

12 Writing Essentials for All Grade Levels

Teach these essentials well in any purposeful writing, and with guidance students can transfer their use to all forms of writing.

- **writing for a specific reader and meaningful purpose**
writing with a particular audience in mind (which may include the author herself) and defining the writing task
- **determining an appropriate topic**
planning the writing, researching, narrowing the focus, deciding what's most important to include
- **presenting ideas clearly, with a logical, well-organized flow**
organizing the writing in an easy-to-follow style and form at the word, sentence, and paragraph level; putting like information together; staying on the topic; knowing when and what information and words to add or delete; incorporating transitions
- **elaborating on ideas**
including appropriate details and facts to stated main ideas; explaining key concepts; supporting judgments; creating descriptions that evoke mood, time, and place, and develop characters
- **embracing language**
“fooling with words”—experimenting with nouns, verbs, adjectives, literary language, sensory details, dialogue, rhythm, sentence length, paragraphs—all to craft precise, lively writing
- **creating engaging leads**
attracting the reader's interest right from the start
- **composing satisfying endings**
developing original endings that bring a sense of closure
- **crafting authentic voice**
writing in a style that illuminates the writer's personality—may include dialogue, humor, point of view, unique form
- **rereading, rethinking, and revising while composing**
assessing, analyzing, reflecting, self-evaluating, planning, redrafting, and editing as you go—all part of the recursive, nonlinear nature of writing
- **applying correct conventions and form**
producing letters and words; employing editing and proofreading skills; using accurate spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, legibility, formal rules of the genre
- **reading widely and deeply—and with a writer's perspective**
reading avidly; noticing what authors—and illustrators—do; developing an awareness of how stories work as well as the characteristics of various genres—such as fiction, poetry, persuasive pieces—and applying that knowledge and craft to one's own writing
- **taking responsibility for producing effective writing**
considering relevant responses and suggestions and willingly revising; sustaining writing effort; self-monitoring, self-evaluating, and setting goals; possibly publishing, including a suitable and pleasing presentation style and format; doing whatever is necessary to ensure the text is meaningful and clear to the reader as well as accurate, legible, and engaging

(For more information, see the expanded version of this list on pages 13–14.)