

Writing A-Z

Helpful Tips for Teachers

DIFFERENTIATION

1. Use the Skills Lessons to personalize writing instruction for each student to strengthen writing skills that you notice need practice in written compositions
2. Because Process Writing Lessons are leveled, it is easy to have the whole class complete lessons and compositions on the same text type while still delivering developmentally appropriate resources for each level of writer.
3. Use the ELL Guide found with the Process Writing Lessons to target instruction for English Language Learners who need more support with the connection between the written and spoken word.
4. Remember: Each Process Writing Lesson provides a strong foundation for each type of writing as students are learning how to write. However, once students are fluently writing, encourage them to take risks with their writing and be creative with their writing for each text type.

CLASSROOM TIPS

1. Put Graphic Organizers on an interactive whiteboard during the prewrite section of a Process Writing Lesson and complete it as a class activity.
2. Use a Research Packet to introduce students to an upcoming topic in science or social studies, and use the Research Packet to support writing about the topic.
3. Manage students' time using Writing A-Z's online writing tools with simple stacks of plastic cups. Write each student's name on a plastic cup and put the cups in stacks. Use as many stacks as you have classroom computers, dividing the cups as evenly as possible among the stacks. Each student whose cup is on top of a stack is "up" at a computer. Students can set a timer for their turn and then move their cup to the bottom of the stack so the next student can take a turn.
4. Create time-saving writing center activities using the Story Cards, Wordless Books, Writing Prompts, or any other Quick Writing Activities.
5. Make writing time special by setting a mood that helps students be comfortable and creative. You might play music, arrange different seating areas, and have a computer set up for students to take turns using the online writing tools.
6. Print a set of seasonal writing prompts to place next to each classroom computer. Have students respond to a prompt using the Write Your Way online writing tool.

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PLANNING

1. Use pocket folders for each student to keep his or her writing in throughout the writing process. Have students keep ideas for writing on one side of the folder and drafts in progress on the other side.
2. Be sure to read the Overview page at the beginning of each text type lesson. This page gives valuable information about how to pace the lesson, important points to address before teaching the lesson, and book connections that provide examples of the text type.
3. Remind students to put a date on the top of their compositions to keep track of the progression in their writing.

RESOURCE-SPECIFIC TIPS

1. Have students practice their friendly letter writing skills by writing to pen pals in another class or school.
2. Have students create their own author videos using the Interview Process Writing Lesson to create questions to interview authors. Have students interview each other about writing that has been placed in the online Kids Writing Library.
3. Cut the text writing prompts into strips. Staple each strip to a sheet of writing paper and pass one paper to each student. Have students write a second sentence for the “story,” and then pass the paper to the next student. Have those students write the third sentence. Continue for a designated number of passes or until a specific time.
4. Did you know that Writing A-Z has video interviews with authors? Have students watch these videos to inspire and motivate their writing.
5. Help students draft a business email or business letter to ask a children’s book author for an interview. Arrange a video chat with the author or have the author visit the class, and have students create interview questions as a whole class before talking with the author.



PUBLISHING AND PRESENTATION

1. Motivate student writing by establishing a storytelling festival in your school where students can read or perform their compositions in front of an audience.
2. Use books in the Kids Writing Library to read aloud to the whole class each day. Have the student who wrote the book sit at the front of the class to respond to questions about the book as the featured author of the day.
3. Remember: The online writing tools can be used to help students generate work products, such as a book or written presentation, as part of project-based learning.
4. Have students log in to the Process Writing Workshop to apply what they have learned in Process Writing Lessons. Make assignments or have students write independently within the online tool.
5. Have classroom volunteers help type or bind student compositions into books. Have students illustrate their stories and place them in class book bins or the school library for other students to check out and read.
6. Have the entire school teach the informational report lesson, and have students write a report on the same topic. Display the reports during Open House. Students and parents will see how writing progresses through the developmental levels.
7. Assign pairs or groups of students to collaborate on making a book in the Build-a-Book online writing tool to share with the class.

SISTER WEBSITE CONNECTIONS

1. Did you know that you can use the Leveled Books on Reading A-Z to support the lessons on writing genres? Look for models or examples of informative/explanatory, narrative, opinion/argument, and transactional writing.
2. Did you know that sister site Raz-Kids shares some resources with Reading A-Z? On Raz-Kids, students can listen to and read examples of informative/explanatory, narrative, opinion/argument, and transactional compositions before you formally teach the lesson on a particular text type.