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Katherine Bomer AND Corinne Arens

a teacher's guide to

WRITING WORKSHOP

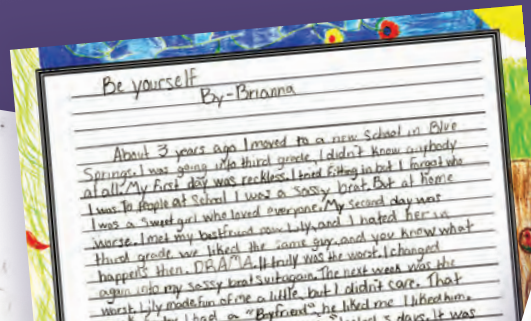
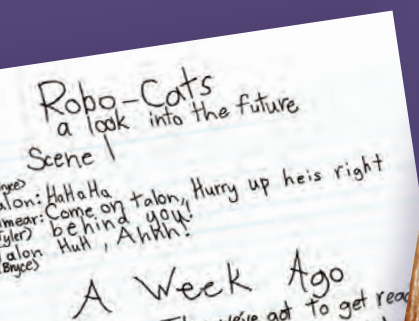
ESSENTIALS

Time, Choice, Response

GRADES K-5

series editor **Katie Wood Ray**

Heinemann Portsmouth, NH



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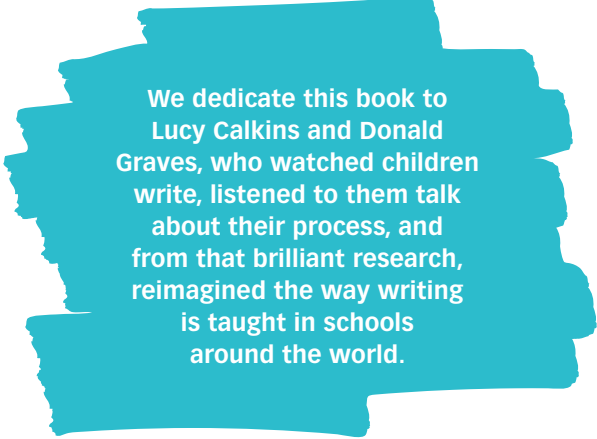
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We dedicate this book to
Lucy Calkins and Donald
Graves, who watched children
write, listened to them talk
about their process, and
from that brilliant research,
reimagined the way writing
is taught in schools
around the world.

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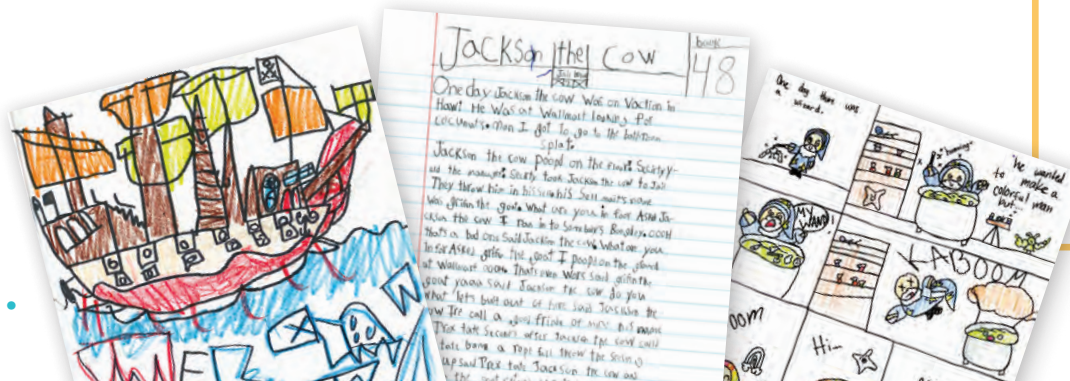
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About the Online Resources in This Book

In the online resources for this book, we've included a variety of forms and documents to use as you support your students with time, choice, and response in the writing workshop. You will find:

Supporting Young Writers at Home

Writing in Notebooks

Conferring at a Glance

Formative Assessment Form

Sample Conferring Forms

Different Kinds of Responses

Getting What You Need as a Writer

What to Do with Response

Supporting Appreciative Response

Reflecting on Work over Time



Look for this arrow throughout the book for resources that can be downloaded. See page x for instructions to access the online resources.

