

# Writing Workshop



Resources and information on implementing the Writing Workshop, also known as *Writer's Workshop*.

The Writing Workshop, similar to the Reading Workshop, is a method of teaching writing using a workshop method. Students are given opportunities to write in a variety of genres and helps foster a love of writing. The Writing Workshop allows teachers to meet the needs of their students by differentiating their instruction and gearing instruction based on information gathered throughout the workshop.

This page gives a basic overview of the Writing Workshop.



## Components of the Writing Workshop

Time:	Component:
5 minutes	Read aloud
10 - 15 minutes	Mini-lessons
30 - 60 minutes	Independent Writing & Conferring
	Guided Writing
5-10 minutes	Sharing



## Read Aloud of Touchstone/Mentor Texts



Usually, when teachers use Writing Workshop, they teach using genre studies. Examples are *personal narratives*, *information writing*, *procedural writing (how-to)*, and so forth.

If students are expected to produce writing in these genres, then they need to be immersed with books based on those genres. These texts are known as **touchstone texts** or **mentor texts**.

Read alouds are a way to use authors as mentors for writing styles and genres.

Students can see how writers use different styles and literary elements to create pieces of writing.

Teachers are not required to read the entire text. Excerpts are acceptable and recommended.

### Websites on touchstone/mentor texts:

<a href="#">Touchstone Texts</a>	<a href="#">Book List</a>	<a href="#">Touchstone/Mentor Texts</a>
<a href="#">Read Alouds List</a>	<a href="#">Touchstone Books List</a>	<a href="#">Bibliography for Older kids</a>
<a href="#">Chapter on Mentor Texts</a>	<a href="#">Mentor Texts for Launching</a>	

## Mini-Lessons



The mini-lessons for Writing Workshop teach concepts, strategies, and techniques for writing while encouraging students to write in different genres or styles. The 10-15 minute mini-lessons gives teachers the opportunity to give direct instruction to students and model the lessons using authentic literature or teacher's own writing. *Sample mini-lessons can include:*





- procedures for Writing Workshop
- writing strategies and skills
- literary elements
- literary techniques (i.e. voice, descriptive words, etc.)
- genre studies
- text features

Lucy Calkins discusses the architecture or format of a mini-lesson. You can read about it at this site: [Architecture of a Mini-lesson](#)

Here is a [mini-lesson planning sheet](#) from BTC to help you plan effective mini-lessons.

### Websites for Writing Mini-lessons:

<a href="#">Writing Minilessons</a>	<a href="#">Mandy Gregory's Mini-lessons</a>	<a href="#">Writing Mini-lessons</a>
<a href="#">First Grade Mini-lessons</a>	<a href="#">Second Grade Mini-lessons</a>	<a href="#">Possible Mini-lessons</a>
<a href="#">Writing Plan for Kindergarten</a>		

Independent Writing	Conferring						
 <p>The majority of time of Writing Workshop is devoted to independent writing. During this time, students are prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing their pieces. Depending on the age and abilities of your students, independent writing can be as short as 15 minutes or as long as 45-60 minutes. It helps to build stamina with your class, beginning with a short amount of time and building that time until they can work for up to 30 minutes or more.</p> <p>According to Katie Wood Ray (<i>The Writing Workshop</i>, 2001), students can also do other activities during their writing time, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• writing in their schema notebooks</li> <li>• journal writing</li> <li>• writing exercises to experiment with language and style</li> <li>• conducting peer-conferences</li> <li>• reading to support writing</li> </ul>	 <p>During independent writing time, the teacher confers with students about their writing. The teacher should keep anecdotal records which include the date of the conference, observations, discussion, and teaching points.</p> <p>Teachers should keep conferences short. The purpose is to ask students how their writing is going and to teach them something that makes sense at the time.</p> <p><b>Websites on Conferring:</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="881 961 1317 1226"> <tr> <td><a href="#">How do I conference with students?</a></td> <td><a href="#">Top 10 Rules for Conferring</a></td> <td><a href="#">Conferring Notes</a></td> </tr> <tr> <td><a href="#">Conferring in Writer's Workshop</a></td> <td><a href="#">How to Make Conferring Better</a></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<a href="#">How do I conference with students?</a>	<a href="#">Top 10 Rules for Conferring</a>	<a href="#">Conferring Notes</a>	<a href="#">Conferring in Writer's Workshop</a>	<a href="#">How to Make Conferring Better</a>	
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Guided Writing	Sharing						
 <p>During independent writing time, the teacher can gather a group of students to work on guided writing. Similar to guided reading, the teacher works with a group based on their needs. This is particularly helpful if a group of students is having difficulty with a concept and you want to avoid repeating the same conference with a number of students.</p>	 <p>Sharing is an extremely important component of the writing workshop that many teachers tend to dismiss due to time constraints.</p> <p>During the share portion, students contribute what they did during their independent writing time, either with the whole group or with a peer. This gives students the opportunity to observe and learn from each other.</p>						

## Management of the Writing Workshop

### Schema/Writer's Notebooks or Folders:

Writer's notebooks, also known as schema notebooks, are a place for students to write notes, practice their writing, and other various activities. Check out the sites below for more information.

- [Launching Notebooks and Writing Workshop Powerpoint](#)
- [Creating Writer's Notebooks](#)
- [Writer's Notebooks](#)
- [Ideas for Writing in a Writer's Notebook Powerpoint](#)
- [The Writer's Notebook](#)
- [Writer's Notebooks](#)

### [Writing Process Bulletin Board Pieces](#) -

You can use them to remind students about the writing process or you can use them as headers for a management system. Place a plastic cup under each header and students place a wooden stick or clothes pin with their name in the cups to keep track of where they are in the writing process.

### Launching Writing Workshop:

The first unit of study Lucy Calkins recommends is the launching of the Writing Workshop. This establishes the rules, procedures, and practices for running the writing workshop in your classroom.

Here are some sites that were helpful when I was planning my own launching unit:

- [Launching the Writing Workshop Packet \(a must see!!\)](#)
- [Launching Writing Workshop](#)
- [Starting Writer's Workshop](#)
- [Launching Writer's Workshop for Upper Grades](#)
- [Getting Your Classroom Ready](#)
- [Launching Mini-lessons](#)
- [Launching Writing Workshop Powerpoint](#)
- [Starting Writer's Workshop](#)

### More sites:

<a href="#">How to Start a Writer's Workshop</a>	<a href="#">Beth Newingham's Writing Workshop Pages</a>	<a href="#">Mandy Gregory's Writing Workshop Management Tips</a>	<a href="#">Overview of Writer's Workshop</a>
<a href="#">Reading/Writing Journey</a>	<a href="#">Writer's Workshop</a>	<a href="#">Writing Workshop Forms</a>	<a href="#">Writer's Workshop</a>
<a href="#">Writer's Workshop for Elementary Kids</a>	<a href="#">Structure of Writer's Workshop</a>	<a href="#">Writer's Toolbox: Helping Teachers Teach Writing</a>	<a href="#">Example of DonorsChoose</a>

