

Improving Literacy Instruction

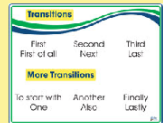
The Write Tools Companion Software is available!

Our software is the perfect addition to your exceptional writing instruction.

Click here to learn more about it and view some on-line tutorials.

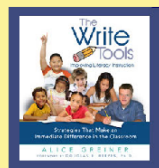
Don't forget to order your classroom posters!

Our big bold posters are perfect to use during instruction and to post as a reminder to your students. Click here to view them all!



Take a look at our newest modules!

We have released two new modules, Descriptive Writing, and Research and Report Writing. Training for these modules is in demand, so, schedule your staff development soon!



www.thewritetools.net

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We're Back to School!

Here are some ideas for planning your writing instruction for the year...

Welcome back! Hopefully everyone is ready for and excited about the 2009-2010 school year! During our trainings, we get many questions about how to organize The Write Tools strategies into a year-long plan. We'd like to share a few suggestions with you:

When to teach writing

1. Determine specifically when you will be teaching writing to your students.

In order for students to experience growth and success, they need to write. Will you teach writing each day as half of your literacy block? Will you alternate reading days and writing days? Will you alternate reading "weeks" with writing "weeks"? Many different systems will work, but you must have a plan that you can stick with! Don't let writing time be thrown out the window whenever a disruption occurs! Look for opportunities to write all day long when a 45 minute chunk of time isn't possible. Small bits of time spent writing, modeling writing, or "writing out loud" all count as writing instruction.

What to teach

2. Now that you have a plan for when, move on to what.

Consider first setting up a yearly plan where you map out your writing "units." Units should reflect the assessments your students will be taking, as well as the state standards for your grade level. Units based on particular genres can be one way to organize your thinking. An example from middle school teacher is shown below:

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Review paragraph writing along with prompt writing	Expository Essays	Review both Personal and Narrative and Expository Essays by having students write one of each on the same topic (companion papers)	Research Papers
Personal Narratives	Persuasive Essays	State Testing	Compare/Contrast Essays

Once you have a general idea of where you want to go, you can map out more specific lesson plans.

Aspects to include

3. When you are ready to begin a particular unit of writing, consider the aspects you will include in your daily writing routine.

In the beginning of a unit, each day may look a little different as you "frontload" the students with the skills/strategies they'll need to be successful with a particular genre. Once your great instruction has occurred, it will be time for independent writing. These are some of the activities you might plan for as you put together a writing unit in more detail:

- Exposing students to **Mentor Text** from that genre through read-alouds, free response, guided reading or independent reading
- **Whole Class Instruction** when a strategy is new. Are students ready to learn and practice a new method for writing a topic sentence? A new strategy for planning? A list of characteristics that are unique to a particular genre?
- **Writing Demonstrations.** Are you going to write for them so you have a strong model on the wall in your classroom for them to refer to during Independent Writing?
- **Collaborative Writing.** Are they going to work with a small group to practice a particular genre of writing that might be new to them? Consider having them work through the entire writing process with peers of various abilities to produce a model for your classroom.
- **Independent Writing.** Is it time to "turn them loose" in a workshop type setting to produce a piece of writing independently? During this time you'll be free to conference with individual students.
- **Mini-Lessons.** Are you noticing common needs in any particular area? Is it time for a mini-lesson on writing dialogue or logical versus emotional arguments?

If you are new to receiving these email tips, consider checking out our past years' tips. A few helpful ones for early in the school year might be:

- Quick Assessments to Start the Year
- Tips for Quick Assessments
- Back-To-School Supplies



To locate these tips, visit our website at www.thewritetools.net. Above the red apple, click on the TIPS button, and then click on the last button that says *Tips and Ideas for Writing Instruction* from The Write Tools.

As you know, The Write Tools has modules available for many different types of writing. Each one is packed with the ideas you need to do a complete unit with your students. Please keep us in mind as you plan your staff development for the year. We'd love to see you again!

Sincerely,

The Write Tools, LLC