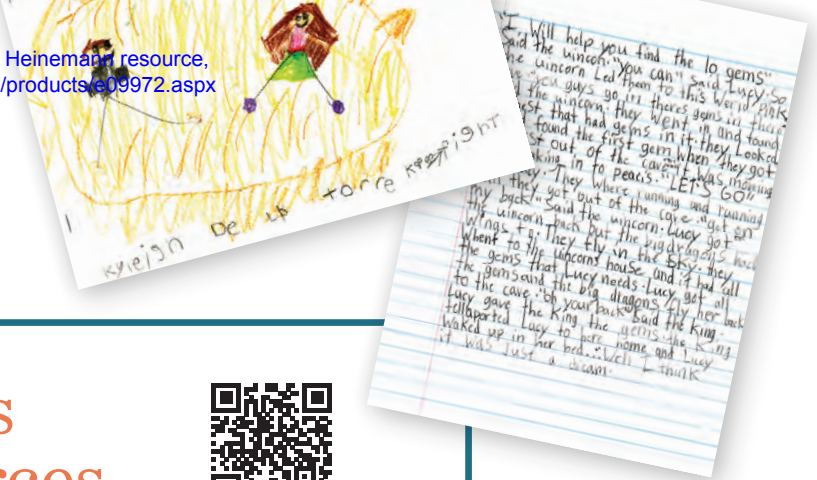


In addition to these resources, you will also find fifteen video clips highlighting time, choice, and response in action in writing workshops across grade levels.



VIDEO TITLE	VIDEO CONTENT
Independent Writing Time	This clip shows what it looks and sounds like when K–5 students and teachers are engaged during independent writing time.
Prioritizing Time	Teachers reflect on the importance of time to the work and development of writers and how they protect time for workshop each day.
Routines in Action	A writing workshop thrives on structure and routines, and this clip showcases routines in action across grade levels.
Conference with Jeremiah	In this clip, Katherine confers with Jeremiah, a third grader, who seems to be practicing math rather than writing, but really just needs appreciative eyes to see the strengths in what he is doing, name them as such, and teach him how to use them for his writing.
Conference with Jalen	Katherine talks writer to writer as she confers with Jalen, a fourth grader, who’s having a little trouble getting started.
The Importance of Topic Choice	K–5 teachers and students talk about how important choosing what to write about is to their engagement in the process.
Writing in Notebooks	Teachers and students in grades 3–5 reflect on the role of notebooks in the process of writing.
Students Engaged with Materials	This clip shows students choosing and using materials and space in different ways across grade levels.

VIDEO TITLE	VIDEO CONTENT
Teaching a Minilesson with Mentor Texts	In this clip, Georgiana uses a student mentor text to teach writers in first grade and reflects on the importance of mentor texts to students’ development as writers.
Conference with Izzy	In this conference with a first grader, Katherine shows why having an enthusiastic, delighted <i>tone</i> is an important tool for children learning to write.
Teaching from Your Own Writing	Students need to see their teachers as fellow writers, and in this clip, teachers in different grades use their own writing to teach a skill or strategy in minilessons.
The Value of Response	This clip shows the power of peer response in partnerships and small groups as K–5 students and teachers reflect on their importance.
A Student Teaches the Class	During share time at the end of each writing workshop, students often teach each other what they learned in conferences, as Siena, a third grader, shows in this clip.
Teaching into Small-Group Work	The best teaching is responsive teaching, and in this clip, Adri teaches “into” what she sees and hears her fourth graders doing as they meet in small groups.
Jackson and Tate Talk About Coauthoring a Series	This video shows, better than we can tell, how time, choice, and response create skilled, passionate writers.



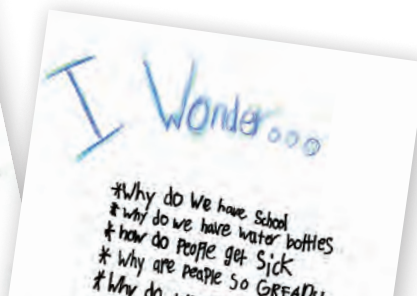
How to Access Online Resources



To access the online resources for *A Teacher's Guide to Writing Workshop Essentials*:

1. Go to <http://hein.pub/WritingWorkshop-login>.
2. Log in with your username and password. If you do not already have an account with Heinemann, you will need to create an account.
3. On the Welcome page, choose **"Click here to register an Online Resource."**
4. Register your product by entering the code: **XXXXXX** (be sure to read and check the acknowledgment box under the keycode).
5. Once you have registered your product, it will appear alphabetically in your account list of **My Online Resources**.

