new First Steps® in Literacy

CANADIAN EDITION

Map of Development

Writing

first steps

PEARSON

First Steps® Writing Map of Development, Canadian Edition

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Authors' Acknowledgments

The *First Steps®* team gives grateful thanks to

- **all teachers and students** who were involved in piloting the materials and offering feedback, either Critical Readers, Test Pilots, or Navigator Schools;

- **the authors** of the original *First Steps®,* developed by the Education Department of Western Austrialia, and the efforts of the many individuals who contributed to that resource.

Overview of the *First Steps* Writing Map of Development

Global Statement

Role Play Phase
In this phase, writers emulate adult writing by experimenting with marks to represent written language. Role Play writers are beginning to understand that writing is used to convey meaning or messages; however, as understandings about sound–symbol relationships are yet to develop, their messages are not readable by others. Role Play writers rely heavily on topic knowledge to generate text.

Experimental Phase
In this phase, writers are aware that speech can be written down. Experimental writers rely on familiar topics to generate a variety of texts, such as greeting cards, lists, and letters. They demonstrate an understanding of one-to-one correspondence by representing most spoken words in their written texts. These words may consist of one, two, or three letters, and reflect their developing understanding of sound–symbol relationships.

Early Phase
Early writers produce a small range of texts that exhibit some of the conventions of writing. Texts, such as retellings, reports, and e-mails, 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.

Transitional Phase
Transitional writers show increasing control over the conventions of writing such as punctuation, spelling, and text organization. They consider audience and purpose when selecting ideas and information to be included in texts. They compose a range of texts, including explanations, narratives, brochures, and electronic presentations. Writing shows evidence of a bank of known words that are spelled correctly. Transitional writers are moving away from a heavy reliance on sounding out and are beginning to integrate visual and meaning-based strategies to spell unknown words.

Key Indicators

Role Play Phase
USE OF TEXTS
- Assigns a message to own written and drawn symbols
- Demonstrates awareness that writing and drawing are different
- Knows that print carries a message, but may read writing differently each time

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- States purpose or audience for own writing, e.g., This is a card for Dad.
- Identifies and talks about characters from literary texts
- Identifies and talks about people and ideas in informational texts

CONVENTIONS
- Begins to demonstrate an awareness of directionality, e.g., points to where print begins
- Uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent writing

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES
- Relies upon personal experiences as a stimulus for writing

Experimental Phase
USE OF TEXTS
- Experiments with familiar forms of writing, e.g., lists, captions, retellings
- Uses writing with the intention of communicating a message
- Demonstrates awareness that print contains a constant message, e.g., recalls the gist of the message over time
- With assistance, finds information in texts appropriate to purpose or interest

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- Provides reasons why people write, e.g., to remember, to say thank you.
- States the purpose and audience of own writing, e.g., I am going to write to Grandma to say…
- Talks about how characters and events are represented in literary texts
- Talks about how people and ideas are represented in informational texts

CONVENTIONS
- Writes using simple language structures, e.g., I like…, I see…
- Demonstrates one-to-one correspondence between written and spoken word, e.g., word-pointing when reading back own writing
- Begins to demonstrate understanding of the conventions of print
- Identifies the letters of the alphabet by name or by common sounds

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES
- Draws upon semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge when writing, e.g., topic knowledge, sound–symbol relationships
- Uses a limited range of strategies throughout the writing process, e.g., connecting
- Uses a limited range of strategies to spell, e.g., sounding out
- Decides how own text will be presented

Early Phase
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 organization, 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 edit and proofread own writing when directed, e.g., deleting words, adding punctuation
- Creates a published text that is beginning to reflect the intended purpose

Transitional Phase
USE OF TEXTS
- Composes a range of texts, but may not fully control all elements
- Composes texts by finding, recording, and organizing information appropriate to purpose

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- Explains the purpose and audience of a range of text forms
- Selects ideas to include in own text to suit purpose and audience
- Discusses alternatives about how to represent characters and events when composing literary texts
- Discusses alternatives about how to represent people and ideas when composing informational texts
- Experiments with the use of devices, e.g., repetition of words or phrases

CONVENTIONS
- Varies vocabulary to add interest
- Spells and uses an increasing bank of known words correctly
- Knows less common letter patterns and the sounds they represent, e.g., tion, ph
- Writes a variety of simple and compound sentences, using correct punctuation
- Groups related information, sometimes without regard for paragraphing conventions

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES
- Draws upon semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge when writing, e.g., vocabulary knowledge, text-structure knowledge
- Uses an increasing range of strategies throughout the writing process, e.g., determining importance
- Uses an increasing range of strategies to spell unknown words, e.g., using visual memory
- Begins to organize ideas before writing, e.g., brainstorming, drawing, jotting
- Revises, edits, and proofreads own writing when directed
- Plans for and creates a published text that reflects the intended purpose and needs of the audience

Major Teaching Emphases

Role Play Phase
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., using known letters, composing messages.
- Encourage students to value writing as a social practice.

USE OF TEXTS
- Expose students to a range of text forms pointing out purpose, e.g., recipes tell how to make something.
- Provide opportunities for students to write a range of texts for authentic purposes and audiences.
- Model the connection between oral and written language, e.g., what is said can be written down.
- Demonstrate that written messages remain constant.
- Foster students' sense of voice and individual writing style.
- Teach students the metalanguage associated with writing, and encourage its use.

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- Discuss that writing has a purpose and an intended audience.
- Draw students' attention to decisions writers make when composing texts.
- Draw students' attention to the way characters are represented in literary texts.
- Draw students' attention to the way people or ideas are represented in informational texts.

CONVENTIONS
- Provide opportunities for students to develop and use new vocabulary.
- Begin to build the bank of words students can automatically spell and use, e.g., personally significant words.
- Build phonological awareness and graphophonic knowledge, such as
  - recognizing, matching, and generating rhymes
  - listening for sounds in words
  - linking letter names with their sounds, focusing on the regular sound
- Teach students the conventions of print.
- Model one-to-one correspondence between written and spoken words.
- Model the composition of simple sentences, including the use of punctuation, e.g., capital letters, periods.

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES
- Build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge, e.g., topic knowledge, sound–symbol relationships.
- Teach strategies used throughout the writing process, e.g., connecting.
- Teach spelling strategies, e.g., sounding out.
- Model simple alternatives, e.g., text and illustration.
- Model how to find required information in texts.
- Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.

Experimental Phase
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., spelling, composing sentences.
- Encourage students to value writing as a social practice.

USE OF TEXTS
- Continue to expose students to a range of text forms, pointing out purpose and audience.
- Provide opportunities for students to compose a range of texts for authentic purposes and audiences.
- Foster students' sense of 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.
- Discuss some of the decisions writers make when composing texts, and provide opportunities for students to do the same.
- Draw students' attention to the different ways characters or events are represented in literary texts.
- Draw students' attention to the different ways people or ideas are represented in informational texts.
- Highlight and encourage the use of simple devices that writers use to influence readers, e.g., print size, colour.

CONVENTIONS
- Provide opportunities for students to develop and use new vocabulary.
- Continue to build the bank of words students can automatically spell and use, e.g., high-frequency words.
- Build students' knowledge about words and word parts, e.g., plurals.
- Continue to build phonological awareness and graphophonic knowledge, such as
  - segmenting words into sounds
  - linking letters with their regular sound
  - representing sounds heard in words with letters written in the order they are heard
  - recognizing that the same letter represents different sounds
- Reinforce conventions of print.
- Teach the use of commonly used punctuation, e.g., question marks, exclamation marks.
- Teach the use of parts of speech, e.g., nouns, verbs.
- Demonstrate the construction of sentences as units of meaning.
- Model how to group information that is related to compose a text.
- Begin to build students' knowledge about different text forms, e.g., procedures instruct, procedures have steps.

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES
- Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge, e.g., word order, text organization.
- Continue to teach strategies used throughout the writing process, e.g., self-questioning.
- Continue to teach spelling strategies, e.g., chunking.
- Model simple ways to plan for writing, e.g., talking, drawing.
- Model simple ways to edit and proofread, e.g., adding words or punctuation.
- Continue to model simple publishing alternatives, highlighting purpose.
- Model how to find, record, and organize information from texts, e.g., alphabetical order, simple retrieval chart.
- Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.

Early Phase
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 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 using 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, emphasizing
  - purpose, e.g., reports describe
  - text structure, e.g., reports list details
  - text organization, 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 editing and proofreading to refine their writing.
- Continue to model a variety of publishing alternatives, highlighting the purpose and audience.
- Teach students how to find, record, and organize 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.

Transitional Phase
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., new forms, devices, vocabulary.
- 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 craft a range of texts for authentic purposes and audiences.
- Foster students' sense of voice and individual writing style.
- Continue to teach students the metalanguage associated with writing, and encourage its use.

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- Discuss some of the reasons writers choose one particular text form over others.
- Encourage students to explain their decisions about
  - text form selected
  - information and ideas included or omitted
  - language used
- Teach students how to represent characters and events to create specific effects in literary texts.
- Teach students how to represent people and ideas to create specific effects in informational texts.
- Teach students the use of devices, and discuss how they may influence the audience, e.g., flashback, illustration size.
- Encourage students to use writing to influence change about social issues that concern them.
- Discuss how writers' knowledge, experiences, and perspectives influence the composition of a text.

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., less common words, subject-specific words.
- Continue to build students' knowledge about words and word parts, e.g., prefixes, suffixes, homophones.
- Continue to build students' graphophonic knowledge, such as using less common sound–symbol relationships, e.g., ocean, nation, fashion.
- Extend students' knowledge of the use of punctuation, e.g., apostrophes, quotation marks.
- Extend students' knowledge and use of parts of speech, e.g., noun–pronoun agreement.
- Teach students to construct and manipulate a variety of sentences, e.g., using conjunctions, using phrases and clauses.
- Teach students how to group sentences about similar information together to form a paragraph.
- Continue to build knowledge of different text forms, emphasizing
  - purpose, e.g., explanations explain phenomena
  - text structure, e.g., explanations use cause and effect
  - text organization, e.g., explanations include diagrams or cutaways
  - language features, e.g., explanations use signal words to show cause/effect

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES
- Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge, e.g., world knowledge, linguistic features.
- Continue to teach strategies used throughout the writing process, e.g., synthesizing.
- Continue to teach spelling strategies, e.g., using analogy.
- Continue to teach students to plan for writing in a variety of ways, e.g., storyboards.
- Continue to teach students how to use revising, editing, and proofreading to refine their writing.
- Encourage students to select and use publishing formats that best suit purpose and audience, e.g., Web page, slide show, poster.
- Continue to teach students to find, record, and organize information from texts, e.g., using graphic organizers.

Overview of the *First Steps* Writing Map of Development

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Global Statement

Conventional Phase

Conventional writers demonstrate control over the conventions of writing and most components of the writing process. While composing, they take responsibility for adjusting the language and content to suit specific audiences and purposes. Conventional writers craft a variety of literary and informational texts, such as biographies, Web pages, and documentary scripts. In this phase, writers use an increasing bank of known words and select from a wide vocabulary. They integrate a range of strategies to spell unknown words.

Proficient Phase

Proficient writers demonstrate control over all components of the writing process. They understand how purpose and audience have impact on writing and are able to craft and manipulate texts to suit. They compose texts, such as research papers, newspaper articles, expositions, and hypertexts. Proficient writers are able to convey detailed information and explore different perspectives. They have developed an extensive vocabulary and use a multistrategy approach to spelling.

Accomplished Phase

Accomplished writers are able to make critical choices about all components of writing—including style, vocabulary, and content—as they craft a wide range of texts. They are able to develop complex ideas, sustain coherence, and present information clearly. Writers in this phase reflect on, evaluate, and critique their own writing to ensure that they have achieved their specific purpose for the intended audience.

Key Indicators

Conventional Phase

USE OF TEXTS
- Crafts a wide range of texts, demonstrating control over all elements
- Composes texts by retrieving, recording, and organizing information appropriate to purpose and audience

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- Explains why a particular text form may be more appropriate to achieve a purpose for an intended audience
- Adjusts the language and ideas to include in own texts to suit purpose and audience
- Selects ways to represent characters and events to create specific effects in literary texts
- Selects ways to represent people and ideas to create specific effects in informational texts
- Uses devices when attempting to influence the reader, e.g., humour

CONVENTIONS
- Selects vocabulary to create precise meaning
- Spells and uses a large bank of known words correctly
- Knows and uses less common letter patterns correctly, e.g., aisle, reign
- Writes a variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences using appropriate punctuation
- Develops a paragraph by writing a topic sentence and including supporting information

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES
- Draws upon semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge when writing, e.g., world and cultural knowledge, linguistic features
- Selects appropriate strategies to use throughout the writing process
- Selects appropriate strategies to spell unknown words
- Plans for writing in a range of ways, e.g., graphic organizers, storyboard
- Independently revises, edits, and proofreads own writing
- Selects appropriate text product types to enhance audience understanding and impact

Proficient Phase

USE OF TEXTS
- Controls the crafting of a large repertoire of texts
- Critiques own texts by evaluating the information retrieved, recorded, and organized

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- Makes critical choices about the composition of a text to suit different purposes and to influence audiences
- Consciously provokes positive or negative responses through the representation of characters and events in literary texts
- Consciously provokes positive or negative responses through the representation of people and ideas in informational texts
- Selects devices designed to deepen impact or to influence a particular audience

CONVENTIONS
- Selects vocabulary for its shades of meaning and effect
- Has accumulated an extensive bank of known words that are spelled and used correctly
- Is aware of the many letter patterns that are characteristic of the English spelling system
- Uses grammatically complex sentences appropriately and correctly
- Organizes paragraphs logically to form a cohesive text

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES
- Consciously adds to semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge as required, when writing
- Selects appropriate strategies to use throughout the writing process
- Accurately spells, using a multistrategy approach
- Plans for writing in efficient and effective ways
- Refines writing to deepen impact
- Makes critical choices about the publication of texts to suit different purposes and to create impact

Accomplished Phase

USE OF TEXTS
- Controls the crafting of a large repertoire of texts
- Critiques own texts by evaluating the information retrieved, recorded, and organized
- Is able to write using a dispassionate style that conceals personal bias
- Is able to write using an emotive style that makes ideas more appealing
- Writes with conviction, using a strong personal voice
- Uses the metalanguage associated with writing

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- Makes critical choices about the composition of a text based on an analysis of the purpose and the intended audience
- Consciously provokes positive or negative responses through the representation of characters and events in literary texts
- Consciously provokes positive or negative responses through the representation of people and ideas in informational texts
- Selects devices designed to deepen impact or to influence a particular audience
- Recognizes how one's values, attitudes, and beliefs have impact on the composition of a text
- Accommodates or resists the likely expectations of particular audiences

CONVENTIONS
- Deliberately selects words to convey meaning economically and precisely
- Accurately spells a wide range of words
- Consciously selects sentence structure and associated punctuation to achieve impact
- Organizes ideas and information clearly, sustaining coherence throughout texts
- May choose to deviate from the conventions of writing to deepen impact

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES
- Consciously adds to semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge as required, when writing
- Selects appropriate strategies to use throughout the writing process
- Accurately spells, using a multistrategy approach
- Competently uses an extensive range of processes to plan, draft, and refine writing
- Makes critical choices about the publication of texts based on an analysis of the purpose and the intended audience

Major Teaching Emphases

Conventional Phase

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., manipulating forms, use of devices.
- 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 craft a range of texts for authentic purposes and audiences.
- Encourage students to experiment with the manipulation of elements to compose a text.
- Foster students' sense of voice and individual writing style.
- Continue to teach students the metalanguage associated with writing, and encourage its use.

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- Provide opportunities for students to explain their choice of text, information and ideas included or omitted, and devices used.
- Encourage students to represent characters and events to create specific effects in literary texts.
- Encourage students to represent people and ideas to create specific effects in informational texts.
- Encourage students to select devices to influence a particular audience.
- Encourage students to use writing to influence change about social issues that concern them.
- Continue to discuss how writers' and readers' knowledge, experiences, and perspectives affect the composition and interpretation of texts.

