I went to finde my Mom and I tolde her I was sick. My Mom gav me some Medisin and she mad Cambell chicken newdl soup for me to eat. Then I got all Betr.

Anthony's spelling errors are characteristic of phonetic spellers. He sounds out the spelling of many words, such as HRT (*hurt*), MEDISIN (*medicine*), and BETR (*better*), and he's experimenting with final *e* markers at the end of TOLDE and FINDE, but ignores them on other words, such as OUT SID (*outside*) and GAV (*gave*). He uses the word wall in the classroom and spells many high-frequency words correctly (e.g., *with*, *went*, *have*).

Anthony writes single-draft compositions in paragraph form, and he creates a title for his stories. He writes in sentences and includes simple, compound, and complex sentences in his writing. He correctly uses capital letters to mark the beginnings of sentences and periods to mark the ends, but as his "I Got Sick" story shows, he continues to randomly capitalize words.

Instructional Implications

"Anthony is a very motivated student: He's eager to read because he has a goal in mind," Ms. McCloskey explains. "I'm confident that he'll reach level 18 by the end of the year. I've been encouraging Anthony to read increasingly difficult chapter books and practice using the strategies he's learned when he's reading independently."

Ms. McCloskey plans to teach Anthony about complex vowel patterns and consonant blends and digraphs so he'll be able to decode unfamiliar words while he's reading. She's also noticed that it's time for him to move beyond single-draft compositions and learn to use the writing process to revise and edit his writing.

Portrait of a Fluent Reader and Writer



Jazmen is a confident and articulate third grader with an easy smile. She's eight years old, and she celebrated her birthday last fall with a family trip to the Magic Mountain amusement park in Southern California. Jazmen is a computer whiz and she often provides assistance to her classmates. When asked about her favorite school activity, Jazmen says that she likes using the computer best of all. In fact, she's interested in learning more about careers that involve computers because she knows that she always wants to work with them.

Ms. McCloskey identified Jazmen for this feature because she's made such remarkable progress this year. This is the second year that Jazmen has been in Ms. McCloskey's class. Last year, she seemed stuck in the beginning stage, not making too much progress, according to Ms. McCloskey, "but this year, it's like a lightbulb has been turned on!" She's now a fluent reader and writer.

Reading

Jazmen likes to read, and she reports that she has a lot of books at home. According to the Accelerated Reader program, she's reading at 3.8 (third grade, eighth month) level, which means she's reading at or slightly above grade level. She enjoys reading the Marvin Redpost (e.g., *Marvin Redpost: A Magic Crystal?* by Louis Sachar, 2000) and Zack Files (e.g., *Never Trust a Cat Who Wears Earrings*, by Dan Greenburg, 1997) series of easy-to-read paperback chapter books. She says she enjoys these books because they're funny.

Currently, she's reading Paula Danziger's series of chapter-book stories about a third grader named Amber Brown who deals with the realities of contemporary life, including adjusting to her parents' divorce. The first book in the series is *Amber Brown Is Not a Crayon* (2006), about Amber and her best friend, Justin, who moves away at the end of the book; other chapter books in the series are *Amber Brown Goes Fourth* (2007), *Amber Brown Is Feeling Blue* (1999), *Amber Brown Sees Red* (1998), and *Amber Brown Is Green With Envy* (2004).

Fluent Reader and Writer Characteristics that Jazmen Exemplifies

READING

- Recognizes most words automatically
- Reads with expression
- Reads more than 100 words per minute
- Reads independently
- Uses a variety of strategies
- Makes connections when reading
- Thinks inferentially
- Applies knowledge of story structure and genre when reading

WRITING

- Uses the writing process
- Has a sense of audience and purpose
- Writes a complete story with a beginning, middle, and end
- Writes in paragraphs
- Indents paragraphs
- Uses sophisticated language
- Spells most words correctly
- Uses capital letters and punctuation to mark sentence boundaries

Jazmen reads fluently. She recognizes words automatically and reads with expression. She says that when you're reading to someone, you have to be interesting, and that's why she reads the way she does. Her most outstanding achievement, according to Ms. McCloskey, is that she thinks inferentially about stories. She can juggle thinking about plot, characters, setting, and theme in order to make thoughtful connections and interpretations. She knows about various genres and literary elements, and she uses this knowledge as she reflects on her reading.

Writing

Jazmen likes to write. She gets her ideas for stories from TV programs. She explains, "When I'm watching TV, I get these ideas and I draw pictures of them and that's how I think of a story." She's currently working on a story entitled "Lucky and the Color Purple," about a princess named Lucky who possesses magical qualities. Why are her stories interesting? Jazmen says, "Most important is that they are creative." She shares her stories with her classmates, and they agree that Jazmen is a good writer.

Jazmen is particularly pleased with her story "The Super Hero Dog," which is shown here. The story is humorous—just imagine a three-pound dog helping an elephant! Ms. McCloskey said that she likes the story because it's complete with a beginning, middle, and an end, and because Jazmen uses dialogue (and quotation marks) effectively. The errors remaining on the final draft of the paper also suggest direction for future instruction. Jazmen spelled 95% of the words in her composition correctly. In particular, she appears ready to learn more about homophones, possessives, and punctuating dialogue.

Instructional Implications

"Jazmen is a fluent reader," says Ms. McCloskey, "so she's ready to tackle more challenging fiction and nonfiction books, both during guided reading lessons and when she's reading independently." When she reads, Jazmen's focus has changed from decoding the words to comprehending the author's message. Ms. McCloskey plans to teach minilessons about asking questions, drawing inferences, and using other reading strategies to encourage Jazmen to think more deeply about the books she's reading.

Jazmen has begun to use the writing process to refine her compositions, but most of her pieces have been stories. Ms. McCloskey is encouraging Jazmen to write nonfiction books, poems, letters, and other genres. After reading *Hate That Cat* (Creech, 2010), a novel written in verse, Jazmen decided to imitate the genre and draft her own novel in verse, expanding on an encounter she had with a squirrel. Ms. McCloskey also plans to carefully monitor Jazmen's progress and teach minilessons on concepts and skills that she's attempting to use, including homophones, possessives, and dialogue.

The Super Hero Dog

Once upon a time a girl named Jazmen owned a dog named Chewbarka. Chewbarka was a Chorkie. Thats a Chiuwawua and Yorkie mix. Even tho Chorkies only way about three pounds, Chewbarka was a super hero! Chewbarka new how to fly and she had super strength. Then one day Jazmen got a call from Dashawna the vet. Dashawna said "There is an elephant named Rosie that needs help quick!" Rosie had a broken leg and could not walk to the vet with her owner. Jazmen told Chewbarka to fly over to where Rosie was pick her up and fly to the vet. Chewbarka did what she was told. The people who saw Chewbarka and Rosie could not beleve their eyes. There was a tiny dog with super strength flying the elephant over to the vets. After Chewbarka got Rosie to the vet, Dashawna started working on Rosie right away. Now her leg is in a big purple cast. Why did she get a purple cast? Its Rosie's favrite color! Rosie thanked the super hero for her help and they became BFFs. Without Chewbarkas help, Rosie would have never been helped.

PreK Practices

How do teachers promote students' literacy development?

The cornerstone of early literacy instruction, according to Vukelich and Christie (2009), is interactive read-alouds: As teachers share books, students learn literacy strategies and skills and become interested in reading and making their own books. A print-rich classroom environment is another important component because it provides opportunities for students to engage in emergent reading and writing activities. Teachers also include explicit, developmentally appropriate instruction to teach phonological awareness; concepts about print; and alphabet knowledge. In addition, teachers engage students in conversations and expose them to content-related vocabulary words as they develop their content knowledge.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES. Emergent readers and writers participate in a variety of activities ranging from modeled and shared reading and writing, during which they watch as teachers read and write, to independent reading and writing that they do themselves. Ms. McCloskey's students, for example, listened to her read books aloud and read big books using shared reading, and they also participated in reading and writing workshop.

Stage 2: Beginning Reading and Writing

This stage marks students' growing awareness of the **alphabetic principle**—that letters represent sounds. Students learn about phoneme–grapheme correspondences; phonics rules in words such as *run*, *hand*, *this*, *make*, *day*, and *road*; and word families, including *-ill* (*fill*, *hill*, *will*) and *-ake* (*bake*, *make*, *take*). They also apply (and misapply) their developing phonics knowledge to spell words. For example, they spell *night* as NIT and *train* as TRANE. At the same time, they're learning to read and write high-frequency words, many of which can't be sounded out, such as *what*, *are*, and *there*.

Students grow in these ways during the second stage:

- Learn phonics skills
- Recognize 20–100 high-frequency words
- Apply reading strategies, including cross-checking, predicting, and repairing
- Write five or more sentences, sometimes organized into a paragraph
- Spell phonetically
- Spell 20–50 high-frequency words
- Capitalize letters to begin sentences
- Use punctuation marks to indicate the ends of sentences
- Reread their writing

Most first and second graders are beginning readers and writers and, with explicit instruction and daily opportunities to read and write, students move through this stage to reach the fluent stage. Anthony, a six-year-old beginning reader and writer in Ms. McCloskey's classroom, is presented in the Literacy Portraits.

READING. Students usually read aloud slowly, word by word, stopping often to sound out unfamiliar words. They point at each word as they read but, by the end of this stage, their reading becomes smoother and more fluent, and they point at words only when the text is especially challenging.

Although the emphasis in this stage is on word identification, students also learn that reading involves comprehension. They make predictions to guide their thinking about events in stories they read, and they make connections between what they're reading and their own lives and the world around them as they personalize the reading experience. They monitor their reading to recognize when it doesn't make sense; cross-check using phonological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic information in the text to figure out the problem; and repair or self-correct it (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). They also learn about story structure—particularly that stories have a beginning, middle, and an end, and use this knowledge to guide their reading and retelling.

WRITING. Students move from writing one or two sentences to developing longer compositions, with five, eight, or more sentences organized into paragraphs. Their writing is better developed because they're acquiring a sense of audience, and they want their classmates to like what they've written. Students continue to write single-draft compositions but begin to make a few revisions and editing corrections as they learn about the writing process.

Students apply what they're learning about phonics in spelling, and they correctly spell many of the high-frequency words that they've learned to read. They know how to spell some high-frequency words and can locate others on word walls. They learn to use capital letters to mark the beginnings of sentences and punctuation to mark the ends. Students are more adept at rereading their writing, both immediately afterward and days later, because they're able to read many of the words they've written.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES. Teachers plan activities for students at the beginning stage that range from modeled to independent reading and writing activities, but the emphasis is on interactive and guided activities. Through interactive writing, choral reading, and guided reading, teachers scaffold students as they read and write, and they use minilessons to provide strategy and skill instruction. For example, Ms. McCloskey's students were divided into small, homogeneous groups for guided reading lessons; the students met to read books at their reading levels, and Ms. McCloskey introduced new vocabulary words, taught reading strategies and skills, and assessed their comprehension.

Teachers introduce the writing process to beginning-stage writers once they develop a sense of audience and want to make their writing better. Students don't immediately start writing rough drafts and final copies or doing both revising and editing: They often begin the writing process by rereading their compositions and adding a word or two, correcting a misspelled word, or capitalizing a lowercase letter. These changes are cosmetic, but the idea that the writing process doesn't end after the first draft is established. Next, students show interest in making a final copy that really looks

Teach Kids to Be Strategic!

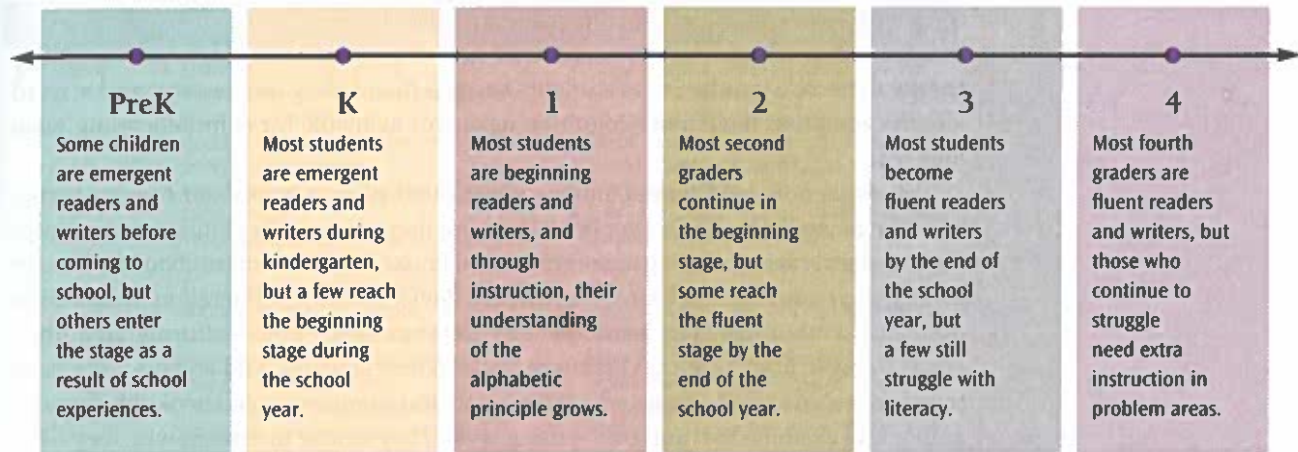
Beginning Reading Strategies

Introduce these first reading strategies in kindergarten and first grade:

- Cross-check
- Predict
- Connect
- Monitor
- Repair

Students practice them when they participate in shared and guided reading activities as well as interactive read-alouds. Look for students to use these strategies during guided practice and independent reading activities. If they struggle, reteach the strategies, making sure to name them, model their use, and think aloud and talk about their application.

Developmental Continuum LITERACY LEARNING



good. They either recopy the composition by hand or use word processing and print out the final copy. Once students understand that writing involves a rough draft and a final copy, they're ready to learn more about revising and editing, and they usually reach this point at about the same time they become fluent writers.

Stage 3: Fluent Reading and Writing

Fluent readers and writers reach the third stage when they accomplish the following:

- Read fluently and with expression
- Recognize most one-syllable words automatically and can decode other words efficiently
- Use decoding and comprehension strategies effectively
- Write well-developed, multiparagraph compositions
- Use the writing process to draft and refine their writing
- Write stories, reports, letters, and other genres
- Spell most high-frequency and other one-syllable words correctly
- Use capital letters and punctuation marks correctly most of the time

Some second graders reach this stage, and all students should be fluent readers and writers by the end of third grade. Reaching this stage is an important milestone because it indicates that students are ready for the increased literacy demands of fourth grade, when they're expected to read longer chapter-book stories, use writing to respond to literature, read content-area textbooks, and write essays and reports. Jazmen, an eight-year-old fluent reader and writer in Ms. McCloskey's classroom, is profiled in the Portrait of a Fluent Reader and Writer in this chapter.

READING. The distinguishing characteristic of fluent readers is that they read words accurately, rapidly, and expressively. Fluent readers automatically recognize many words and can decode unfamiliar words efficiently. Their reading rate has increased to 100 words or more per minute; in addition, they can vary their speed according to the demands of the text they're reading.

Most fluent readers prefer to read silently because they can read more quickly than when they read orally. No longer do they point at words as they read. Students can read many books independently, actively making predictions, visualizing, monitoring their understanding, and making repairs when necessary. They have a range of strategies available and use them to enhance their comprehension.

Fluent readers' comprehension is stronger, and they think more deeply about their reading than emergent and beginning readers do. It's likely that students' comprehension improves at this stage because they have more cognitive energy available for comprehension now; in contrast, beginning readers use much more cognitive energy to decode words. So, as students become fluent, they use less energy for word identification and have more cognitive resources available for comprehending what they read.

Students now read longer, more sophisticated picture books and chapter books, but they generally prefer chapter books because they enjoy really getting into a story or digging deeply when reading an informational book. They learn more about the literary genres, their structural patterns, and literary devices, such as alliteration, personification, and symbolism. They participate in literature focus units featuring an author, genre, or book, in small-group literature circles where students read and discuss a book together, and in author studies where they read and compare several books by the same author and examine that author's writing style. They're able to explain why they liked a particular book and make recommendations to classmates.

WRITING. Fluent writers understand that writing is a process, and they use the writing process stages—prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. They make plans for writing and write both rough drafts and final copies. They reread their rough drafts and make revisions and editing changes that reflect their understanding of writing forms and their purpose for writing. They increasingly share their rough drafts with classmates and turn to them for advice on how to make their writing better.

Students get ideas for writing from books they've read and from TV programs and movies they've viewed. They organize their writing into paragraphs, indent paragraphs, and focus on a single idea in each paragraph. They develop ideas more completely and use more sophisticated vocabulary to express their ideas.

Fluent writers are aware of writing genres and organize their writing into stories, reports, letters, and poems. Their stories have a beginning, middle, and an end, and the reports they write are structured using sequence, comparison, or cause-and-effect structures. Their letters reflect an understanding of the parts of a letter and how they're arranged on a page. Their poems incorporate alliteration, symbolism, rhyme, or other poetic devices to create vivid impressions.

Students' writing looks more conventional. They spell most of the 100 high-frequency words correctly and use phonics to spell other one-syllable words. They add inflectional endings (e.g., *-s*, *-ed*, *-ing*) and experiment with spelling two-syllable and longer words. They've learned to capitalize the first word in sentences and names and to use punctuation marks correctly at the ends of sentences, although they're still experimenting with punctuation marks within sentences.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES. At this stage, students can apply the reading and writing processes and are prepared to participate independently in reading and writing workshop. They're learning about genres, text structures, and literary devices and can apply this knowledge to reading and responding to literature in literature circles. Teachers have shifted their focus from teaching students to decode words to comprehending stories and informational books.

Instructional recommendations for each of the three stages of reading and writing development are presented in Figure 2-6.

Figure 2–6 Instructional Recommendations

STAGE	READING	WRITING
Emergent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use environmental print. • Include literacy materials in play centers. • Read aloud to students. • Read big books and poems on charts using shared reading. • Introduce the title and author of books before reading. • Teach directionality and letter and word concepts using big books. • Encourage students to make predictions and text-to-self connections. • Have students retell and dramatize stories. • Have students respond to literature through talk and drawing. • Have students manipulate sounds using phonemic awareness activities. • Use alphabet-learning routines. • Take students' dictation using the Language Experience Approach. • Teach 20–24 high-frequency words. • Post words on a word wall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students use crayons for drawing and pencils for writing. • Encourage students to use scribble writing or write random letters if they can't do more conventional writing. • Teach handwriting skills. • Use interactive writing for whole-class and small-group writing projects. • Have students write their names on sign-in sheets each day. • Have students write their own names and names of classmates. • Have students inventory or make lists of words they know how to write. • Have students "write the classroom" by making lists of familiar words they find in the classroom. • Have students use frames such as "I like ____" and "I see a ____" to write sentences. • Encourage students to remember what they write so they can read it.
Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read charts of poems and songs using choral reading. • Read leveled books during guided reading lessons. • Provide daily opportunities to read and reread books independently. • Teach phonics concepts and rules. • Teach students to cross-check using the cueing systems. • Teach the 100 high-frequency words. • Point out whether texts are stories, informational books, or poems. • Teach predicting, connecting, cross-checking, and other strategies. • Teach the elements of story structure, particularly beginning, middle, and end. • Have students write in reading logs and participate in grand conversations. • Have students take books home to read with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use interactive writing to teach concepts about written language. • Provide daily opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and using different genres. • Introduce the writing process. • Teach students to develop a single idea in their compositions. • Teach students to proofread their compositions. • Teach students to spell the 100 high-frequency words. • Teach contractions. • Teach capitalization and punctuation skills. • Have students use computers to publish their writing. • Have students share their writing from the author's chair.
Fluent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students participate in literature circles. • Have students participate in reading workshop. • Teach about genres and other text features. • Involve students in author and genre studies. • Teach students to make text-to-self, text-to-world, and text-to-text connections. • Expand students' ability to use comprehension strategies. • Have students respond to books through talk and writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students participate in writing workshop. • Teach students to use the writing process. • Teach students to revise and edit their writing. • Teach paragraphing skills. • Teach spelling rules. • Teach synonyms. • Teach homonyms. • Teach root words and affixes. • Teach students to use a dictionary and a thesaurus.

MyLab Education Self-Check 2.3

MyLab Education Application Exercise 2.1: Is Mrs. Koch's Word Wall Developmentally Appropriate?

Chapter Review

Examining Students' Literacy Development

- Teachers promote students' language development and build their vocabulary.
- Teachers build young students' interest in literacy and teach concepts about written language.
- Teachers understand that students' progress through the emergent, beginning, and fluent stages of literacy development as they become proficient readers and writers.

Accountability Check

Visit the following assessment links to access quiz questions and instructional applications.

MyLab Education Application Exercise 2.2 : Understanding Literacy Development
MyLab Education Application Exercise 2.3 : Understanding Literacy Development
MyLab Education Application Exercise 2.4 : Understanding Literacy Development
MyLab Education Application Exercise 2.5 : Monitoring Literacy Development
MyLab Education Application Exercise 2.6 : Measuring Literacy Development

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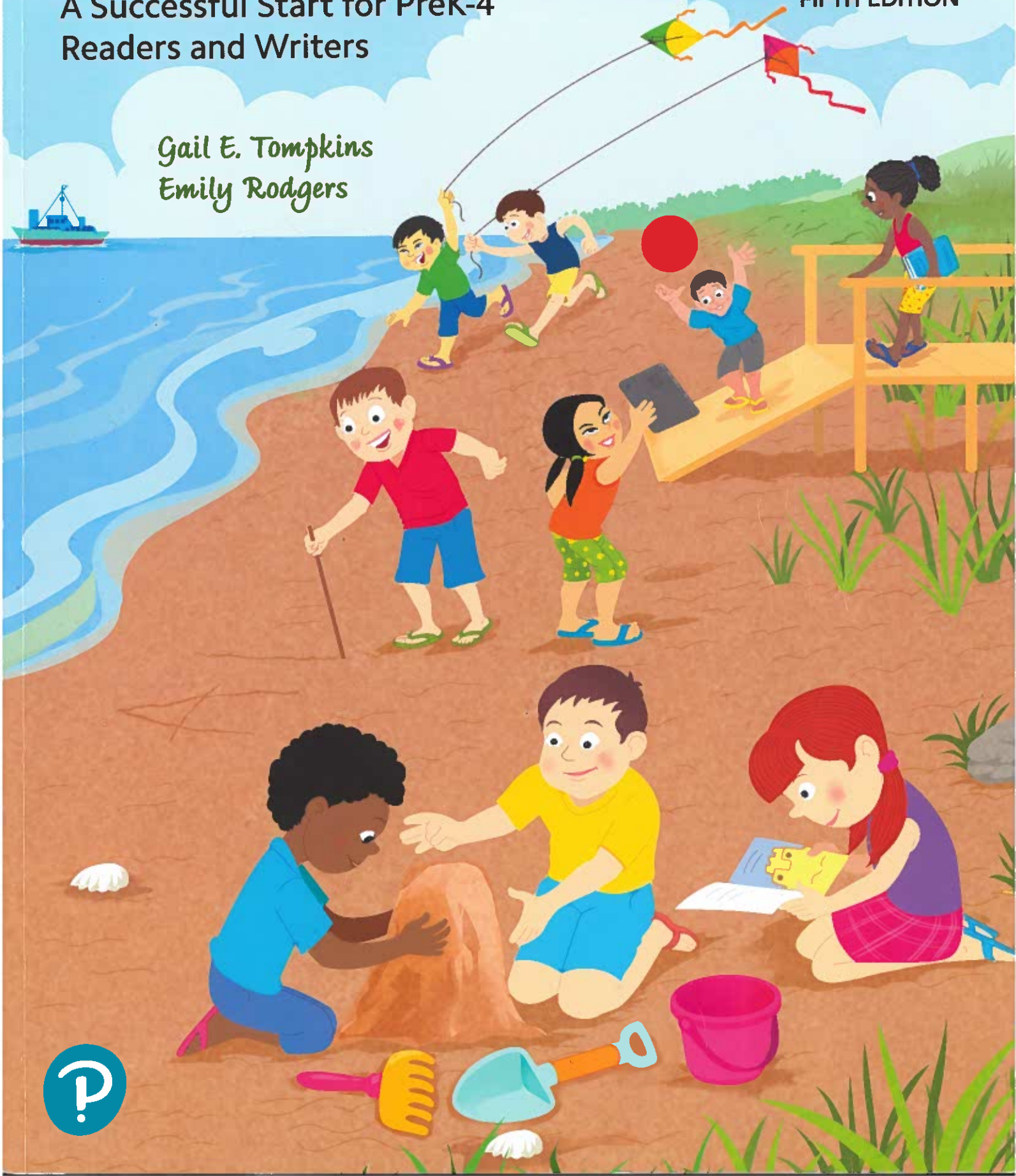
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Literacy in the Early Grades

A Successful Start for PreK-4
Readers and Writers

FIFTH EDITION

*Gail E. Tompkins
Emily Rodgers*



Chapter 3

Assessing Students' Literacy Development

Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you'll be prepared to:

- 3.1** Explain how teachers link instruction and assessment.
- 3.2** Discuss how teachers use diagnostic tests to determine students' reading levels and diagnose their strengths and weaknesses.
- 3.3** Define high-stakes testing and discuss its role in literacy instruction and assessment.
- 3.4** Describe how teachers use portfolios to assess students' learning and their progress toward meeting grade-level standards.