Note: When returning to Heinemann.com to access your previously registered products, simply log into your Heinemann account and click on **"View my registered Online Resources."**



Acknowledgments

Take a Bow!

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and Katie Wood Ray, for being such a staggeringly wise and helpful editor and for keeping the purpose and audience for this book front and center.

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Time



part
one

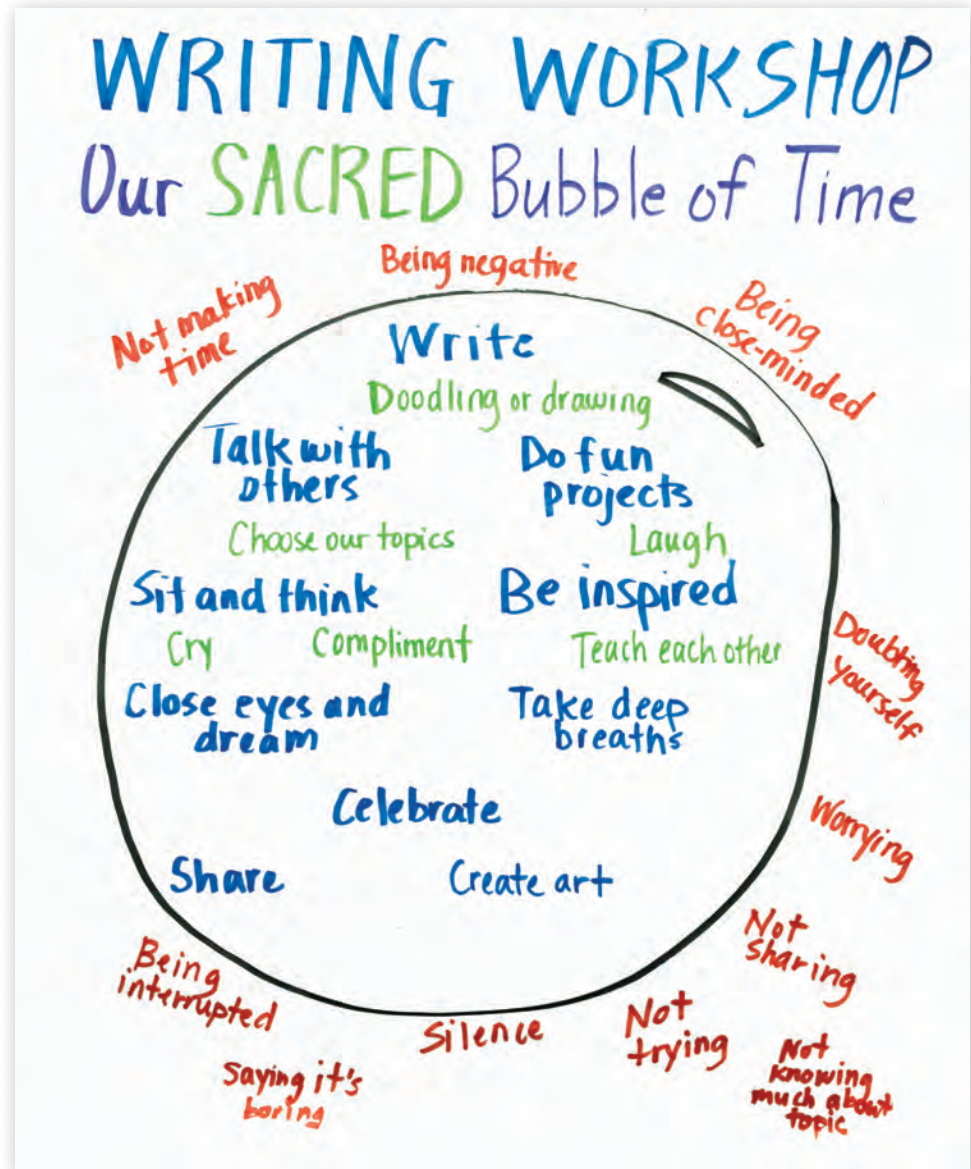
How much time did it take for you to learn to read or ride a bike? How much time did it take to understand another language or to solve algebraic equations? How long did it take for Michelangelo to paint the Sistine Chapel or for the founders to agree upon and craft the Constitution of the United States of America? How many hours of intense dance and gymnastics training did it take for Simone Biles to perfect her superhuman floor routine flip, now named “The Biles”?