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., technical terms.
- Continue to build students' knowledge about words and word parts, e.g., derivatives and word origins.
- Extend students' knowledge of the use of punctuation, e.g., colons, hyphens.
- Extend students' knowledge and use of parts of speech and their relationships, e.g., active and passive verbs.
- Continue to teach students to construct and manipulate a variety of sentences.
- Teach students different ways to develop cohesive paragraphs.
- Continue to build knowledge of different text forms.
- Build knowledge of texts where combinations and adaptations of text structure and organization have been used.

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES
- Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge, e.g., orthographic knowledge, cultural knowledge.
- Continue to teach strategies used throughout the writing process.
- Consolidate known spelling strategies.
- Encourage students to discuss the effectiveness of various ways they plan for writing.
- Encourage students to use revising, editing, and proofreading to refine their writing.
- Continue to encourage students to select and use text product types that best suit purpose and audience, e.g., Web site, video, portfolio.
- Encourage students to evaluate their effectiveness in retrieving, recording, and organizing information from texts and to critique own texts.
- Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.

Proficient Phase

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., creating hybrid texts, refining texts.
- Encourage students to value writing as a social practice.

USE OF TEXTS
- Encourage students to explore and discuss a wide range of literary and informational texts.
- Encourage students to craft a range of literary and informational texts for authentic purposes and audiences.
- Encourage students to manipulate elements to craft a range of texts, e.g., hybrid texts, multimodal texts.
- Foster students' sense of voice and individual writing style.
- Encourage students to independently use the metalanguage associated with writing.

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- Continue to provide opportunities for students to discuss the choices they have made when crafting texts, such as
  – text form
  – devices used to influence
  – the representation of people and ideas
  – the representation of characters and events
- Encourage students to use writing to influence change about social issues that concern them.
- Explore how the ideologies of the writer and the reader combine to create an interpretation of the text.

CONVENTIONS
- Encourage students to take responsibility for extending, refining, and using new vocabulary.
- Reinforce to students their obligation to use spelling and grammar that is appropriate to the context.
- Continue to teach students how to compose cohesive paragraphs and coherent texts.
- Encourage students to build their knowledge of different text forms as required.
- Continue to explore texts where combinations and adaptations of conventions have been used.

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES
- Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge.
- Consolidate strategies used throughout the writing process.
- Consolidate spelling strategies.
- Encourage students to be selective in the way they plan for writing.
- Encourage students to refine their texts holistically to ensure that they are effective.
- Encourage students to be selective in their choice of text product types
- Continue to encourage students to evaluate their effectiveness in retrieving, recording, and organizing information from texts and to critique own texts.
- Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.

Accomplished Phase

Major Teaching Emphases and **Teaching and Learning Experiences** are not provided for this phase, as Accomplished writers are able to take responsibility for their own ongoing writing development.

CHAPTER 1
About Writing

This chapter focuses on what is important about writing and writing instruction. It outlines the basis of the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* and *First Steps Writing Resource Book,* Canadian Editions. *Writing Map of Development* (formerly known as the *Writing Developmental Continuum*) is designed to help teachers map their students' progress; it offers suggestions for teaching and learning experiences that will assist with further development in writing.

In *First Steps Literacy*, each strand of Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Speaking and Listening comprises thinner, interwoven substrands. The following table summarizes how these substrands combine to capture the nature of writing.

Substrand	Writing is...
Use of Texts: what students do with texts to convey meaning	• translating inner speech into symbols to communicate with an audience over time and/or distance • composing meaning in a wide range of print and electronic texts
Contextual Understanding: • how the context affects the choice of language and the communication mode, medium, and text product type used • how the context affects the interpretation of text	• a social practice used to accomplish a wide range of purposes across a range of cultural and situational contexts • used to influence and manipulate others, often to maintain or challenge existing power
Conventions: structures and features of texts	• encoding written language using letters, words, sentences, grammar, and knowledge of the social context
Processes and Strategies: how students read, write, view, speak, and listen	• the application of knowledge and understandings to compose print and electronic texts using dynamic processes that together make one recursive process

The Evolution of the Teaching of Writing

Over the past four decades, different approaches to teaching writing have been taken. Each new approach has been informed by a growing understanding of the process of writing and the changing views about the purposes of writing. Each subsequent approach has taken insights from the previous ones and incorporated new thinking. Harris, McKenzie, Fitzsimmons, and Turbill (2003) have summarized some major shifts in thinking about writing instruction.

> A genre is a category of written texts, such as literary or informational; text in a certain genre can appear in a range of text forms. For example, a text to recount might appear in diary, biographical sketch, autobiography, and other forms.

1 *Writing as Production or Encoding*—an emphasis on teaching spelling, handwriting, punctuation, and grammar in isolation, all as prerequisites to the task of writing

2 *Writing as Creativity*—a shift in emphasis to writing as a form of self-expression: composition as "creative writing"

3 *Writing as Process*—a shift in emphasis from the product to the ways texts are developed: a focus on teaching the processes proficient writers use when creating text

4 *Writing as Genre*—an emphasis on the systematic, explicit instruction in specific genres of writing: modelling, joint construction, and independent writing were used to scaffold students' control of genres

Over time, these approaches have contributed to a comprehensive and balanced method to support students' writing development. Effective writing instruction has been a result of the emergence of best practices across all of the above approaches.

5 *Writing Within the Context of Setting and Culture*
   The latest refinement has been to give greater emphasis to the consideration of context, especially setting and culture (Harris, McKenzie, Fitzsimmons, and Turbill 2003). This approach acknowledges that all writing happens in situational and socio-cultural contexts to fulfill a writer's purpose. It is important that in the classroom students are exposed to many real-world situations and purposes for using writing. The goal for students is to understand and use writing in real-life settings to communicate their ideas, share information, stimulate thinking, formulate questions, or influence policy and action.

A Multidimensional Model of Teaching Writing

This resource provides a model of teaching writing that reflects a culmination of all the approaches previously outlined. The changes in emphases across these approaches have led to cumulative refinements of the way writing is taught. The *First Steps* materials support teachers in implementing an approach that acknowledges the need to build prior knowledge and learn the skills necessary for writing. The multidimensional model shown in Figure 1.1 represents writing as process and writing as genre, and acknowledges the importance of socio-cultural perspectives to the teaching of writing.

Purpose   **CONTEXT OF THE WRITING EVENT**   **Roles and Relationships**

RANGE OF TEXT FORMS

	Summaries		Blueprints	Cartoons	
Rules	Memos	Affidavits	Policies	Timetables	Complaints
Narratives	Poems	Competition entries	Fairy-tales	Fables	Myths

Interviews

Blurbs

Descriptions

Song lyrics

Instructions

Diaries

Menus

Surveys

Notes

Messages

Reports

Directions

Labels

Glossaries

Expositions

Editorials

Biographies

WRITING PROCESSES

Planning   **Drafting**

WRITING STRATEGIES

Generating questions   Paraphrasing/Summarizing   Connecting   Chunking

Predicting

Creating images

Determining importance

Comparing

Rereading

Synthesizing

CUEING SYSTEMS

Semantic

Graphophonic   Syntactic

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Using spelling generalizations

Sounding out

Using analogy

Consulting an authority

Using meaning

Using memory aids

Using visual memory

Lists

Retellings

Recipes

Journals

Invoices

Word puzzles

Slogans

Indexes

Recount

Procedure

Publishing   **Conferring**   **Refining**

Job applications	Headlines	Questionnaires	Explanations
Apologies	Invitations	Jokes	Experiments	Contents pages
Autobiographies	Meeting minutes	Reviews	Personal correspondence	Comics

Subject Matter   **Socio-cultural Influences**   **Situation**
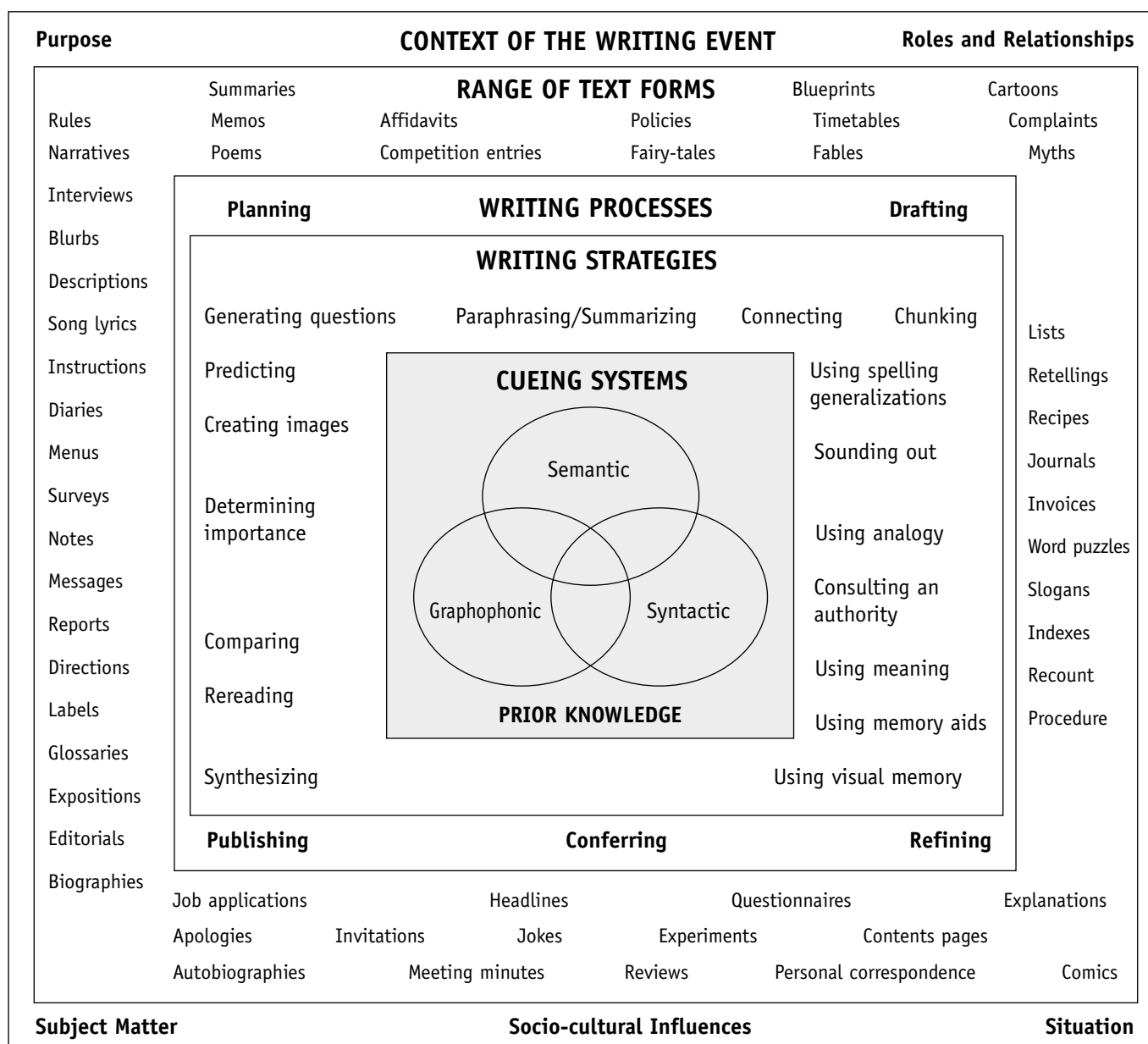
Figure 1.1 A multidimensional model of teaching writing

Building Prior Knowledge

The centre of Figure 1.1 represents three major cueing systems. Just as effective readers draw upon a range of information sources when comprehending texts, effective writers draw on a range of information sources when composing texts. These sources are often referred to as semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cues, or more broadly, as cueing systems. Each cueing system is seen as equally important, and the systems are used simultaneously before, during, and after composing texts. Collectively, they make up a student's prior knowledge, or *schema*.

It is critical that students from a very early age be provided with opportunities to build knowledge and skills within each cueing system. Helping them focus on elements such as building knowledge about concepts and topics, expanding cultural and world knowledge, building vocabulary, understanding words and word parts, building grammatical understandings, exploring graphophonic relationships, and expanding text-form knowledge achieves this goal.
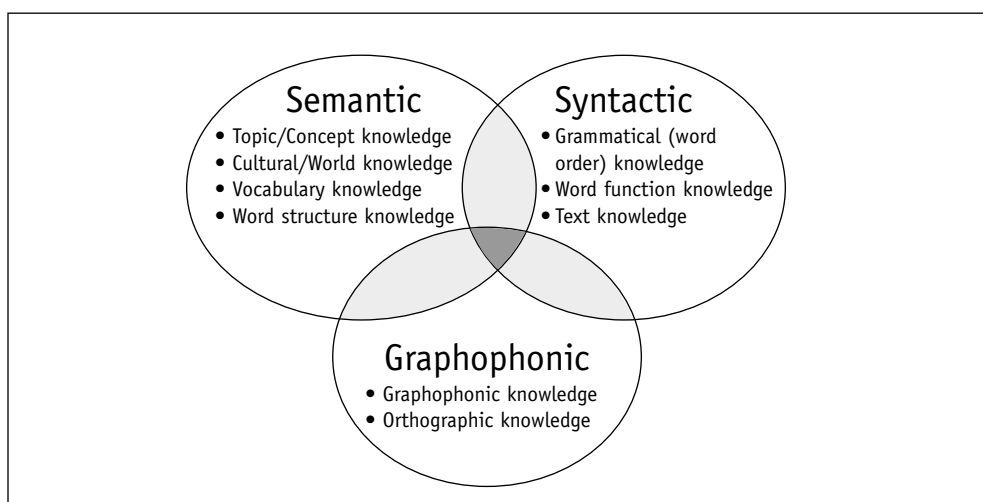
Some sources identify a fourth major cueing sysem—the pragmatic—whereby the other three are linked with the context. Pragmatic cues relate to knowledge of audience, purpose of writing, and situation. Readers seek to understand how the context influences how sentences convey information. Two other cueing systems to construct meaning are the textual, which pertains to genre and form, and one that relates to text features, such as graphs.

Figure 1.2 The knowledge within the cueing systems makes up the writer's prior knowledge.

Using Writing Strategies

Another important element in supporting writing development is the explicit teaching of the strategies related to crafting texts, including those used in spelling unfamiliar words (see box, p. 5). Strategies are most effectively introduced through such teaching and learning as modelling, sharing, and guiding, and through authentic independent practice. Strategies can be introduced, used, and applied by students as they plan, draft, confer, refine, and publish

texts for a range of social purposes. The control of a wide range of strategies is essential for successful writing.

Writing strategies include
generating questions   sounding out   predicting   chunking
creating images/visualizing   using spelling generalizations
determining importance   using analogy   inferring
consulting an authority   comparing   using meaning
rereading   using memory aids   synthesizing
paraphrasing/summarizing   connecting

Using the Writing Processes

First Steps Literacy recognizes that there are many useful writing processes that feed into one recursive process. Consciously or not, all writers go through a series of stages—or predictable paths—to compose a text. Effective writers understand that writing is a process that occurs over time; it may vary from person to person or according to the purpose and audience of the writing event. It is complex. Social and cultural influences play a part in how writers compose texts.

Teaching inexperienced writers the various processes of writing provides them with a structure they can follow to help them craft text from beginning to end. The important factor is to help students understand that the stages are not fixed. Writers move back and forth between stages, making the overall process fluid and dynamic, in other words, recursive. Some writing may not go through all stages to publication. Sometimes, a writer may engage in several processes simultaneously. See Figure 1.3 (p. 6) for a representation of how the writing processes relate to one another.

Crafting a Wide Range of Text Forms

Figure 1.1 on page 3 represents a sample of the wide range of text forms that writers may compose, depending on the context of the writing event. The goal or desired outcome for students is that they can write for a range of purposes, using electronic and print media as well as the conventions appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context. Many texts that writers compose to convey their meanings will be hybrid texts that combine features from a variety of text forms. (See Figure 1.4, p. 7—text forms are identified under each purpose.)