Mrs. McNeal's Second-Quarter Assessments



The end of the second quarter is approaching, and Mrs. McNeal is assessing her first graders. She collects assessment data about her students' reading, writing, and spelling development, which she uses to document students' achievement, verify that they're meeting state standards, determine report card grades, and make instructional plans for the third quarter.

Today, Mrs. McNeal assesses Ethan, who is six and a half years old. Mrs. McNeal has a collection of Ethan's writing, but she wants to assess his reading level. At the beginning of the school year, Mrs. McNeal considered him an average student, but in the past month, his reading has accelerated.

ASSESSING ETHAN'S INSTRUCTIONAL READING LEVEL. Mrs. McNeal regularly takes running records as she listens to students reread familiar books to monitor their ability to

recognize high-frequency words, decode unfamiliar words, and use reading strategies. In addition, she assesses each student's instructional reading level using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)—an assessment kit with 44 leveled books arranged from kindergarten to fifth grade reading levels.

At the beginning of the school year, most of Mrs. McNeal's first graders were reading at level 3; by midyear, they should be reading at level 12; and by the end of the school year, they're expected to reach level 20. Ethan was reading at level 3 in August, like many of his classmates, and at the end of the first quarter, he was reading at level 8. Now, nearing the end of the second quarter, Mrs. McNeal decides to test him at level 16 because he's reading a book at that level in his guided reading group.

Ethan reads *The Pot of Gold* (2001), a level 16 book in the *Developmental Reading Assessment* kit. The book recounts an Irish folktale about a man named Grumble who makes an elf show him where his pot of gold is hidden. Grumble marks the spot by tying a scarf around a nearby tree branch and goes to get a shovel with which to dig up the gold. Grumble admonishes the elf not to move the scarf, and he doesn't; instead, the elf ties scarves on nearby trees so that Grumble can't find the gold. Mrs. McNeal takes a running record while Ethan reads; a running record will give her an opportunity to assess what Ethan can do independently. Locate Ethan's running record in this chapter before reading on.

As indicated on the running record sheet, Ethan makes 14 errors and, of those, self-corrects just 2; his accuracy rate is high at 95%. Mrs. McNeal analyzes Ethan's running record by asking herself three questions:

1. Did Ethan have any difficulty with high-frequency words?
2. What sources of information does Ethan typically use and neglect?
3. What reading strategies does Ethan use or not use when he encounters difficulty?

Mrs. McNeal thought that Ethan knew *my* and *that* by sight so she was surprised that his self-corrections were on words that should have been ones that he could recognize automatically.

She is pleased to note that many of Ethan's errors fit all three sources of information—*Grumply* for *Grumble*, or *for of*, *make* for *mark*, *me* for *my*, *self* for *scarf*, *they* for *that*, *maybe* for *may*—all make sense, sound acceptable, and look like the actual word in the text. On three occasions however, Ethan used only visual information—*safr* and *scafer* for *scarf*, and *sit* for *still*—and neglected meaning and structure.

Mrs. McNeal examines the record for evidence of Ethan's strategy use. She notes with some concern that Ethan showed very few signs of monitoring his errors. In fact, he only seemed to notice on three occasions that he had encountered difficulty: once when he asked for help with the word *always* and twice more when he corrected his errors—*me* for *my*, and *they* for *that*. Mrs. McNeal knows that, unless Ethan notices when he has made an error, he won't have an opportunity to problem solve. Next, Mrs. McNeal thinks about Ethan's comprehension. When Ethan retells the story, he shows that he comprehends the big idea, but his retelling isn't especially strong: He retells the beginning and the end of the story but leaves out important details in the middle.

Mrs. McNeal pulls together all of the information she has collected and evaluates Ethan's progress. She decides that he is within grade level expectations for that time of the year and that he has made consistently good progress since the start of the school year.

The teacher makes notes about Ethan's instructional priorities for the third quarter of the school year so that he will continue to make progress. A priority will be that he notices when he makes an error and then makes an attempt to solve by cross-checking. In guided reading lessons, she'll focus on teaching Ethan to monitor (or notice). If he

In this chapter, you'll learn how to determine students' reading levels and assess their literacy learning. Teachers integrate assessment with instruction through a four-step cycle of classroom assessment—planning, monitoring, evaluating, and reflecting. As you read this vignette, notice how Mrs. McNeal evaluates her first graders' learning at the end of the second quarter. She uses multiple assessment tools to measure their achievement, determine grades, and set goals for the next quarter.

makes an error and doesn't notice, she will say, "Something you just read wasn't quite right. Go back to find and fix it."

Secondly, so that Ethan will have something to try once he notices he has made an error, she will teach him ways to problem-solve words while reading. To teach him to cross-check information, she will prompt him to use information that he is neglecting. For example, if he only uses visual information, she will say, "You are using the letters to try the word. That's good, but it doesn't make sense. Try something else that will make sense *and* look right." Mrs. McNeal knows that Ethan often uses all sources of information, which is great, but she needs to teach him to use additional visual information at those times. For errors such as *maybe* for *may*, or *self* for *scarf*, she will say, "Take a closer look at that word; it doesn't look quite right."

Finally, because Ethan had difficulty with some high-frequency words that he should know by sight, Mrs. McNeil will add some sight word activities. High-frequency words need to be read with automaticity.

ASSESSING ETHAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS. Mrs. McNeal's goal is for her first graders to recognize at least 75 of the 100 high-frequency words by the end of the school year. In August, most students could read at least 12 words; Ethan read 16 correctly. Today, Mrs. McNeal asks Ethan to read the list of 100 high-frequency words again. She expects that he'll be able to read 50 to 60 of the words, and when he misses 5 in a row, she'll stop; but Ethan surprises her and reads 65!

ASSESSING ETHAN'S ABILITY TO WRITE WORDS. Several days ago, Mrs. McNeal administered the "Words I Know" Test to the class: She asked the students to write as many words as they could in 10 minutes without copying from classroom charts. In August, most students could write and spell 15 to 20 words correctly; Mrs. McNeal's goal is for them to write and spell 50 words by the end of the school year. Ethan wrote 22 words in August, and on the recent test, he wrote 50 correctly spelled words, including *the, hat, bat, come, go, going, dog, dogs, God, cat, cowboys, from, fight, night, sun, run, fish, starfish, fin, trees, what, and you*. Mrs. McNeal reviews Ethan's list and notices that most are one-syllable words with short vowels, such as *cat* and *fin*, but he's beginning to write words with more complex spellings, such as *what, come, and night*; words with inflectional endings, such as *going*; and two-syllable words, such as *cowboys*. She concludes that Ethan is making very good progress, in both the number of words he can write and the complexity of the spelling patterns he's using.

ASSESSING ETHAN'S COMPOSITIONS. Mrs. McNeal looks through Ethan's journal and chooses several representative samples written in the past three weeks to score; one of the samples is shown in this chapter. Here's the text with conventional spelling and punctuation:

I ate pizza for dinner. My dad took me to Round Table. It was half Hawaiian and half pepperoni. We brought the leftovers home.

Using the school district's six-point rubric, Mrs. McNeal scores the composition as a four. A score of five is considered to be at grade level at the end of the school year, and Mrs. McNeal believes that Ethan will reach that level before then. She notices that he's writing several sentences, even though he sometimes omits a word or two, and often leaves out the punctuation at the ends of sentences. Mrs. McNeal plans to talk to him about rereading his writing to catch omissions, adding punctuation marks, and correcting misspelled words.

ASSESSING ETHAN'S WORD KNOWLEDGE. The first graders take a dictation test each week. On Monday, they compose two sentences and write them on a chart displayed in the classroom. They practice writing the sentences on small whiteboards each day,

A Running Record Scoring Sheet.

Name Ethan Date Jan. 14

Level 16 Title The Pot of Gold Easy Instructional Hard

Running Record	E	SC	E	SC
✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ grumpy ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ 2 Grumble T ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓✓✓✓ always T A ✓✓✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓	1		(m) (s) (v)	
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Scoring 12/266 95% accuracy	Picture Walk Gets gist of story			
Types of Errors: (M) (S) (V) Needs to monitor and notice errors Needs to use more visual cues.	Oral Reading Reads fluently			
Self-correction Rate 1:7	Retelling/Questions Tells BME but middle is brief			

and during minilessons, Mrs. McNeal draws their attention to high-frequency words, the phonetic features of words, and capitalization and punctuation rules applied in the sentences. Last week's sentences focused on *The Magic School Bus Lost in the Solar System* (Cole, 1993), a book Mrs. McNeal read aloud:

Their bus turned into a rocket ship. They wanted to visit all of the planets.

Ethan's journal



I ate piza for dinr My dad tok me to Ron Tab. It was haf huyan and haf peprone. We bot the bfors home.

After practicing the sentences all week, Mrs. McNeal dictates them for the students to write on Friday. She tells them to try to spell the words correctly and to write all of the sounds they hear in the words that they don't know how to spell. Ethan wrote:

The bus turd into a rocket ship they wande to vist all of the planis.

Ethan spelled 10 of the 15 words correctly and included 46 of 51 sounds in his writing. He omitted the period at the end of the first sentence, however, and didn't capitalize the first word in the second sentence.

Mrs. McNeal uses this test to check students' phonics knowledge and ability to spell high-frequency words. Ethan spelled most of the high-frequency words correctly, except that he wrote *the* for *their*. His other errors involved the second syllable of the word or an inflectional ending.

Mrs. McNeal concludes that Ethan is making good progress in learning to spell high-frequency words and that he's ready to learn more about two-syllable words and inflectional endings.

EVALUATING ETHAN'S LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT. Having collected and analyzed the assessment data, Mrs. McNeal evaluates Ethan's progress. He and his classmates receive separate number grades on their report cards in reading, writing, and spelling, ranging from one—not meeting grade-level standards—to four—exceeding standards. Ethan receives a three in reading, writing, and spelling; a score of three means that he's meeting grade-level standards. Even though his reading level is higher than average, his lack of noticing errors and problem-solving keep him at the third level in reading.

Assessment has become a priority in 21st-century schools. School district, state, and federal education agencies have increased their demands for accountability, and today, most students take annual high-stakes tests to measure their achievement. By linking assessment and instruction, teachers improve students' learning and their teaching. Near the end of this chapter, you will find "My Teaching To-Do Checklist" for the assessment topics you are about to read. You can print the checklist and keep in a place that you can easily access and refer back to, once you are a teacher.

The terms *assessment* and *evaluation* are often considered interchangeable, but they're not. **Assessment** refers to the collection and interpretation of data to inform decision-making. **Evaluation** refers to the decision-making itself about how well the student has progressed.

Assessments can be formative or summative; it all depends on the purpose behind collecting the information. According to the 2017 Position Statement of the International Literacy Association (ILA, 2017), summative assessments are designed to measure achievement at the end of an instructional sequence. Examples of summative assessments can range from the more formal state tests to the more informal teacher-designed quiz at the end of a unit of instruction. A **running record** can be a summative assessment if it is given at the end of an instructional period to determine the students' final instructional level.

The 2017 Position Statement of the International Literacy Association defines formative assessments as ongoing and taking place during instruction. **Formative assessments** are used for screening and monitoring student progress and to inform instruction. Again, a running record can be an example of a formative assessment if it is given to inform teaching and monitor student progress during the instructional period.

Because the purpose of Mrs. McNeil's assessments (the running record, spelling assessment, knowledge of high-frequency words, writing assessment) was to measure

student progress at the end of the second quarter, we can refer to them as **summative assessments**. The same assessments would be considered formative if they were given during the term to help make decisions about what to teach next.

A **high-stakes test** refers to any assessment that is used to make an important high-stakes decision, like retaining a student in a grade or raising state standards for achievement. By definition, any assessment can be a high stakes assessment if its results are used to make a high-stakes decision, but in reality, high-stakes assessments are typically formal, summative assessments like a state achievement test. More on high-stakes assessments appears later in this chapter.

It is important to note that we need a variety of assessments in schools because there are so many stakeholders with different concerns and interests in the progress of students, including parents, other educators, the community, the school district, policy makers, and of course, the students themselves. The goal of all assessments, though, ought to be to produce information that is useful in helping students become better readers (Afflerbach, 2016, p. 414).

In contrast, **evaluation** is the decision-making or judgment that is made after analyzing assessment data. In other words, assessments are given to facilitate evaluation.

Classroom Assessment

Classroom assessment drives instruction, ensures that students are making adequate progress, determines the effectiveness of instruction, and assesses students' achievement. Every day, teachers use a combination of assessment tools to collect meaningful information about what students know and do (Afflerbach, 2007a; Kuhs, Johnson, Agruso, & Monrad, 2001). Assessment involves four steps—planning, assessing, evaluating, and reflecting. Each step serves a different purpose, so teachers need to integrate all of the steps into their literacy programs.

Step 1: Planning for Assessment

Teachers plan for assessment at the same time they're designing instruction, but how do we know what it is that we must teach and assess? Afflerbach (2016) refers to this knowledge that teachers need as the "must haves" (p. 413); in other words, teachers must know what it is that students must have at each grade level in order to be considered proficient readers and writers. When we are certain about the "must haves," then we are better able to plan instruction and assessment accordingly. Throughout this volume, and especially in the chapters to come, you will be learning about the "must haves" of early literacy. In this chapter, we focus on ways to assess the "must haves."

Teachers think about these questions and choose the assessment tools they'll use to get answers:

- What is it that students must have learned in this unit of instruction?
- What kinds of formative assessment will I use while teaching that will tell me whether any students are struggling with the "must haves" and falling behind?
- How often will I conduct the formative assessments I choose?
- How will I collect, organize, and display the information that I collect from the formative assessments?
- If I see students are falling behind, how will I adjust my teaching to help them catch up?

By planning for assessment before they begin teaching, teachers are preparing to use assessment tools wisely; otherwise, classroom assessment turns out to be haphazard and impromptu. Tests are a traditional way to assess students' learning, but increasingly teachers prefer to use students' actual reading and writing activities to assess their achievement.

Step 2: Assessing Students' Progress Every Day

Every day, in every literacy lesson, teachers assess student learning. These classroom-based assessments may be less formal from what we traditionally think of as commercially designed “tests,” but they are just as important. Indeed, teachers who collect information about student learning on a regular basis in the classroom are able to adjust instruction from one day to the next. In other words, expert teachers not only teach, but they assess as they go along.

The key to assessing student progress every day is to be organized about how you do it. In this section, we describe seven broad categories for assessing student progress in the classroom and we give strategies to help organize the information you collect to best inform your teaching. The next time you are in a classroom, ask the teacher what kinds of ongoing classroom assessment are used; you will probably hear examples from each one of these six categories: observations, keeping anecdotal notes, conducting student conferences, creating and using checklists, examining student work samples, and applying rubrics.



MyLab Education Video Example 3.1

Monitoring students' learning and sharing that documentation with parents are important parts of the assessment process. What planning does a teacher need to do to prepare for documenting student learning?

OBSERVATIONS. Effective teachers are “kid watchers”—a term Professor Yetta Goodman coined to describe the informal observation of students as they participate in reading and writing activities (Owocki & Goodman, 2002). To be effective kid watchers, teachers must focus on what students do as they read and write, not on whether they're behaving properly or working quietly. Of course, little learning can occur in disruptive situations, but during these observations, the focus is on literacy, not behavior. Observations should be planned. Teachers usually observe a specific group each day so that, over the course of a week, they watch everyone in the class.

ANECDOTAL NOTES. Teachers write brief notes as they observe students. The most useful notes describe specific events, report rather than evaluate, and relate the events to other information about the student. For instance, teachers make notes about the questions students ask and the responses they offer, their interactions with classmates as they work on projects, and the strategies and skills they use fluently and those they don't understand. They often write their notes in notebooks they've divided into sections for each student, or on small self-stick notes that they post in students' folders. These records monitor and document students' growth and pinpoint problem areas to address in future minilessons.

CONFERENCES. Teachers talk with students in order to monitor their progress in reading and writing as well as to set goals and help them solve problems. They often conduct these types of conferences during the school day:

On-the-Spot Conferences. The teacher visits with students at their desks to monitor some aspect of their work or to check on progress. These conferences are brief, with the teacher often spending less than a minute with each student.

PreK Practices

How do teachers assess young students?

The two best ways to assess prekindergartners' literacy learning are by observing them and collecting samples of their reading and writing (Bennett-Armistead, Duke, & Moses, 2005; Vukelich & Christie, 2009). Teachers focus on one student at a time, carefully observing his or her language use and literacy behaviors, and document their observations by writing brief anecdotal notes. They also collect writing samples over time and compare them to determine growth. Assessment should be anchored in authentic reading and writing activities because young students' learning can't be measured on standardized tests in ways that are useful to inform day-to-day instruction. Paper-and-pencil tests aren't reliable or valid indicators of what young students can do.

Planning Conferences. The teacher and the student make plans for reading or writing: At a prereading conference, they talk about background knowledge or difficult vocabulary words related to the book, or set guidelines for reading log entries; and at a prewriting conference, they discuss possible writing topics or narrow a broad topic into a more manageable one.

Revising Conferences. A small group meets with the teacher to share their rough drafts and get specific suggestions about how to revise them.

Book-Discussion Conferences. Students meet with the teacher to discuss the book they've read. They may share reading log entries, discuss plot or characters, or compare the book to others they've read.

Editing Conferences. The teacher reviews students' proofread compositions and helps them correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and other mechanical errors.

Evaluation Conferences. The teacher meets with students after they've completed a project to talk about their growth as readers and writers. They also reflect on their accomplishments and set goals.

Often these conferences are brief and impromptu, held at students' desks as the teacher moves around the classroom; at other times, however, the conferences are planned, and students meet with the teacher at a designated conference table.

CHECKLISTS. Checklists simplify assessment and enhance students' learning (Kuhs, Johnson, Agruso, & Monrad, 2001). Teachers identify the evaluation criteria in advance so students understand what's expected of them before they begin working. Grading is easier because teachers have already set the evaluation criteria, and it's fairer, too, because teachers use the same criteria to grade everyone's work. The Assessment Snapshot coming up in this chapter shows a fourth grade checklist for giving book talks; the student's grade was B. At the beginning of the school year, the teacher introduced book talks, modeled how to do one, and developed the checklist. The students use the checklist whenever they're preparing to give a book talk, and the teacher uses it as a rating scale to evaluate the effectiveness of their presentations.

Check the Compendium of Instructional Procedures, which follows Chapter 12. These green terms also show a brief description of each procedure.



MyLab Education
Video Example 3.2

In this video, Ms. Janusz conferences with Caden about his writing. What goals does Ms. Janusz suggest to Caden to help improve his writing?

Assessment Snapshot

Book Talk Checklist

Name Jaime Date: November 12

Title Cockroach Cooties

Author Laurence Yep

- ✓ Hold up the book to show to classmates.
- ✓ State the title and author's name.
- ✓ Interest classmates in the book by asking a question, reading an excerpt, or sharing some information.
- Summarize the book, without giving away the ending.
- ✓ Talk loud enough for everyone to hear you.
- ✓ Look at the audience.
- Limit the book talk to 3 minutes.

TEACHER'S NOTE
Jaime's book talk was effective. She showed the book and generated lots of excitement about it, even though she talked for more than five minutes and didn't summarize the story. She was very poised. She engaged the audience, and her classmates really responded!
Grade B

STUDENTS' WORK SAMPLES. Teachers collect students' work samples, including reading logs, audio files of students reading aloud, photos of projects, videos of puppet shows and oral presentations, flash drives with digital projects, and copies of books they've written in folders. They use this data to celebrate students' learning as well as to document their progress toward meeting grade-level standards and to assign grades. Students also choose some of their best work to document their own learning and accomplishments.

RUBRICS. Teachers use rubrics, or scoring guides, to assess students' performance according to specific criteria and levels of achievement (Afflerbach, 2007b; Stevens, Levi, & Walvoord, 2012). They're similar to checklists because they specify what students are expected to be able to do, but they go beyond because they also describe levels of achievement. Writing rubrics are the most common type, but teachers also use rubrics to assess students' reading, the projects they develop, and their achievement in other curricular areas.

The Assessment Snapshot Book Talk Checklist, shows a narrative writing rubric with five levels. The achievement levels, ranging from one (lowest) to five (highest) are shown

Assessment Snapshot

A Second Grade Writing Rubric

5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Writing has an original title. Plot, setting, and other story elements are used effectively. Writing shows originality, sense of humor, or cleverness. Writing is organized effectively into paragraphs. Writing contains very few spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Writing has an appropriate title. ✓ Beginning, middle, and end are well developed. ✓ A problem or goal is identified in the story. ✓ Writing is organized into paragraphs. ✓ Writing contains a few spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing has a title. Writing has a beginning, middle, and an end. Events are presented sequentially. Writing is not organized into paragraphs. Spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors are present but they don't interfere with meaning.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The title is confusing or incomplete. Writing includes two of the three parts of a story. Writing may show a partial sequence of events. Writing is brief and underdeveloped. Writing has spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors that interfere with meaning.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing doesn't have a title. Writing lacks a sense of story. An illustration may suggest a story. Writing is brief and may support the illustration. Some words may be recognizable, but the writing is difficult to read.

TEACHER'S NOTE
 Jeremy's story, "The Biggest, Baddest Dog Ever," is a clever story about Jeremy's pet Boxer named Randy. In the personal narrative, Jeremy recounts an adventure during a camping trip. His narrative is well organized. He breaks his writing into paragraphs and makes only a few mechanical errors. Jeremy's writing rates a four, indicating that he's a grade-level writer.

on the left, and the descriptors for each level are listed on the right. The Snapshot shows Ms. Kweon's scoring of second grade Jeremy's personal narrative, "The Biggest, Baddest Dog," and the teacher reflects on her scoring in the accompanying Teacher's Note.

Students also use rubrics to self-assess their work, and sometimes classmates use rubrics to assess a student's performance. To be successful, students need to analyze anonymous work samples and identify the qualities that demonstrate strong, average, and weak achievement; it's also helpful for teachers to model how to address the qualities at each level in the rubric. Skillings and Ferrell (2000) taught second and third graders to develop the criteria for evaluating their writing, and the students moved from using the rubrics their teachers prepared to creating their own three-point rubrics, which they labeled as the "very best" level, the "okay" level, and the "not so good" level. Perhaps the most important outcome of teaching students to create rubrics, according to Skillings and Ferrell, is that they develop metacognitive strategies and the ability to think about themselves as writers.

Step 3: Evaluating Students' Learning

Evaluating progress means making sense of the information collected from the various assessments. Equipped with a plan for assessment from the outset, and having collected information in various ways to assess student progress, teachers are now ready to evaluate, or make judgements, about how well students are achieving. In our vignette in this chapter for example, we describe how Mrs. McNeal used the assessment data she collected to evaluate Ethan's progress, as well as the other students in her class. Her evaluation of their progress was expressed as separate number grades on their report cards for reading, writing, and spelling, and ranged from one to four in terms of meeting grade level expectations. Mrs. McNeal can feel confident that her evaluation of her students' progress is sound because it is based on a range of assessments that she used each day in her classroom.

How often teachers evaluate achievement will vary. Teachers evaluate at the end of an instructional period; that could be at the end of a unit, or at the end of the term when report cards are due. The important thing to keep in mind is the need to plan ahead of time, before the school year begins, what assessments you will use and to know how you will use that information to make evaluations about student progress.

GO DIGITAL! Creating Rubrics

Teachers can find tools for generating rubrics and blank rubric templates online as well as a collection of rubrics that other teachers have developed at these websites:

RubiStar. RubiStar (<http://rubistar.4teachers.org>) is a free tool teachers can use to create effective rubrics. Teachers make their own rubrics for oral language, multimedia, reading, and writing projects using the template at the site.

6 +1 Traits. This website (<http://educationnorthwest.org>) is designed for teachers who are implementing the writing process and teaching the six traits. The five- and six-point rubrics are for beginning writers (K-2) and for more experienced writers. Take a look at the students' writing samples that have been scored using "illustrated rubrics."