We know that everything lovely, difficult, necessary, and meaningful takes time. We do not question this.

Writing also takes time. Authors need time to craft their novels, articles, poems, and plays. Professionals need time to compose reports, ads, and websites. There is no way around the fact that writing takes time from initial idea, to draft(s), to revising and editing, to the final product. Time is the only absolute about the writing process—nothing gets written without it!

Young writers need time to write, but they also need time to learn how to write well. Our students must experience taking a piece of writing *through* time and practice how to manage themselves *in* time—how to breathe through frustration, sit through multiple rereadings, make changes, and solve sticky problems that arise in crafting sentences and paragraphs. The strategies we teach students for working through this process in time actually form the curriculum of writing. If students aren't spending *time* writing, they're not learning how to write.

Writers also need *uninterrupted* time. Schools are sometimes the most disruptive places to learn. Trying to write at school reminds us of trying to rest and heal in a hospital bed, when attendants come at all hours to check vitals, make us swallow big pills, and deliver something they call “food.” Writing workshop doesn't need to feel like a hospital. We can create and protect an uncluttered, uninterrupted space for thinking, writing, and responding each day—a precious bubble of time that should not be pierced for any reason. Though there are stops and starts on each day's journey of pieces of writing, the work of writing isn't “over” until the clock says it's time for lunch or math. Once the workshop is a daily routine, kids will be upset if it doesn't occur. This time of day becomes an appointment you look forward to, like recess or lunch or soccer practice.



Supporting Young Writers at Home 

“

Some people do not seem to grasp that I still have to sit down in peace and write the books, apparently believing that they pop up like mushrooms without my connivance. I must therefore guard the time allotted to writing as a Hungarian Horntail guards its firstborn egg.

J. K. ROWLING, N.D.

Working in Time

Because writing workshop is a *time*, not a task like a prescribed activity or worksheet, no one races to finish so they can go and do something else—say, finish social studies homework or play a math game. In the writing workshop structure, after the minilesson, everyone in the room is attending to projects for the entire thirty to forty minutes of independent writing time. Students have work to do and decisions to make about whatever project they are working on. In many classrooms, students actually have *several* writing projects they are working on independently, and of course, students can always start a new piece at any time.



Types of Projects That Occur Across Time in the Writing Workshop



INDEPENDENT WRITING PROJECTS

Students have time to design, explore, and compose writing projects they have chosen. Perhaps they have been itching to write a letter to a friend who moved to another state, or to compose lyrics to a song that has been burning in their heart, or to practice a spoken word poem.



DIGITAL PROJECTS

Students have time to explore safe digital spaces for writing and for creating print and visual texts: digital storytelling, movie making, animations, or products from word processing templates like invitations, posters, flyers, or pamphlets.



COLLABORATIVE WRITING PROJECTS

Students work with a partner or two on dream projects: a play about unicorns, a fan-fiction piece for a website, a how-to book about the video game they play together after school.



WRITING PROJECTS CONNECTED TO A GENRE STUDY

At certain times of the year, the whole class may be studying a particular kind of writing for several weeks. During these studies, students are working on at least one writing project in that genre, about a topic they have chosen and through a process they determine.