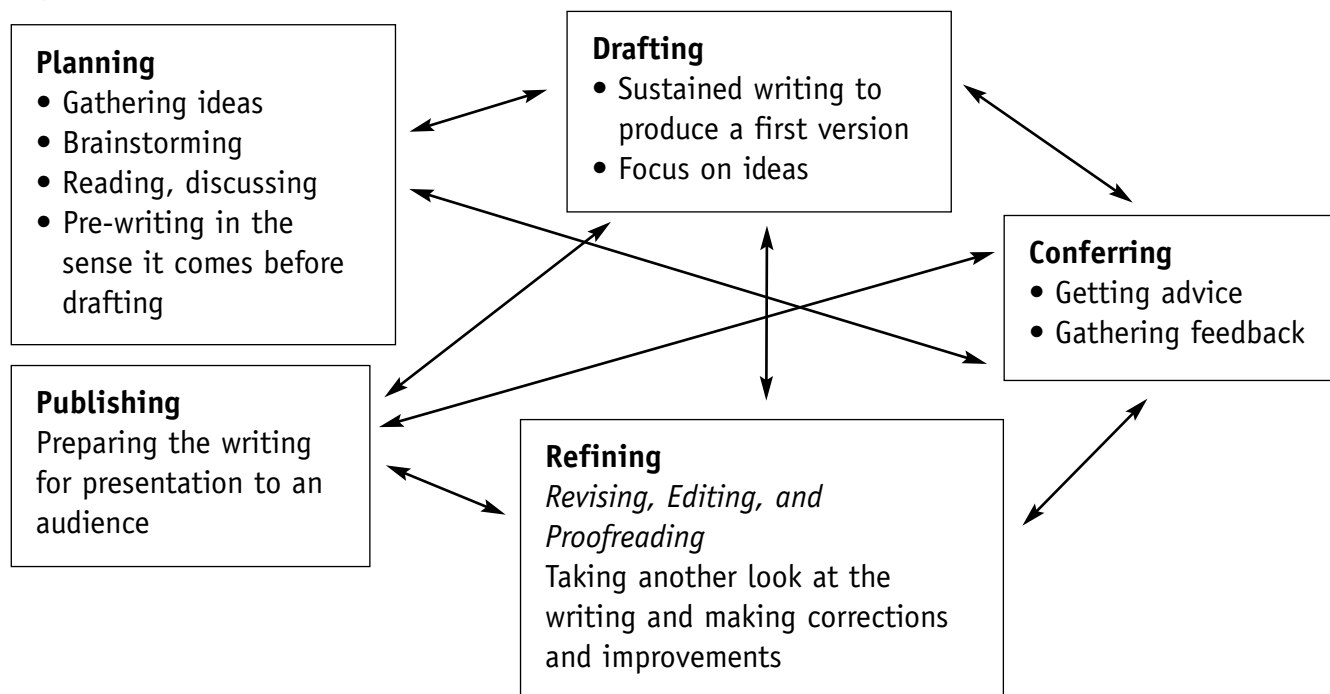An example of a hybrid text is non-fiction, written in a narrative form.

first steps

Planning
- Gathering ideas
- Brainstorming
- Reading, discussing
- Pre-writing in the sense it comes before drafting

Drafting
- Sustained writing to produce a first version
- Focus on ideas

Conferring
- Getting advice
- Gathering feedback

Publishing
Preparing the writing for presentation to an audience

Refining
Revising, Editing, and Proofreading
Taking another look at the writing and making corrections and improvements

Figure 1.3 How the processes of writing interrelate

It is becoming increasingly important that the texts students compose are produced through both pen and paper and electronic media. Electronic texts have unique characteristics. Becoming literate in electronic writing will involve writers in learning to compose non-linear, non-sequential text and in using such organizational features as pop-up menus, hyperlinks, and sidebars. Electronic texts may also incorporate a wide range of animated, flashing, or moving visual displays, sound effects, or video. Writers need to learn the conventions of how to incorporate these elements in prose to create effective multimedia texts.

First Steps views the stages of writing as processes to emphasize the fluid and dynamic nature of writing.

The Context of the Writing Event

Context refers to the immediate situational circumstances as well as to the broader socio-cultural influences that have impact on a writing event. Writers are members of a socio-cultural group. This context influences what and how they write, and how their writing is perceived. When writers compose texts, several factors will influence their choice of language and guide them to decide what is important:

- the purpose of the communication
- knowledge of the subject matter
- the roles of the writer and the audience, and their relationships
- the physical situation in which the writing takes place
- socio-cultural beliefs, values, and assumptions

6

An Overview of Texts

COMMUNICATION PURPOSES

Communication MODES*	Entertain	Recount	Socialize	Inquire	Describe	Persuade	Explain	Instruct	TEXT PRODUCT TYPES
Written — Print	Narrative, e.g.: • fairy-tale • fable • fantasy; Poem, e.g.: • haiku • limerick • free verse; Song lyric; Word puzzle	Biography, Autobiography, Diary, Journal, Retellings: direct or indirect experiences, Minutes of meetings, Review	Invitation, Apology, Message, Note, Personal correspondence, Announcement	Survey, Questionnaire, Interview	Report, Label, Menu, Contents page, Index, Glossary, Bibliography, Blurb, Description	Exposition, Menu, Job application, Editorial, Headlines, Competition entry, Slogan, Advertisement	Explanation, Affidavit, Memo, Rules, Policy, Journal, Timetable, Complaint	Directions, Timetable, Recipe, Manual, Invoice, List, Experiment, Summons, Blueprint, Instructions, Map	Magazine, Letter, Book, Brochure, Pamphlet, Newspaper, Newsletter, Chart, Journal, Itinerary
Written — Electronic	Joke		Chat room conversation						CD-ROM, Text message, E-mail, Fax, Card
Oral — Live	Joke, Story, Song lyric, Theatre	Conversation	Greeting, Apology, Telephone conversation	Interview	Oral report	Debate, Discussion	Oral explanation	Oral directions	Performance, Speech
Oral — Electronic	Talking book, Song lyric		Voice mail message, Chat room conversation			Talk radio, Song lyric			Audio cassette, Radio, Television, CD-ROM, Video, DVD
Visual — Live	Play, Theatre, Mime					Logo, Advertisement, Catalogue	Venn diagram, Timeline, Graph, Table, Flowchart, Map	Road sign	Gesture, Performance
Visual — Print	Painting, Photograph, Cartoon	Picture book, Photo, Timeline			Travel brochure				Button, Flyer, Poster, Magazine, Graffiti, Sticker, Magnets, Clothing, Tattoo
Visual — Electronic	Television, Sitcom, Film					Advertisement	Documentary, News report		CD-ROM, Videocassette, Web page, DVD

Figure 1.4 Categorizing texts by purpose

* Texts may also be multimodal—produced and shared in a range of ways, including print and electronic.

Understanding the Writing Map

Writing Map of Development validates what teachers know about their students and is organized to help them link assessment, teaching, and learning.

Although in practice literacy is an amalgam of the strands Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Viewing, individual maps are necessary to represent the complexity of each strand.

Viewing the strands through the substrands Use of Texts, Contextual Understanding, Conventions, and Processes and Strategies provides further opportunity for a more specialized analysis. The organization of the Writing Map of Development into substrands provides a practical framework for looking at assessment, teaching, and learning, and reflects current beliefs about how writing is defined.

Writing Map of Development contains behaviours, suggested teaching emphases, and a range of teaching and learning experiences at each phase of development. Together, these features help teachers make informed, strategic decisions about how to support students' literacy development.

How the Writing Map Is Organized

There are seven phases outlined in *Writing Map of Development*.
• Role Play
• Experimental
• Early
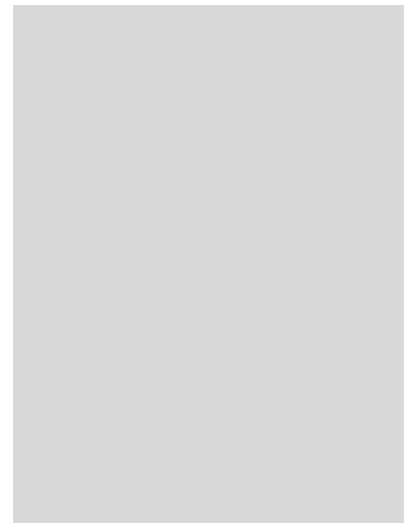• Transitional
• Conventional
• Proficient
• Accomplished

Figure 2.1

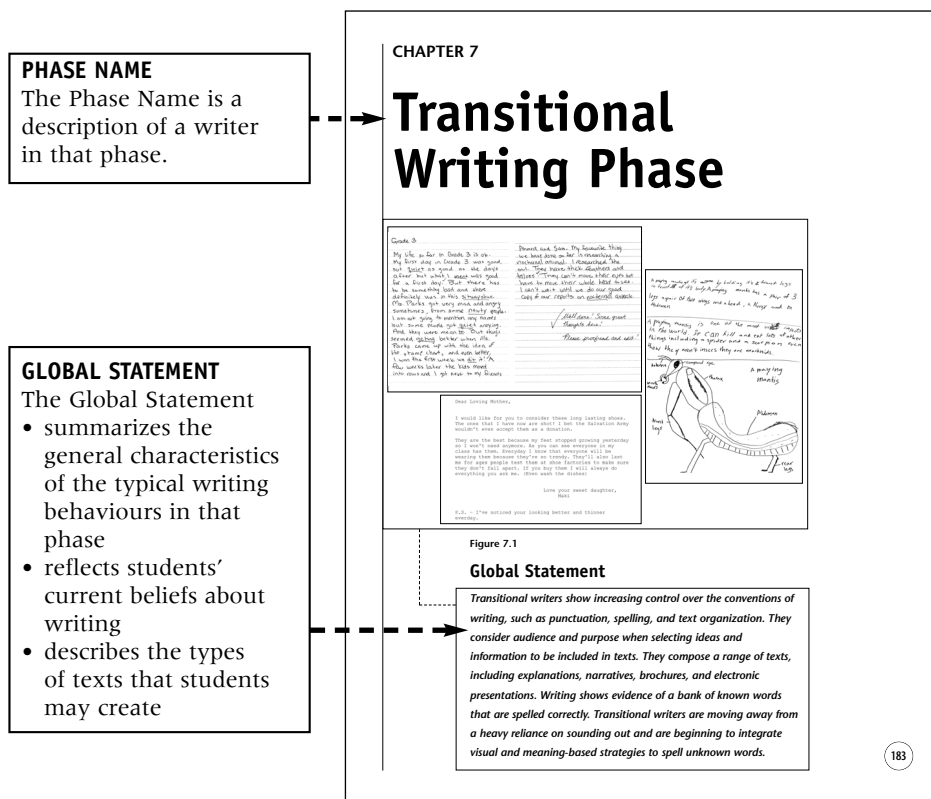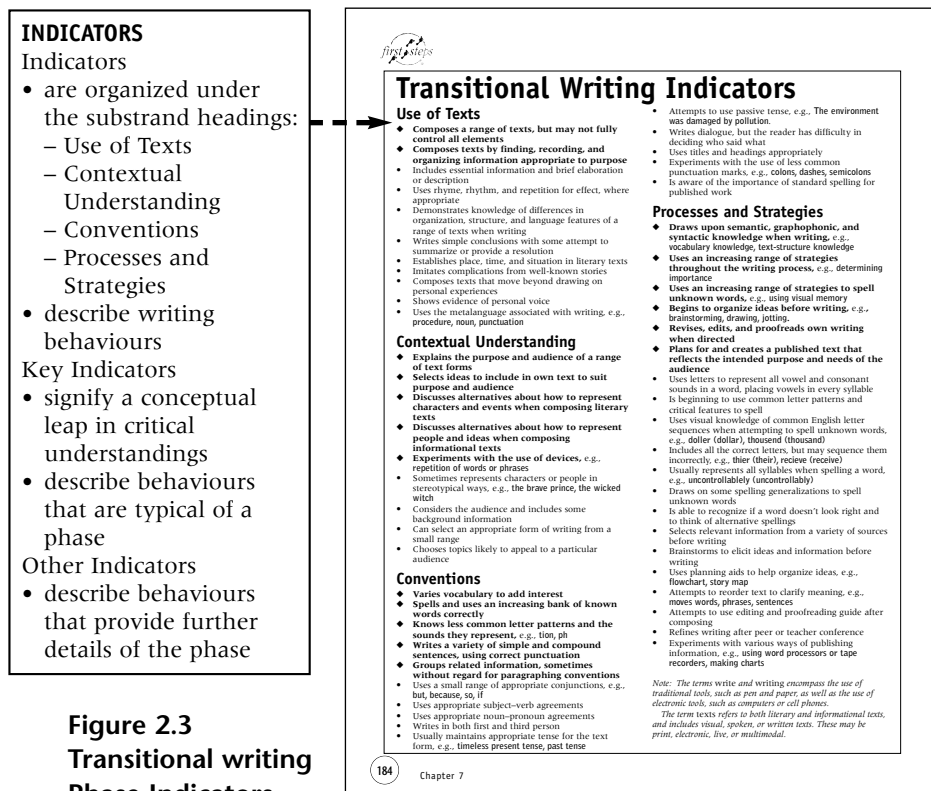The same organizational, or text, framework is used for each phase.

PHASE NAME
The Phase Name is a description of a writer in that phase.

CHAPTER 7

Transitional Writing Phase

Figure 7.1

Global Statement

Transitional writers show increasing control over the conventions of writing, such as punctuation, spelling, and text organization. They consider audience and purpose when selecting ideas and information to be included in texts. They compose a range of texts, including explanations, narratives, brochures, and electronic presentations. Writing shows evidence of a bank of known words that are spelled correctly. Transitional writers are moving away from a heavy reliance on sounding out and are beginning to integrate visual and meaning-based strategies to spell unknown words.

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GLOBAL STATEMENT
The Global Statement
• summarizes the general characteristics of the typical writing behaviours in that phase
• reflects students' current beliefs about writing
• describes the types of texts that students may create

Figure 2.2 Transitional writing Phase Name and Global Statement

INDICATORS
Indicators
• are organized under the substrand headings:
  – Use of Texts
  – Contextual Understanding
  – Conventions
  – Processes and Strategies
• describe writing behaviours
Key Indicators
• signify a conceptual leap in critical understandings
• describe behaviours that are typical of a phase
Other Indicators
• describe behaviours that provide further details of the phase

Figure 2.3 Transitional writing Phase Indicators

first steps

Transitional Writing Indicators

Use of Texts
◆ **Composes a range of texts, but may not fully control all elements**
◆ **Composes texts by finding, recording, and organizing information appropriate to purpose**
• Includes essential information and brief elaboration or description
• Uses rhyme, rhythm, and repetition for effect, where appropriate
• Demonstrates knowledge of differences in organization, structure, and language features of a range of texts when writing
• Writes simple conclusions with some attempt to summarize or provide a resolution
• Establishes place, time, and situation in literary texts
• Imitates complications from well-known stories
• Composes texts that move beyond drawing on personal experiences
• Shows evidence of personal voice
• Uses the metalanguage associated with writing, e.g., procedure, noun, punctuation

Contextual Understanding
◆ **Explains the purpose and audience of a range of text forms**
◆ **Selects ideas to include in own text to suit purpose and audience**
◆ **Discusses alternatives about how to represent characters and events when composing literary texts**
◆ **Discusses alternatives about how to represent people and ideas when composing informational texts**
◆ **Experiments with the use of devices,** e.g., repetition of words or phrases
• Sometimes represents characters or people in stereotypical ways, e.g., the brave prince, the wicked witch
• Considers the audience and includes some background information
• Can select an appropriate form of writing from a small range
• Chooses topics likely to appeal to a particular audience

Conventions
◆ **Varies vocabulary to add interest**
◆ **Spells and uses an increasing bank of known words correctly**
◆ **Knows less common letter patterns and the sounds they represent,** e.g., tion, ph
◆ **Writes a variety of simple and compound sentences, using correct punctuation**
◆ **Groups related information, sometimes without regard for paragraphing conventions**
• Uses a small range of appropriate conjunctions, e.g., but, because, so, if
• Uses appropriate subject–verb agreements
• Uses appropriate noun–pronoun agreements
• Writes in both first and third person
• Usually maintains appropriate tense for the text form, e.g., timeless present tense, past tense

• Attempts to use passive tense, e.g., The environment was damaged by pollution.
• Writes dialogue, but the reader has difficulty in deciding who said what
• Uses titles and headings appropriately
• Experiments with the use of less common punctuation marks, e.g., colons, dashes, semicolons
• Is aware of the importance of standard spelling for published work

Processes and Strategies
◆ **Draws upon semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge when writing,** e.g., vocabulary knowledge, text-structure knowledge
◆ **Uses an increasing range of strategies throughout the writing process,** e.g., determining importance
◆ **Uses an increasing range of strategies to spell unknown words,** e.g., using visual memory
◆ **Begins to organize ideas before writing,** e.g., brainstorming, drawing, jotting.
◆ **Revises, edits, and proofreads own writing when directed**
◆ **Plans for and creates a published text that reflects the intended purpose and needs of the audience**
• Uses letters to represent all vowel and consonant sounds in a word, placing vowels in every syllable
• Is beginning to use common letter patterns and critical features to spell
• Uses visual knowledge of common English letter sequences when attempting to spell unknown words, e.g., doller (dollar), thousend (thousand)
• Includes all the correct letters, but may sequence them incorrectly, e.g., thier (their), recieve (receive)
• Usually represents all syllables when spelling a word, e.g., uncontrollablely (uncontrollably)
• Draws on some spelling generalizations to spell unknown words
• Is able to recognize if a word doesn't look right and to think of alternative spellings
• Selects relevant information from a variety of sources before writing
• Brainstorms to elicit ideas and information before writing
• Uses planning aids to help organize ideas, e.g., flowchart, story map
• Attempts to reorder text to clarify meaning, e.g., moves words, phrases, sentences
• Attempts to use editing and proofreading guide after composing
• Refines writing after peer or teacher conference
• Experiments with various ways of publishing information, e.g., using word processors or tape recorders, making charts

Note: The terms range and writing encompass the use of traditional tools, such as pen and paper, as well as the use of electronic tools, such as computers or cell phones.
The term texts refers to both literary and informational texts, and includes visual, spoken, or written texts. These may be print, electronic, live, or multimodal.