TeAch-nology. TeAch-nology (<http://www.teach-nology.com>) offers a huge collection of premade grade-level rubrics, beginning at the first grade level, plus a rubric maker that teachers can use to create customized rubrics.

These websites offer a wealth of rubrics that teachers can use or adapt to meet the needs of their students.

Figure 3–1 Ways to Assess Students' Learning

Step 1: Planning	Step 2: Monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine children's reading levels using running records and informal reading inventories. • Choose appropriate books for children. • Match children's reading levels to instructional procedures and approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe children as they read and write. • Conference with students. • Make anecdotal notes. • Have children mark checklists and rubrics to track their progress.
Step 3: Evaluating	Step 4: Reflecting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use checklists and rubrics to evaluate and grade children's work. • Examine collections of student work to determine grades. • Create tests, when necessary, to evaluate children's achievement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have children respond orally and in writing to questions about their work habits and achievement. • Have children place work that highlights their accomplishments in portfolios. • Reflect on your teaching effectiveness by examining the results of children's assessments.

Step 4: Reflecting on Instruction

Teachers reflect on the instruction they've presented to improve their teaching effectiveness. They ask themselves questions about lessons that were successful and those that weren't and how they might adapt instruction to better meet their students' needs. They also analyze students' achievement, because teachers aren't effective if students aren't learning. Danielson (2009) recommends that teachers work with colleagues who can help to solve problems and improve instruction.

Students also reflect on their achievement to develop self-awareness and to learn to take more responsibility for their learning. Self-assessment is metacognitive: Students evaluate their achievement, ways of learning, and work habits. Teachers often provide questions such as these to prompt students' reflections:

- What did you learn during this unit?
- How can your teacher help you be a better reader? A better writer?
- How did you feel at the beginning, middle, and end of the unit?
- How did you contribute to our classroom community of learners?
- What are your three strengths as a reader? As a writer?
- What would you like to get better at?

Teachers ask these questions during conferences, or students write journal entries or letters to their teacher to respond to them.

Each step serves a different purpose, so it's important that teachers choose assessment tools carefully. Researchers recommend that teachers use a combination of assessment tools to improve the fairness and effectiveness of classroom literacy assessment (Kuks, Johnson, Agruso, & Monrad, 2001). Figure 3–1 highlights the assessments teachers use during each step of assessment.

MyLab Education Self-Check 3.1

MyLab Education Application Exercise 3.1: Analyzing Alejandro's Running Record



Diagnostic Tests

Teachers administer commercial diagnostic tests to inform their instruction. In particular, these tests determine students' reading levels and identify students who are struggling. Then teachers use the results to differentiate instruction, make accurate placement decisions, and create meaningful classroom interventions.

Determining Students' Reading Levels

Teachers match students with books at appropriate levels of difficulty because students are more likely to be successful when they're reading books that aren't too easy or too difficult: Books that are too easy don't provide enough challenge, and those that are too difficult frustrate them. Researchers have identified three reading levels that take into account students' ability to recognize words automatically, read fluently, and comprehend what they're reading:

Independent Reading Level. Students can read books at the **independent reading level** comfortably, on their own. They recognize almost all words; their accuracy rate is 95%–100%. Their reading is fluent, and they comprehend what they're reading. Books at this level are only slightly easier than those at their instructional level, and they still engage students' interest.

Instructional Reading Level. Students read and understand books at the **instructional reading level** with instruction, but not on their own. They recognize most words; their accuracy rate is 90%–94%. Their reading may be mostly fluent, but sometimes it isn't. With support from the teacher or classmates, students comprehend what they're reading, but if they're reading by themselves, their understanding is limited.

Frustration Reading Level. Books at the **frustration reading level** are too difficult for students to read successfully, even with assistance. Students don't recognize enough words automatically, and their accuracy is less than 90%. Students' reading is choppy and word-by-word, and it often doesn't make sense. They show little understanding of what they've read.

These reading levels have important implications for instruction. Students read independent-level books for pleasure and instructional-level books when they're participating in **guided reading** or other reading lessons. They shouldn't be expected to read books at their frustration level; when it's essential that they experience grade-appropriate literature or learn content-area information, teachers should read the text aloud.

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (2010) require teachers to plan instruction using grade-level requirements, not students' developmental reading levels. The 10th Standard at grades 2–4 clearly states that students should read and comprehend grade-level narratives and nonfiction books independently and proficiently by the end of the school year, needing support only to succeed with the most challenging texts. Students who read at or above grade level typically meet this Standard, but struggling students who read two or more grades below their grade placement can't. This Standard emphasizes the importance of using grade-level texts with all students, but teachers must consider students' current levels and provide developmentally appropriate instruction, too, to scaffold struggling readers as they become more proficient. For more information, check this Common Core State Standards box.

READABILITY FORMULAS. For nearly a century, readability formulas have been used to estimate the ease with which reading materials, both trade books and textbooks, can be read. Readability scores serve as rough gauges of text difficulty and are traditionally reported as grade-level scores. If a book has a readability score of third grade, for example, teachers assume that average third graders will be able to read it. Sometimes readability scores are marked on books with *RL* and a grade level, such as *RL 3*.

Readability scores are determined by correlating semantic and syntactic features in a text. Several passages from a text are identified for analysis, and then vocabulary sophistication is measured by counting the syllables in each word, and sentence complexity by counting the words in each sentence. The syllable and word counts from each passage are averaged, and the readability score is calculated by plotting the averages

Common Core State Standards

Assessment

Common Core State Standards don't identify how to assess learning or which evaluation instruments to use; instead, they specify what students should be able to demonstrate at each grade level, and Standard 10 emphasizes that students in grades two and up should be able to read and comprehend challenging grade-appropriate texts. Sample fiction and nonfiction texts are listed for each grade level in the Standards document. To learn more about the literacy Standards, go to <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>, or check your state's educational standards website.

on a graph. It seems reasonable that texts with shorter words and sentences would be easier to read than those with longer words and sentences; however, readability formulas take into account only two text factors; they can't consider reader factors, including the experience and knowledge that readers bring to reading, their cognitive and linguistic backgrounds, or their motivation for reading.

One quick and simple readability formula is the Fry Readability Graph, developed by Edward Fry (1968); it's available in *The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists* (Fry & Kress, 2006), and online at numerous websites. This graph predicts the grade-level score for texts. Teachers use a readability formula as an aid in evaluating textbook and trade-book selections for classroom use; however, they can't assume that materials rated as appropriate for a particular level will be appropriate for everyone because students within a class typically vary three grade levels or more in their reading levels.

LEVELED BOOKS. Basal readers have traditionally been leveled according to grade levels, but grade-level designations, especially in kindergarten and first grade, are too broad. Fountas and Pinnell (2006) developed a text gradient, or classification system that arranges books along a continuum from easiest to hardest, to match students to books in grades K–4. Their system is based on these 10 variables that influence reading difficulty:

- Genre and format of the book
- Organization and use of text structures
- Familiarity with and interest level of the content
- Complexity of ideas and themes
- Language and literary features
- Sentence length and complexity
- Sophistication of the vocabulary
- Word length and ease of decoding
- Relationship of illustrations to the text
- Length of the book, its layout, and other text features

Fountas and Pinnell used these criteria to identify 26 levels, labeled A through Z, for their text gradient, which teachers can also use to level books in their classrooms. More than 59,000 books have been leveled according to this text gradient. A sample trade book for each level is shown in the Booklist coming up; other leveled books are listed in *The Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Book List 2013-2015*—available online at <https://www.fandpleveledbooks.com/>

THE LEXILE FRAMEWORK. Another approach to matching books to readers is the Lexile Framework. This approach is different because it's used to measure both students' reading levels and the difficulty level of books. Word familiarity and sentence complexity are the two factors used to determine the difficulty level. **Lexile scores**

range from 100 to 1300, representing kindergarten through 12th grade reading levels. The numerical scores have been organized into grade-level bands to coordinate with the Common Core State Standard 10 expectation and recently recalibrated to increase the challenge presented to students so that they'll be better prepared for college and careers after graduating from high school. For example, the difficulty level of the grades 2–3 band increased by more than 100 points! The Booklist: Fountas and Pinnell's Levels presents the updated Lexile grade bands through fifth grade with sample books.

Students' results on high-stakes tests are often linked to the Lexile Framework. Standardized achievement tests, such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Stanford Achievement Test, report test results as Lexile scores, and a number of standards-based state reading tests, including the California English-Language Arts Standards Test, the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests, and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, do the same. With this information, students, parents, and teachers can match students to books by searching the online Lexile database to locate books at each student's reading level.

The wide range of scores in the Lexile Framework allows teachers to more closely match students with books. Plus, the availability of the online database with more than 100,000 leveled books, 80 million articles, and 60,000 websites that

Booklist Fountas and Pinnell's Levels

Level	Grade	Books
A	K	Burningham, J. (1985). <i>Colors</i> .
B	K–1	Carle, E. (1997). <i>Have you seen my cat?</i>
C	K–1	Martin, B., Jr. (2010). <i>Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?</i>
D	1	Peek, M. (2006). <i>Mary wore her red dress</i> .
E	1	Hill, E. (2005). <i>Where's Spot?</i>
F	1	Hutchins, P. (2005). <i>Rosie's walk</i> .
G	1	Shaw, N. (2006). <i>Sheep in a jeep</i> .
H	1–2	Kraus, R. (2005). <i>Whose mouse are you?</i>
I	1–2	Wood, A., & Wood, D. (2010). <i>The napping house</i> .
J	2	Rylant, C. (1996). <i>Henry and Mudge and the bedtime thumps</i> .
K	2	Heller, R. (1999). <i>Chickens aren't the only ones</i> .
L	2–3	Marshall, J. (2000). <i>The three little pigs</i> .
M	2–3	Park, B. (2007). <i>Junie B. Jones and the stupid smelly bus</i> .
N	3	Danziger, P. (2006). <i>Amber Brown is not a crayon</i> .
O	3–4	Cleary, B. (1992). <i>Ramona Quimby, age 8</i> .
P	3–4	Mathis, S. B. (2006). <i>The hundred penny box</i> .
Q	4	Howe, D., & Howe, J. (2006). <i>Bunnlicula: A rabbit-tale of mystery</i> .
R	4	Paulsen, G. (2007). <i>Hatchet</i> .
S	4–5	Norton, M. (2003). <i>The borrowers</i> .
T	4–5	Curtis, C. P. (2004). <i>Bud, not Buddy</i> .
U	5	Lowry, L. (2011). <i>Number the stars</i> .
V	5–6	Sachar, L. (2008). <i>Holes</i> .
W	5–6	Choi, S. N. (1993). <i>Year of impossible goodbyes</i> .
X	6–8	Hesse, K. (1999). <i>Out of the dust</i> .
Y	6–8	Lowry, L. (2006). <i>The giver</i> .
Z	7–8	Hinton, S. E. (2006). <i>The outsiders</i> .

Based on Fountas & Pinnell, 2009.

Booklist The Recalibrated Lexile Grade Bands

Grade Band	Level	Books
K-1*	100-449	Allard, H. (1985). <i>Miss Nelson is missing!</i> (340)** Bridwell, N. (2002). <i>Clifford the big red dog</i> (220) Henkes, K. (2007). <i>Chrysanthemum</i> (410) Lobel, A. (1979). <i>Frog and toad are friends</i> (400) Willems, M. (2003). <i>Don't let the pigeon drive the bus!</i> (120)
2-3	450-790	Blume, J. (2007). <i>Tales of a fourth grade nothing</i> (470) Brown, J. M. (2009). <i>Flat Stanley</i> (640) Howe, D., & Howe, J. (2006). <i>Bunnica: A rabbit-tale of mystery</i> (710) Rathmann, P. (1995). <i>Officer Buckle and Gloria</i> (510) Steig, W. (2009). <i>Amos & Boris</i> (690)
4-5	770-980	Dahl, R. (2007). <i>Charlie and the chocolate factory</i> (810) Gantos, J. (2011). <i>Joey Pigza swallowed the key</i> (970) Lewis, C. S. (2005). <i>The lion, the witch and the wardrobe</i> (940) Naylor, P. (2000). <i>Shiloh</i> (890) Rowling, J. K. (1999). <i>Harry Potter and the sorcerer's stone</i> (880)

* This band isn't included on most Lexile documents because Common Core State Standard 10 for first grade specifies that students work toward reading grade-level books with prompting and support; mastery isn't required. The band is included here to suggest books at the K-1 level.
** Lexile Score

students, parents, and teachers can access makes it a very useful assessment tool; however, matching readers to books is more complicated than determining a numerical score!

The Assessment Tools included in this chapter describes three screening tools to identify students' reading levels.

The search results present useful information about each book, including the title and author, a photo of the book cover, the book's interest and reading levels, the genre, a summary, and a list of topics related to the book. The reading level is expressed as a grade-level equivalent (e.g., *RL 2.3*; or second grade, third month) and according to both Fountas and Pinnell's levels and Lexile scores. Links are also provided to author information and teaching resources.

Diagnosing Students' Strengths and Needs

Teachers use diagnostic assessments to identify students' strengths and needs, examine areas of difficulty in detail, and decide how to adjust instruction to improve students' reading. They use a variety of diagnostic tests to examine students' achievement in

GO DIGITAL! Online Book-Search Systems.

Teachers can consult online databases to locate books at students' reading levels so that they can match readers with appropriate books. One of the most popular resources for teachers is the Teacher Book Wizard <http://www.scholastic.com/tbwpromo/tbwhome.htm>—a free book-search system at Scholastic's website. Teachers can search the more than 50,000 books in its database to locate books at a student's reading level or check the reading level of a particular book they'd like to use for a literature focus unit or a literature circle using these search tools:

Quick Search. Teachers search for particular books, themed book lists, or books by an author.

Leveled Search. Teachers customize the search by students' interests, reading levels, language (English or Spanish), topic, and genre.

Assessment Tools

Determining Reading Levels

Teachers use screening assessments to determine students' reading levels, monitor their progress, and document achievement through a school year and across grade levels. Here are three screening assessments:

- **Developmental Reading Assessment, 2nd Edition (DRA2)**

DRA2 is available as two kits—one for grades K–3 and the other for grades 4–8—to assess reading performance using leveled fiction and nonfiction books. The K–3 kit also includes an individualized diagnostic instrument to assess phonemic awareness and phonics knowledge. Teachers use an online system to manage students' scores and group them for instruction.

- **Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System**

The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System is sold as two kits—one for grades K–2 and the other for grades 3–8. Each kit contains 30 leveled fiction and nonfiction books written specifically for the kit and CDs with assessment forms to manage students' scores. Teachers use the books in the kit to match students' reading levels to the Fountas and Pinnell 26-level text gradient.

For both assessments, teachers test students individually. The teacher selects an appropriate book for the student to read and then introduces it; the student reads the book, and the teacher takes a running record of the student's reading. Then the student retells the text and answers comprehension questions. The teacher scores and analyzes the results, and testing continues until the teacher determines the student's instructional level.

- **Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI)**

SRI is a unique computer-adaptive assessment program that reports students' reading levels using Lexile scores. Students take this 20-minute computerized test individually. The student reads a narrative or informational passage on the computer screen and answers multiple-choice comprehension questions. This test is computer adaptive because if the student answers a question correctly, the next one will be more difficult, but if the answer is wrong, the next question will be easier. Students read passages and answer questions until their reading level is determined. They receive a customized take-home letter with their Lexile score and a personalized list of recommended books.

These assessments are usually administered at the beginning of the school year and periodically during the year to monitor students' progress. The results are also used to group students for guided reading and to identify those who need diagnostic testing.

phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and other components of reading and writing. The Assessment Tools feature lists diagnostic tests recommended in this text and directs you to the chapter where you can learn more about them.

RUNNING RECORDS. Running records were developed by Marie Clay (1972), and have since been adapted by many people, although the essential format remains the same. Running records are authentic assessment tools because students demonstrate how they read aloud using their regular reading materials as teachers make a systematic account of all of their reading behaviors (Clay, 1972; 2007). Teachers take running records of students' oral reading to assess their word solving and reading fluency. Teachers can use any blank sheet of paper to record the student's reading. Standard coding is used so that teachers can read and interpret each other's records from year to year. Check marks are used for words read accurately; other marks are used to indicate words that the student substitutes, repeats, omits, inserts, mispronounces, or doesn't know, as Mrs. McNeal did in the vignette. The Assessment Snapshot shows the analysis of Ethan's errors from the running record in the vignette. Only words that students mispronounce or substitute can be analyzed; insertions and omissions aren't analyzed.

Assessment Tools

Diagnostic Assessments

Component	Tests	Where to Learn More
Comprehension	Comprehension Thinking Strategies Assessment Developmental Reading Assessment Informal reading inventories	Chapter 8, Facilitating Students' Comprehension: Reader Factors
Concepts About Print	Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement	Chapter 2, Examining Students' Literacy Development
Fluency	Fluency rubrics Informal reading inventories Running records	Chapter 6, Developing Fluent Readers and Writers
Oral Language	Assessment of Literacy and Language Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy	Chapter 2, Examining Students' Literacy Development
Phonemic Awareness	Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening Yopp-Singer Test of Phonemic Segmentation	Chapter 4, Cracking the Alphabetic Code
Phonics	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Observation Survey The Tile Test	Chapter 4, Cracking the Alphabetic Code
Spelling	Developmental Spelling Analysis Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening Qualitative Spelling Inventory	Chapter 5, Learning to Spell
Vocabulary	Expressive Vocabulary Test-2 Informal reading inventories Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-4	Chapter 7, Building Students' Word Knowledge
Word Recognition	Developmental Reading Assessment Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening Running records	Chapter 6, Developing Fluent Readers and Writers
Word Identification	High-frequency word lists Observation Survey	Chapter 6, Developing Fluent Readers and Writers
Writing	Rubrics	Chapter 11, Scaffolding Students' Writing Development

INFORMAL READING INVENTORIES. Teachers use commercial tests called **informal reading inventories (IRIs)** to evaluate students' reading performance. They can be used beginning in first grade, but first grade teachers often find that IRIs don't provide as much useful information about beginning readers as running records do. These popular reading tests are often used as a screening instrument to determine whether students are reading at grade level, but they're also a valuable diagnostic tool (Nilsson, 2008). Teachers can use IRIs to identify struggling students' instructional needs, particularly in word identification, oral reading fluency, and comprehension.

These individualized tests consist of two parts: graded word lists and passages ranging from first to eighth grade level. The word lists contain 10 to 20 words at each level, and students read the words until they become too difficult; this indicates an approximate level for students to begin reading the passages. Because students who can't read the words on their grade-level list may have a word identification problem,

Assessment Snapshot

Error Analysis

Student Ethan Date Jan. 14

Text The Pot of Gold (Level 16)

Words	Meaning	Syntax	Visual		
Text	Student	The error was self-corrected	The substitution made sense up to the error.	The substitution sounded grammatically acceptable up to the error.	The substitution has some visual similarity to the word in the text
Grumble	Grumply	✓	✓	✓	
always	omitted				
didn't	did not	✓	✓	✓	
I'll	I	✓	✓	✓	
mark	make	✓	✓	✓	
scarf	safr			✓	
of	or	✓	✓	✓	
my	me	✓	✓	✓	
scarf	self		✓	✓	
taken	take	✓		✓	
scarf	scafer			✓	
that	they	✓	✓	✓	
may	maybe	✓	✓	✓	
still	sit			✓	

TEACHER'S NOTE
 Ethan fluently read "The Pot of Gold" with 95% accuracy. Level 16 is his current instructional level. The error analysis indicates that Ethan now often uses all three cues when he makes an error (hooray!) but he usually only uses the initial letter or letters. However, he rarely notices his mistakes and, as a result, rarely problem-solves and rarely self-corrects. I need to now teach Ethan to notice visual mismatches beyond the first letters while still using meaning and syntax.

teachers analyze the words students read incorrectly, looking for error patterns and deciding what kind of visual information the student notices and uses (for example, the initial part of the word only, like milk for made; the initial and ending parts, like dad for did; or the initial, middle, and ending parts, like went for want).

The graded reading passages include both narrative and expository texts, presented in order of difficulty. Unlike running records, students have not received prior instruction on these stories; they are read sight unseen. Students read these passages orally or silently and then answer several comprehension questions that are included for that passage. The teacher asks the questions. Students are asked to recall specific information, draw inferences, or explain the meaning of vocabulary words.

When students read the passage orally, teachers assess their fluency. All students should be able to read the independent level passages fluently (the ones that they score at least 95% accuracy); if they can't, they may have a fluency problem. Teachers also examine students' comprehension. If students can't answer the questions after reading the passage at their grade level, they may have a comprehension problem, and teachers check to see if there's a pattern to the types of questions that they miss.

Teachers use scoring sheets to record students' performance data, and they calculate students' independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels. When a student's reading level is below his or her grade-level placement, teachers also check the student's listening capacity—that is, the ability to understand passages that are read

aloud to the student. Knowing whether students can understand and learn from grade-level texts that are read aloud is crucial because that's a common way that teachers support struggling readers.

ORAL LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT. Teachers assess students who speak a language other than English at home to determine their English language proficiency. They typically use commercial oral language tests to determine if students are proficient in English. If they're not, classroom teachers provide the appropriate supports so that all students can participate meaningfully and equally in classroom instruction. Two widely used tests are the Language Assessment Scales, published by CTB/McGraw-Hill, and the IDEA Language Proficiency Test, published by Ballard and Tighe; both tests assess students' oral and written language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) proficiency in English. Individual states have developed language assessments that are aligned with their English language proficiency standards; for example, the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test and the California English Language Development Test.

An authentic assessment tool that many teachers use is the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM), developed by the San Jose (CA) Area Bilingual Consortium. It's not a test per se; rather, the SOLOM is a rating scale to assess students' command of English as teachers observe them talking and listening in real, day-to-day classroom activities. The SOLOM addresses five oral language components:

Listening. Teachers score students along a continuum from unable to comprehend simple statements to understanding everyday conversations.

Teaching English Learners

English Proficiency Screening

Civil rights law requires school districts to ensure that English learners (ELs) can participate meaningfully and equally in school instruction. In fact, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act, passed in 1974, states that schools and school districts must act to overcome the language barriers that many ELs face in school.

Most school districts use a home language survey when students first enroll to learn what language (or languages) are spoken at home. Students who are identified by these surveys as being potential ELs must then be assessed with screener tests to determine their level of English proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and listening. The results of the screener test are used to provide ELs with the appropriate language assistance. By law, these services must be provided to ELs until they have reached English language proficiency.

While EL programs are provided by teachers who have specialized training, all teachers are responsible for the teaching and learning of ELs in their classrooms. And, because the population of ELs in the U.S. is steadily increasing, chances are very good that you will have at least one EL, if not more, in your classroom (Rowe, In Press).

The first assessment step for ELs is to learn about the students' language background. Find out from the home language survey what language or languages are spoken at home and learn whether your student is literate in any of them. A student who has already learned to read in Arabic or Chinese, for example, will have different challenges learning to read in English than a student who is literate in Spanish.

Classroom teachers assess ELs' developing language proficiency as well as their progress in learning to read and write. It's more challenging to assess ELs than native English speakers, because when students aren't proficient in English, their scores don't accurately reflect what they know (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013). Their cultural and experiential backgrounds also contribute to making it more difficult to assure that assessment tools being used aren't biased.

Literacy Portraits

Ms. Janusz regularly monitors the second graders' reading achievement. Working one-on-one, she introduces a leveled book and asks the student to read the first part aloud while she takes a running record on a separate sheet of paper. Then the student reads the rest of the book silently. She also asks questions after the student finishes reading orally and again after the student reaches the end of the book. In these videos, Ms. Janusz assesses Jimmy's reading in October and again in March. As these video clips play, think about how Jimmy grew as a reader during the school year. Does he decode unfamiliar words, read fluently, and comprehend what he's read orally and silently? Next, reflect on how Ms. Janusz linked instruction and assessment when she took advantage of teachable moments while she assessed his reading.



Jimmy in
October



Jimmy in
March

Fluency. Teachers score students along a continuum from halting, fragmentary speech to fluent speech, approximating that of native speakers.

Vocabulary. Teachers score students along a continuum from extremely limited word knowledge to using words and idioms skillfully.

Pronunciation. Teachers score students along a continuum from virtually unintelligible speech to using pronunciation and intonation proficiently, similar to native speakers.

Grammar. Teachers score students along a continuum from excessive errors that make speech unintelligible to applying word order, grammar, and usage rules effectively.