1 Drafting a Book on Dinosaurs

2 Composing a Notebook Entry



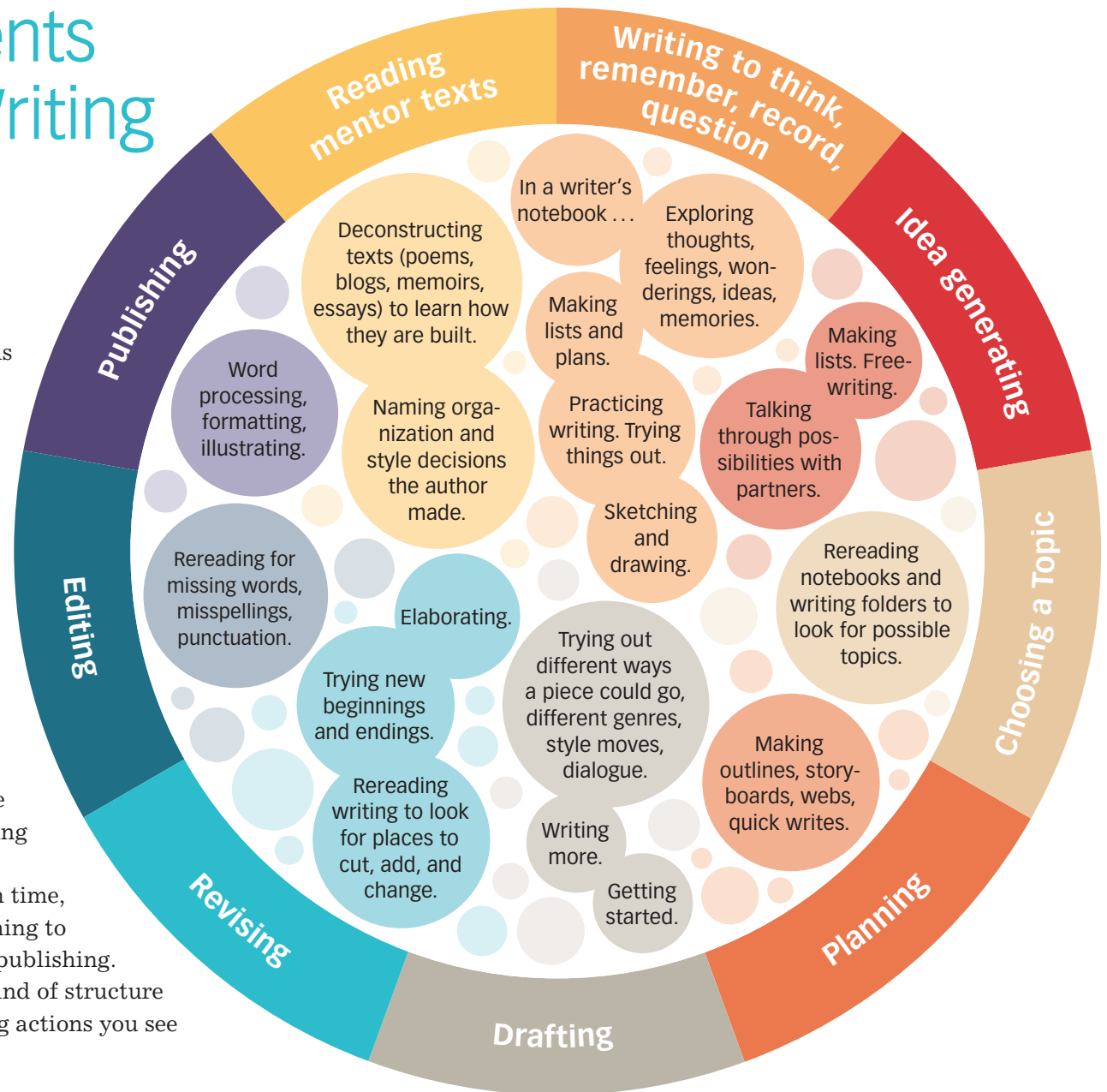
3 Editing Prior to a Celebration

4 Studying a Mentor Text

What Students Do in the Writing “Bubble of Time”

Writing is a process that unfolds in different ways, and the process is always in motion, so it’s hard to say when one “step” of it begins and another one ends. On any given day, different students might be engaged in a range of writing process activities that support their different projects.

If you glance at this graphic and think, “Yikes, that just looks chaotic,” don’t worry. Around the outside of the circle are the basic moves of the writing process. This is generally how a piece of writing travels through time, from idea generating and planning to drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. These basic moves give you a kind of structure in which to place all the writing actions you see inside the circle.



Thinking About Beginning Writers

Pictorial Support to
Build Independence



I Can add letters and words to my book.

I Can use tools around the room to help me.



If you have plenty of paper choices and writing tools available, beginning writers easily use the writing process to make all kinds of things: picture books, cards, signs and labels, poems, songs, letters. They don't write quickly, of course, so most of their thinking, idea generating, and planning will happen through talk (before, during, and even after!) instead of writing. If you want to see a kindergarten teacher get her students started in writing workshop on the very first day of school, check out another book in the Classroom Essentials series, *A Teacher's Guide to Getting Started with Beginning Writers*, by Katie Wood Ray and Lisa Cleaveland.