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MAJOR TEACHING EMPHASES

Major Teaching Emphases

- are organized under the following headings:
  - Environment and Attitude
  - Use of Texts
  - Contextual Understanding
  - Conventions
  - Processes and Strategies
- are suggestions of appropriate priorities for teaching at each phase
- are designed to help teachers support and challenge students' current understandings

Figure 2.4 Transitional writing phase, Major Teaching Emphases

TEACHING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Teaching and Learning Experiences are organized under the following headings:
  - Environment and Attitude
  - Use of Texts
  - Contextual Understanding
  - Conventions
  - Processes and Strategies
- Each of these is divided into two sections: Teaching Notes and Involving Students.
  - Teaching Notes unpack the intent of the Major Teaching Emphases.
  - Involving Students contains a selection of developmentally appropriate activities that support the Major Teaching Emphases.

Figure 2.5 Transitional writing—Teaching and Learning Experiences

Figure 2.6 Transitional writing—Involving Students

SUPPORTING WRITERS IN THE HOME PAGES

These pages

- provide support for teachers in helping parents or guardians assist their child's writing development at home
- contain
  - a general description of writers in the phase
  - a list of Parent Cards that include activities appropriate for the home setting

Each Parent Card is available on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM and may be copied for distribution to parents.

Supporting Transitional Writers in the Home

Transitional writers are able to write a variety of texts, such as explanations, narratives, and brochures. They consider the purpose and the audience when making decisions about what to include. Transitional writers are developing control over conventions, such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and the way texts are organized. They are beginning to use a range of strategies to spell unknown words.

Transitional writers will benefit from a range of experiences in the home setting. Ideas for providing appropriate experiences are available on Parent Cards located on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM. Teachers can select appropriate cards for each Transitional writer and copy them for parents or guardians to use at home.

Parent Cards	
1 Transitional Writers: How to Support	2 Writing and Reading Links
3 Supporting the Writing Process	4 Supporting Punctuation and Grammar
5 Building Understandings About Different Types of Writing	6 Developing Vocabulary and Spelling
7 Building Vocabulary and Spelling Knowledge Through Games	8 Supporting Project Work—Accessing and Using Information

Available on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM is a parent-friendly version of the Writing Map of Development.

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Figure 2.7 Transitional writing—Supporting writers in the home

How to Use the Writing Map

The purpose of using the Writing Map of Development is to link assessment, teaching, and learning in a way that best addresses the strengths and needs of all students. The process used to achieve this goal may vary from teacher to teacher; it may be dependent on a teacher's familiarity with *First Steps Literacy*, the data already collected on students' writing development, the time of the school year, or the school's implementation plan.

This section outlines a possible process (see Figure 2.8). As teachers become more familiar with linking assessment to teaching and learning, strategic decisions about using the map can be made. Some may focus on placing students on the map; for example, how many students and which ones; using which indicators, which recording sheet, and over what period of time. Others may focus on the selection of Major Teaching Emphases and Teaching and Learning Experiences for individual, small-group, and whole-class teaching.
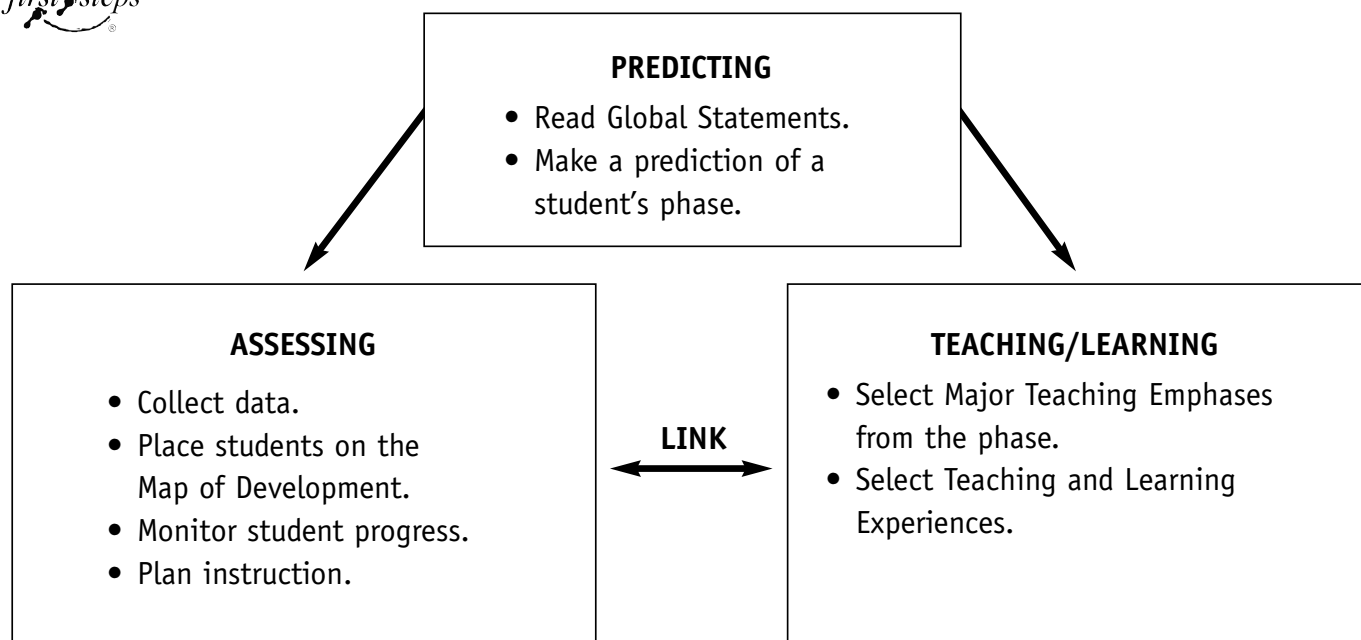
PREDICTING
- Read Global Statements.
- Make a prediction of a student's phase.

ASSESSING
- Collect data.
- Place students on the Map of Development.
- Monitor student progress.
- Plan instruction.

LINK

TEACHING/LEARNING
- Select Major Teaching Emphases from the phase.
- Select Teaching and Learning Experiences.

Figure 2.8 A process for using the Writing Map of Development

Suggested Process for Using the Map
Predict Phase of Development

Many teachers begin to use the Writing Map of Development by making predictions about each student's phase of development. Predictions are made by reading through the Global Statements and thinking about students collectively and indivdually. Teachers are then able to use this information, together with their professional judgment, to make an educated guess in each case. The initial predictions, recorded on a class profile sheet (see Figure 2.9), allow teachers to immediately begin linking assessment, teaching, and learning.

These predictions can be used to select Major Teaching Emphases from appropriate phases for whole-class, small-group, or individual teaching. Major Teaching Emphases will then guide the selection of teaching and learning experiences to support students' development.

It is critical that teachers begin to collect data to confirm or amend their initial predictions.

Collect Data

The Indicators on the Writing Map of Development provide a focus for data collection, which can be carried out on a continual basis using a range of tools in a variety of contexts. A balance of conversation, observation, and analysis of products will ensure that

First Steps Writing Map of Development: Class Profile Sheet

Grade Level: _____3_____   Teacher: _____Ms. McNeally_____

	Role Play	Experimental	Early	Transitional	Conventional	Proficient	Accomplished
1		Bethan	Annaliese	Howard			
2		Louisa	Sara-Jane	Philip			
3		Kade	Ben	Janette			
4		Mahmoud	James	Denise			
5		Brenda	Vikki	Yvonne			
6		Seth	Hope				
7		Daniel	Greg				
8			Allan				
9			Matthew				
10			Stephen				
11			Rebecca				
12			Monica				
13			Max				
14			Marilyn				
15			Alison				
16			Grace				
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							
23							
24							
25							
26							

Major Teaching Emphases can be selected from a range of phases:
• whole-class focus, e.g., Transitional phase
• small-group focus, e.g., Experimental phase
• individual student focus

Figure 2.9 Sample of a class profile

information is gathered across all four substrands. Encouraging the involvement of students and parents or guardians in the data collection will provide further information about students' writing development and interests (see Chapter 3).

Identify Students on the Map of Development

The Writing Map of Development can be used as a framework for recording a wide range of information gathered about students' writing behaviours. A number of recording line masters have been designed and successfully used by teachers. Samples of these are provided on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.

Information about the behaviours can be recorded in a range of ways. The development of a system, such as highlighting or dating, is an individual or school preference. Marking the selected recording sheets in some way is referred to as "identifying the students on the Map of Development." (See Figure 2.10.)

Consider these points when identifying students on the Map of Development.

- Indicators for each phase should be interpreted in conjunction with the Global Statement of the phase and with the indicators from the surrounding phases.
- With the exception of Role Play writers, students are considered to be in the phase where they exhibit *all* Key Indicators.
- When students display *any* of the indicators of the Role Play writing phase, they are considered to be in that phase.
- For most students in the class, it will be necessary to record information only about the Key Indicators.
- It is important that any student behaviours (indicators) recorded have been displayed more than once and in a variety of contexts.

> To be recorded, student indicators or behaviours must have been displayed several times and in a variety of contexts.

WRITING MAP OF DEVELOPMENT: Individual Student Profile Sheet—Key Indicators Only

Student's Name: **Ross Schultz**

EARLY	TRANSITIONAL
USE OF TEXTS	**USE OF TEXTS**
✓ Attempts a small range of familiar texts, either teacher directed or self selected	✓ Composes a range of texts, but may not fully control all elements
✓ With assistance, finds information in texts and records it through drawing or writing key words	✓ Composes texts by finding, recording, and organizing information appropriate to purpose
CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING	**CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING**
✓ Explains the purpose of a small range of familiar text forms, e.g., *jokes are to entertain*	◆ Explains the purpose and audience of a range of text forms
✓ Talks about the purpose of a piece of writing and the ideas that need to be included	✓ Selects ideas to include in own text to suit purpose and audience
✓ Explains why characters or events are represented in a particular way when composing literary texts	◆ Discusses alternatives about how to represent characters and events when composing literary texts
✓ Explains why people or information are represented in a particular way when composing informational texts	◆ Discusses alternatives about how to represent people and ideas when composing informational texts
✓ Imitates the use of simple devices used in texts, e.g., *print size, colour*	◆ Experiments with the use of devices, e.g., *repetition of words or phrases*
CONVENTIONS	**CONVENTIONS**
✓ Experiments with words drawn from a variety of sources, e.g., *literature, media, oral language of peers*	◆ Varies vocabulary to add interest
✓ Spells and uses a small bank of known words correctly	✓ Spells and uses an increasing bank of known words correctly
✓ Knows all letters by name and their common sounds	◆ Knows less common letter patterns and the sounds they represent, e.g., *tion, ph*
✓ Knows simple letter patterns and the sounds they represent, e.g., *sh, ch, ee*	✓ Writes a variety of simple and compound sentences using appropriate punctuation
✓ Writes simple sentences using correct punctuation	◆ Groups related information, sometimes without regard for paragraphing conventions
PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES	**PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES**
✓ Draws upon semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge when writing, e.g., *text organization, word order*	◆ Draws upon semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge when writing, e.g., *vocabulary knowledge, text-structure knowledge*
✓ Uses a small range of strategies throughout the writing process, e.g., *self-questioning*	◆ Uses an increasing range of strategies throughout the writing process, e.g., *determining importance*
✓ Uses a small range of strategies to spell unknown words, e.g., *chunking, sounding out*	◆ Uses an increasing range of strategies to spell unknown words, e.g., *using visual memory*
✓ Talks or draws as a means of planning when writing	◆ Begins to organize ideas before writing, e.g., *brainstorming, drawing, jotting*
✓ Begins to edit and proofread own writing when directed, e.g., *deleting words, adding punctuation*	◆ Revises, edits, and proofreads own writing when directed
✓ Creates a published text that is beginning to reflect the intended purpose	◆ Plans for and creates a published text that reflects the intended purpose and needs of the audience

Grade: _____   Teacher: **Dale** _____   Grade: _____   Teacher: _____   Grade: _____   Teacher: _____

Figure 2.10 A student profile

Link Assessment, Teaching, and Learning

Identifying students on the Writing Map of Development is just the beginning of the assessment, teaching, and learning cycle. It is crucial that teachers continue to analyze student profiles so that they will be better able to plan appropriate teaching, and learning experiences.

Once a student's phase of development has been determined, the Major Teaching Emphases provide the next step in linking assessment, teaching, and learning. These are provided at each phase of development, and suggest appropriate teaching priorities for students in that phase.

After Major Teaching Emphases have been selected for an individual, small-group, or whole-class focus, appropriate Teaching and Learning Experiences can be chosen from the corresponding phase outlined in this resource (see Figure 2.11). *First Steps Writing Resource Book* and other teacher resource material can provide further support for the chosen Emphases.
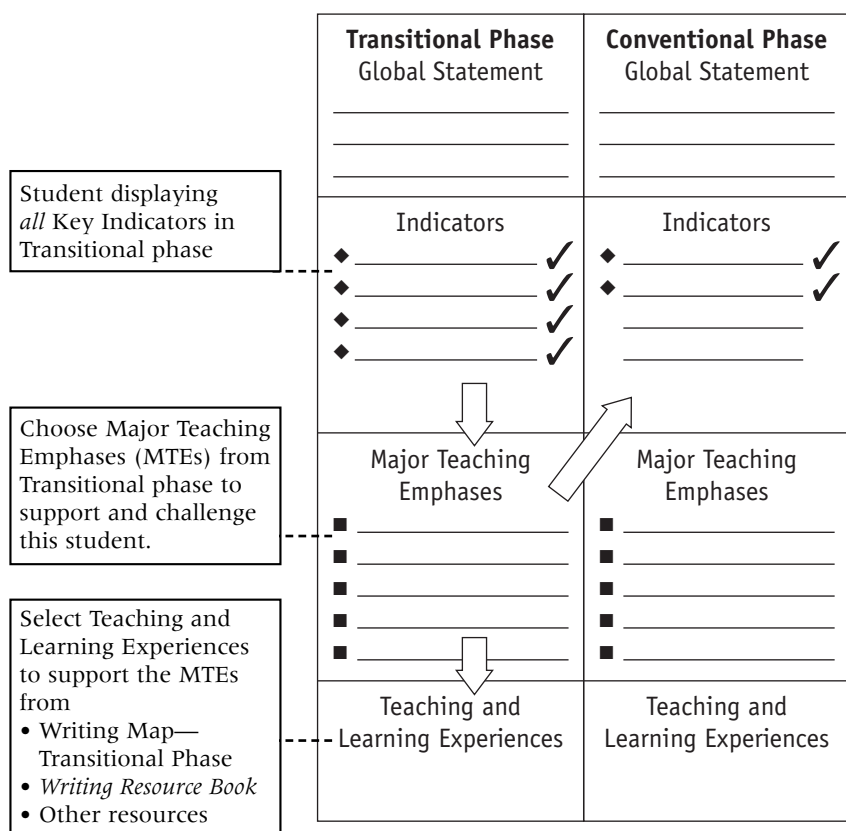
Note that the arrow at the 60 degree angle recognizes that when teachers focus on these MTEs, the student will begin to display these behaviours in the next phase.