Each component has a 5-point range that's scored 1 to 5; the total possible score on the matrix is 25, and a rating of 20 or higher indicates that students are fluent speakers of English. The SOLOM is available free of charge online at <http://www.cal.org>, at other websites, and in many professional books.

READING ASSESSMENT. English learners face two challenges: They're learning to speak English at the same time they're learning to read. They learn to read the same way that native English speakers do, but they face additional challenges because their knowledge of English phonology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics is limited and their background knowledge is different (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013). Some English learners are fluent readers in their home language (Garcia, 2000); these students already have substantial funds of knowledge about how written language works and about the reading process that they build on as they learn to read in English (Moll, 1994). Having this knowledge gives them a head start, but students also have to learn what transfers to English reading and what doesn't.

Teachers use the same assessments that they use for native English speakers to identify English learners' reading levels, monitor their growth, and document their learning. Peregoy and Boyle (2013) recommend using data from running records or informal reading inventories along with classroom-based informal assessments, such as observing and conferencing with students.

Because many English learners have less background knowledge about topics in books they're reading, it's important that teachers assess ELs' background knowledge before instruction so they can modify their teaching to meet students' needs. One of the best ways to accomplish this is with a **KWL chart**. As they work with students to complete the first two sections of the chart, teachers learn what students know about a topic and have an opportunity to build additional background knowledge and introduce related vocabulary. Later, when students complete the KWL chart, teachers get a clear picture of what they've learned and which vocabulary words they can use.

Another way teachers learn about ELs' development is by asking them to assess themselves as readers. Teachers ask students, for example, what they do when they come to an unfamiliar word, what differences they've noticed between narrative and expository texts, which reading strategies they use, and what types of books they prefer. These quick assessments, commonly done during conferences at the end of a grading period, shed light on students' growth in a way that other assessments can't.

WRITING ASSESSMENT. English learners' writing develops as their oral language grows and as they become more fluent readers (Riches & Genesee, 2006). For beginning writers, fluency is the first priority. They move from writing strings of familiar words to grouping words into short sentences that often follow a pattern, much like young native English speakers do. As they develop some writing fluency, ELs begin to stick to a single focus, often repeating words and sentences to make their writing longer. Once they become fluent writers, ELs are usually able to organize their ideas more effectively and group them into paragraphs. They incorporate more specific vocabulary and expand the length and variety of sentences. Their mechanical errors become less serious, and their writing is much easier to read. At this point, teachers begin teaching the writer's craft and choosing writing strategies and skills to teach based on the errors that students make.

Peregoy and Boyle (2013) explain that ELs' writing involves fluency, form, and correctness, and that teachers' assessment of students' writing should reflect these components:

- Teachers monitor students' ability to write quickly, easily, and comfortably.
- Teachers assess students' ability to apply writing genres, develop their topics, organize the presentation of ideas, and use sophisticated vocabulary and a variety of sentence structures.
- Teachers check that students control Standard English grammar and usage, spell most words correctly, and use capitalization and punctuation conventions appropriately.

Teachers use rubrics to assess ELs' writing, and the rubrics address fluency, form, and correctness as well as the six traits that teachers have taught. They also conference with students about their writing and provide quick **minilessons**, as needed. To learn about students as writers, teachers observe them as they write, noticing how they move through the writing process, interact in writing groups, and share their writing from the author's chair. In addition, students document writing development by placing their best writing in portfolios.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS. Because of the difficulties inherent in assessing English learners, it's important to use varied types of assessment that involve different language and literacy tasks and ways of demonstrating proficiency (Huerta-Macías, 1995). In addition to commercial tests, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) urge teachers to use authentic assessment tools, including oral performances, story retellings, oral interviews, writing samples, illustrations, diagrams, and projects.

Assessment is especially important for students who are learning to speak English at the same time they're learning to read and write in English. Teachers use many of the same assessment tools that they use for their native English speakers, but they also depend on alternative, more authentic assessments because it's difficult to accurately measure these students' growth. Assessment results must be valid because teachers use them to make placement decisions, modify instruction, and document learning.

High-Stakes Testing

A high-stakes test is any test that is used to make a high-stakes decision. A test that is used to decide whether a student should be promoted or retained, for example, is a high-stakes test. Annual high-stakes testing is emphasized in American schools with the goal of improving reading instruction. These tests are designed to objectively measure students' knowledge according to grade-level standards. The current emphasis on testing and grade-level standards are reform efforts that began in response to The National Commission on Excellence in Education report *A Nation at Risk* (1983), which argued that American schools were failing miserably. The report stated that American students' test scores were dropping, comparing unfavorably with students' scores in other industrialized countries, and it concluded that the United States was in jeopardy of losing its global superiority. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001), which promoted an increased focus on reading instruction to improve students' reading performance and narrow the racial and ethnic gaps in achievement, reinforced the call for annual standardized testing.

Researchers have repeatedly refuted these arguments (Bracey, 2004; McQuillan, 1998). Allington (2012) explains that average test scores have remained stable for more than 30 years, despite the dramatic increases in federal funding over the past decade. He goes on to explain that reporting average scores obscures important findings because it's necessary to examine subgroup data to discover that most students from middle-class families read well and that many students from low-income families lag behind. He also notes that, although significant progress has been made in closing the achievement gap between white and minority students, the number of minority students has grown tremendously. Finally, he points out that grade-level standards of achievement have increased in the last 50 years so that what was considered third grade level is now second grade level, and older readability formulas have been renormed to reflect today's higher grade-level standards. Nonetheless, the public's perception that schools are failing persists.

High-stakes testing is different from classroom assessment. The test scores typically provide little information for making day-to-day instructional decisions; nevertheless, students, teachers, administrators, and schools are judged and held accountable by the results. The scores are used to make important educational decisions—to determine school placement, for example. These scores influence administrators' evaluations of teachers' effectiveness and even their salaries in some states, and they result in rewards or sanctions for administrators, schools, and school districts.

Standardized tests are comprehensive, with batteries of subtests covering decoding, vocabulary, comprehension, writing mechanics, and spelling. Most tests use multiple-choice test items, although a few are introducing open-ended questions that require students to write responses. Beginning in second grade, classroom teachers administer the tests to their students, typically in the spring. Most require multiple testing periods to administer all of the subtests.

Problems With High-Stakes Testing

A number of problems are associated with high-stakes testing (ILA, 1999). Students feel the pressure of these tests, and researchers have confirmed what many teachers have noticed: Students don't try harder because of them (Hoffman, Assaf, & Paris, 2005). Teachers complain that they feel compelled to improve students' test scores at any price, and that they lose valuable instructional time for test-taking and practice sessions (Hollingworth, 2007). Overemphasizing the test often leads teachers to abandon the balanced approach to instruction; sometimes students spend more time completing practice tests than reading books and writing compositions. One of the most insidious side effects is that teachers are often directed to focus on certain groups of students, especially those scoring just below a cutoff point, in hopes of improving test scores.

Preparing for Standardized Tests

Standardized tests are a unique text genre, and they require readers and writers to do different things than they would normally, so teachers can't assume that students already know how to take reading tests. It's essential that they prepare students to take high-stakes tests without abandoning a balanced approach to instruction that's aligned to state standards. Greene and Melton (2007) agree; they maintain that teachers must prepare students for high-stakes tests without sacrificing their instructional program. Unfortunately, with the pressure to raise test scores, some teachers are having students take more multiple-choice tests while creating fewer projects.

Hollingworth (2007) recommends these five ways to prepare for high-stakes tests without sacrificing the instructional program:

- Teachers check that their instructional program aligns with their state's curriculum standards and make any needed adjustments to ensure that they're teaching what's going to be on the test.
- Teachers set goals with students and use informal assessments to regularly monitor their progress.
- Teachers actively engage students in authentic literacy activities so they become capable readers and writers.
- Teachers explain the purpose of the tests and how the results will be used, without making students anxious.
- Teachers stick with a balanced approach that combines explicit instruction and authentic application.

Other researchers advise that, in addition to these recommendations, teachers prepare students to take standardized tests by teaching them how to read and answer test items and having them take practice tests to hone their test-taking strategies (McCabe, 2003). Preparing for tests involves explaining their purpose, examining the genre and format of multiple-choice tests, teaching the formal language of tests and test-taking strategies, and providing opportunities for students to take practice tests; but these lessons should be folded into the existing instructional program, not replace it. Greene and Melton (2007) organized test preparation into minilessons that they taught as part of reading workshop.

THE GENRE OF STANDARDIZED TESTS. Students need opportunities to examine old test forms to learn about the genre of standardized tests and how test questions are formatted. They'll notice that tests look different from other texts they've read; they're typically printed in black and white, the text is dense, and few illustrations are included. Sometimes words, phrases, and lines in the text are numbered, bolded, or underlined. Through this exploration, students begin to think about what makes one type of text harder to read than others, and with practice, they get used to how tests are formatted so that they're better able to read them.

THE LANGUAGE OF TESTING. Standardized reading tests use formal language that's unfamiliar to many students. For example, some tests use the word *passage* instead of *text* and *author's intent* instead of *big idea*. Test makers also use *locate*, *except*, *inform*, *in order to*, *provide suspense*, and other words that students may not understand. Greene and Melton (2007) call the language of testing "test talk" and explain that students won't be successful on standardized reading tests unless they can decipher test talk. Students need help understanding test talk so that high-stakes tests really measure what they know and can do.

TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES. Students vary the test-taking strategies they use according to the type of test they're taking. Most standardized tests employ multiple-choice questions, and successful test-takers use these strategies to answer multiple-choice questions:

Read the entire question first. Students read the entire question first to make sure they understand what it's asking. For questions about a reading passage, students read the questions first to guide their reading.

Look for key words in the question. Students identify key words in the question, such as compare, except, and author's intent, that will guide them to choose the correct answer.

Read all answer choices before choosing the correct one. After students read the question, they stop and think about the answer before reading all of the possible answers. Then they eliminate the unlikely answer choices and identify the correct answer.

Answer easier questions first. Students answer the questions they know, skipping the difficult ones, and then they go back and answer the questions they skipped.

Make smart guesses. When students don't know the answer to a question, they make a smart guess, unless there's a penalty for guessing. To make a smart guess, they eliminate the answer choices they're sure are wrong, think about what they know about the topic, and then pick the best remaining answer choice. The correct answer is often the longest one.

Stick with your first answer. Students shouldn't second-guess themselves; their first answer is probably right. They shouldn't change an answer unless they're certain that their first answer was wrong.

Pace yourself. Students budget their time so they'll be able to finish the test. They don't spend too much time on any one question.

Check your work carefully. Students check that they've answered every question if they finish early.

Students use these test-taking strategies along with reading strategies, including determining importance, questioning, and rereading, when they're taking standardized tests.

Test preparation should be embedded in literacy activities and not take up a great deal of instructional time. Teachers often teach test-taking strategies through minilessons where they explain the strategy, model its use, and provide opportunities for guided practice and discussion. Greene and Melton (2007) recommend also teaching minilessons on the genre of tests, test formats, and the language of tests as part of reading workshop. They reported that their students, many of whom are English learners, became more confident and empowered test-takers through test-preparation minilessons, and their test scores improved!

PRACTICE TESTS. Teachers design practice tests with the same types of items found on the standardized tests students will take. They use easy-to-read materials for practice tests so students can focus on practicing test-taking strategies without being challenged by the difficulty level of the text or the questions. They include a combination of unrelated narrative, poetic, and expository passages on the tests because all three types of texts appear on high-stakes tests. Teachers also provide answer sheets similar to those found on the standardized test so that students gain experience using them. So that students will be familiar with the testing conditions, teachers simulate them in the classroom or take students to where the test will be administered for practice sessions. Through these practice tests, students develop both confidence in their test-taking abilities and the stamina to persist through long tests.

Preparation for reading tests is especially important, because when students aren't familiar with multiple-choice tests, they'll score lower than they otherwise would. Don't confuse test preparation with teaching to the test; preparing for a test involves teaching students how to take a test, but "teaching to the test" is the unethical practice of drilling students on actual questions from old tests. The term is also used in a less pejorative way to describe how teachers tailor instruction to meet state-mandated standards.

The Politics of High-Stakes Testing

The debate over high-stakes testing is a politically charged issue (Casbarro, 2005). Test scores are being used as a means to reform schools, and although improving the quality of instruction and ensuring that all students have equal access to educational opportunities are essential, there are unwanted consequences for both students and teachers. Proponents claim that schools are being reformed, but although some gains in test scores for minority groups have been reported, many teachers believe that the improvement is the result of “teaching to the test.” So far, no results indicate that students have actually become better readers and writers because of standardized achievement tests.

Teach Kids to Be Strategic!

Test-Taking Strategies

Beginning in second grade, teach students how to use these test-taking strategies to answer multiple-choice questions on standardized tests:

- Read the entire question first.
- Look for key words in the question.
- Read all answer choices before choosing the correct one.
- Answer easier questions first.
- Make smart guesses.
- Stick with your first answer.
- Pace yourself.
- Check your work carefully.

Students learn to use these strategies through test-prep lessons and practice tests.

MyLab Education Self-Check 3.3

Portfolio Assessment

Students collect their work in portfolios and use them to evaluate their progress and showcase their best work (Afflerbach, 2007b). These systematic and meaningful collections of artifacts document students’ literacy development over a period of time (Hebert, 2001). As students select the pieces to be placed in their portfolios, they learn to establish criteria for their selections. Because of students’ involvement in developing their portfolios and reflecting on them, portfolio assessment respects students and their abilities.

Portfolios help students, teachers, and parents see patterns of growth from one literacy milestone to another in ways that aren’t possible with other types of assessment. There are other benefits, too:

- Students feel ownership of their work.
- Students become more responsible about their work.
- Students provide “windows” on the strategies they use through their work samples.
- Students set goals and are motivated to work toward accomplishing them.
- Students make connections between learning and assessing.

Teachers use portfolios in parent conferences and to supplement the information provided on report cards. In schools where portfolios are used schoolwide, students overwhelmingly report that, by using portfolios, they’re better able to show their parents what they’re learning and better able to set goals for themselves (Kuhs, Johnson, Agruso, & Monrad, 2001).

Collecting Work in Portfolios

Portfolios are folders, large envelopes, or boxes that hold students' work. Teachers often have students label and decorate large folders and then store them in plastic crates or cardboard boxes. Students date and label items as they place them in their portfolios, and they often attach notes to the items to explain the context for the activity and why they selected a particular item. Portfolios are stored in a readily accessible place in the classroom because students like to review them periodically and add new pieces. Today, many teachers are turning to ePortfolios, where artifacts are stored digitally (Light, Chen, & Ittelson, 2012). Online portfolios incorporate a hierarchical organization, make searching for and retrieving items easier, and can be displayed for audiences to view. They're practical, too, because they don't take up space on bookshelves or in teachers' file cabinets.

Students choose the items to place in their portfolios within the guidelines the teacher provides. Some students submit the original piece of work; others want to keep the original, so they scan it or place a copy in the portfolio instead. In addition to writing samples, students' record oral language and drama samples on audiotapes or video clips, artwork is photographed, and multigenre projects are compiled on flash drives. When students create ePortfolios, they also learn to use scanners, digital cameras, and other technology tools.

Many teachers collect students' work in folders, and they assume that portfolios are basically the same thing; however, the two types of collections differ in several important ways. Perhaps the most important difference is that portfolios are student oriented, but work folders are usually teachers' collections—students choose which samples will be placed in portfolios, but teachers often place all completed assignments in work folders. Next, portfolios focus on students' strengths, not their weaknesses. Because students select items for portfolios, they choose samples that best represent their literacy development. Another difference is that portfolios involve reflection (D'Aoust, 1992); through reflection, students pause and become aware of their strengths as readers and writers.

Involving Students in Self-Assessment

Portfolios are a tool for engaging students in self-assessment and goal setting. Students learn to reflect on and assess their own reading and writing activities and their development as readers and writers (Stires, 1991). Teachers begin by asking students to do **think-alouds** about their reading and writing in terms of contrasts. For reading, students identify the books they've read that they liked most and least, and they ask themselves what these choices suggest about them as readers. They also identify what they do well in reading and what they need to improve. In writing, students make similar contrasts; they identify their best compositions and others that weren't as good, and they think about what they do well when they write and what to improve. By making these comparisons, students begin to reflect on their literacy development.

Teachers use **minilessons** and conferences to teach about the characteristics of good readers and writers. In particular, they discuss these topics:

- What fluent reading is
- Which reading strategies students use
- How students demonstrate their comprehension
- What makes a good project to apply reading knowledge
- What makes an effective piece of writing
- Which writing strategies are most effective
- How to use writing rubrics
- Why correcting mechanical errors is a courtesy to readers



MyLab Education Video Example 3.3

In this video, a first grade teacher describes why she believes portfolios are most helpful in assessing students' literacy development. How do portfolios help students self-assess their learning?

As students learn about what it means to be effective readers and writers, they acquire the tools they need to reflect on and evaluate their own reading and writing. They learn how to think about themselves as readers and writers and acquire the vocabulary to use in their reflections, such as *goal*, *strategy*, and *rubric*.

Students write notes on items they put into their portfolios. In these self-assessments, students explain the reasons for their choices and identify strengths and accomplishments in their work. In some classrooms, students write their reflections and other comments on index cards, and in others, they design special comment sheets that they attach to the items in their portfolios.

Teachers usually collect baseline reading and writing samples at the beginning of the school year and then conduct portfolio review conferences with students at the end of each grading period. At these conferences, the teacher and the student talk about the items being placed in the portfolio and the student's self-assessments. Students also talk about what they want to improve or what they want to accomplish during the next grading period.

Showcasing Students' Portfolios

At the end of the school year, many teachers organize "Portfolio Share Days" to celebrate students' accomplishments and to provide an opportunity for them to share their portfolios with classmates and the wider community. Family members, local businesspeople, school administrators, college students, and others are invited to attend. Students and visitors form small groups, and students share their portfolios, pointing out their accomplishments and strengths. This activity is especially useful for involving community members in the school and showing them how students are becoming effective readers and writers.

These sharing days also help students accept responsibility for their own learning—especially those who haven't been as motivated as their classmates. When less motivated students listen to their classmates talk about their work and how they've grown as readers and writers, they often decide to work harder the next year.

Use **My Teaching To-Do Checklist: Assessment** to remind you of your responsibilities in the classroom with regard to planning for and using assessment data to inform instruction.

MY TEACHING TO-DO CHECKLIST: Assessment

- I determine my students' independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels.
- I consider the reading level of my instructional materials.
- I make plans for assessment as I plan for instruction.
- I monitor my students' progress during instruction.
- I choose authentic assessment activities as well as tests to measure my students' achievement.
- I use checklists and rubrics to assess my students' work.
- I have my students self-assess their work and reflect on their achievement.
- I teach my students how to take high-stakes tests in grades 2–4.
- My students keep portfolios to highlight their literacy achievements and milestones.
- I integrate state standards into my instruction.

Chapter Review

Literacy Assessment

- Teachers link classroom assessment with instruction using four steps: planning for assessment, assessing progress, evaluating students' learning, and reflecting on teaching and learning.
- Teachers use diagnostic assessments to identify students' progress in concepts about written language, phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, and other components of literacy.
- Teachers prepare students to take high-stakes tests without sacrificing their instructional programs.
- Teachers have students document their learning in portfolios.

Accountability Check

Visit the following assessment links to access quiz questions and instructional applications.

MyLab Education Application Exercise 3.2: Understanding Literacy Development
MyLab Education Application Exercise 3.3: Monitoring Literacy Development
MyLab Education Application Exercise 3.4: Measuring Literacy Development



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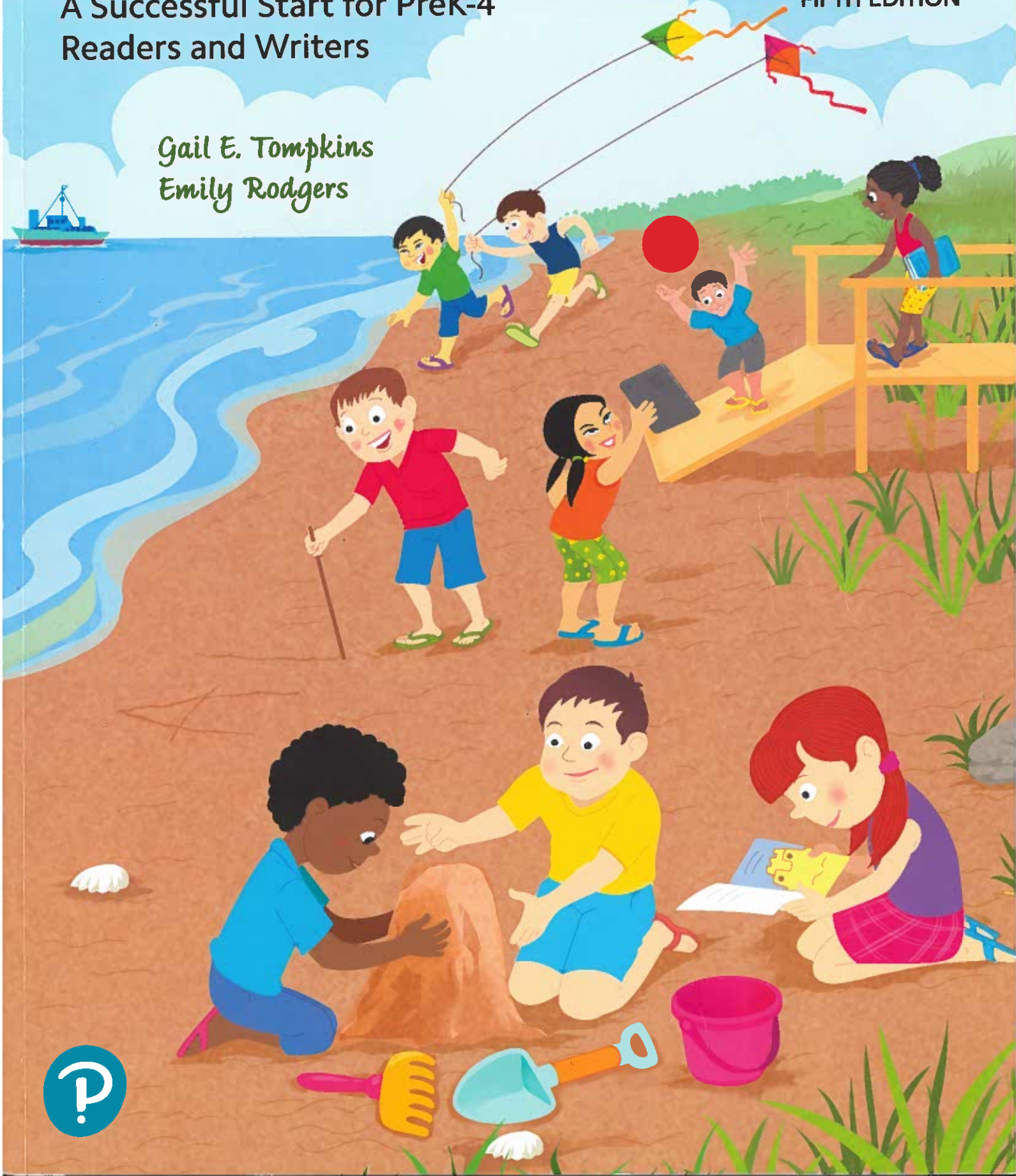
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Literacy in the Early Grades

A Successful Start for PreK-4
Readers and Writers

FIFTH EDITION

*Gail E. Tompkins
Emily Rodgers*



MY TEACHING TO-DO LIST: Phonemic Awareness

- I begin with oral activities, using objects and pictures, but after students learn to identify the letters of the alphabet, I add reading and writing components.
- I emphasize experimentation as my students sing songs and play word games.
- I read and reread wordplay books, and encourage my students to experiment with rhyming words, alliteration, and other wordplay activities.
- I teach minilessons on manipulating words, moving from easier to more complex levels.
- I emphasize the blending and segmenting strategies.
- I use small-group activities so students can be more actively involved in manipulating language.
- I teach phonemic awareness in the context of authentic reading and writing activities.
- I spend approximately 20 hours teaching phonemic awareness strategies.
- I integrate state standards into my instruction.

Teaching English Learners

Phonemic Awareness

It's more difficult to develop English learners' phonemic awareness than native English speakers' because they're just learning to speak English; however, this training is worthwhile as long as familiar and meaningful words are used (Riches & Genesee, 2006). Teachers create a rich literacy environment and begin by reading books and poems aloud and singing songs so students can learn to recognize and pronounce English sound patterns.

To plan effective phonemic awareness instruction, teachers need to be familiar with English learners' home languages and understand how they differ from English (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013). Instruction should begin with sounds that students can pronounce easily and that don't conflict with those in their home language. Sounds that aren't present in students' home languages or those that they don't perceive as unique, such as /ch/-/sh/ or /e~/-/i/ for Spanish speakers, are more difficult. Students may need more time to practice producing and manipulating these difficult sounds.