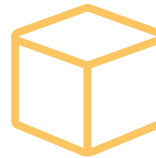
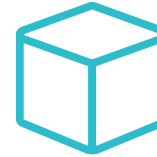
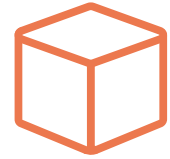
VIDEO
Independent Writing Time

But What About ... ?

Don't I need to teach my students the steps of the writing process before I let them go in a writing workshop?

You don't! To put anything on paper, students have to use some kind of process. If your students have never been in a writing workshop before, just talk a little about the different kinds of things writers make and do—perhaps chart a few possibilities—then give them some writing tools and materials and let them get started. You will quickly see what they do and don't yet know, and you will get all kinds of ideas for the teaching they need. And remember, you've got a whole year's worth of teaching to support them in getting better at every aspect of the writing process.

TIME, CHOICE, AND RESPONSE IN ACTION



Response

Though his written text is not yet conventional, his teacher and friends know the book says, "Go mermaid! Go mermaid!" because that's how he read it several times aloud.

Choice

Ellison loves mermaids, and he loves writing workshop because he gets to write about mermaids every day if he wants to.

Time

Ellison worked on his "Go, Mermaid!" book over several days, and it shows in the careful details of the mermaids' bodies, hair, faces, the pirate ship, and the segmented colors. He added speech bubbles like he has seen in mentor picture books.