Figure 2.11 Choosing appropriate Major Teaching Emphases and Teaching and Learning Experiences

Monitor Student Progress

The Writing Map of Development can be used to monitor students' progress over time. It is crucial that teachers update the profile of each student often enough to inform instruction in the classroom so that student needs are constantly being met.

Decisions about the monitoring and updating process are a personal, pedagogical choice. Some teachers choose to focus on four or five students at a time; some choose to focus on the indicators from a particular substrand, while others focus on students from a particular phase. These options help to make the monitoring and updating process manageable.

> A student profile, as in Figure 2.10, should accurately reflect the student's developmental phase under each of the major substrands: Use of Texts, Contextual Understanding, Conventions, and Processes and Strategies. It provides a concrete representation of what the student can do or understands.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I start using the Major Teaching Emphases and the Teaching and Learning Experiences before I have identified students on the Writing Map of Development?

Yes. The best way to start is to predict each student's phase of development based on the Global Statement and thinking about the student's needs as a writer. Once you have done so, you may choose the Major Teaching Emphases from the predicted phase. After that, select appropriate Teaching and Learning Experiences and use these as a springboard for collecting data in an ongoing manner.

Does a student have to display all Key Indicators of a phase to be in that phase?

Yes. The phase in which the student is displaying all the Key Indicators is considered to be the student's phase of development.

There is, however, an exception to this. When students display any of the indicators in the Role Play phase, they are considered to be in that phase.

Do I need to place all students on the Map of Development?

It is important to be clear about your purpose for placing students on the Writing Map of Development and this purpose will guide your decision about which students to choose. You may decide that for some students it is sufficient to predict using the Global Statement and then use this information to select Major Teaching Emphases and Teaching and Learning Experiences. For others in the class, you may gather information only about Key Indicators to create individual profiles. For a selected few, you may gather information about both Key Indicators and Other Indicators to create more detailed records of development.

How much evidence do I need to collect before an indicator can be marked or highlighted?

You need to have formative and summative evidence to determine whether a student consistently displays a particular behaviour. The most effective way to do this is to see the behaviour displayed several times in a range of contexts. Your professional judgment will help you decide whether the evidence you have is strong enough to mark the indicator. When in doubt, leave it out and wait until you have confirmation that an indicator is being displayed.

When would I use Other Indicators?

Other Indicators lists additional behaviours you may notice *some* students displaying. You may choose to use them when you are looking for more detailed information about a student.

How long should a student be in a phase?

There is no definitive time span. Some students may progress quickly through a phase, while others remain in the same phase for some time. Each student is unique, and no two developmental pathways will be the same. Providing developmentally appropriate teaching and learning experiences will help students move along the Writing Map of Development.

How often do I need to update each student's progress on the Writing Map of Development?

Data collection and analysis is ongoing, and the frequency of the collation of this information onto the map is your decision. However, it is crucial that you update the profiles often enough to drive teaching and learning in the classroom so that student needs are constantly being met.

From which phase do I choose Major Teaching Emphases?

Major Teaching Emphases are chosen from the phase in which a student is displaying all Key Indicators; for example, if a student displays all the Key Indicators in the Transitional phase, Major Teaching Emphases come from the Transitional phase. Major Teaching Emphases are designed to support students' current understandings and challenge them to begin displaying behaviours from the next phase.

Within a phase, which Major Teaching Emphases do I choose?

Any of the Major Teaching Emphases in the phase where a student displays all the Key Indicators will be appropriate. To select the most appropriate, you may take into consideration the following:

Formative assessment and evaluation is ongoing; it provides continuous information about a learner's development, for example, through anecdotal records and teacher-made tests. It is a resource for program planning. Summative assessment and evaluation occurs at the end of a unit or year and typically involves analysis, grading, and reporting. It compares a student's achievement against a standard.

- the student's interests, strengths, and needs
- any "gaps" in previous teaching
- the grouping arrangements
- links to other literacy strands and what is being taught in other curriculum areas
- provincial/territorial writing outcomes

Major Teaching Emphases are designed to be revisited many times across all curriculum areas. This selection and revisiting process continues until a student consistently displays all Key Indicators in the next phase.

How do I use the Student Self-Assessment pages?

The Student Self-Assessment pages are designed to be completed by the students. These pages can be completed over time either independently or with teacher support, which could happen during student conferences or reflection sessions, or as part of an interview. These pages provide a springboard for individual goal-setting. They can be found on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM, keyed to pages in Chapter 3.

Why are there no activities for students in the Processes and Strategies substrand in First Steps *Writing Map of Development?*

The activities for the Processes and Strategies substrand are in *Writing Resource Book*. The rationale for this is that all writers make use of a range of processes and strategies that are not hierarchical and are therefore not phase specific. The activities in *Writing Resource Book* can be applied across a range of phases to develop effective use of the processes and strategies being introduced or consolidated.

Can I use the Map of Development with English Language Learner (ELL) students?

Yes, the map may be used with ELL students. By using the map to record a student's behaviours, you will see patterns indicating strengths and needs. The behaviours exhibited could be across a number of phases; therefore, it may not be appropriate to identify an ELL student as being in one particular phase. In order to differentiate instruction appropriately, you may need to select Major Teaching Emphases from more than one phase of the map (see *Linking Assessment Teaching and Learning*, Chapter 4, for further information about *First Steps* and Diversity).

However, there are different considerations for students who are print literate in another language and those who are not.

For students who are print literate in a language other than English

Students who already speak, read, and write languages other than English may already be aware that each language has its own features. Some of these understandings can be transposed from one language to another; others cannot. Consequently, such students may have a well-developed understanding of language as a system, but not in those aspects of language that are peculiar to English.

When using the Writing Map of Development with these students, consider the following:
- Their thinking and cognitive ability usually far exceeds their ability to read and write in English.
- Their understanding of oral texts is usually more advanced than their ability to express themselves in oral or written English.
- Their competence in using social language may mask difficulties they are experiencing with the language of learning.
- They tend to use elements of their own language as a bridge to learning the English language system, e.g., **code-mixing, where words, phrases, or sentences are borrowed from the first language to help clarify meaning.**
- Their competencies may vary according to the similarity or difference between their home language and specific aspects of English.
- Phonological differences between their home language and English can affect spelling development, e.g., **they may have difficulty distinguishing between sounds and therefore may omit letters or letter clusters when writing.**

For students not print literate in a language other than English

Young students who have not learned to read and write in any language seem to follow a pattern of development similar to that of those learning to read and write English as their first language.

Older students may progress in a similar way; however, they may make progress more quickly than their younger counterparts. This difference is due to their maturity and greater cognitive development. They may not display behaviours from the Role Play and Experimental phases.

Collecting Data on Writing Development

The focus of this chapter is on how data-collection tools can be used specifically to make judgments about students' writing development. The ideas and suggestions provide support for teachers when identifying students on the *First Steps* Writing Map of Development.

Planning for success in writing requires teachers to find out what individual students know and can do. It is useful to ask the following questions.

- What information is needed at a substrand level?
- What are the most reliable and valid ways to collect data on writing, and who should collect it?
- How can the data be collected?
- How can I verify the accuracy of the information over time?
- How can the data on writing be recorded?
- How can I use the information to make judgments and select appropriate focuses for future teaching?
- How can the information be shared with others?

Reliable and Valid Ways to Collect Data on Writing

Different data-collection tools will provide different perspectives on writing performance, so it is important to use a range. The type of tools selected will depend upon the substrand of focus: Use of Texts, Contextual Understanding, Conventions, or Processes and Strategies. Decisions teachers make about which assessment tools to use, and how and when to use them, have impact on the quality of judgments made. These decisions can also have impact on the messages given to students about what counts in writing. It is important to develop

Chapter 6 of *Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning* provides detailed information about beliefs of assessment and evaluation that underpin *First Steps Literacy*. The data-collection tools listed in that chapter are generic and can be applied to all areas of literacy.

reliable and valid ways of assessing writing, and to involve students, parents or guardians, and other teachers in collecting and recording data.

Data can be collected in several ways for each substrand of writing and can be grouped under the following broad headings:
• Focused Observation
• Writing Products
• Conversations

As the table below suggests, data can be gathered in many different ways for each of the substrands, and different teachers will choose different assessment tools. Further information about the use of each tool can be found throughout this chapter.

Data-collection tools in the context of the substrands of writing

Writing-related assessment information that could be used to develop an individual learner's profile includes texts created using a range of technologies, performance tasks, cross-curricular samples of writing, and independent writing in different text forms. Gathering assessment information works best with a systematic whole-school approach.

SUBSTRANDS OF WRITING TOOLS AND MEANS OF ASSESSMENT	Use of Texts	Contextual Understanding	Conventions	Processes and Strategies
Focused observation				
Informal				
Formal				
Writing products				
Logs				
Personal goal-setting				
Writing journals				
Two Stars and a Wish				
Student self-assessment line masters				
Writing samples				
Have-a-Go pads				
Spelling-error analysis				
Surveys and questionnaires				
Tests				
Conversations				
Conferences				
Interviews				

FOCUSED OBSERVATION

Powerful assessment takes place when teachers are observing students at work in regular classroom activities. Assessment need not be a separate procedure; it can happen as part of everyday teaching and learning. Observation involves much more than simply watching or listening to students in the classroom. It involves the systematic collection of observable data and the analysis of that information. It is one way of finding out what students know and can do as writers. It allows teachers to assess specific strategies students use—or understandings they demonstrate—either during specific writing experiences or in other curriculum areas. Focused observation in writing can be carried out in either an informal or a formal way, or in both.

In informal observations, the teacher simply notes writing behaviours as they naturally happen.

Formal observations are planned, with a predetermined focus, such as writing behaviours to be targeted or the students that will be observed. The teacher also decides when and how often formal observations will occur and how they will be recorded.

What Information Can Be Collected?

The table on the next page provides an example of information that could be collected through focused observation.

Questions for observations

Planning	Drafting	Refining	Publishing
• Has the student clearly identified the purpose and audience for writing? • Has the most appropriate form of writing been identified? (e.g., procedure, report) • How did the student gather ideas or plan before writing? (e.g., brainstorming, drawing, jotting lists, webbing, mapping, discussing with a peer) • What kinds of things do students say among themselves, to the teacher, or to others before writing? • Does the student use an identifiable stimulus for writing? • Is the student able to articulate strategies needed to engage in planning?	• How easily is the student able to set down ideas? • Does the student write with fluency in the first draft or when recording initial ideas? • Do students revise and edit as they go? • Is fluency hampered by difficulties with spelling?	• At which level does the student make refinements? (e.g., whole text, paragraph, sentence, word level) • How does the student add or otherwise revise information? • To what extent does the student edit? • Does the student make notes on feedback from peers? • Does the student edit for many conventions at one time or individually? • How does the spelling change between the drafts or drafts and the final product? • Is the student able to identify misspellings? • What strategies does the student use to correct spelling?	• Does the student use feedback from peers in the final copy? • Have all corrections been identified? • Have careful corrections been made? • Has consideration been given to the way the piece is presented? • Have alternative ways to publish work been discussed with peers or teacher? • Does the student appear satisfied with final piece? • Has the piece been shared with others?

WRITING PRODUCTS

The assessment of both process and product is important when making decisions about supporting students' writing development. Teachers can assess student products that have been created across the whole process of writing a text, e.g., planning, drafting, refining, and publishing. The *First Steps* Writing Map of Development can provide teachers with the necessary support when analyzing text products created and the processes used before, during, and after writing.

> Note that not all writing is taken as far as publishing.

The following products will support teachers in gathering information about students' writing development.
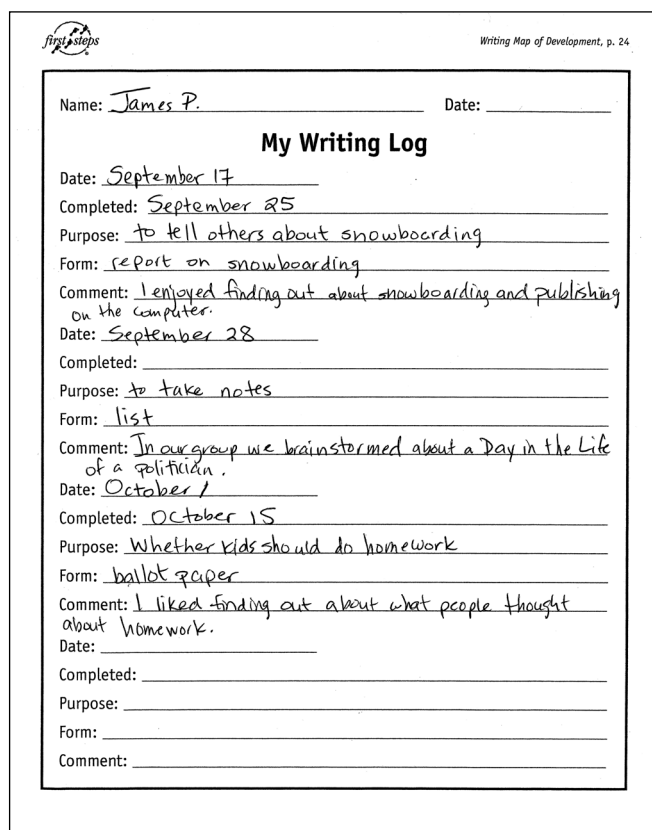
1 Logs   2 Personal Goal-Setting

3 Writing Journals   4 Two Stars and a Wish

5 Student Self-Assessment   6 Writing Samples
  Line Masters

7 Have-a-Go Pads   8 Spelling-Error Analysis

9 Surveys and Questionnaires   10 Tests

1 Logs

WRITING LOGS

A Writing Log, in its simplest form, is a place to record the texts that have been written. The purpose of the Writing Log, together with the age and experience of the student, will determine the
way it is used and structured. The following sample provides a suggestion of the types of entries that can be made. Further applicable line masters can be found on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.

Figure 3.1

What Information Can Be Collected?

Writing Logs provide teachers with information about a student's use of texts, including insights into the student's interests, preferences, attitudes, or understandings.

SPELLING LOGS

A Spelling Log is a place to record words that a student knows how to spell. It may include a record of high-frequency words, class theme words, or words from personal spelling lists. It could also include words that the student is working towards learning to spell. These could be written on sticky notes and transferred into the log once learned. Figure 3.2 provides suggestions of the types of entries that can be made. Further line masters can be found on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.

first steps				*Writing Map of Development, p. 25*
Name: Shazia			Date: Nov 12	

Spelling Log

Words I Need to Know				Words I Know
High-Frequency Words	Signal Words	Topic/Theme Words	Personal Words	
you're their whether because tomorrow people	therefore because	triangular rectangle environment recycle politician	enormous character atomic does	gigantic where they journal

Figure 3.2

What Information Can Be Collected?

Spelling Logs provide teachers with accurate records of words the students can spell and words the students are trying to learn.

2 Personal Goal-Setting

Setting goals to improve writing and monitoring the achievement of those goals is a form of self-assessment suitable for all students. It can provide the teacher with valuable information about writing strategies and help students in developing independence in writing.