Researchers recommend explicit instruction on phonemic awareness and practice opportunities for English learners (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). They sing familiar songs and play language games like native speakers do, but teachers also draw ELs' attention to pronouncing English sounds and words. Teachers often integrate phonemic awareness training, vocabulary instruction, and reading and writing activities to show how oral language sounds are represented by letters in written words.

Phonemic awareness is a common underlying linguistic ability that transfers from one language to another (Riches & Genesee, 2006). Students who have learned to read in their home language—if it's alphabetic—are already phonemically aware, and this knowledge supports their reading and writing development in English.

Assessing Students' Phonemic Awareness

Students need to learn to manipulate words orally before they begin phonics instruction, so assessing their knowledge is crucial. Teachers often administer a screening test to determine the level of students' knowledge about phonemic awareness before instruction, and they use the instruction–assessment cycle to manage assessment during and after instruction. Linking assessment with phonemic awareness instruction is especially important because the instruction should be targeted to students' instructional needs, and it should move to manipulating written words once students can use phonemic awareness strategies orally.

SCREENING TESTS. Teachers administer one of several readily available phonemic awareness tests to screen students' ability to use phonemic awareness strategies, monitor their progress, and document their learning. Four phonemic awareness tests are described in this Assessment Tools feature.



MyLab Education Video Example 4.3

Teachers assess first grader's knowledge of phonemic awareness. What do you observe about the teacher's ability to give this assessment and the student's responses?

Assessment Tools

Phonemic Awareness

Kindergarten and first grade teachers monitor students' learning by observing them during classroom activities, and they screen, monitor, diagnose, and document their growing phonemic awareness by administering these tests:

- **Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS): Phoneme Segmentation Fluency Subtest**

This individually administered DIBELS subtest assesses students' ability to segment words with two and three phonemes. Multiple forms are available so that this test can be used periodically to monitor students' progress. The test is available free of charge on the DIBELS website, but there's a fee for analyzing and reporting the test results.

- **Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) System: Rhyme Awareness and Beginning Sound Subtests**

The kindergarten level of PALS includes brief subtests to assess young students' phonemic awareness. Students look at pictures and supply rhyming words or produce the beginning sounds for picture names. The grades 1–3 tests also include phonemic awareness subtests for students who score below grade level on other tests. PALS is available from the University of Virginia; it's free for Virginia teachers, but teachers in other states must pay for it.

- **Test of Phonological Awareness (TPA)**

This group test is designed to measure students' ability to isolate individual sounds in spoken words and understand the relationship between letters and phonemes. The TPA is administered in 40 minutes, and it's available from LinguSystems.

- **Yopp-Singer Test of Phonemic Segmentation**

This individually administered oral test for kindergartners measures their ability to segment the phonemes in words; it contains 22 items and is administered in less than 10 minutes. The test is free; it can be found in the September 1995 issue of *The Reading Teacher* or online. A Spanish version is also available.

Information gained from classroom observations and these assessments is used to identify students who aren't yet phonemically aware, plan appropriate instruction, and monitor their progress.

THE INSTRUCTION-ASSESSMENT CYCLE. Teachers use the four-step instruction-assessment cycle to integrate assessment with instruction, and they also address the Common Core State Standards in their instruction and assessment.

Step 1: Planning. As teachers plan developmentally appropriate instruction based on their understanding about their students' ability to manipulate words and the Common Core State Standards they're expected to teach, they make plans for assessment during and after instruction.

Step 2: Monitoring. Teachers informally observe students' performance as they read wordplay books, teach minilessons, and play phonemic awareness games, such as sorting picture cards according to beginning sounds or identify rhyming words in a familiar song. Based on their observations, teachers modify instruction or teach additional minilessons and play more word and sound games according to students' instructional needs.

Step 3: Evaluating. Teachers often use checklists to track students' growth in the ability to manipulate words and, in particular, apply the segmenting, blending, and substituting strategies. Through a combination of informal monitoring and

one-on-one oral assessments, teachers check that their students are meeting grade-level expectations.

Step 4: Reflecting. Both teachers and students participate in this step. Teachers use their evaluation of students' learning to judge the effectiveness of their instruction and decide how to adapt instruction to better serve struggling learners. In addition, students reflect on their developing ability to manipulate sounds.

If Students Struggle . . .

Some five-year-olds can't think of a word that rhymes with *pig* or *make*, can't clap the syllables in their names or in common words (e.g., *apple*, *umbrella*), and aren't interested in wordplay activities; it's likely that these students aren't developing the phonemic awareness knowledge that they need to learn to read and write successfully. If the results of phonemic awareness tests indicate that students are struggling, teachers must act quickly because students with lower levels of phonemic awareness are more likely to experience reading difficulties (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Teachers provide interventions for struggling students that focus on the sounds of oral language, especially during the second half of kindergarten. They work with individual students and small groups using developmentally appropriate activities that emphasize oral language but also make links to reading and writing.

The sequence in learning phonemic awareness moves from recognizing the order of sounds in words to manipulating these sounds. First, students identify and match initial and final sounds in words. Next, they count the phonemes in words, often using Elkonin boxes. Finally, students manipulate sounds in four ways—segmenting, blending, deleting, and substituting. Teachers identify the specific phonemic awareness concepts that students haven't developed and teach lessons to address these topics in order of difficulty.

Students with extremely limited understanding of phonemic awareness may lack knowledge in one or more of these prerequisite concepts:

Environmental Sounds. Do students notice sounds in their environment? Can they recognize specific sounds, such as a bird chirping, a person coughing, a car horn honking, or a door squeaking? If students are unaware of environmental sounds, teachers develop their awareness by teaching them to identify sounds and classify them according to loudness and pitch.

Concept of "Rhyme." Do students understand what rhyming words are? Can they break words into onsets and rimes? If not, teachers help students understand that words rhyme when their rimes sound alike (e.g., *go-throw*, *snail-whale*) and have them identify rhyming words in poems, songs, and books.

Concept of "Word." Do students understand what a word is? Can they recognize individual words in speech? If students haven't developed this concept, teachers emphasize individual words as they speak and read aloud, and they ask students to listen for specific words.

Concept of "Syllable." Do students understand what a syllable is? Can they demonstrate how to count the syllables in a word? If students can't, teachers accentuate the syllables in individual words, beginning with students' names, common words (e.g., *baby*, *pizza*, *together*), and compound words (e.g., *birthday*, *airplane*). They also teach students to clap the syllables as they say a word aloud; for example, as they pronounce the word *elephant*, they clap three times.

If students haven't developed these basic understandings, teachers begin their intervention here; however, if students can demonstrate their understanding of these concepts, teachers focus on identifying and manipulating sounds.

Literacy Portraits

Beginning readers and writers usually depend on the “sound it out” strategy to decode and spell words. It’s effective for phonetically regular words, such as *bus* and *feet*, but not for figuring out *chair*, *now*, or *said*. Recall that Ms. Janusz teaches the second graders about other ways to decode and spell words in her minilesson on the “think it out” strategy. (Play the video for her “think it out” strategy again if you want a reminder.)

Also, check my interviews with Rakie, Curt’Lynn, and Rhiannon. These students still rely on the “sound it out” strategy; they describe reading as a process of decoding words and emphasize that good writers spell words correctly. Think about the phonics concepts presented in this chapter. How do you expect these students’ views to change once they become fluent readers and writers?



Ms. Janusz



Rakie



Curt’Lynn



Rhiannon

MyLab Education Self-Check 4.2

MyLab Education Application Exercise 4.1: Using Phonemic Awareness Strategies



Phonics

Phonics is the set of relationships between **phonology**, the sounds in speech, and **orthography**, the spelling system. The emphasis is on spelling patterns, not individual letters, because there isn’t a one-to-one correspondence between phonemes and graphemes in English. Sounds are spelled in different ways, and several reasons explain this inconsistency. One reason is that sounds, especially vowels, vary according to their location in a word (e.g., *go–got*). Adjacent letters often influence how letters are pronounced (e.g., *bed–bead*), as do vowel markers such as the final *e* (e.g., *bit–bite*) (Shefelbine, 1995).

Etymology, or language origin, of words also influences their pronunciation. For example, the *ch* digraph is pronounced in several ways; the three most common are /*ch*/ as in *chain* (English), /*sh*/ as in *chauffeur* (French), and /*k*/ as in *chaos* (Greek). Neither the location of the digraph within the word nor adjacent letters account for these pronunciation differences: In all three words, the *ch* digraph is at the beginning of the word and is followed by two vowels, the first of which is *a*. Some letters aren’t pronounced, either. In words such as *write*, the *w* isn’t pronounced, even though it probably was at one time. The same is true for the *k* in *knight*, *know*, and *knee*. Silent letters in words such as *sign* and *bomb* reflect their parent words, *signature* and *bombard*, and have been retained for semantic, not phonological, reasons (Venezky, 1999).

Phonics Concepts

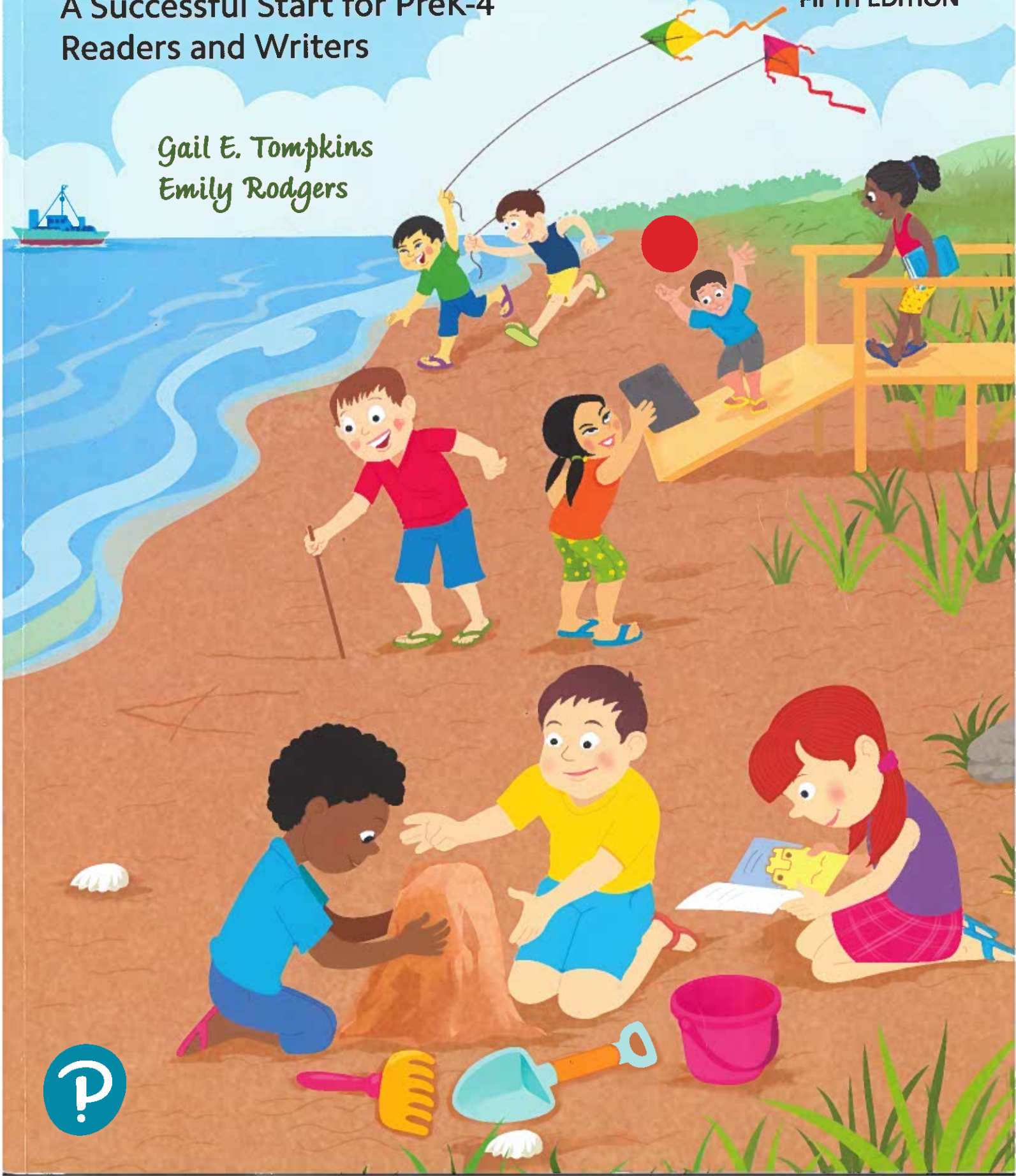
Phonics explains the relationships between phonemes and graphemes. There are 44 phonemes in English, which are represented by the 26 letters. The alphabetic principle suggests that there should be a one-to-one correspondence between phonemes and graphemes, so that each sound is consistently represented by one letter. English, however, is an imperfect phonetic language, and there are more than 500 ways to represent the 44 phonemes using single letters or combinations of letters. Think about the word *day*: The two phonemes, /*d*/ and /*ā*/, are represented by three letters. The *d* is a consonant, and *a* and *y* are vowels. Interestingly, *y* isn’t always a vowel; it’s a consonant at the beginning of a word and a vowel at the end. When two vowels

Literacy in the Early Grades

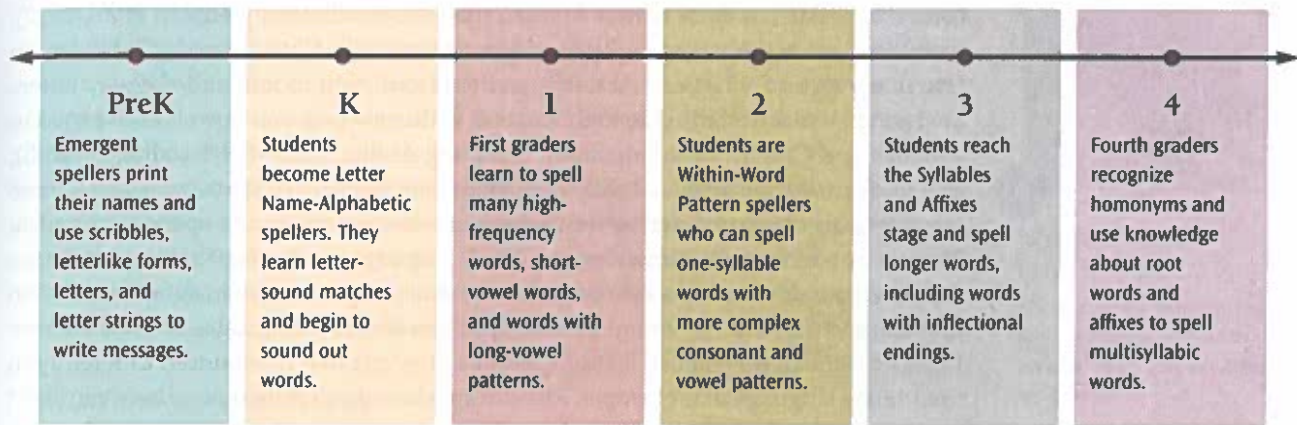
A Successful Start for PreK-4
Readers and Writers

FIFTH EDITION

*Gail E. Tompkins
Emily Rodgers*



Developmental Continuum Spelling



Teachers need to be able to explain that *sign* is a shortened word developed from *signature*. Another shortened word with an unpronounced letter is *bomb*; it developed from *bombard*. Similarly, many second and third graders spell *nation* correctly, but when they try to spell *national*, they apply vowel rules and spell the word this way: *NATTIONAL*. Once students move beyond spelling phonetically, they're ready for teachers to begin pointing out some of the more sophisticated principles underlying our spelling system.

Students' spelling provides evidence of their growing understanding of English **orthography**. The words they spell correctly show which phonics concepts, spelling patterns, and other language features they've learned to apply, and the words they invent spellings for and misspell show what they're still learning to use as well as those features of spelling that they haven't noticed or learned about. **Invented spelling** is sometimes criticized because it appears that students are learning bad habits by misspelling words, but researchers have confirmed that students grow more quickly in phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling when they're encouraged to use invented spelling, as long as they're also receiving spelling instruction (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). As students learn more about spelling, their spellings become more sophisticated to reflect their new knowledge, even if the words are still spelled incorrectly and, increasingly, students spell more and more words correctly as they move through the stages of spelling development.

Teaching English Learners

Spelling

English learners move through the same five developmental stages that native English speakers do, but they move more slowly because they're less familiar with the letter—sound correspondences, spelling patterns, and grammar of English (Helman, Bear, Templeton, Invernizzi, & Johnston, 2012). Students' spelling development reflects their reading achievement, but it lags behind: When ELs learn a word, they begin by learning its meaning and how to pronounce it. Almost immediately, they're introduced to the word's written form, and with practice, they learn to recognize and read it. Soon they're writing the word, too. At first, their spellings reflect what they know about the English spelling system, but with spelling instruction and reading and writing practice, they learn to spell words correctly. Because spelling is more demanding than reading, it's not surprising that students' knowledge about spelling grows this way.

It's essential that teachers learn about English learners' home language, especially about the ways it differs from English. They need to explicitly teach students about the contrasts because they're harder to learn than the similarities (Helman et al., 2012). Consider these written language differences, for example: Chinese uses syllable-length characters instead of letters; Arabic is written from right to left, and the way letters are formed varies according to their location within a word; and vowels aren't used in Croatian and Czech. Some languages, including Arabic, Spanish, Kiswahili (Swahili), and Russian, are more phonetically consistent than English; students who speak these languages are often confused by the number of ways a sound can be spelled in English. There are phonological differences, too: Many languages, including Korean, don't have the /th/ sound; there's no /p/ in Arabic, so Arabic speakers often substitute /b/ in English; and /l/ and /r/ sound alike to speakers of Asian languages. Vowels are particularly difficult for English learners because they're often pronounced differently in their home language. For example, Russian speakers don't differentiate between short and long vowels, and Spanish speakers often substitute /ě/ for /ā/ and /ō/ for /ō/. Many African and Asian languages, including Kiswahili, Punjabi, Chinese, and Thai, as well as Navajo—a Native American language—are tonal; in these languages, pitch, not spelling differences, is used to distinguish between words. In addition, there are syntactic differences that affect spelling: Hmong speakers don't add plural markers to nouns; Korean speakers add grammatical information to the end of verbs instead of using auxiliary verbs; and Chinese speakers aren't familiar with prefixes or suffixes because they're not used in their language.

Teachers base their instruction on English learners' stage of spelling development, and they emphasize the contrasts between students' home languages and English. According to Helman and her colleagues (2012), at each developmental stage, teachers focus their instruction on concepts that confuse English learners:

Emergent Stage. Students learn English letters, sounds, and words, and they learn that English is written from left to right and top to bottom, with spaces between words. Developing this awareness is more difficult for students whose home languages aren't alphabetic.

Letter Name-Alphabetic Stage. Students learn that letters represent sounds, and the sounds that are the same in ELs' home languages and English are the easiest to learn. They learn both consonant and vowel sounds. Those consonant sounds that are more difficult include /d/, /j/, /r/, /sh/, and /th/. English learners often have difficulty pronouncing and spelling final consonant blends (e.g., *-st* as in *fast*, *-ng* as in *king*, *-mp* as in *stomp*, and *-rd* as in *board*). Long and short vowel sounds are especially hard because they're often pronounced differently than in students' home languages.

Within-Word Pattern Stage. Students move from representing individual sounds in words to using vowel spelling patterns. They practice the CVCe and CVVC patterns and exceptions to these rules (e.g., *lake*, *have*, *come*, *mail*, *head*); *r*-controlled vowels are especially tricky because they're found in so many common words, and pronunciation often doesn't predict spelling (e.g., *bear/care/hair*, *word/heard/fern/burst*). They also learn to spell contractions (e.g., *I will = I'll*, *cannot = can't*, *will not = won't*).

Syllables and Affixes Stage. Students learn spelling and grammar concepts together as they investigate verb forms (e.g., *talk—talked*, *take—took—taken*, *think—thought*), change adjectives to adverbs (e.g., *quick—quickly*), and add inflectional endings (e.g., *walks—walked—walking*), comparatives, and superlatives (e.g., *sunny—sunnier—sunniest*). During this stage, English learners also learn to pronounce accented and unaccented syllables differently, to use the schwa sound in unaccented syllables, and to differentiate between homophones (e.g., *wear—where*, *to—too—two*).

Derivational Relations Stage. Students learn about consonant and vowel alternations in related words (e.g., *crumb—crumble*, *define—definition*). Some ELs use tonal changes to signal these relationships in their home languages, but they must learn that related words in English are signaled by similar spelling and changes in how the vowels are pronounced. They also learn about Latin and Greek root words and affixes and use this knowledge as an aid in understanding the meanings of words and spelling the words.

Spelling instruction for English learners is similar to that for native speakers: Teachers use a combination of explicit instruction, **word sorts** and other practice activities, and authentic reading and writing activities. The biggest difference is that ELs need more instruction on the English spelling concepts that confuse them, often because these features aren't used in their home languages.

MyLab Education Self-Check 5.1

Teaching Spelling

Perhaps the best known way to teach spelling is through weekly spelling tests, but tests should never be considered a complete spelling program. To become good spellers, students need to learn about the English orthographic system and move through the stages of spelling development. They need to know strategies for spelling unknown words, participate in a variety of daily reading and writing activities, and gain experience in using dictionaries and other resources. A complete spelling program includes these components:

- Teaching spelling strategies
- Matching instruction to students' levels of spelling development
- Providing daily reading and writing opportunities
- Teaching students to spell high frequency words

A complete spelling program is an important component of a balanced approach to literacy instruction. Use this Teacher Checklist to determine whether your spelling program is complete and to assess your ability to teach spelling effectively.

SPELLING STRATEGIES. Students learn strategies to figure out how to spell unfamiliar words. As they move through the stages of spelling development, they become



MyLab Education Video Example 5.2

These educators are engaging young students in concept sorts. How do concept sorts prepare students for word sorts?

Check the Compendium of Instructional Procedures, which follows Chapter 12. These **green** terms also show a brief description of each procedure.

PreK Practices

How do I teach spelling to four-year-olds?

Spelling begins as preschoolers learn to identify and print the letters in their names. Soon these letters and others appear in their drawings. Researchers have identified this sequence in preschoolers' spelling development:

- Scribbling
- Adding letters and letterlike forms to scribbles
- Using random strings of letters to represent writing
- Copying environmental print (e.g., *M for McDonalds*)
- Writing one or more letters that represent obvious sounds in a word (e.g., *K = cat*, *APL = apple*)
- Spelling names and phrases such as "I love you" correctly (Ray & Glover, 2008; Schickedanz & Casbergue, 2009)

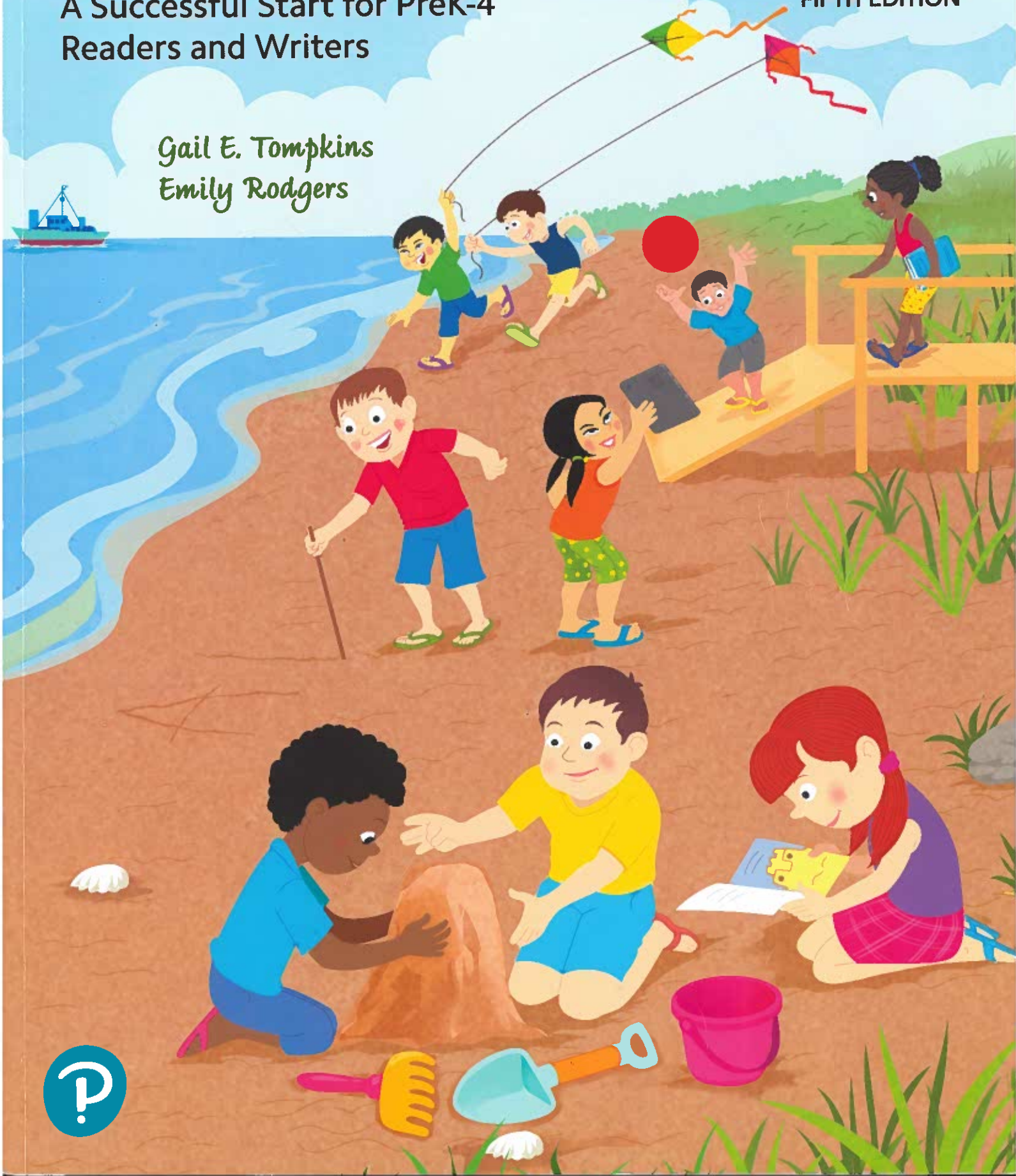
As students move along this sequence, it's easy to see what they understand about the alphabet, environmental print, and words.

