

First Steps Writing Stages of Development

Early Phase

Early writers produce a small range of texts that exhibit some of the conventions of writing. Texts such as retells, reports and emails are composed to share experiences, information, or feelings. Early writers have a small bank of frequently used words that they spell correctly. When writing unknown words, they choose letters on the basis of sound, without regard for conventional spelling patterns.

USE OF TEXTS

- Attempts a small range of familiar texts, either teacher-directed or self-selected.
- With assistance, finds information in texts and records through drawing or writing key words.

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

- Explains the purpose of a small range of familiar text forms, e.g. jokes are to entertain.
- Talks about the purpose of a piece of writing and the ideas that need to be included.
- Explains why characters or events are represented in a particular way when composing literary texts.
- Explains why people or ideas are represented in a particular way when composing informational texts.
- Imitates the use of simple devices used in texts, e.g. print size, colour.

CONVENTIONS

- Experiments with words drawn from a variety of sources, e.g. literature, media, oral language of peers.
- Spells and uses a small bank of known words correctly.
- Knows all letters by name, and their common sounds.
- Knows simple letter patterns and the sounds they represent, e.g. sh, ch, ee.
- Writes simple sentences using correct punctuation.

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES

- Draws upon semantic, graphophonic and syntactic knowledge when writing, e.g. text organisation, word order.
- Uses a small range of strategies throughout the writing process, e.g. self-questioning.
- Uses a small range of strategies to spell unknown words, e.g. chunking, sounding out.
- Talks or draws as a means of planning before writing.
- Begins to proofread and edit own writing when directed, e.g. deleting words, adding punctuation.
- Creates a published text that is beginning to reflect the intended purpose.

Key Indicators

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTITUDE

- Create a supportive classroom environment that nurtures a community of writers.
- Foster students' enjoyment of writing.
- Encourage students to experiment with different facets of writing, e.g. planning, editing, spelling.
- Encourage students to value writing as a social practice.

USE OF TEXTS

- Continue to expose students to a range of text forms and discuss the features of each.
- Provide opportunities for students to compose a range of texts for authentic purposes and audiences.
- Foster students' sense of 'personal voice' and individual writing style.
- Continue to teach students the metalanguage associated with writing and encourage its use.

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

- Discuss the purpose and audience of a range of text forms.
- Continue to discuss some of the decisions writers make when composing texts and provide opportunities for students to do the same.
- Encourage students to make choices about how to represent characters and events when composing literary texts.
- Encourage students to make choices about how to represent people and ideas when composing informational texts.
- Model and encourage the use of devices and discuss how they influence meaning.
- Model to students how to use writing to influence change about social issues that concern them.

CONVENTIONS

- Provide opportunities for students to develop, refine and use new vocabulary.
- Continue to build the bank of words students can automatically spell and use, e.g. topic words, signal words.
- Build students' knowledge about words and word parts, e.g. contractions, suffixes.
- Continue to build phonological awareness and graphophonic knowledge, such as: – representing the same sound with different letters or letter combinations, e.g. beach, me, ski, thief – representing different sounds with the same letters or letter combinations, e.g. enough, though, through.
- Continue to teach the use of punctuation, e.g. commas.
- Continue to teach the parts of speech and their relationships, e.g. subject–verb agreement.
- Teach students to construct and manipulate sentences, e.g. expanding, reducing, transforming.
- Model how to group together sentences with similar information.
- Continue to build knowledge of different text forms, emphasising: – purpose, e.g. reports describe – text structure, e.g. reports list details – text organisation, e.g. reports use headings – language features, e.g. reports use present tense.

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES

- Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic and syntactic knowledge, e.g. grammatical knowledge, cultural knowledge.
- Continue to teach strategies used throughout the writing process, e.g. determining importance.
- Continue to teach spelling strategies, e.g. using visual memory.
- Teach students to plan for writing in a variety of ways, e.g. brainstorming, classifying.
- Teach students how to use proofreading and editing to refine their writing.
- Continue to model a variety of publishing alternatives, highlighting the purpose and audience.
- Teach students how to find, record and organise information from texts, e.g. note making, note taking.
- Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same