Goals can be recorded in many ways. They may be written in students' writing journals or recorded on goal-setting sheets. Once a goal is recorded, the teacher and the student can work together to monitor it. The cumulative record of the goals can provide evidence of successful learning, showing both teacher and student the specific writing strategies and understandings that have been learned. It also clearly demonstrates the progress being made towards improving writing. For students who are just beginning to use goal-setting, frameworks can provide support. A variety of frameworks are provided on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.

Figure 3.3

What Information Can Be Collected?

Reviewing students' writing goals will provide information about the processes and strategies they are using to compose texts.

3 Writing Journals

Writing journals provide a framework for students to

- record topics for writing
- record thoughts, ideas, or inspirations for writing
- record social issues that concern them
- reflect on writing development
- reflect on spelling development
- record thought processes when constructing texts
- reflect on past learning and consider it for future application to new learning
- record relevant background knowledge and experiences
- share thoughts with others

> Writing journals provide a forum in which students can practise metacognition—think about their thinking, monitor their progress, determine strengths, and set new goals.

All journal writing requires clear guidelines; all types of entries need to be modelled extensively before students use them independently. Until students are familiar with expectations, teachers may brainstorm and chart possible sentence starters or questions as prompts for responses. The emphasis of writing journals should be on content and meaning, not on mechanics. Although it is

beneficial to provide regular opportunities to make entries during class time, the activity should not become tedious. Entries can be made every second or third day.

Figure 3.4 A metacognitive journal entry

A teacher viewing this entry would want to point out that proofreading requires much more than trying to spell words; it requires a close reading of the text to double-check appropriate use of conventions.

What Information Can Be Collected?

Journal entries may provide information about any of the four substrands of writing.

4 Two Stars and a Wish

"Two Stars and a Wish" provides students with a simple framework for reflecting on positive aspects of their work (the stars) as well as focusing on an area for improvement (the wish). It also provides a simple framework for peer assessment. (See the *First Steps Writing Resource Book* CD-ROM.)

What Information Can Be Collected?

"Two Stars and a Wish" may provide information about any of the four substrands of writing.

5 Student Self-Assessment Line Masters

Self-assessment is a critical part of developing a student's ownership of his or her own learning. Student self-assessment can provide teachers with insights into the student's writing that otherwise may not be apparent. With teacher support and guidance, students can

develop the skills necessary for them to assess their own writing and spelling. A range of self-assessment line masters are provided on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.

Phase-specific student self-assessment line masters are provided for the *First Steps Writing Map of Development*. These are designed to

- support teachers as they involve students in the data-collection and reflection processes
- support students to reflect on their own writing and to set writing goals
- reflect the indicators of each phase, but do so in student-friendly language
- be completed by students or with teacher scribing

Figure 3.5 A student's self-assessment line master

What Information Can Be Collected?

Information for any of the four substrands of writing can be gathered using self-assessment line masters.

6 Writing Samples

A collection of writing samples gathered over time provides a clear picture of how a student has improved as a writer. Samples can be collected at any stage of the writing process, either during specific writing lessons or from work in other curriculum areas. They can be those created at home, at school, independently, or collaboratively, and they can be collected from a wide variety of media sources, e.g., **paper and pen, electronic.**

Analyzing both draft and final copies of writing allows for a greater range of information to be collected. When students are writing

Each student can develop a literacy portfolio, where work in progress and finished writing are kept. Selecting what to keep, refine, and remove requires the student to reflect and make assessments. This process can be motivating. All work should be dated.

drafts, encourage them not to use erasers so that any changes made during the construction of the text can be seen. If students are composing using word-processing software, have them print out the various drafts they produce as evidence of their writing.

Figure 3.6 Writing samples—across the curriculum

Figure 3.7

What Information Can Be Collected?

Information for any of the four substrands can be gathered from students' writing samples. A range of samples across a period of time can clearly demonstrate progress made.

7 Have-a-Go Pads

The purpose of Have-a-Go pads is for students to try out alternative spellings of words they think they may have spelled incorrectly in their writing. Analysis of a student's spelling attempts can show understandings or misunderstandings of spelling patterns, as well as which strategies the student is using.

What Information Can Be Collected?

Have-a-Go pads are particularly useful for collecting information about both the Conventions and the Processes and Strategies substrands.

8 Spelling-Error Analysis

Spelling-Error Analysis is a great way for teachers to determine the reason behind a student's spelling difficulty. A diagnostic assessment process, it requires the teacher to look beyond whether a word is right or wrong and to carefully analyze the errors a student is making, searching for patterns in those errors.

Spellers who write most words accurately are still learning new principles about spelling. Their errors reveal current understandings, and help teachers make good decisions about teaching. Student writing samples, Have-a-Go pads, or writing of dictated sentences are good sources of texts for this type of analysis.

first steps

Writing Map of Development, p. 30

Spelling-Error Analysis

Student's Name: _Melanie H._

Misspelling	Standard Spelling	ANALYSIS						Comments
		Reasonable Phonic Alternative	Errors with Sequential Letter Patterns	Errors with Hearing Sounds in Words	Reversal and Repetition Errors	Errors Associated with Meaning	Unclassified Errors	
Novemember	November				✓ repetition			Check: does it look right?
whent	went	✓						Focus on critical features; add to "Words to Learn" list
exdends	extends			✓				Check pronunciation
Kilometers	Kilometres	✓				✓		Focus on base word and meaning Kilo metre
sruface	surface		✓					Encourage proofreading; revisit "ur" pattern
cheimicals	chemicals						✓	Check: does the word look right? Syllables/chunking; visual pattern

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Figure 3.8

What Information Can Be Collected?

Spelling-Error Analysis can provide valuable information about both the Conventions and the Processes and Strategies substrands of writing.

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9 Surveys and Questionnaires

Surveys and questionnaires about writing can take many forms and address a range of topics. They typically consist of a series of statements or questions about which students or parents are asked to express agreement or disagreement (sometimes using a scale). The items to be included on the survey or questionnaire will be determined by the type of information required. The *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM contains some sample surveys and questionnaires that can be used with either students or parents.

Figure 3.9

Figure 3.10

What Information Can Be Collected?

Surveys and questionnaires can be used to ascertain students' writing attitudes, self-perceptions, and interests or to gather information about their home writing practices. They can also provide an insight into the attitudes and beliefs parents hold, and the goals they may have for their child.

10 Tests

Testing can be another way of gathering data about a student's writing and spelling development, and should be used in

conjunction with other data-collection tools. Many types of tests are available, but generally they can be categorized under the following headings.

CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Criterion-referenced tests are designed to measure how well students have learned a specific body of knowledge or certain skills. Therefore, they can provide information related to strengths and weaknesses.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Standardized, or norm-referenced, tests are the formalized tests in which scoring, norms, and administration have been established as a result of each having been given to a large number of students. They are administered under specific conditions adhering to the directions set out in the examiner's manual. The performances of other students are presented as norms for the purpose of comparing achievement.

TEACHER-MADE TESTS

Many teachers devise their own tests to measure student progress in writing. These are generally criterion referenced and measure the students' mastery of what has been taught. The advantage they have over other types is that they can be tailored to a specific group of students or to specific information the teacher is seeking.

What Information Can Be Collected?

Tests give information about a student at a particular time, situation, and place. The information may or may not be able to be generalized to other situations, times, or places.

Tests may provide information about each of the four substrands. By analyzing errors and misunderstandings, teachers are provided with direction for creating an effective writing program.

CONVERSATIONS

Both incidental and scheduled conversations will provide valuable information that may not be collected in other contexts. Teachers who ensure they are having conversations with individual students on a regular basis can gain a deeper understanding of each student's writing development.

Information about these types of conversations is detailed:
1 Conferences
2 Interviews

1 Conferences

There are a variety of ways to involve students in writing conferences. These include

• one-on-one conferences—teacher and student
• peer conferences—student and student
• small-group conferences—several students and teacher
• three-way conferences—student, teacher, and parent

Each of these situations can provide the teacher with an opportunity to collect data; however, the one-on-one conference especially lends itself to specific individual instruction.

Effective one-on-one conferencing centres on building relationships with individual students and providing them with specific feedback on their writing. For conferences to be successful, students need to know what is expected of them, for example, what their role will be, the structure of the conference, and the records that will be kept. Although each student–teacher conference will be unique, it can be helpful to have a planning framework, such as that shown.

THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT IN CONFERENCES

• Be prepared.
• Have current writing material and topics for discussion.
• Discuss any writing problems the teacher can help with.
• Review the writing goal. Discuss problems or successes in the achievement of the goal.
• Be prepared to set a new writing goal.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN CONFERENCES

• Identify the focus for the discussion.
• Encourage the student to talk.
• Raise questions that lead to student identification of strengths and challenges in their work.
• Talk about strategies and processes that will help students improve their writing.
• Provide feedback to students, based on shared criteria.
• Review students' writing goals and help them to set new ones.
• Record information gleaned from the conference.
• Plan future lessons, considering the needs of the whole class and small groups.

Asking questions

What are you writing? Where are you up to? How can I help you? How do you feel about your text so far?

Identifying the focus for the conference

What are your writing goals? Are you achieving them?
Would you like me to help you with anything you are having particular difficulties with?

Offering praise, emphasizing strengths

Making suggestions to improve the writing

Setting directions for the future

Set a new writing goal if appropriate and discuss the possibility of a lesson targeting a particular substrand, if appropriate.

Closure

It is useful for teachers to use recording sheets before, during, or after conferencing with students; these can provide a focus for conversations and for keeping records of information shared. The *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM offers several recording sheets that can be used when conferencing.

What Information Can Be Collected?

Writing conferences can be used to gain information about any of the four substrands, depending on the focus of the conference.

2 Interviews

An interview is a one-on-one, prepared question-and-answer conversation between a teacher and a student or between a teacher and a parent.

Teacher–student interviews provide an opportunity for teachers to actively listen to students and encourage them to verbalize their thought processes. Teachers can design questions to focus on different aspects of writing, depending on the purpose and the desired outcomes of the interview. However, planning questions that elicit useful information and encourage students to do most of the talking is a challenge; effective questions should be focused, open, and probing in order to encourage answers of more than one word.

Further examples of writing interview questions and recording line masters can be found on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.

Figure 3.11

Spelling Interview Record Sheet (Billy, May 10, 2007)

Questions for the Student	Student Response/Teacher Comment
Is spelling important? Why?	It is important because if you mess it up people can't read it.
When is it important to spell correctly?	In an official document, when you do something in your portfolio, your exams.
Who is a good speller?	Me, Tom
Why do you think that?	We don't have to sound out the words and we can figure out how to spell words we don't know!
How do you feel about spelling?	I like it because I'm good at it.
How do people learn to spell?	With the right kind of teaching. Reading a lot.
What do you do when you are unsure about how to spell a word?	Say it out loud and I hear it in my head and the spelling pops into my head.
What else could you do?	If I know what the thing is, I can get a picture of the thing and the word in my head.
Where in the classroom would you look if you wanted to know how to spell a word?	Dictionary. Classroom charts or signs.
If you were at home, what would you do to find out how to spell a word?	Ask mom or dad. Dictionary.
What do you do when you haven't spelled something correctly?	Erase it or cross it out and do it again. That doesn't happen at school because I can spell the words.
Tell me something you would like to learn about spelling.	How to spell in other languages like Latin. Knowing root words and the whole word it came from.
General comment/Follow-up	Spells correctly, needs vocab extension. Start on word derivations.

Figure 3.12

Writing Interview Record Sheet (Salma, April 2007)

Areas of Discussion	Student Response/Teacher Comment
Attitude — How do you feel when asked to write?	
Use of Texts — What text forms have you written over the past two weeks?	
Contextual Understanding — What audiences have you written for? How did your writing change for each audience?	
Conventions — Tell me about how you organized one of your pieces of writing.	
Processes and Strategies — What do you do to refine your writing?	
General comments/Follow-up	

Interviews with parents or guardians can also provide useful information about students' writing outside the school environment. In all interviews, it is important to consider the following points:

- Explain the reasons for the interview and limit questions to those that will yield the most useful information. This way, parents won't feel "interrogated."
- Let the parents know that notes will be taken.
- Questions for parent–teacher interviews could include the following:
  - What are your child's special interests?
  - How often does your child choose to write at home?
  - What type of writing does your child like to do at home?
  - How do you help your child with writing?
  - What would you like your child to do as a writer?
  - What do you think your child needs to do to become a better writer?

What Information Can Be Collected?

Interviews can provide information about any of the four substrands, depending on the questions being asked.

How the Data on Writing Can Be Recorded

Teachers use a range of ways to record the information they gather about students' writing development. The use of computers or personal digital assistants often helps streamline the time it takes to record information.

The following ways of recording the information, on paper or electronically, are outlined below:

1 Anecdotal Notes
2 Checklists
3 Rubrics
4 Annotations
5 *First Steps* Writing Map of Development

Collection of information about students' development as writers needs to be ongoing and comprehensive, if accurate determinations of developmental phases are to be made.

1 Anecdotal Notes

Anecdotal notes are short, objective, factual descriptions of observations recorded at the time an event or activity occurs, or soon thereafter. Behaviours listed on the *First Steps* Writing Map of Development will provide a focus for observations.

- Making useful anecdotal notes takes time and practice. Notes should provide an accurate description of the situation and information about students' strengths and weaknesses, and should include comments and questions that may guide further observations.
- Notes should be written daily, and as soon as possible after an observation has been made. They can be written during a variety of instructional approaches to writing, e.g., Guided Writing, Independent Writing.
- The recording form should suit the teaching situation, the students, and the teacher's personal style, e.g., grids, sticky notes, *First Steps* Writing Map of Development (see Figure 3.13).
- Notes should be examined and analyzed regularly to be sure that comments are being made for every student on a variety of writing behaviours, in different contexts, and across the curriculum.

2 Checklists

A checklist is a list of skills or behaviours to be checked off as they are observed. Whether teacher made or commercially produced, it is critical to acknowledge that checklists are static. Most checklists will not apply to every student in one classroom at the same time.

Figure 3.13

Teacher-made checklist for writing to recount

Name: _____ Date: _____				
	Always	Sometimes	Not Yet	Teacher Comments
• Uses writing to recount to suit purpose and target audience, choosing the most appropriate form and text product type				
• Provides an introduction that both sets the scene and aims to interest the reader				
• Includes significant events chosen to add interest and impact				
• Elaborates on events so the reader can visualize the experience				
• Chooses to include dialogue or reported speech for impact				
• Manipulates time order of events for impact				
• Concludes with a personal reflection, evaluative comment and/or summarizes aspects of the text, appropriate to the form				
• Maintains consistent tense or manipulates tense for effect				
• Writes in the active and passive voice, e.g., I decided, It was decided				
• Writes cohesively, using a large variety of linking words to do with time				
• Manipulates writing in first and third person for impact				

3 Rubrics

Rubrics are a way to begin with the end in mind. They are recording frameworks that feature short descriptive statements about performance along a continuum of excellence. Teachers and/or students determine the quality of a performance against a set of criteria carefully chosen and established in advance. For example, a rubric about writing to instruct may assess performance against criteria such as stating main ideas and providing supporting details. The assessment is used to promote learning. Rubrics can be reused, adding levels of achievement as students' skill level increases, or adding criteria for new concepts, skills, or attitudes that students display. They are dynamic assessment tools.

There are many publications and Web sites that offer ready-made rubrics; however, many teachers wish to create their own. Involving students in the creation of rubrics is strongly recommended.

Creating a Rubric

- Deciding on the criteria
  Students can be involved in brainstorming these criteria. If they have not had experience in generating criteria for evaluation, show them some completed work samples. Characteristics of effective and not so effective samples can be listed and discussed for inclusion as criteria on the completed rubric.
- Articulating the qualities
  It is often easier to decide on the two extremes first; that is, what makes "best" performance and what makes "worst" performance.
- Deciding on the number of levels of performance
  It is a good idea to have an even number of levels of performance, as this eliminates the tendency to rank in the middle
- Deciding on the labelling to be used for the levels of performance
  Labels to be used for the levels of performance need to be considered. Either a numerical value or a descriptive word can be used. Some teachers prefer to use neutral words for level labels, while others prefer words that signal excellence, such as Nickel, Bronze, Silver, and Gold rather than Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory, Competent, and Excellent.