Literacy in the Early Grades

A Successful Start for PreK-4
Readers and Writers

FIFTH EDITION

*Gail E. Tompkins
Emily Rodgers*



Chapter 11

Scaffolding Students' Writing Development



Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you'll be prepared to:

- 11.1 Describe the five stages in the writing process.
- 11.2 Discuss how to teach writing using the six traits.
- 11.3 Explain how to assess students' writing development.
- 11.4 Describe three ways to implement the writing process in classrooms.

Participating in Writing Workshop



Wavebreakmedia/Shutterstock

The 20 first graders in Mrs. Albers' class participate in writing workshop from 10:20 to 11:30. Here's the schedule:

- 10:20–10:40 Shared reading/minilesson
- 10:40–11:15 Writing and conferencing with Mrs. Albers
- 11:15–11:30 Author's chair

Mrs. Albers devotes more than an hour each morning to writing workshop because she wants her students to have time to talk about their experiences, extend their vocabulary, and manipulate basic English syntactic patterns through writing and talking. Many of these five- and six-year-olds are English learners whose parents or grandparents immigrated to the United States from Southeast Asia and who speak Hmong, Khmer, or Lao at home; they're learning to speak English as they learn to read and write in English.

Writing workshop begins with a 20-minute whole-class meeting. Mrs. Albers either reads a big book using the **shared reading** procedures or teaches a **minilesson**, often

using as an example something from the big book she has read previously. Yesterday, Mrs. Albers read *An Egg Is an Egg* (Weiss, 1990), an informational book about egg-laying animals. After reading the big book twice, Mrs. Albers and the students talked about animals that lay eggs and those that don't.

Today, Mrs. Albers rereads *An Egg Is an Egg*, and the students join in to read familiar words. Afterward, she reads the book again, asking the students to look for words on each page with *ou* and *ow* spellings. In a previous minilesson, Mrs. Albers explained that usually these spellings are pronounced /ou/ as in *ouch*, but sometimes *ow* is pronounced /ō/ as in *snow*, and they began a chart of words with each spelling or pronunciation. The first graders locate several more words and write them on their chart. After they add the new words from the big book, Boupfa (bo-fa) writes *hour* and Leticia writes *found*, words they noticed in books they were reading. The students practice reading the lists of words together, and Beso reads the lists by himself. He smiles proudly as his classmates clap. Now the chart looks like this:

ou	ow	ow (long o)
loud	clown	low
sound	brown	blowing
cloud	down	tow
outside	town	slowly
flour	flower	sown
around	tower	snows
shout	now	
hour		
found		

In this chapter, you'll read about the writing process. Like the reading process, this essential process has five stages. As you read this vignette, notice how Mrs. Albers uses the writing process as her first graders participate in writing workshop. Try to pick out the stages: *prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.*

Mrs. Albers quickly reviews the class's guidelines for writing because two students have recently joined the class, and she has noticed that some of the other students aren't on task during the writing and conferencing period. The class's guidelines for writing are posted on a chart that the students wrote using interactive writing earlier in the school year. Mrs. Albers rereads each guideline and then asks a student to explain it in his or her own words. Here's the class's list:

1. Think about your story.
2. Draw pictures on a storyboard.
3. Write words by the pictures.
4. Tell your story to one editor.
5. Write your story.
6. Read your story to two editors.
7. Illustrate your story.
8. Publish your story.

The second part of writing workshop is writing and conferencing. The students use a process approach to write personal narratives, stories about their families and pets, and events in their lives. To begin, the students plan their stories using storyboards, sheets of paper divided into four, six, or eight blocks. (Note that these are different from story boards, described in the Compendium.) They sketch a drawing in each numbered block and then add a word or two to describe the picture. Next, they use their storyboards to tell their stories to one of five first graders serving as editors that day; today's editors are Pauline, Lily, Mai, Destiny, and Khammala. It's easy to recognize the editors in Mrs. Albers's classroom because they're wearing neon-colored plastic visors with the word "Editor" printed on them.

Check Your Work!

Does the story make sense?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Punctuation marks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Capital letters	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Spelling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

My editors are:

LilyMai

After this rehearsal, the students write their stories using one sheet of paper for each block on their planning sheets. Next, they read their writing to two editors, who often ask the student to add more detail or to insert a word or phrase that has been omitted. Then the students draw and color a picture to complement and extend the words on each page. Sometimes they add a cover and title page and staple their stories together, and at other times, they turn in their drafts for the bilingual aide in the classroom to word process.

Students complete an editing sheet when they share their writing with the two classmates who are serving as editors; a copy of the editing sheet is shown here. The author writes his or her name and the title of the story at the top of the sheet. The editors check off each box as they read their classmate's story and then sign their names at the bottom of the page. Mrs. Albers often calls herself their third editor, and the students know that they must complete this editing sheet with two classmates before they ask her to review their writing.

Mrs. Albers has divided the class into five conference groups, and she meets with one group each day while the other students are working on their stories. The students bring their writing folders to the conference table and talk with Mrs. Albers about their work. They're working at different stages of the writing process.

The teacher begins by asking the students to each explain what they're writing about and where they are in the writing process. Then she examines each student's storyboard or writing and offers compliments, asks questions, and provides feedback about the student's work. She also makes notes about each student's progress.

Today, she's meeting with Lily, Beso, Dalany, and Matthew. Lily begins by showing Mrs. Albers her storyboard for a story about her cousin's birthday. She has developed eight blocks for her story, and she talks about each one, working to express her ideas in a sentence or two. Mrs. Albers praises Lily for tackling such a long story and for including a beginning, middle, and end. She encourages Lily to begin writing, and a

week later, Lily completes her book and shares it with her classmates. Here is Lily's published story, "My Cousin's Birthday":

Page 1 **This is my cousin's birthday.**

Page 2 **I bought her a present.**

Page 3 **I have clothes for her present.**

Page 4 **She makes a wish on her birthday cake.**

Page 5 **We eat cake.**

Page 6 **We play games.**

Page 7 **My cousin is happy.**

Page 8 **We went to sleep.**

Next, Mrs. Albers turns to Beso, who says that he's working on a storyboard for a story about his grandmother's cat, but he can't find it. Mrs. Albers checks her notes and recalls that Beso couldn't find his storyboard for the same story last week, so she asks him to get a new storyboard and start again. They talk out the story together. Beso wants to describe what his grandmother's cat looks like and then tell all the things that she can do. He begins drawing a picture in the first block while Mrs. Albers watches. After he draws the picture, Mrs. Albers will help him add one or two key words in the block, then she'll help him do a second block. Mrs. Albers plans to keep Beso close to her for a few days to ensure that he completes the storyboard and writes his story.

Next, Mrs. Albers turns her attention to Matthew, who's finishing his ninth book, "The Soccer Game." He reads it to Mrs. Albers:

Page 1 **Me and my friends play soccr.**

Page 2 **I won a trophe.**

Page 3 **I won another point.**

Page 4 **I played at the soccr field.**

Page 5 **I won again.**

Page 6 **I went home.**

Then they read it over again, and Mrs. Albers helps him correct the spelling of *trophy* and *soccer* and correct several letters that were printed backward. He also shows her his editing sheet, which indicates that he had already edited his story with Pauline and Sammy serving as his editors. Matthew says that he wants to finish the book today so that he can share it at the author's chair. Mrs. Albers sends him over to write his name on the sharing list posted beside the author's chair.

Dalany is next. She reminds Mrs. Albers that she finished her book, "The Apple Tree," last week, and she's waiting for it to be word processed. Mrs. Albers tells her that it's done and gives her the word processed copy. They read it over together, and Dalany returns to her desk to draw the illustrations. Here's Dalany's book, "The Apple Tree":

Page 1 **I see the apple tree.**

Page 2 **I picked the apple up.**

Page 3 **I ate the apple.**

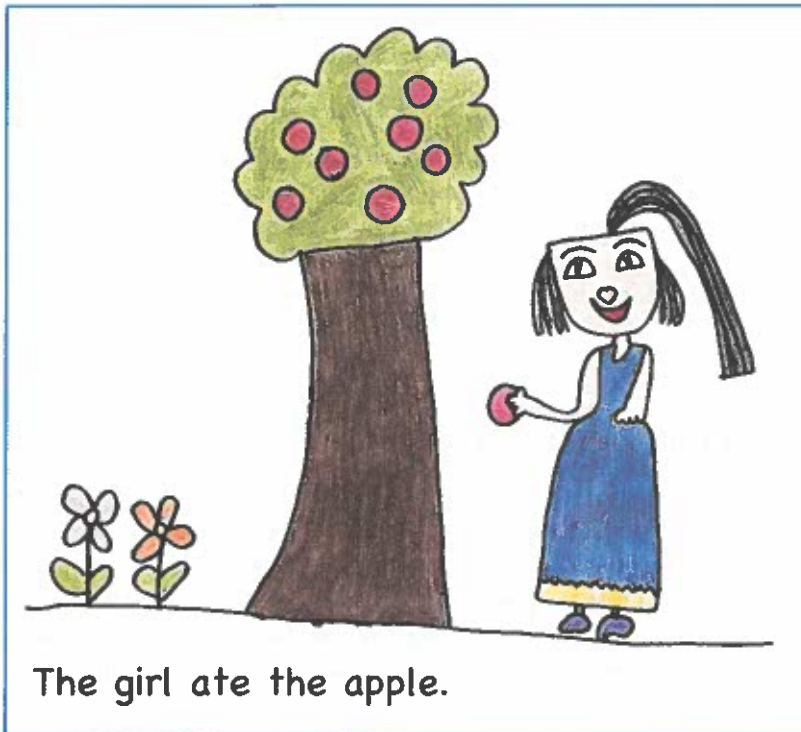
Page 4 **I see another girl pick up the apple.**

Page 5 **The girl ate the apple.**

Page 6 **We are friends.**

The fifth page from Dalany's word processed book with hand-drawn illustrations is shown.

After the students write their stories, an aide word processes them in Standard English, adding a title page, a dedication page, and a "Readers' Comments" page. The



The girl ate the apple.

student draws an illustration on each page. Then Mrs. Albers laminates the title page and adds a back cover and the student staples the book together. The author shares the book at that day's author's chair, and then it's placed in the classroom library. Students take turns reading each other's books and adding comments on the back page; they take great pride in reading their classmates' comments in their books. Mrs. Albers and the first graders have written these comments in Matthew's book about playing soccer:

I have tropy. Michael

I like Matthew play soccer. Pauline

You are a good soccer player! Mrs. Albers

Nice story. Rosemary

You god sucr ply. Jesse

Do you win and win? Lily

I lik play soccr. Beso

Although not all comments are grammatically correct or spelled correctly, Matthew can read them, and he has walked around and thanked each person for his or her comment. It's important to him that lots of friends read his book and write comments.

The third part of writing workshop is author's chair. Each day, three students sit in the author's chair and share their published stories. After students read their stories, their classmates offer comments and ask clarifying questions. Then they clap for the author, and the published book is ceremonially placed in a special section of the classroom library for everyone to read.

The writing process, like the reading process, involves a series of five recursive stages. Students participate in a variety of activities as they gather and organize ideas, draft their compositions, revise and edit their drafts, and finally, publish their writings (Dorn & Soffos, 2001). Some teachers have thought that young students

weren't ready for writing, but the first graders in Mrs. Albers's class demonstrated that beginning writers—even English learners—can learn about the writing process and move beyond single-draft compositions.

Reading and writing have been thought of as opposites: Readers decoded or deciphered written language, and writers encoded or produced written language. Then researchers began to notice similarities between reading and writing and talked of both of them as processes (Hayes, 2004; Kintsch, 2013; Rumelhart, 2013). Now reading and writing are viewed as parallel processes of meaning construction, and we understand that readers and writers use similar strategies for making meaning with text.

The Writing Process

The focus in the **writing process** is on what students think about and do as they write. The five stages are *prewriting*, *drafting*, *revising*, *editing*, and *publishing*. The labeling and numbering of the stages don't mean that the writing process is a linear series of neatly packaged categories; rather, the process involves recurring cycles, and labeling is simply an aid for identifying and discussing writing activities. In the classroom, the stages merge and recur as students write. The key features of each stage are shown in Figure 11–1.



MyLab Education Video Example 11.1

Young students learn the key features of the writing process. Why is engaging students in the stages of the writing process a valued practice?

Stage 1: Prewriting

Prewriting is the “getting ready to write” stage. The traditional notion that writers have a topic completely thought out and ready to flow onto the page is ridiculous: If writers wait for ideas to fully develop, they may wait forever. Instead, writers begin tentatively—talking, reading, writing—to see what they know and in what direction they want to go. Prewriting has probably been the most neglected stage in the writing process; however, it's as crucial to writers as a warm-up is to athletes. Murray (1982) believes that at least 70% of writing time should be spent in prewriting. During the prewriting stage, students choose a topic, consider purpose and form, and gather and organize ideas for writing.

Figure 11–1 Key Features of the Writing Process

STAGE 1: PREWRITING

- Choose a topic
- Consider the purpose for writing
- Identify the genre the writing will take
- Gather and organize ideas using words, pictures, diagrams, and talk

STAGE 2: DRAFTING

- Write a rough draft
- Emphasize ideas rather than mechanical correctness

STAGE 3: REVISING

- Reread the rough draft
- Share writing in revising groups
- Make substantive changes that reflect classmates' comments
- Conference with the teacher

STAGE 4: EDITING

- Proofread the revised rough draft
- Identify and correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar errors
- Conference with the teacher

STAGE 5: PUBLISHING

- Make the final copy
- Share the writing with an authentic audience

CHOOSING A TOPIC. Students should choose their own topics for writing—topics that they're interested in and know about—so that they'll be more engaged, but that isn't always possible: Sometimes teachers provide the topics, especially in connection with literature focus units and content-area units. It's best when teacher-selected topics are broad so students can narrow them in the way that's best for them. Asking students to choose their own topics for writing doesn't mean that teachers do not provide guidance; teachers still provide general guidelines. They may specify the writing form, and at other times they may establish the function, but students should choose their own content.

CONSIDERING PURPOSE. As students prepare to write, they need to think about the purpose of their writing: Are they writing to entertain? to inform? to persuade? Setting the purpose for writing is just as important as setting the purpose for reading because purpose influences decisions students make about form.

CONSIDERING GENRE. Students make decisions about the genre or form their writing will take: a story? a letter? a poem? a report? Figure 11–2 describes the genres that students learn to use. The genre they choose relates to their purpose for writing: If they're writing to share information, a report might be the most appropriate genre, but if they're writing to convince someone about something, a persuasive letter may be the best choice.

REHEARSAL ACTIVITIES. Students engage in a variety of activities to gather and organize ideas for writing. They brainstorm words, draw pictures, and talk with classmates as they gather ideas, and they create graphic organizers to visually display their words and images. Their choice of diagram varies according to genre; for example, students often draw a series of three boxes for the beginning, middle, and end when they're planning a story, and use a Venn diagram to compare two ideas.

Stage 2: Drafting

Students get their ideas down on paper and write a first draft of their compositions in this stage. Because they don't start writing with their pieces already composed in their minds, writers begin tentatively with the ideas they've developed through prewriting activities. Their drafts are usually messy, reflecting the outpouring of ideas with cross-outs, lines, and arrows as they think of better ways to express ideas. Students write quickly, with little concern about legible handwriting, correct spelling, or careful use of capitalization and punctuation.

Figure 11–2 Writing Genres

Genre	Purpose	Activities
Descriptive Writing	Students use this genre to paint vivid pictures of people, places, events, and things. They use sensory details to breathe life into their writing.	descriptive paragraphs descriptive sentences poems
Expository Writing	Students use this genre to present information. They use expository text structures to organize their presentation of information and cue words to guide readers.	alphabet books directions posters
Journals and Letters	Students use this genre for personal writing. They share news and explore new ideas. They also learn the special formats that letters and envelopes require.	email messages friendly letters learning logs
Narrative Writing	Students use this genre to present accounts of experiences, either true or imaginary. They create a world for readers to imagine, tell a story, and explain why it's memorable.	innovations personal narratives retellings of stories
Persuasive Writing	Students use this genre to win someone to their viewpoint. They state their position and support it with examples and evidence.	advertisements book and movie reviews persuasive letters
Poetry Writing	Students use this genre to create word pictures and evoke emotional responses. They use figurative language, poetic forms, and poetic devices to make their poems more powerful.	acrostics color poems "I Am . . ." poems

When they write rough drafts, students skip every other line to leave space for revisions and write only on one side of a sheet of paper. Wide spacing between lines is crucial. At first, teachers make small *x*'s on every other line as a reminder to skip lines, but once students understand the importance of leaving space, they skip lines automatically. Students write *Rough Draft* on their drafts; this label indicates to classmates, parents, and administrators that the emphasis is on content, not mechanics. It also explains why the draft hasn't been graded.

Instead of writing drafts by hand, many students, even kindergartners and first graders, use computers to compose rough drafts, polish their writing, and print out final copies. There are many benefits of using computers for word processing. Students are often more motivated to write, and they tend to write longer pieces. Their writing looks neater, and they use spell-check programs to identify and correct misspelled words.



MyLab Education
Video Example 11.2

Students can learn to be good writers, but they're often influenced by what their teachers think is important in writing. As you read through this chapter, consider what you will emphasize during writing instruction.

Stage 3: Revising

After writers have completed their rough drafts, they work to refine their presentation of ideas. Students often break the writing process cycle as soon as they complete a draft, believing that once they've jotted down their ideas, the writing task is complete. Experienced writers, however, know they must turn to others for reactions and revise on the basis of these comments. Revision is not just polishing; it's meeting the needs of readers by adding, substituting, deleting, and rearranging material. *Revision* means "seeing again," and in this stage, writers see their compositions again with the help of classmates and the teacher. Revising consists of three activities: rereading the rough draft, sharing the rough draft with classmates, and revising on the basis of feedback.

REREADING THE ROUGH DRAFT. Writers need to distance themselves from their rough drafts for a day or two and then reread them from a fresh perspective, as a reader might. As they reread, students make changes—adding, substituting, deleting, and moving words, sentences, and paragraphs—and place question marks by sections that need work; students ask for help with these trouble spots when they meet with classmates in revising groups.

REVISING GROUPS. Students meet in small revising groups to share their rough drafts with classmates, who respond and suggest possible revisions. Sometimes teachers participate in these groups, and sometimes they meet separately with students, as Mrs. Albers did in the vignette at the beginning of the chapter. Revising groups provide a scaffold in which teachers and classmates talk about plans and strategies for writing and revising.

In some classrooms, revising groups form whenever four or five students finish their rough drafts and want to get feedback. The students gather around a conference table or sit on the floor in a corner of the classroom and take turns reading their rough drafts aloud; classmates listen and respond, offering compliments and revision suggestions. But in other classrooms, revising groups are assigned, and students get together when everyone in the group has finished writing and is ready to share. Sometimes the teacher participates in the group; however, if the teacher is involved in something else, students work independently and conference with the teacher afterward.

MAKING REVISIONS. Students make four types of changes as they revise their drafts:

Additions. Writers insert words and sentences to provide additional information and improve the flow of ideas. Students like to use the caret symbol (^) to indicate where they're inserting new words and sentences.

Substitutions. Writers replace words and sentences to express their ideas more effectively. As students learn about synonyms, alternatives for tired words such as *good* and *said*, and how to use a thesaurus, they become more interested in making substitutions.

Literacy Portraits

Michael and his classmates are confident writers who willingly share their rough drafts and revise their writing. Compare Michael's work with his writing in February, when Ms. Janusz taught a minilesson on writing effective endings and then conferenced with Michael about how he planned to end the story he was writing. You might also check Rhiannon's April video clip of her writing conference with Ms. Janusz. Because Rhiannon's writing is a challenge to read, Ms. Janusz usually combines revising and editing when she works with her. Ideas are born so quickly in Rhiannon's imagination that she forgets about inserting punctuation when she writes, and her abbreviated phonetic spellings are difficult to decipher. Getting students to revise isn't easy. What do you notice in these video clips to suggest why these second graders are so successful?



Michael in May



Rhiannon in April

Deletions. Writers cross out redundant, unnecessary, or inappropriate words and sentences. Deletions are particularly difficult for writers to make, especially those who think longer compositions are better than shorter ones.

Moves. Writers change the location of words and sentences to improve their presentation of ideas or heighten the lyrical quality of their writing. This is the most sophisticated type of revision, and students make fewer moves than additions, substitutions, or deletions. (Faigley & Witte, 1981)

Students often use a blue pen to cross out words, draw arrows, and write between the double-spaced lines of their rough drafts so that revisions will show clearly; this way, teachers can easily check the types of revisions they make. Revisions are an important gauge of students' growth as writers.

REVISING CENTERS. Teachers often set up revising centers to give students revision options: They can talk with a classmate about the ideas in their rough draft, examine the organization of their writing, consider their word choice, or check that they've included all required components in the composition. A list of revising centers is shown in Figure 11-3. Teachers introduce these centers as they teach about the writing process, and then students work at them before or after participating in a writing group. Teachers usually provide a checklist of center options that students put in their writing folders, and then they check off the centers that they complete. Through these center activities, students develop a repertoire of revising strategies and personalize their writing process.

Stage 4: Editing

Editing is putting the piece of writing into its final form. Until this stage, the focus has been primarily on ideas. Now the focus changes to mechanics, and students polish their writing by correcting spelling mistakes and other mechanical errors. **Mechanics** are the commonly accepted conventions of written Standard English; they consist of capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, usage, and formatting considerations specific to poems, scripts, letters, and other writing genres. The use of these commonly accepted conventions is a courtesy to those who'll read the composition.

Students are more efficient editors if they set the composition aside for a few days before beginning to edit. After working so closely with a piece of writing during drafting

Figure 11–3 Revising and Editing Centers

Type	Centers	Activities
Revising	Rereading	Students reread their rough drafts with a partner, who offers compliments and asks questions.
	Word Choice	Students choose three to five words in their rough drafts and look for more specific or more powerful synonyms using a thesaurus, word walls in the classroom, or suggestions from classmates.
	Graphic Organizer	Students draw a chart or diagram to illustrate the organization of their compositions, and they revise their rough drafts if the organization isn't effective or the writing isn't complete.
	Sentence Combining	Students choose a section of their drafts with too many short sentences and combine some of them to improve the flow of their writing.
Editing	Spelling	Students work with a partner to proofread their writing. They locate misspelled words and use a dictionary to correct them. Students may also check for specific errors in their application of recently taught skills.
	Homonyms	Students check their rough drafts for homonym errors, and after consulting a chart posted in the center, they correct the errors.
	Punctuation	Students proofread their writing to check for punctuation marks. They make corrections as needed and then highlight all punctuation marks in their drafts.
	Capitalization	Students check that each sentence begins with a capital letter, the word <i>I</i> is capitalized, and proper nouns and adjectives are capitalized. After the errors are corrected, students highlight all capital letters in their drafts.

and revising, they're too familiar with it to notice many mechanical errors; but with the distance gained by waiting a few days, students are better able to approach editing with a fresh perspective and gather the enthusiasm necessary to finish the writing process. Then students move through two activities in the editing stage: proofreading to locate errors and correcting the ones they find.

