

From: The Write Tools <training@thewritetools.net>

Subject: The Importance of Readable Writing

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Help Your Students Write Readable Papers

Consider hosting a Summer Writing Institute at your school.

The staff from The Write Tools will help you design a customized week of training that will send teachers back to school prepared to implement successful writing instruction beginning the first day of school.

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With writing assessments coming up this spring, it's important to spend some time with students talking about the +1 trait of the 6+1 Traits of Writing...Presentation. When an outside scorer is looking at student work, scores are improved when the writing is legible and easy to read.



Begin by developing some common "rules" for readable papers. If your entire school adopts the same rules, it's so helpful to students. An example from one classroom teacher looked like this:

Rules for Readable Writing

1. Place your heading on the top right side of your paper. Include your first and last name, the date, and the subject and class.
2. The title (if necessary) should be below the heading in the center of the page.
3. Indent each new paragraph one inch.
4. Write between the pink margin lines.
5. If you write with a pencil, use dark lead. Never cross out something written in pencil--revisions/edits should be erased and corrected.
6. If you use ink, use blue or black ink on final papers.
7. Handwriting should be neat and easy to read. Do not switch ink color or style of writing in the middle of a final copy.
8. All final copies should show pride in your work.

Give students a copy of your Rules for Readable Writing. Feel free to add/subtract rules that are important to your staff. Discuss the guidelines with students, and then show them a short piece of writing on a piece of chart paper that follows these rules. You might use this as an example:

Luisa Chavez

1/16/08

Literacy 2

Readable Writing

When I am doing a final copy of a piece of writing, I must be sure that it is readable. Indenting each new paragraph is a must. Staying between the margin lines is also important. I must always use my best handwriting so the reader can enjoy my well-written paper. I take pride in having neat papers to share with others.

Have students work diligently to produce an error-free paper. Collect them when they are finished. This is one assignment you might consider having them redo, if necessary, so you end up with each student's best work.

The following day, return their paper to them in a plastic sheet protector. Although this is an expense, it is usually a big hit! Have them put their paper in the front of their binder/writing folder to use as their personal rubric for readable writing. If necessary, compare future work that is not as neat to the sample in the sheet protector, to remind them of what they are capable of! When students are ready to write a final copy of a paper, remind them you want "readable writing."

What is your district doing for staff development this summer? We're scheduling Summer Writing Institutes, and would love to talk to someone in your district about this exciting opportunity. E-mail us at training@thewritetools.net or call us at 303-221-5301 to let us know who to contact.

Sincerely,
The Write Tools, LLC

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