Teachers may wish to involve students in self- or peer-assessment, using the completed rubric, before work is formally submitted for teacher evaluation. Rubrics can be holistic or analytic in nature. Holistic rubrics evaluate the task as a whole, while analytic rubrics evaluate each separate criterion.

Analytic rubric for writing

CRITERIA	1	2	3	4
QUALITY →				
Organization	Little organization	Text has some elements of logical organization.	Logical organization, but strays a bit	Logical organization
Editing	Limited use of punctuation	Limited correct use of punctuation	Common punctuation correct	All punctuation correct
Sentences	Sentences are very long and may contain more than one idea.	Each sentence contains one idea with little description.	Each sentence contains one idea with some description.	Each sentence contains one main idea with detailed description.
Spelling	Few words spelled correctly	High-frequency words spelled correctly	Good overall spelling	Spelling almost all correct

4 Annotations

Annotations are short descriptions of judgments made about a student's work recorded directly onto the work sample. This kind of feedback may be completed at the time of the event, but can also be done later if the work sample, such as written work, is portable. Annotations need to be specific, objective, and factual; they should lead to the recognition and interpretation of individual patterns of learning over time, e.g., this paragraph expands the main idea clearly.

5 The First Steps *Writing Map of Development*

The *First Steps* Writing Map of Development is an excellent framework for recording information about students' writing development. Some teachers choose to record their observations, outcomes of conversations, or analysis of products directly onto the Writing Map. They may do this by writing on sticky notes, or by dating, or by highlighting the indicators the student is displaying. Other teachers prefer to use another recording method first—such as checklists, conference records, or rubrics—and then collate the information and transfer it onto the Writing Map.

> In many classrooms worldwide, rubrics are based on at least six elements of effective writing, called traits. The six major traits, as determined by teachers from Beaverton School District in Oregon and researchers from the North West Regional Educational Laboratories, can be summarized as follows:
> • ideas and content
> • organization
> • voice
> • word choice
> • sentence fluency
> • conventions
> Sometimes, presentation is also treated as a trait. See Ruth Culham's *The 6+1 Traits of Writing* (New York: Scholastic, 2002) and Vicki Spandel's *Creating Writers Through 6-Trait Writing Assessment and Instruction*, 3rd Edition (New York: Addison-Wesley Longman, 2001) for more information.
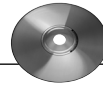
The following recording line masters can be found on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM and may be photocopied for classroom use.

1 Writing: Class Profile Sheet
2 Individual Student Profile Sheets—Key Indicators Only
3 Individual Student Profile Sheets—All Indicators
4 Class Profile Sheets—Key Indicators Only
5 Class Profile Sheets—All Indicators
6 Overview of *First Steps* Writing Map of Development, Parent Version

Role Play Writing Phase

Figure 4.1

Global Statement

In this phase, writers emulate adult writing by experimenting with marks to represent written language. Role Play writers are beginning to understand that writing is used to convey meaning or messages; however, as understandings about sound–symbol relationships are yet to develop, their messages are not readable by others. Role Play writers rely heavily on topic knowledge to generate text.

Role Play Writing Indicators

Use of Texts

- ◆ **Assigns a message to own written and drawn symbols**
- ◆ **Demonstrates awareness that writing and drawing are different**
- ◆ **Knows that print carries a message, but may read own writing differently each time**
- • Writes, then asks others to assign meaning to what has been written
- • Dictates to an adult desired writing, e.g., This is my toy.
- • Talks about own writing and drawing
- • Attempts to write own name
- • Makes random marks on paper or screen
- • Makes horizontal or linear scribbles with some breaks
- • Produces circular scribble
- • Orally recounts own experiences
- • Begins to use the metalanguage associated with writing, e.g., word, letter, sound

Contextual Understanding

- ◆ **States purpose or audience for own writing, e.g.,** This is a card for Dad.
- ◆ **Identifies and talks about characters from literary texts**
- ◆ **Identifies and talks about people and ideas in informational texts**
- • Role-plays writing for a purpose, e.g., taking a lunch order in a restaurant
- • Makes links to own experience when creating texts
- • Talks about times when they have seen others writing
- • Reacts to written texts in their environment, e.g., signs
- • Imitates the act of writing when they see others write

Conventions

- ◆ **Begins to demonstrate an awareness of directionality, e.g.,** points to where print begins
- ◆ **Uses known letters or approximations of letters to represent writing**
- • Draws symbols consisting of straight, curved, or intersecting lines that simulate letters
- • Knows that a word can be written down
- • Writes letters randomly or as strings on the page
- • Mixes letters, numerals, and invented letter shapes
- • Makes organizational decisions about writing, e.g., I'll start here so it will fit.
- • Writes the first one or two letters of own name or a word correctly and may finish with a random string of letters
- • Recognizes own name or part of it, in print

Processes and Strategies

- ◆ **Relies upon personal experiences as a stimulus for writing**
- • Uses texts viewed, read, or heard as a stimulus for writing
- • Copies print from the environment
- • Uses letters from own name to generate writing
- • Asks questions about printed words, signs, and messages
- • Tells others about what has been written or drawn
- • Voices thoughts before and during writing

Note: The terms write *and* writing *encompass the use of traditional tools, such as pen and paper, as well as the use of electronic tools, such as computers or cell phones.*

The term texts *refers to both literary and informational texts and includes visual, spoken, or written texts. These may be print, electronic, live, or multimodal.*

Major Teaching Emphases

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., using known letters, composing messages.
- **Encourage students to value writing as a social practice.**

Use of Texts

- **Expose students to a range of text forms, pointing out purpose,** e.g., recipes tell how to make something.
- **Provide opportunities for students to write a range of texts for authentic purposes and audiences.**
- **Model the connection between oral and written language,** e.g., what is said can be written down.
- **Demonstrate that written messages remain constant.**
- **Foster students' sense of voice and individual writing style.**
- **Teach students the metalanguage associated with writing and encourage its use.**

Contextual Understanding

- **Discuss that writing has a purpose and an intended audience.**
- **Draw students' attention to decisions writers make when composing texts.**
- **Draw students' attention to the way characters are represented in literary texts.**
- **Draw students' attention to the way people and ideas are represented in informational texts.**

Conventions

- **Provide opportunities for students to develop and use new vocabulary.**
- **Begin to build the bank of words students can automatically spell and use,** e.g., personally significant words.
- **Build phonological awareness and graphophonic knowledge, such as**
  - **recognizing, matching, and generating rhymes**
  - **listening for sounds in words**
  - **linking letter names with their sounds, focusing on the regular sound**
- **Teach students the conventions of print.**
- **Model one-to-one correspondence between written and spoken words.**
- **Model the composition of simple sentences, including the use of punctuation,** e.g., capital letters, periods.

Processes and Strategies

- **Build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge,** e.g., topic knowledge, sound–symbol relationships.
- **Teach strategies used throughout the writing process,** e.g., connecting.
- **Teach spelling strategies,** e.g., sounding out.
- **Model simple publishing alternatives,** e.g., text and illustration.
- **Model how to find required information in texts.**
- **Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.**

Teaching and Learning Experiences

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTITUDE

Major Teaching Emphases
■ **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., using known letters, composing messages.
■ **Encourage students to value writing as a social practice.**

Teaching Notes

A classroom community that supports and nurtures Role Play writers includes many opportunities that encourage them to interact with, explore, and experiment with written language. Role Play writers' early attempts at writing should be accepted and praised. It is important that these writers feel comfortable experimenting with writing. The focus for developing positive attitudes towards writing as well as a supportive environment for Role Play writers is organized under the following headings:

• Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment
• Fostering Enjoyment of Writing
• Encouraging Experimentation
• Writing as a Social Practice

Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment

A supportive environment is an environment in which both the physical aspects and the culture of the classroom are considered. In a positive classroom climate, students have opportunities to use and combine print, oral, visual, and digital processes. These opportunities contribute to students' willingness and eagerness to write.

Physical environment

The foundation for developing understandings about language springs from a student's oral language. A jointly constructed

print-rich environment contains a variety of texts using print for different purposes and provides opportunities for students to discover relationships between oral and written language.

- *Everyday print* in the classroom and the community can be constantly referred to. Doing this will help students begin to build understandings about the purpose of written language and the way it works. Talking about everyday print, encouraging students to bring in examples, preparing charts of community signs, or taking students for walks around the community to read environmental print will all be beneficial.

- *Labels* can be attached to students' belongings and work displays. It is important that teachers model the creation and discuss the purpose of these labels.

- *Calendars and classroom planners* can help develop concepts, such as the days of the week, or temporal terms, such as yesterday, today, and tomorrow, and week, month, and year. Recording forthcoming events on calendars or planners helps students develop understandings of how written language is used to record and organize our lives.

- *Word Walls* can contain words such as the names of students in the class and words required by students to compose their own texts. These words can be used as a reference for students when writing independently.

- *Songs, poems, and rhymes* can be written on charts and read together. Encourage the use of these charts as a further source for finding words to use when writing.

- *Word banks* may include a class list of names with photographs next to them, members of the school community, and alphabet and number charts. Encourage students to use these when they are writing. Word banks displayed at eye level are easier for students to use.

- *A writing centre* promotes active inquiry into how letters and words work. Magnetic letters with boards, pocket charts with letter cards, software programs, and a variety of writing materials such as papers, pencils, computers, printers, envelopes, tape, and stamps will help Role Play writers venture into writing.

- *A reading corner* provides another opportunity to promote growth in understandings about written language. This corner can include a variety of texts, e.g., literary texts, informational texts, picture dictionaries, interactive storybooks, and book and tape sets.

- *Creative centres* containing appropriate literacy materials encourage students to write for real purposes. For example, a restaurant centre could have menus, blank cards for recipes, notepads, and pencils, and a post office centre could have envelopes, stamps,

stickers, and calendars. Establishing a particular centre that links directly to a planned school or field trip provides a context for exploring writing for real purposes. Texts and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources associated with the theme of the centre can also be included.

Options for Centres

grocery store	flower shop
museum	bank
theatre	police station
library	hospital
medical clinic	dentist
travel agency	artist's studio
store	restaurant

Debbie Diller explores the potential of learning centres in *Literacy Work Stations: Making Centers Work* (2003).

It is important to encourage students to continually interact with and use the print created and displayed in the classroom environment.

• Provide opportunities for students to "write the room." They can walk around the room and copy words they find. They can choose these words themselves, or some direction can be provided by the teacher, e.g., **"Today, can you write down some words that begin with the letter r?"**

• Provide opportunities to "read the room."

• Write and share sentences about planned curriculum activities, e.g., **"Today we will be collecting leaves. I wonder how many different shapes we will find?"** Use these sentences as an opportunity for students to interact with and discuss print.

• Write letters to individual students, mailing them in the class mailbox. Invite students to take the letters home and read them with an adult.

• Encourage students to write letters and place them in the class mailbox or create e-mails, perhaps sent through a class intranet.

• Model the use of environmental print as a reference source, e.g., **copying words, looking for letters, using a calendar to find a date.**

• Display and discuss writing created by other family members, e.g., **grandmothers, elders, siblings.**

Classroom culture

Although it is beneficial to provide access to a variety of physical resources for students to use when writing, it is equally important to create a classroom culture in which students view themselves as writers who have real or worthwhile reasons to compose text.

- Allocate regular uninterrupted blocks of time for writing.
- Create genuine purposes and audiences for writing.
- Have high expectations of all students.
- Provide opportunities for students to choose their own topics.
- Provide a range of ICT resources for students to use to create texts.
- Praise all attempts at writing.
- Display students' writing.
- Ensure that students have a clear sense of what is expected of them.
- Allow time for students to share their writing with others.
- Value writing, and convey this attitude to students.
- Use language that fosters both unity and diversity.
- Incorporate purposeful writing into all curriculum areas.

Fostering Enjoyment of Writing

Foster students' enjoyment of writing in the following ways:
- Model writing for students every day.
- Provide opportunities for students to write for their own purposes and audiences.
- If possible, provide opportunities for students to use a range of ICT resources when combining print and images, e.g., **computers, software programs, interactive whiteboards, digital cameras.**
- Provide time and opportunities for students to read their own writing to others.
- Provide multiple demonstrations of the strategies effective writers use.
- Involve the students with buddies from other classes to provide real audiences for their writing.
- Interact and respond positively to all writing attempts.
- Respond primarily to the message of students' writing.
- Invite guest writers, such as grandparents or visiting authors, to write for the students.
- Provide an enticing writing centre.
- Read to students every day from a variety of texts.
- Discuss the texts read.
- Provide opportunities for students to practise writing using computer software, such as Kid Pix Studio Deluxe, or Web sites.

Encouraging Experimentation

Role Play writers should be encouraged to experiment with all aspects of writing. You can do this by inviting students to
- talk about personal experiences as a source of topics for writing
- write for real purposes and audiences

- use personal experiences to make connections to ideas in texts read aloud or shared in class
- use a variety of strategies when writing, e.g., creating images
- use drawing as an initial means of communicating
- try writing by copying or using what they know, e.g., My name has a K
- use ICT to communicate a message

Writing as a Social Practice

The focus when teaching writing in the classroom is to provide many real-world situations that require the use of written language. The ultimate goal is for students to function in society as literate individuals who can use writing to communicate their ideas, share information, stimulate thinking, formulate questions, and influence policy and action.

It is important to talk with Role Play writers about why people write and to share examples of real-life writing, particularly writing by people they identify with. Doing this helps them to begin understand that writing is an important social practice and that there is an expectation they will join a community of writers who use writing for different purposes.

For further information about Environment and Attitude, see *Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning*, Chapter 5: Establishing a Positive Teaching and Learning Environment.

USE OF TEXTS

| **Major Teaching Emphases** |

- **Expose students to a range of text forms, pointing out purpose,** e.g., recipes tell how to make something.

- **Provide opportunities for students to write a range of texts for authentic purposes and audiences.**

- **Model the connection between oral and written language,** e.g., what is said can be written down.

- **Demonstrate that written messages remain constant.**

- **Foster students' sense of voice and individual writing style.**

- **Teach students the metalanguage associated with writing and encourage its use.**

Teaching Notes

The focus for supporting Role Play writers in this substrand is organized under the following headings:
- Exposure to a Range of Text Forms
- Opportunities to Write a Range of Texts
- Crafting Voice and Individual Style
- Developing Metalanguage

Exposure to a Range of Text Forms

Role Play writers will benefit from continued opportunities to discuss and interact with a variety of literary and informational texts. Texts selected may include songs, poems, rhymes, fairy or folk tales, traditional or modern stories, simple reports, procedures, messages, timetables, or environmental signs. These texts could be multimodal, class-made, or published materials encompassing books, Web sites, e-mails, CD-ROMs, and software programs, as available.

During Modelled, Shared, and Interactive Writing sessions, show students how successful writers write in a range of text forms for different purposes, including these:
- to entertain, e.g., songs, rhymes, jokes, speech bubbles
- to recount, e.g., diaries, retellings
- to describe, e.g., classroom instructions, labels

- to socialize, e.g., thank-you letters, electronic cards, invitations, notes
- to explain, e.g., classroom rules, routines
- to instruct, e.g., recipes, lists of things to do, labels
- to persuade, e.g., brochures, catalogues
- to inquire, e.g., interviews

Opportunities to Write a Range of Texts

Students learn to write by watching adults write, talking about writing, trying to write, and receiving explicit, supportive feedback about their attempts. Modelled, Shared, and Interactive Writing, as well as Language Experience sessions, provide ideal opportunities to show Role Play writers how to create a range of texts.

After these sessions, Role Play writers can be encouraged to experiment with writing for real purposes. Such experiences are valuable; they will help students to clarify and develop understandings about written language. Positive feedback is critical, and all early attempts to create texts should be given specific descriptive feedback.