PROOFREADING. Students proofread their compositions to locate and mark possible errors. **Proofreading** is a unique type of reading in which students read word by word, hunting for errors rather than reading for meaning. Errors are highlighted with special proofreader's marks; students enjoy using these marks—the same as those used by adult authors and editors. Figure 11–4 presents a list of proofreaders' marks that students use when they're proofreading their writing. Concentrating on mechanics is difficult because of our natural inclination to read for meaning; even experienced proofreaders often find themselves focusing on comprehension and thus overlook errors that don't inhibit meaning. It's important, therefore, to take time to explain proofreading and demonstrate how it differs from regular reading.

To demonstrate proofreading, teachers copy a piece of writing on the whiteboard or display it on an overhead projector. The teacher reads it aloud several times, each time hunting for a particular type of error, such as spelling, capitalization, or paragraph indentation. During each reading, the teacher reads the composition slowly, softly pronouncing each word and touching it with a pen to focus attention on it. The teacher marks possible errors as they're located.

Editing checklists help students focus on particular types of errors. Teachers develop checklists with two to six items that are appropriate for their grade level. A first grade checklist, for example, might have only two items—perhaps one about capital letters at the beginnings of sentences and a second about periods at the ends. In contrast, a fourth grade checklist might contain items such as using commas in a series, indenting paragraphs, and spelling homonyms correctly. Teachers revise the checklist during the school year to focus attention on skills that have recently been taught.

Figure 11-4 Proofreaders' Marks

Correction	Mark	Example
Delete		Most whales are big and huge creatures.
Insert		A baby whale is a calf. ^{called}
Indent paragraph		Whales look a lot like fish, but the two are quite different.
Capitalize		In the United <u>s</u> tates it is illegal to hunt whales.
Change to lower case		Why do beached W hales die?
Add period		Baleen whales do not have any teeth
Add comma		Some baleen whales are blue whales , gray whales and humpback whales.
Add apostrophe		People are the whales ['] only enemy.

The Assessment Snapshot shows a third grade editing checklist. Classmates work as partners to edit their drafts. First, students proofread their own compositions, searching for errors in each category on the checklist, and after proofreading, check off the item. After completing the checklist, students sign their names and then trade checklists and compositions; they now become editors and complete each other's checklist. Having both the writer and the editor sign the checklist helps them take the activity seriously.

Assessment Snapshot

A Third Grade Editing Checklist

Author Editor

1. I have circled the words that might be misspelled.

2. I have checked that all sentences begin with capital letters.

3. I have checked that all sentences end with punctuation marks.

4. I have checked that all proper nouns begin with a capital letter.

Signatures:

Author: Jessie

Editor: Alex

TEACHER'S NOTE
Jessie is getting better at checking her own work before showing it to me, and she's found that Alex is a very helpful proofreader. I found only six errors—mainly proper nouns. She doesn't capitalize days of the week, but does capitalize third grade, boys, girls, and school. She needs more practice to learn which words to capitalize.

CORRECTING ERRORS. After students proofread their compositions and locate as many errors as they can, they use red pens to correct the errors independently or with an editor's assistance. Some errors are easy to correct, some require a dictionary, and others involve instruction from the teacher. It's unrealistic to expect students to locate and correct every mechanical error in their compositions; published books aren't always error-free! Once in a while, students may change a correct spelling or punctuation mark and make it incorrect, but they catch far more errors than they create.

Students work at editing centers to check for and correct specific types of errors; a list of editing centers is also shown in Figure 11-3. Teachers often vary the activities at a center to reflect the types of errors students are making. For example, students who continue to misspell common words can check for these words on a chart posted in the center, or after a series of lessons on contractions or punctuation marks, one or more centers can focus on applying the newly taught skill.

Editing can end after students and their editors correct as many mechanical errors as possible, or after students meet with the teacher for a final editing conference; when mechanical correctness is crucial, this conference is important. Teachers proofread the composition with the student, and they identify and make the remaining corrections together, or the teacher makes checkmarks in the margin to note errors for the student to correct independently.

Stage 5: Publishing

When students publish their compositions, they bring their writing to life. They make the final copy and share it orally with a real audience of classmates, parents, and others; in this way, students come to think of themselves as authors. Publication is a powerful motivator: Students want to continue writing and to improve the quality of their writing through revising and editing (Weber, 2002).

MAKING BOOKS. The most popular way for students to publish their writing is by making books. Simple booklets can be made by folding a sheet of paper into quarters, like a greeting card; students write the title on the front and use the three remaining sides for their composition. They can also construct booklets by stapling sheets of writing paper together and adding covers made out of construction paper. Sheets of wallpaper cut from old sample books also make sturdy covers. These stapled booklets can be cut into various shapes, too. Students can make more sophisticated books by wrapping cardboard covers with contact paper, wallpaper samples, or cloth. Pages are sewn or stapled together, and the first and last pages (endpapers) are glued to the cardboard covers to hold the book together.

SHARING WRITING. Students share their writing by sitting in a special chair called the *Author's Chair* and reading their writing aloud to classmates. Afterward, classmates ask questions, offer compliments, and celebrate the completion of the writing project. Sharing writing is a social activity that helps writers develop sensitivity to their audience and confidence in themselves as authors. Beyond just providing the opportunity for students to share writing, teachers need to teach students how to make appropriate comments as they respond to their classmates' writing. Teachers also serve as a model for responding to students' writing without dominating the sharing.

Students also share their writing in these ways:

- Read it to their families
- Share it at a back-to-school event
- Place it in the class library
- Post it on the class website
- Display it at a school or community event
- Submit it to a student's literary magazine

Through this sharing, students communicate with genuine audiences who respond to their writing in meaningful ways.

Adapting the Writing Process for Young Students

Young students do learn to use the five-stage writing process, but at first, teachers often simplify it by abbreviating the revising and editing stages. Students' revising is limited to reading the text to themselves or to the teacher to check that they've written all that they wanted to say. Revising becomes more elaborate as students learn about audience and decide to "add more" or "fix" their writing to make it appeal to their classmates. Some emergent and beginning writers ignore editing altogether—as soon as they've dashed off their drafts, they're ready to publish or share their writing. Others, however, change a spelling, fix a poorly written letter, or add a period to the end of the text as they read over their writing. When students begin writing, teachers accept their work as it's written and focus on the message. Then as students gain experience with writing, teachers encourage them to fix more and more of their errors.

MyLab Education Self-Check 11.1

MyLab Education Application Exercise 11.1: The Five Stages of the Writing Process



Teaching Writing

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (2010) specify that students are expected to develop a range of writing strategies, skills, and applications to meet grade-level expectations. The Standards integrate reading and writing with social studies, science, and other content areas. They address these components:

Genres or Text Types. The Standards emphasize these three text types: persuasive, informational, and narrative writing. Students learn to vary their writing according to genre, purpose, and audience. These genres are introduced in kindergarten, where students use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to present their ideas, and as they become more proficient writers, they do the writing themselves.

Writing Process. Although the term *writing process* isn't mentioned in the Standards document, students are expected to produce writing where they develop ideas, get feedback from classmates and the teacher, refine and polish their drafts based on the feedback, and finally publish their compositions. Students at all grade levels are expected to explore digital tools for drafting and publishing compositions.

Research. Students conduct short research on topics related to thematic units to build knowledge, and then they present what they've learned to interested audiences. Young students work together as a whole class, and with more experience, they work in small groups and, finally, individually. By the end of fourth grade, students should be able to investigate topics, gather information from print and digital sources, take notes, organize information, and make lists of sources.

Range of Writing. Beginning in third grade, students are expected to be regularly involved in a combination of short- and long-term writing and research projects, usually in connection with thematic units. This Standard emphasizes the importance of having students develop writing fluency as they apply their knowledge of writing genres, the writing process, and research procedures to complete projects.

Check the Compendium of Instructional Procedures, which follows Chapter 12. These green terms also show a brief description of each procedure.

Teachers teach the writing process; present **minilessons** on writing strategies, the six traits, and other skills; and use a variety of instructional procedures to ensure that their students meet grade-level standards. This Common Core State Standards: Writing box presents additional information about the writing Standards.

Teachers use an apprenticeship approach to writing, where they cultivate a community of writers, teach students to use the writing process, and present **minilessons** that address the Common Core State Standards topics. Like Mrs. Albers, they combine explicit instruction with authentic practice as students apply what they're learning about writing strategies, the traits of effective writing, and genres in their own compositions.

Writing Strategies and Skills

Writing strategies are like reading strategies: They're tools that students use deliberately to craft effective compositions. Students apply many of the same strategies for both reading and writing, such as activating background knowledge, questioning, repairing, and evaluating, and they also use some strategies that are specific to writing. They use strategies purposefully as they plan, revise, and edit their writing. Writers also draw on other, more specific strategies at each stage of the writing process and for varied types of writing activities (Dean, 2006). Students learn to apply these writing strategies:

Elaborating. Writers expand their ideas by adding details, examples, and quotes; it's the opposite of *narrowing*. Sometimes students brainstorm additional words and ideas; at other times, however, they have to do more research to elaborate their ideas.

Formatting. Writers design the layout of the final copies of their compositions. Formatting plays a more important role in some genres than in others; for example, students spend a great deal of time formatting the poems they write and digital compositions of information, including PowerPoint presentations.

Generating. Writers brainstorm ideas and the words to express them. Sometimes they activate their background knowledge and brainstorm lists, but at other times, they read books or research a topic.

Common Core State Standards

Writing

The Common Core State Standards focus on having students learn writing strategies and skills that they apply through extended writing projects; many of the projects integrate writing with thematic units. Students use the writing process to develop and refine their writing, and they learn to use research procedures to build and present knowledge. The Standards emphasize these points:

- Students write persuasive, informational, and narrative texts for varied purposes and audiences.
- Students use a process to develop a topic, write a rough draft, get feedback, refine the composition, and publish the final copy.
- Students participate in research projects in connection with thematic units.
- Students participate in a wide range of writing projects on literacy and content-area topics.

To learn more about the writing Standards, go to <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>, or check your state's educational standards website.

Teach Kids to Be Strategic!

Writing Strategies

Teach students to use these strategies as they learn to use the writing process:

- Elaborate
- Format
- Generate
- Narrow
- Organize
- Proofread
- Reread
- Revise

Students practice these strategies as they participate in writing workshop and other writing activities. They use different strategies during various stages of the writing process; in drafting, for instance, they often use *generate*, *elaborate*, *organize*, and *reread*. If students struggle, reteach the strategies in minilessons, demonstrate their use, and think aloud about their application.

Narrowing. Writers limit the scope of their topic to make it more manageable. When students attempt to write about a broad topic, they're often so overwhelmed with information that they can't complete the composition.

Organizing. Writers impose an order on their presentation of ideas using their knowledge of narrative elements, expository structures, or poetic forms. Outlining is the traditional form of organizing, but clusters and other graphic organizers are usually more effective.

Proofreading. Writers proofread to identify mechanical errors in their compositions, including spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar mistakes.

Rereading. Writers often stop writing to read what they've written. They use this strategy for a number of reasons: to check that they're achieving their purpose, to monitor their flow of ideas, or to appreciate the voice they're creating. After a break, students reread to remember where they left off so they can begin to write again.

Revising. Revising isn't just a stage in the writing process; it's also a strategy writers use to improve the quality of their compositions. The four most important aspects are adding, deleting, substituting, and moving words, sentences, and longer pieces of text. For example, students add dialogue, delete redundant sentences, substitute more vivid verbs, or move paragraphs to improve the organization.

Students use these writing strategies purposefully as they draft and refine their writing.

In contrast, writing skills are knowledge-based, automatic actions that students learn to apply during the writing process. Writers use these skills:

Content Skills. Students apply skills such as crafting topic sentences to arrange information into paragraphs. These skills are most important during the drafting and revising stages.

Word Skills. Students use skills such as adding synonyms and figurative language during drafting and revising to make their writing clearer.

Sentence Skills. Students apply skills such as varying the type of sentences to make their writing more interesting. They use these skills during drafting and revising.

Grammar Skills. Students use skills such as monitoring subject–verb agreement to correct any nonstandard English errors during editing.

Mechanical Skills. Students apply spelling, capitalization, and punctuation skills to make their compositions more readable, especially during the editing stage.

Teachers use **minilessons** with demonstrations and **think-alouds** to teach writing strategies and skills, and then students apply what they’re learning during guided practice and independent writing projects. These strategies and skills are often reflected in **rubrics** that teachers and students use to assess writing.

The Six Traits

Specific techniques that writers use to capture readers’ attention and convey meaning are referred to as the *writer’s craft*. Establishing a clear voice, incorporating a useful organization, choosing precise words, and fashioning effective sentences are often mentioned as essential components of the writer’s craft. More than 20 years ago, researchers at Education Northwest identified six writer’s craft techniques, which they called *traits*: *ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions*. Later *presentation* was added as the seventh trait, but these qualities are still referred to as “the six traits” or “the six traits plus one.” Two of the researchers who developed the traits—Ruth Culham (2003, 2005) and Vicki Spandel (2008)—continue to design instruction and assessment procedures and share them with teachers. Students, even in the primary grades, learn to incorporate these traits into their writing:

Ideas. The ideas are the essence of a composition. Students choose an interesting idea during prewriting, and as they draft and revise, they narrow and develop it using main ideas and details.

Organization. The organization is the skeleton of the composition. Students hook the reader in the beginning, identify the purpose, present ideas logically, provide transitions between ideas, and end with a satisfying conclusion so that the important questions are answered. Students organize their writing during prewriting and follow their plans as they draft.

Voice. The writer’s distinctive style is *voice*; it’s what breathes life into a piece of writing. Culham (2003) calls voice “the writer’s music coming out through the words” (p. 102). During the drafting and revising stages, students create voice in their writing through the words they choose, the sentences they craft, and the tone they adopt.

Word Choice. Careful word choice makes the meaning clear and the composition more interesting to read. Students learn to choose lively verbs and specific nouns, create word pictures, and use idiomatic expressions as they craft their pieces. They focus on word choice as they draft and revise their writing.

Sentence Fluency. Sentence fluency is the rhythm and flow of language. Students vary the length and structure of their writing so that it has a natural cadence and is easy to read aloud. They develop sentence fluency as they draft, revise, and edit their writing.

Conventions. In the editing stage, students proofread their compositions to make sure they have used the conventions (or rules) of writing correctly: that means checking spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. When students correctly use the

Booklist The Six Traits

Trait	Books
Ideas	Baylor, B. (1995). <i>I'm in charge of celebrations</i> . Shannon, D. (2006). <i>Good boy, Fergus!</i> Willems, M. (2004). <i>Knuffle bunny</i> .
Organization	Fleming, D. (2006). <i>The cow who clucked</i> . Ryan, P. M. (2001). <i>Mice and beans</i> . Smith, R. (1993). <i>The hat book</i> .
Voice	Biedrycki, D. (2005). <i>Ace Lacewing, bug detective</i> . Raschka, C. (2007). <i>Yo! Yes?</i> Schachner, J. (2003). <i>Skippyjon Jones</i> .
Word Choice	Henkes, K. (2008). <i>Chrysanthemum</i> . Scieszka, J. (2005). <i>Baloney (Henry P.)</i> . Steig, W. (2009). <i>Amos & Boris</i> .
Sentence Fluency	Aylesworth, J. (1995). <i>Old black fly</i> . MacLachlan, P. (1994). <i>All the places to love</i> . Yolen, J. (1987). <i>Owl moon</i> .
Mechanics	Donohue, M. R. (2008). <i>Penny and the punctuation bee</i> . Pattison, D. (2003). <i>The journey of Oliver K. Woodman</i> . Pulver, R. (2003). <i>Punctuation takes a vacation</i> .

conventions of writing, the reader does not have to stop to figure out the intended message.

As students learn about these traits, they apply their knowledge and find ways to make their writing more effective.

TEACHING PROCEDURE. Teachers teach a series of **minilessons** about each trait. They explain the trait, share examples from books they've read aloud and from students' own writing, involve students in activities to investigate and experiment with the trait, and have students apply what they've learned in their own writing. The Booklist: The Six Traits presents books and activities that teachers can use in teaching the six traits.

As students study the six traits, they internalize what good writers do. They learn to recognize good writing, develop a vocabulary for talking about writing, get better at evaluating their own writing, and acquire strategies to improve the quality of their writing.

Writing Genres

The forms of writing are called **genres**. That's the same term used for the types of literature, and some literature and writing genres are the same, such as poetry, but others are different. Students learn to use a variety of writing genres, and they're often expected to apply their knowledge of writing genres on state- and district-mandated writing assessments. Through reading and examining writing samples, students become knowledgeable about these genres and how they're structured (Donovan & Smolkin, 2002).

DESCRIPTIVE WRITING. Students describe something by painting a word picture. They use sensory words and comparisons so that readers can imagine people, places, and things; they don't explain or tell a story about it. Sometimes writers add descriptive words and sentences to their writing, but they also do descriptive writing—including descriptive sentences and paragraphs—and poems. Teachers teach descriptive writing by having students examine something—an apple or a maple tree, for instance—or look at a photo or a piece of art, and brainstorm lists of words about the object or picture

using each of the five senses. Later, students use the words they've collected for a writing project.

EXPOSITORY WRITING. Students use expository writing to explain something, present information, or specify how to make or do something. They use the writing process to draft and refine alphabet books, informational books, and other types of reports to share information they've learned during thematic units and about their hobbies and special interests.

JOURNALS AND LETTERS. Young students compose daily entries about themselves and topics that interest them in personal journals; this type of journal is especially beneficial for emergent and beginning writers who are learning to print letters, spell high-frequency words, and develop writing fluency. Students also write entries in **reading logs** to explore books they're reading and in **learning logs** to examine big ideas they're studying in thematic units. In addition, students learn the format used in letters and write friendly letters, courtesy letters (thank you notes, invitations, get well cards), and email messages.

NARRATIVE WRITING. Students write stories about true and imaginary experiences, focusing on a single event and applying what they've learned about story elements and narrative devices. In particular, they organize their stories into three parts—beginning, middle, and end. Students often write about events in their own lives; these stories are called *personal narratives*. They also write innovations that are modeled on books they've read and retellings of familiar stories, often from a different viewpoint.

PERSUASIVE/ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING. Students use persuasive writing to make claims and persuade others to agree with them. They make posters and advertisements, write letters, and prepare book and movie reviews. When students write persuasively, they use logical arguments: They clearly state their position and support it with examples and evidence. Older students also identify and refute opposing viewpoints.

POETRY. Poetry is a unique genre: Poets create word pictures, powerful images, and stirring stories using very few words. Poetry is meant to be read aloud so that readers and listeners can appreciate the sounds of language as well as its meaning. Students use poetic forms to structure their poems and choose their words carefully, often using wordplay and poetic devices. They organize the words they write into lines, not sentences, and arrange the lines creatively on the page to visually enhance the meaning. Some students use capitalization and punctuation, but others ignore these conventions.

Students often write powerful poems, especially when they use poetic forms to structure their writing. Here are four poetic forms that students use successfully:

Color Poems. Students begin each line or every other line of their poems with a color; the same color may be repeated, or different colors may be used (Koch, 2000). For example, kindergartners dictated this poem about America's colors:

Red, white, and blue are America's colors.

Red is for love:

We love America.

We say, "America is the best!"

White is for patriotism:

We salute the flag.

We say the Pledge of Allegiance.

Blue is for honor:

We honor our brave soldiers.

We say, "thank you!"

Hurray for the red, white, and blue!

The repetition of colors and beginning the two lines that follow with *we* provide the structure for the poem.

"I Am . . ." Poems. Students assume the perspective of another person and repeat the "I am . . ." line at the beginning and end of each stanza. They begin the other lines with *I* followed by an active-voice verb, not a form of "to be." Fourth grader Madison wrote this poem about Neil Armstrong:

I am the First Man to walk on the moon.

I flew in a landing craft named Eagle.

I landed in the Sea of Tranquility.

I climbed down the ladder.

I put my left foot on the ground.

I said some famous words—

"That's one small step for a man,

one giant leap for mankind."

I collected soil samples.

I planted the American flag.

I am Neil Armstrong.

Madison repeats the *I* pattern to recount the events of the astronaut's famous moon walk.

"If I Were . . ." Poems. As in "I Am . . ." poems, students write from the perspective of other people or things (Koch, 2000). In this poem, second grader David writes about what he would do if he were a giant:

If I were a giant

I would drink up the seas

and I would touch the sun.

I would eat the world

and stick my head in space.

Students can also write poems from the perspective of characters in books they're reading, historical personalities, or things related to thematic units, such as a whale or a saguaro cactus.

List Poems. Students brainstorm a list about a topic, with each line following the same structure (Heard, 2009); the last line presents a twist or sums up the poem. You can read a list poem about a pizza in Chapter 9 and one about life at the aquarium in Chapter 12.

Students use the writing process to draft and refine their poems. During revising, they learn to “unwrite,” or delete unnecessary words in the poems, and as they make their final copies, students decide how to arrange the lines in their poems and how to use capitalization and punctuation.

Teaching English Learners

Writing Development

Writing can be a daunting task for English learners. Students need to know English vocabulary, sentence structure, and spelling to communicate effectively in writing, but Mrs. Albers’s first graders in the vignette at the beginning of the chapter showed that young English learners can become good writers when their teacher sets high expectations, teaches them how to write, and involves them in daily writing activities.

Teachers must be mindful of the increased linguistic demands placed on English learners and take into account these considerations as they teach writing:

Topics. At first, students write about personal topics—their families, after-school activities, friends, and family trips, for example—but with experience, they move on to writing about books they’re reading and topics they’re learning in thematic units. To nudge ELs toward new writing topics, teachers offer suggestions about content-related topics, demonstrate how to write a book on a topic related to a book or unit, and create a collaborative book where each student contributes a page. Making this switch is especially important because English learners need to take advantage of writing as a tool for learning academic vocabulary and understanding the big ideas they’re studying.

Talk. All students need to talk before they begin writing to activate background knowledge and develop ideas, but conversation is even more important for English learners because they’re learning English vocabulary and sentence structures, too. Teachers often make a list of academic words that they call a *word bank* as they talk with ELs during prewriting so the students will have the words available when they’re writing. Sometimes teachers include a few phrases they’ve practiced for students to use when they’re writing.

Models. English learners often use a pattern book as a model for their writing. Pattern books help students move beyond personal writing, and they’re useful in teaching new sentence structures. For example, students learn to write questions and answers as they make their own versions or innovations of Bill Martin Jr.’s *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (2010) and three of his other books that follow the same pattern: *Panda Bear, Panda Bear, What Do You See?* (2007b), about endangered animals; *Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What Do You See?* (2007a), about animal babies; and *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* (1992), about animal sounds. Students write innovations using *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (Numeroff, 1985), *The Cow Who Clucked* (Fleming, 2006), and other pattern books, too.

Focus on Ideas. Many young writers value correctly spelled words and neat handwriting over the clear communication of ideas; but as they learn to use the writing process, most students gradually understand that the focus is on developing ideas before they

reach the editing stage, and that messy rough drafts are a good thing because they reflect thoughtful drafting and revising. English learners, however, often struggle to accept the notion that developing ideas precedes mechanical correctness. Teachers demonstrate the writing process using interactive writing to nurture ELs' appreciation of the concept that writers often make their papers messy as they improve them.

If teachers address these considerations, ELs are better able to grow as writers along with their classmates.

Teachers also vary the instructional procedures they use with emergent, beginning, and fluent EL writers. Teachers use the **Language Experience Approach** to demonstrate how speech is recorded (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007). They help students organize their ideas into words and into one or more sentences, write the sentences, saying each word as they write it, and read the sentences. Later, students often copy the text underneath the teacher's writing and practice rereading it.

Beginning writers learn writing strategies and skills through **interactive writing**. As students take turns doing the writing, they learn to form letters correctly, spell high-frequency words and phonetically regular words, capitalize words, and add punctuation marks correctly. Teachers guide students, help them correct errors, and take advantage of teachable moments to provide instruction when students are most likely to learn from it. Students often practice what they've seen demonstrated when they're writing at writing centers or during writing workshop.