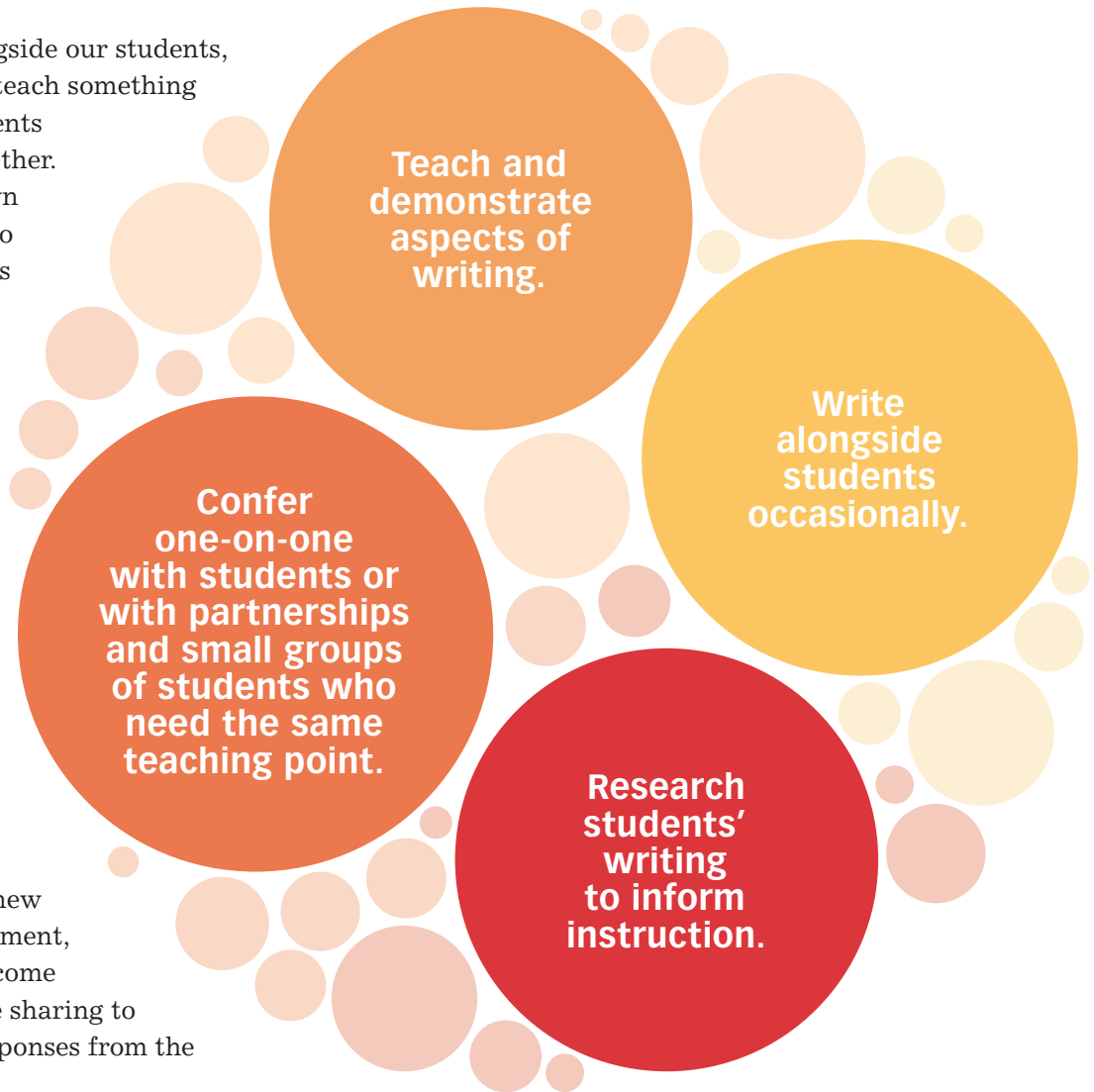


What Teachers Do in the Writing “Bubble of Time”

In writing workshop, we write and learn alongside our students, and they come to see us as fellow writers. We teach something about writing in a short lesson, with our students gathered close to learn and reflect with each other. When we demonstrate something from our own writing, we demystify the process, break it into digestible and doable bits, so that our students can try those out, following our example, and then begin to develop a process of their own.

When students settle into their spots to write, we put ourselves right in the middle of their work. In writing conferences, we sit next to individual writers and teach in response to their needs. Sometimes, if we see that several students need the same writing lesson, we gather them in a small group and offer the teaching they need.

When there are only five to ten minutes left, we might ask students to turn to a partner and take turns sharing something they wrote or learned how to do, or need help with. Or we might signal for students to come back together as a whole group and ask a few of them who discovered something or tried a new strategy to teach the class about it. At this moment, we step back from the teacher role and we become “writer-whisperers,” helping students who are sharing to speak loudly, show their work, and ask for responses from the rest of the class.



“

Children learn to control writing because their teachers practice teaching as a craft. Both teachers and children see the control of the craft as a long, painstaking process with energy supplied along the way through the joy of discovery.

DONALD GRAVES, 1983B, 3

Predictable Time Matters

Ideally, you'll want to plan for your writing workshop to happen at the same time every day for forty-five to sixty minutes. When you make writing time predictable, there are many benefits.

Instructional Benefits

- Protecting a block of time sends a clear message that writing is important and deserves daily attention.
- A protected writing block gives kids space to tune into their own thinking, solve writing problems, and make decisions.
- Students have more time to reread their work, which leads to revising and editing, which teaches that writing can always get better.
- Creating space in the schedule to talk about writing with others helps kids get ideas and important feedback for revising and editing.
- Establishing expectations for movement, noise levels, and activity saves precious minutes for writing.
- Students have more time to take charge of managing their own plans, processes, and products.

Social-emotional Benefits

- Time to think is a gift that can help kids relax and stay calm in a busy or stressful school schedule.
- Kids learn that thinking and writing evolves, slowly and surely, across stretches of time—they do not have to have the “right answer” instantly.
- Writers have chances to change their minds and to both make and fix mistakes.
- Children grow in spurts and at different times—they do not all master a concept at the same time.
- Students learning English as an additional language benefit from having more time to practice writing and gain confidence.

“
We want it to have that accepted, routine, sunrise-sunset kind of dependability in students’ understanding of how the day goes. Writing workshops break down when they lose this quality, when they become questionable, when the teacher may decide, ‘We’re not having it today.’

KATIE WOOD RAY, 2001, 52

But What About ... ?

What if it's just not possible for me to have writing workshop at the same time every day?

You don't have to give up because of this obstacle. What matters most is that the rituals and routines *inside* the bubble of time are consistent and predictable, and that students know they can count on having workshop time every day. If that time has to be a little later one day than another, it breaks the rhythm of the day slightly, but you'll still reap the same benefits over time as students become accustomed to the schedule.