Once students become fluent writers, they still benefit from teacher scaffolding because they're continuing to deal with their limited knowledge of English vocabulary and linguistic structures. Teachers provide assistance by meeting with these students during prewriting and by conferencing with them while they're revising and editing their writing.

MyLab Education Self-Check 11.2

Assessing Students' Writing

Teachers use the instruction–assessment cycle to assess both the process students use as they write and the quality of their compositions. They observe as students use the writing process to develop their compositions and conference with students as they revise and edit their writing. Teachers notice, for example, whether students use writing strategies to organize ideas for writing and whether they take into account feedback from classmates when they revise. So that students can document their writing process activities, teachers also have them keep all drafts, checklists, and rubrics in writing folders.

THE INSTRUCTION–ASSESSMENT CYCLE Teachers integrate writing instruction with assessment by providing developmentally appropriate instruction and addressing the Common Core State Standards for their grade level. They follow these steps:

Step 1: Planning. Teachers plan developmentally appropriate instruction using their knowledge about students' current stage of writing development, and they identify Common Core State Standards to teach.

Step 2: Monitoring. Teachers monitor students' progress through regularly scheduled writing conferences. They read students' rough drafts, talk with them about their successes and struggles, and set goals to achieve before their next conference.

Step 3: Evaluating. Teachers evaluate students' writing using rubrics, and sometimes students also use rubrics to evaluate their own compositions. Rubrics may include items that are developmentally appropriate, items reflecting concepts that have recently been taught, and items reflecting Common Core State Standards.

Step 4: Reflecting. Teachers use their evaluation of students' learning to judge the effectiveness of their instruction and decide how to adapt instruction to better serve struggling students. In addition, students reflect on their own writing development. They reflect on their growth as writers by noting their accomplishments and setting goals for the next writing experience.

RUBRICS. Teachers develop rubrics, or scoring guides, to assess the quality of students' writing (Farr & Tone, 1994). Rubrics make the analysis of writing simpler and the assessment process more reliable and consistent. They may have four, five, or six levels, with descriptors related to ideas, organization, language, and mechanics at each level. Some rubrics are general and are appropriate for almost any writing assignment, and others are designed for a specific writing assignment. The Assessment Snapshot presents a kindergarten writing rubric used to document Emmy's growth. For more information about locating rubrics online, check the Assessment Tools feature in this chapter.

Students, too, can learn to create rubrics to assess the quality of their writing. To be successful, they need to analyze examples of other students' writing and determine the qualities that demonstrate strong, average, and weak papers; teachers need to model how to address the qualities at each level in the rubric. Skillings and Ferrell (2000) taught second and third graders to develop the criteria for evaluating their writing, and the students moved from using the rubrics their teachers prepared to creating their own three-level rubrics, which they labeled as the "very best" level, the "okay" level, and the "not so good" level. Perhaps the most important outcome of teaching students to create rubrics, according to Skillings and Ferrell, is that they develop metacognitive strategies and the ability to think about themselves as writers.

ON-DEMAND WRITING TESTS. In most school districts, students take on-demand writing tests every year, and most states have implemented writing assessments, beginning in third or fourth grade. These writing tests present a prompt for students to respond to within a set time period, and they're scored using a four- or six-point scale. Good writing instruction is the best way to prepare students for on-demand writing assessments (Angelillo, 2005). Students who use writing strategies and skills, apply the six traits, and vary their writing according to genre will do well on almost any type of writing assignment. Nevertheless, writing tests place additional demands on students:

The Prompt. Students need to know how to read and interpret the prompt. They must identify the genre and the audience and look for clue words, such as *describe* and *convince*, to figure out what they're expected to do. Prompts usually have several parts, so students must consider the entire prompt carefully without jumping to conclusions.

The Topic. Students need to get used to writing on assigned topics that may not interest them, because they're accustomed to choosing their own.

Time Restrictions. Students need to practice writing under test conditions so they'll know how to allocate their time for planning, writing, and proofreading.

Teachers teach students about prompts, model how to write in response to a prompt, and have students practice taking writing tests.

Assessment Snapshot

Kindergarten Writing Rubric

- 4 *Exceptional Writer*
- Writes several complete sentences or one sophisticated sentence.
 - Spaces between words and sentences consistently.
 - Spells some high-frequency words correctly.
 - Spells some consonant-vowel-consonant words correctly.
 - Uses capital letters to begin some sentences.
 - Uses periods and other punctuation marks to end some sentences.
- 3 *Developing Writer*
- Writes a complete sentence.
 - Spaces between some words.
 - Spells one or more high-frequency words correctly.
 - Spells beginning and ending sounds in most words.
 - Uses both upper- and lowercase letters.
- 2 *Beginning Writer*
- Writes from left to right and top to bottom.
 - Spells one or more words using one or more letters that represent beginning or other sounds in the word.
 - Rereads the writing with one-to-one matching of words.
- 1 *Emergent Writer*
- Uses random letters that do not correspond to sounds.
 - Uses scribbles to represent writing.
 - Draws a picture instead of writing.
 - Dictates words or sentences.

TEACHER'S NOTE
 Emmy is a developing writer. She's making very good progress. She writes long pieces that include several sentences. She spells the, go, in, I, you, see, and other high frequency words correctly, and most of her writing is easy to decipher. She uses phonics to sound out beginning and ending sounds in many phonetically regular words.

Teachers use a four-step procedure to help students practice for on-demand writing tests:

1. **Analyze the prompt.** Students read and analyze the prompt to determine what it's really asking them to do.
2. **Develop ideas.** Students brainstorm a list of ideas about the topic.
3. **Plan their writing.** Students create a graphic organizer with their plan for writing.
4. **Proofread.** Students take a minute or two at the end of the writing time to proofread their compositions and correct errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar.

Through these steps, students become familiar with the test-taking procedure. Shelton and Fu (2004) describe how a fourth grade teacher interrupted her students' writing workshop to provide an intensive six-week test preparation before the state on-demand writing assessment. During the preparation, students learned to read prompts, studied the two genres that might be tested, and practiced writing under test conditions. These fourth graders scored higher than the state average, but even though they did well, they disliked writing for the test and eagerly returned to writing workshop, where they chose their own topics, collaborated with classmates, and didn't have to adhere to time restrictions.

Assessment Tools

Rubrics

Teachers use rubrics to assess students' writing. Sometimes they create their own rubrics, but at other times, they use rubrics developed by the school district or state department of education. These rubrics are often used for yearly or quarterly mandated writing assessments. Basal reading programs and supplemental writing programs also provide rubrics.

In addition, teachers access writing rubrics that are posted online. They often use Google or another search engine to locate an online rubric that's appropriate for their grade level or for a specific writing assignment. They also check these websites that offer collections of rubrics:

- **Education Northwest**

<https://educationnorthwest.org> Scoring guides or rubrics to assess the 6 + 1 traits are available from Education Northwest, the group that developed this approach to writing instruction and assessment.

- **RubiStar**

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>. Use RubiStar to create your own rubric in English or Spanish.

- **Rubrician.com**

<http://www.rubrician.com> This website has links to hundreds of writing rubrics at all grade levels.

- **Writing With Writers**

<http://teacher.scholastic.com>

Scholastic provides genre-related writing rubrics, including descriptive writing, biography, and poetry scoring guides.

Before they use any writing rubric, teachers should examine it, checking that it addresses the characteristics or qualities they've taught, varies the achievement of characteristics at each level, and is written in student-friendly language.

If Students Struggle . . .

When students aren't making adequate progress in writing, teachers step in to determine the problem and then intervene to address it. Emergent, beginning, and fluent writers exhibit different problems that reflect what they know about writing, so teachers start by identifying students' stage of writing development. They observe students as they write independently and with classmates, examine samples of students' writing, and talk with students about their writing as they analyze their problems.

When the students are emergent writers, teachers ask themselves these questions:

- Do students use pencils to print letters and letterlike forms?
- Do students print their names and other letters of the alphabet?
- Do students demonstrate an awareness of concepts about written language, including the direction of print on a page?
- Do students dictate words and sentences for the teacher to write?
- Do students write a few high-frequency words?
- Do students choose letters to represent words according to beginning sound?

Some students struggle because they don't understand how written language works and haven't developed concepts about print. Some aren't focusing on letters and words, and others aren't applying phonemic awareness and phonics concepts they're being taught to represent words with letters signifying beginning sounds. Teachers use **shared reading** and the **Language Experience Approach** in their interventions, and they also provide daily opportunities for students to write independently and with teacher guidance.

When students are beginning writers, teachers consider these questions:

- Do students write single-draft, multisentence compositions on a topic?
- Do students reread their writing and try to make it better?
- Do students sit in the author's chair to share their writing?
- Do students spell some high-frequency words correctly?
- Do students apply phonics and spelling strategies to spell other words?
- Do students use capitalization and punctuation?
- Do students use legible handwriting?

Beginning writers who struggle have developed concepts about written language, but they aren't aware of audience and haven't learned to develop ideas, spell words conventionally, and write legibly. Teachers design interventions that include using **minilessons** and **interactive writing** to teach writing strategies and skills, introduce the writing process, and provide daily guided and independent writing opportunities.

Once students are fluent writers, teachers ask themselves these questions:

- Do students use the writing process to draft and refine their writing?
- Do students use writing strategies to solve problems?
- Do students apply their knowledge of the six traits when they revise their writing?
- Do students vary their writing according to genre?

Fluent writers' problems are difficult to identify and solve because as students get older, their problems become more complex. Teachers usually begin with the writing process and observe as students complete a writing project. Many struggling writers don't spend enough time gathering and organizing ideas before they begin writing, and they revise only superficially, if at all. Editing is another stumbling point because many struggling writers are poor spellers who can't catch the words they've misspelled during proofreading. Ensuring that students understand and use the writing process goes a long way toward improving their writing. Teachers also provide time every day for these struggling students to write with teacher guidance and independently.

MyLab Education Self-Check 11.3

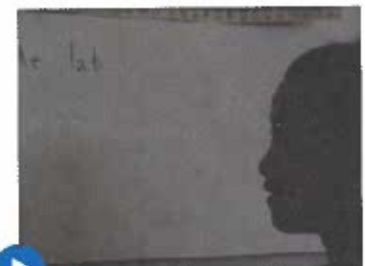
The Writing Process In Action

Teachers use an apprenticeship model of writing where they cultivate a community of writers, and students use the writing process to draft and refine their writing, as the first graders in Mrs. Albers's classroom did in the vignette. Teachers use interactive writing to model how to apply the writing process, and they use writing centers and writing workshop to provide opportunities for students to do their own writing.

Interactive Writing

Students and the teacher create a text together in **interactive writing** and "share the pen" as they write it on chart paper (Button, Johnson, & Furgerson, 1996; McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000). The teacher guides students as they write the words and sentences on chart paper, taking advantage of opportunities to demonstrate how to form letters and think aloud about remembering the sentence they're writing. The teacher also explains about capitalizing names, using apostrophes in contractions, and adding quotation marks. As students learn more about written language, the teacher releases more and more responsibility to them, and they write longer texts.

Teachers use interactive writing to write class news, predictions before reading, retellings of stories, thank-you letters, math story problems, and many other group writings (Tompkins & Collom, 2004). An interactive writing sample written by a



MyLab Education Video Example 11.3

Ms. McCloskey teaches in a multilingual K-3 classroom. She engages her first graders in interactive writing. Most of these students are English learners. How does Ms. McCloskey reinforce skills during the lesson?

Figure 11-5 An Interactive Writing Sample

Wash your hands
 with soap to
 kill germs.

kindergarten class during a health unit is shown in Figure 11-5. Students took turns writing individual letters. The boxes drawn around some of the letters represent correction tape that was used to correct misspellings or poorly formed letters.

Teachers help students spell all words conventionally. They teach high-frequency words, assist students in segmenting sounds and syllables in other words, point out unusual spelling patterns, and teach other conventions of print. Whenever students misspell a word or form a letter incorrectly, teachers use correction tape to cover the mistake and help them make the correction. Teachers emphasize the importance of using conventional spelling as a courtesy to readers; in contrast to the emphasis on conventional spelling in interactive writing, students are encouraged to use invented spelling when writing independently at writing centers or during writing workshop.

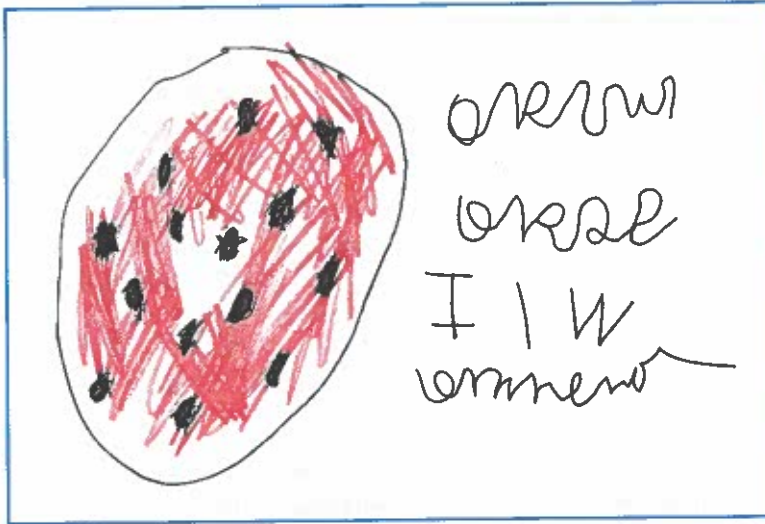
Writing Centers

Teachers set up writing centers in preschool and kindergarten classrooms so that students have a special place to write. The center should be located at a table with chairs and equipped with a box of supplies containing pencils, crayons, a date stamp, different kinds of paper, journal notebooks, a stapler, blank books, notepaper, and envelopes. The alphabet, printed in upper- and lowercase letters, should be available for students to refer to as they write. In addition, a crate with files for each student is needed so writers can store their work. They also send their completed writings to classmates using the classroom mail delivery system. Writers often place their messages in a box or bag at the center, and each day one student delivers the mail.

When students come to the writing center, they draw and write in journals, compile books, and write messages to classmates. At first, they write single-draft compositions, but the social interaction that's part of life at a center encourages students to consider their audience and make revisions and editing changes. Teachers should be available to encourage and assist students at the center. They can observe students as they invent spellings and can provide information about letters, words, and sentences, as needed. If the teacher can't be at the writing center, perhaps an aide, a parent volunteer, or an older student might be able to assist.

Young students also make books at the writing center modeled on books they've read. For example, they use the same patterns in *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* (Martin, 1992); *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 2002); *No David!* (Shannon, 1998); and *Is Your Mama a Llama?* (Guarino, 2004) to create innovations. Figure 11-6 shows Benji's response to *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (Numeroff, 1985). This emergent writer read his writing this way: "I love chocolate chip cookies." Not surprisingly, the four-year-old focused on the cookie theme, not the "if . . . then" structure of the book.

Figure 11-6 An Emergent Writer's Sample



With more literacy experiences, Benji will learn to incorporate the structure of the book he's using as a model.

Writing Workshop

Writing workshop is the best way to implement the writing process (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2007). Students write on topics that they choose themselves and assume ownership of their writing. At the same time, the teacher's role changes from provider of knowledge to guide, and the classroom becomes a community of writers who write and share their writing.

Students have writing folders in which they keep all papers related to the writing project they're working on. Different kinds of paper, some lined and some unlined, are available, as are writing instruments, including pencils and red and blue pens. Students also have access to the classroom library because their writing often grows out of books they've read; they may write a pattern story or retell a story from a different viewpoint, for example.

As they write, students sit at desks or tables arranged in small groups. The teacher circulates, conferencing briefly with everyone, and the classroom atmosphere is free enough that students converse quietly with classmates and move around to assist each other or share ideas. There's space for students to meet for revising groups, and often

PreK Practices

Can four-year-olds learn to write?

Preschoolers aren't too young to be writers (Schickedanz & Casbergue, 2009). They understand that print carries a message and that it's different from drawing. Many four-year-olds incorporate writing into play activities; for example, they create signs for block constructions and write grocery lists in the housekeeping center. Others staple together booklets of paper and write books using a combination of drawing and scribbles to convey a message (Ray & Glover, 2008). Sometimes they remember the text long enough to reread it; at other times, however, it's forgotten as quickly as it's written. Once they learn to write their names, preschoolers acquire a stock of familiar letters to use in writing other words, and they begin to write simple messages that adults can decipher.



MyLab Education
Video Example 11.4

Mrs. Ockey is engaging her second graders in a minilesson on using multiple paragraphs. Which of the six writing traits is Mrs. Ockey teaching her students?

a sign-up sheet for revising groups is posted in the classroom. A table is available for the teacher to meet with individual students or small groups for conferences, revising groups, proofreading, and minilessons.

Writing workshop is a 60-minute period scheduled each day. During this time, students are involved in three components: writing, sharing, and minilessons. Sometimes teacher interactive read-alouds are added when they're not used in conjunction with reading workshop.

MINILESSONS. Teachers teach minilessons on writing workshop procedures; writing strategies and skills, such as organizing ideas, proofreading, and using quotation marks; the six traits; and writing genres (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2007). Teachers often display an anonymous piece of writing (from a student in another class or from a previous year) for students to read and use it in teaching the lesson. Teachers also select excerpts from read-aloud books and mentor texts to show how published authors use writing strategies and skills.

WRITING. Students spend 30 minutes or longer working on writing projects. Just as students in reading workshop read at their own pace, in writing workshop, they usually work independently on writing projects they've chosen themselves. They move through the writing process as they plan, draft, revise, edit, and finally, publish their writing:

Prewriting. Students choose topics and set their own purposes for writing. Then they gather and organize ideas, often drawing pictures, making graphic organizers, or talking out their ideas with classmates.

Drafting. Students work independently to write rough drafts using the ideas they developed during prewriting.

Revising. Students participate in small groups to share their rough drafts and get feedback to help them revise their writing.

Editing. Students work with classmates to proofread and correct mechanical errors in their writing, and they also meet with the teacher for a final editing.

Publishing. Students prepare a final copy of their writing, and they sit in the author's chair to share it with classmates.

Overview Of The Instructional Approach Writing Workshop

Topic	Description
Purpose	To provide students with opportunities for authentic writing activities.
Components	Writing workshop consists of writing, sharing, teaching minilessons, and teacher read-alouds to students.
Theory Base	The workshop approach reflects sociolinguistic and information-processing theories, because students participate in authentic activities that encourage them to enjoy writing.
Applications	Teachers often add writing workshop to other instructional approaches so students have opportunities to use the writing process to develop and refine compositions.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn to work through the stages of the writing process. • Activities are student directed, and students work at their own pace. • Teachers have opportunities to work individually with students during conferences.
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers often feel a loss of control because students are working at different stages of the writing process. • Teachers have the responsibility to teach minilessons on strategies and skills, both to the whole class and to students working in small groups. • Students must learn to be task oriented and to use time wisely to be successful.

At first, students may use an abbreviated writing process, but once they've learned to revise and edit, they move through all five stages of the writing process.

Teachers conference with students as they write. Many teachers prefer moving around the classroom to meet with students rather than having writers come to a table to meet with them: Too often, a line forms, and students lose precious writing time. Some teachers move around the classroom in a regular pattern, meeting with one fifth of the class each day so that they're sure to conference with everyone during the week.

Other teachers spend the first 15 minutes of writing time stopping briefly to check on 10 or more students. Many use a zigzag pattern to reach all areas of the classroom each day. These teachers often kneel down beside each student, sit on the edge of the student's chair, or carry their own stool around to each student's desk. During the one- or two-minute conferences, teachers ask students what they're writing, listen to them read a paragraph or a page or two, and ask what they plan to do next. Then these teachers use the remaining time to conference more formally with students who are revising and editing their compositions. They identify strengths in students' writing, ask questions, and discover possibilities during revising conferences. Some teachers like to read the pieces themselves, and others like to listen to students read their drafts aloud. As they interact with students, teachers model the kinds of responses that students are learning to give to each other.

Students work with classmates to revise and edit their writing. They share their rough drafts in revising groups composed of three or four classmates. Sometimes teachers join in, but students normally run the groups themselves. They take turns reading their rough drafts to each other and listen as classmates offer compliments and suggestions for revision. Students also participate in revising and editing centers. They know how to work at each center and understand the importance of working with classmates to make their writing better.

After proofreading their drafts with a classmate and then meeting with the teacher for a final editing, students make the final copy of their writing. They often want to word process their writing so that it looks professional. Many times, students compile their final copies to make books, but sometimes they attach their writing to artwork, make posters, write letters that will be mailed, or perform scripts. Not every piece is necessarily published; sometimes students decide not to continue with a piece of writing, and they file that piece in their writing folders and start something new.

SHARING. For the last 10 minutes, students share their new publications (Mermelstein, 2007). They take turns sitting in the author's chair to read their published writing aloud. After each sharing, classmates clap and offer compliments; they may also make other comments and suggestions, but the focus is on celebrating completed writing projects, not on revising them.

MANAGING WRITING WORKSHOP. It takes time to implement the workshop approach because students have to learn how to use the writing process to develop and refine a piece of writing and other workshop procedures (Gillet & Beverly, 2001). Some students expect to write single-draft compositions because that's what they're used to doing, or they complain that they don't know what to write about because they're used to having their teachers supply the topics. But with careful instruction and clear guidelines, even young students can learn to use writing workshop, as Mrs. Albers's first graders demonstrated in the vignette.

Teachers develop a schedule for writing workshop, allocating as much time as possible for writing. The writing workshop schedule in first and second grade classrooms often looks like this:

8:45–9:05 Minilesson

9:05–9:35 Writing

9:35–9:45 Sharing

After developing the schedule, teachers post it in the classroom and talk to students about the activities and their expectations. Teachers teach the workshop procedures and continue to model them until students become comfortable with the routines. As students gain experience with the workshop approach, their enthusiasm grows and the workshop approach is successful.

Teachers monitor students' progress on their writing projects using a classroom chart that Nancie Atwell (1998) calls "status of the class"; a third grade class chart is shown in the Assessment Snapshot: Status of the Class Chart. At the beginning of each writing workshop session, students identify the stage of the writing process they're involved in and write it on the chart; if they move to another stage during the writing period, they also write in that number. This chart provides a quick way for teachers to assess whether students are moving through the writing process at a reasonable pace, determine if anyone is "stuck," decide who's ready for a revising or editing conference, and choose students to sit in the author's chair to share their writing.

As you engage in writing instruction use **My Teaching To-Do Checklist: Writing Instruction** to reflect on the effectiveness of your teaching.

Assessment Snapshot

Status of the Class Chart

Names	Dates 3/17	3/18	3/19	3/20	3/21	3/24	3/25	3/26
Antonio	4	5	5	5	1	1	1	2
Bella	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	4
Charlie	3	3	1	2	2	3	3	1
Dina	5	5	5	1	1	1	1	2
Dustin	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	1
Eddie	2	3	2	4	5	1	1	2
Elizabeth	2	3	3	4	4	4	5	1
Elsa	1	2	2	3	4	5	5	1

Code: 1 = Prewriting 2 = Drafting 3 = Revising 4 = Editing 5 = Publishing

TEACHER'S NOTE
 Most of my students are making good progress using the writing process in writing workshop, but several are struggling. Charlie gets stuck during revising and then abandons his drafts. Dina works very slowly. Eddie rushes through the process, and his writing reflects this. Elsa works quickly, too, but her writing is strong.

MY TEACHING TO-DO CHECKLIST: Writing Instruction

- I cultivate a community of writers.
- I provide daily opportunities for my students to write.
- I guide students as they apply the writing process, with particular emphasis on revising.
- I model and teach writing strategies and skills.
- I teach the six traits so students can incorporate these qualities into their own writing.
- My students participate regularly in writing workshop.
- I train my students to use rubrics to assess their own writing.
- I collect my students' writing in portfolios.
- I integrate state standards into my instruction.

Chapter Review

Scaffolding Students' Writing Development

- Teachers teach the five stages in the writing process—*prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing*—so that students can write and refine their compositions.
- Teachers teach students about the six traits of effective writing—*ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and mechanics*.
- Teachers assess students' writing development using rubrics and on-demand writing tests.
- Teachers use interactive writing, writing centers and writing workshop to teach the writing process.

Accountability Check

Visit the following assessment links to access quiz questions and instructional applications.

MyLab Education Application Exercise 11.2: Understanding Literacy Development
 MyLab Education Application Exercise 11.3: Understanding Literacy Development
 MyLab Education Application Exercise 11.4: Understanding Literacy Development
 MyLab Education Application Exercise 11.5: Monitoring Literacy Development
 MyLab Education Application Exercise 11.6: Measuring Literacy Development

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