Understandings about writing are closely linked to understandings about reading. Role Play writers will learn much about written language through reading experiences. In Modelled and Shared Reading sessions, the focus can be on demonstrating many aspects of written language, such as the following:

- Texts are organized in particular ways, e.g., print, pictures, and sounds.
- Texts have special features; for example, electronic texts may have screen prompts and pop-up or drop-down menus, while a book has page numbers, a cover, and a spine.
- Texts have different purposes.
- Texts are constructed differently; for example, informational texts usually have headings and subheadings.
- There is a connection between written and oral language.
- Writing has a purpose and an intended audience.
- What has been written can be read and reread, and the message remains constant.

When students are trying to write, encourage them to apply what they have learned about written language from reading.

Crafting Voice and Individual Style

Many things, including a writer's purpose, world view, multiple identities, and culture, influence voice within text. Voice in writing is defined in several ways.

Writing words that will make readers listen and be affected.
—Tom Romano, 2004

Voice is the imprint of ourselves on our writing.
—Donald Graves, 1994

Voice in writing has to do with a unique personality-on-paper.
—Ralph Fletcher, 1993

At this phase, it is important to help students understand the concept of voice. You can do this during Modelled or Shared Reading sessions, or when reading aloud to students.
• Show and discuss examples of sentences, passages, or entire texts that demonstrate voice.
• Share samples of student writing and literature that has a distinctive voice.

Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions can also help Role Play writers to understand and develop voice in their own writing. There are a range of ways:
• Model how personal thoughts and feelings can add voice to writing.
• Model how words can be changed to reinforce voice; for example, "I like chocolate" becomes "I LOVE chocolate."
• Provide opportunities for students to write about topics they find personally important.

Developing Metalanguage

Students need support to build up a vocabulary they can use to discuss and describe language, their own writing, and the writing process. The vocabulary used to talk about language is known as *metalanguage*, and when students are able to use it to talk competently about their own writing and learning, it helps them to understand how language operates. Developing metalanguage also helps students to understand the support and feedback provided by teachers.

To help Role Play writers become accustomed to terms associated with writing and written language, it is important to use metalanguage as part of everyday teaching: across curriculum areas, as part of targeted discussions, during explicit demonstrations, during one-on-one conversations with students, or as part of planned Modelled, Shared, Interactive, or Guided Writing sessions.

> Similarly, students need to develop metacognition where, for example, they monitor the effectiveness of their learning choices, analyze the tasks they face in order to consider options, and determine how they learn best.

Certain terms tend to be more prominent when focusing on different substrands of writing. For example, when working with Role Play writers, consider the use of the following terms:

- Use of Texts: text, list, letter, e-mail, writing, drawing, message, ideas
- Contextual Understanding: purpose, audience, voice
- Conventions: word, sentence, letter, period, capital letter, spell, punctuation
- Processes and Strategies: connecting, creating images, draft, editing

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For further information about the Use of Texts substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition:
- Chapter 1: Use of Texts
- Chapter 4: Processes and Strategies

Involving Students

1 Writing Bag

Writing Bag is an activity that provides a school–home link, encourages students to write for real purposes and audiences, and can foster a sense of voice. This activity provides an opportunity for students to write about topics that they find significant. Writing Bag is one way for students to write for family, which is not actively addressed in the school setting: for example, an invitation to a family gathering or a thank-you note for a gift.

A Writing Bag is a bag, backpack, or small box containing some or all of the following:
- a range of plain, lined, and coloured paper and card
- recycled greeting cards
- pictures from magazines, catalogues, discarded picture books
- small blank books already made up (several blank pages stapled together with a card cover)
- envelopes
- pencils and markers
- glitter, glue, and tape
- a pencil sharpener
- an alphabet chart
- a list of high-frequency and personally significant words
- a written explanation for parents or guardians (See the sample letter on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.)

– Hold a meeting with parents to explain the purpose and process for making use of the Writing Bag.
– Brainstorm some suggestions with students as to kinds of writing they can do at home.
– Send the Writing Bag home with a different student every school day.
– Provide time for each student to share completed writing with the class.
– Create a space where students can display their writing. Talk about the writing, e.g., who, why, choices, who helped, what was easy, what was hard.

2 Travelling Journal

Using a Travelling Journal encourages students to write for authentic purposes and audiences. Each night one student hosts a visit by a special class toy to his or her home. While hosting the toy,

> **Use of Texts**
> **Involving Students**
> 1 Writing Bag
> 2 Travelling Journal
> 3 Postcards
> 4 Class News Book
> 5 Making the Most of the Moment
> 6 Text Innovation
> 7 Sequencing Activities
> 8 Wall Stories
> 9 Captioning Writing
> 10 Story Prop Box
> 11 Creative Centres

the student, with help from an adult, writes in a journal about the adventures enjoyed with the toy. The writing is then shared with classmates the following day. It is often helpful to give parents or guardians guidelines about the sorts of things that can be written in the journal.

- Organize the Travelling Journal: a backpack or bag containing a notebook (journal), writing implements, and a soft toy, e.g., **a bear**.
- As a class, decide on a name for the soft toy, e.g., **Big Bear**.
- Establish class rules for taking the Travelling Journal home.
- Hold a meeting to get support and endorsement of the project from families.
- Include in the Travelling Journal a letter for parents/guardians (see "Travelling Journal" on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM).
- Send the journal home with a different student each day.
- Set aside time each day for students to share what they have written in the Travelling Journal.

3 Postcards

Writing postcards to family members and friends gives Role Play writers an authentic audience for their writing and an opportunity to share what they are learning in different curriculum areas at school. Postcards that tell family members about upcoming events help students understand that writing communicates a message.

- Discuss with students that the purpose of writing postcards is to share things about school with friends and family.
- Brainstorm a list of audiences students can write to, e.g., **neighbours, Grandpa, aunts**.
- Encourage students to talk about cross-curriculum areas they could write about, such as physical education or a favourite science topic.
- Give each student a blank "postcard."
- Have the student illustrate the activity to be written about on the front of the postcard. Alternatively, if possible, take a digital photo of the student participating in a particular activity.
- Prompt students to write on the back of their postcards.
- Ask them to take the postcards home to be addressed and mailed to their selected audience.

A range of postcard Internet sites provide opportunities for students to create and send electronic postcards.

4 Class News Book

The Class News Book involves modelling the writing of a student's oral news report each day. This activity is an effective way to help students understand that oral language can be written down and that the written message remains constant.

– Make a Class News Book out of large pieces of paper.
– Model the writing of one or two sentences from a student's oral news report each day.
– Use the writing to highlight particular language features, concepts of print, and conventions, e.g., capital letters, spaces between words, periods, sentences.
– Invite the selected student to illustrate the news sentence.
– Create opportunities for the whole class to reread news sentences from the Class News Book.

Georgia said, "I held a baby at <u>Sc</u>ott's house."	Ellena said, "I <u>loo</u>ked at some puppies."	Amber said, "My doll is made of <u>pla</u>st</u>ic. She wets her pants."	Sophie "I am <u>Zeal</u>
Cathy said, " I made a paper b<u>ir</u>d for B.B."	Ryan said, "I have written a le<u>tt</u>er for Daniel."	Vanessa said, "My t<u>oo</u>th will come out s<u>oo</u>n."	Liam "<u>See</u> my post from Ho<u>ll</u>and."
Bre<u>tt</u> said, "I have a <u>whist</u>le. It can unfold."	Alex said, "I have a pla<u>st</u>ic motor-bike."	Naomi said, "We made <u>YUK</u> soup out of navy b<u>ean</u>s."	James said, "I have a g<u>ol</u>d medal. "
Phillip said, "This sand is coloured. <u>See</u> the <u>st</u>ripes?"	Tim M. said, "This is my <u>sm</u>all, <u>blue</u> engine. It has coal."	Charles said, "I am <u>gr</u>owing some pumpkins.".	Ms. B. said, "Everyone be<u>tt</u>er be g<u>oo</u>d today."

Room 3
News of the Week.
Week of May 23
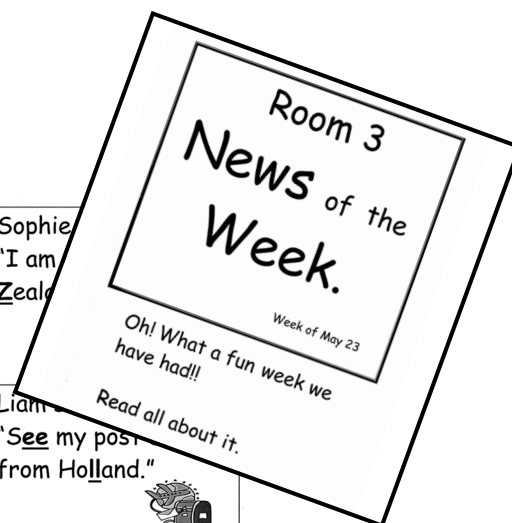Oh! What a fun week we have had!!
Read all about it.

Figure 4.2

Each week, this activity could form part of a home reading sheet, or Class Newspaper, a single sheet of weekly news recorded on the computer that students take home to share with their families. This page could include illustrations to help students read the news sentences.

5 Making the Most of the Moment

Making the Most of the Moment is seizing the opportunity to use unscheduled happenings to reinforce understandings about writing and spelling, and about the connection between oral and written language. It involves the class talking about an unscheduled happening and collaboratively creating a text about the event. It is important that the class timetable is flexible enough to capitalize on teachable moments.

- Notice things happening around the school that can be used as prompts for writing, e.g., a truck delivering sand, a cat stuck in a tree.
- Encourage the students to watch and talk about the moment.
- Use the event as a basis for Modelled or Shared Writing. Alternatively, invite students to write about it.
- Invite a student to illustrate the event. Display the writing. Provide opportunities for students to reread the text over the days that follow.

> Today when we were in the old music room on the second floor, a little brown bat flew out of the cloak room. It happened at the end of class. All of us were startled. Mrs. Minelli called the janitor.

Figure 4.3 Modelled writing about an unscheduled event

6 Text Innovation

Text innovation is the name given to the process of adopting and adapting any linguistic patterns or devices employed by another author. Many texts lend themselves to innovation. When writers innovate on a text, they strengthen their understanding of the concept of a word and the concept of a sentence. Text innovations

allow particular linguistic features to be highlighted and alternatives to be discussed.

Innovations may include these:
- *word-level innovations*—where new words are substituted for the original words, e.g., "I wrote to the zoo to send me a... It was too..., so I sent it back."
- *sentence-level innovations*—where the sentence structure is maintained, but the words in the sentence are altered, e.g., "Rosie the hen went for a walk under..." becomes "Sammy the duck went for a swim under..."

- Select a simple story, rhyme, song, or poem that can be easily modified.
- Read the text several times until the students are familiar with the particular rhyme, rhythm, or repetitive pattern.
- When using a big book or enlarged text, place sticky notes on the original text to conceal words to be replaced.
- Invite students to suggest alternative words to fill the spaces.
- Jointly select a word and write it on the sticky note.
- Read the newly created text together.

Extensions
- Provide each student with a copy of the class innovation.
- Provide time for students to illustrate their innovations.
- Publish the innovations and use them for further reading.
- Provide copies of the newly created text for students to take home to read.

7 Sequencing Activities

Sequencing activities helps students become familiar with a range of text forms and provides a meaningful context for Role Play writers to create texts, using picture sequences as a stimulus. Giving students many opportunities to sequence pictures, discuss their selections, and create an oral text is an effective pre-writing activity.

- Provide students with a series of pictures.
- Have them sequence the pictures logically to create a message.
- Encourage them to create an oral retelling to match the picture sequence. They may choose to write some key words or phrases to support each picture.
- Explain that often more than one sequence is possible.
- Organize students to use the pictures to retell the text to others.

> *Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning* presents text innovation as an effective teaching practice in Chapter 7.

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As a variation, pictures from wordless picture books can be used. Each student creates text to tell to another. Pictures illustrating poems, rhymes, songs, or cross-curriculum informational texts can also be used for this activity.

8 Wall Stories

Wall Stories are large representations (text and illustrations) of the main events of an experience or a text read or heard; they are an effective way of helping young writers focus on sequencing a text and making links between pictures, oral text, and written words. Creating Wall Stories can also expose students to a range of text forms. Wall Stories can be created using shared experiences, songs, poems, rhymes, and literary or informational texts with simple storylines.

- Involve the students in a shared experience or read a text with the class.
- Pair students to orally retell the experience or the text.
- Work with them to elicit and record the main events on chart paper or large cards.
- Organize them to work in small groups to illustrate the main events.
- Jointly sequence the cards, and read the newly created text with the students.
- Display the Wall Story and refer to it frequently during classroom print walks.
- After a period of time, make the Wall Story into a big book and leave it in the class library for students to read during Independent Reading.

As a variation, a Wall Story can be created as a continuous account of an ongoing class project, such as a science experiment about growing plants. Pages are added to the Wall Story as the project progresses.

9 Captioning Writing

Captioning Writing involves an adult scribing a sentence or sentences for a student. This one-on-one situation helps Role Play writers make connections between oral and written language and is also a way of demonstrating that written messages remain constant.

- Encourage students to draw or paint a picture of a recent event or a favourite topic.
- Ask each student to give a sentence or caption that goes with the picture.

– Scribe (or type) what the student has said, saying each word aloud as it is written. Where possible, have the student help with the spelling of the words.
– Reread the sentence together, pointing to each word.
– Encourage the student to reread the sentence.

Extensions
– Leave space for the student to copy the sentence underneath.
– Leave spaces to add in the letters or words the student can write, e.g., his or her name.
– Write the words on sticky notes and invite the student to re-create the sentence.

10 Story Prop Box

Story Prop Box is an independent activity that encourages Role Play writers to become familiar with the language, structure, and organization of a range of text forms. After sharing texts with the whole class, create Story Prop Boxes to accompany chosen examples. A Prop Box consists of a copy of the text and any props that will encourage the students to dramatize, role-play, perform, or create retellings of the familiar text; for example, after sharing "Cinderella," provide props, such as an apron, a feather duster, a pumpkin, a slipper, a tiara, and a small cushion. If they are available, interactive CD versions of the text are also a useful addition to the Story Prop Box.

– Assign students to work in small groups and to select a Prop Box.
– Provide time for them to recap and discuss the text.
– Direct them to determine who will play what role and to select props from the box.
– Allow them time to create a role play, dramatization, or retelling of their text.
– If appropriate, invite students to perform for the whole class.

11 Creative Centres

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Major Teaching Emphases

- Discuss that writing has a purpose and an intended audience.

- Draw students' attention to decisions writers make when composing texts.

- Draw students' attention to the way characters are represented in literary texts.

- Draw students' attention to the way people and ideas are represented in informational texts.

Teaching Notes

The focus for helping Role Play writers to develop contextual understanding in writing is organized under the following headings:
- Understandings About Purpose and Audience
- Exploring Decisions Writers Make
- Representing Characters in Literary Texts
- Representing People and Ideas in Informational Texts

Understandings About Purpose and Audience

In this phase, it is important that students begin to develop an awareness that all texts are written from a certain perspective and for a particular purpose and audience. Modelled, Shared, and Guided Writing sessions provide opportunities to discuss with students who they could write to and why they might write to them, for example: "I want to send a Happy Birthday message to my Dad. I'll write myself a note to remember to bring a hat tomorrow."

Students need to develop an awareness that texts are written for different purposes. Involving students in discussions about why texts are written helps them understand that writing can be used for different reasons. To develop these understandings, it is important to model different forms of writing for different purposes, for example: "I'm going to write a note on the door to remind everyone that it's Play Day tomorrow... Help me write down the procedure to make pancakes so you can take the recipe home and make them." Additionally, when reading texts in different forms to students, highlight the author's purpose, for instance: "Why would the author have written this text? Who might find this text useful?"

This resource categorizes texts according to eight purposes, and writers usually employ certain forms of text to meet these purposes:
• to entertain
• to recount
• to socialize
• to inquire
• to describe
• to persuade
• to explain
• to instruct

At Role Play phase, students need to write for real, familiar audiences who can provide immediate feedback. Having this type of audience helps students develop the understanding that print carries a message and that writing can evoke a response.

Possible audiences for Role Play writers include relatives, siblings, classroom toys, peers, teachers, public figures, or family friends.

Exploring Decisions Writers Make

Role Play writers benefit from opportunities for ongoing conversations about the decisions authors and illustrators make when creating texts. Constantly encouraging students to question authors' choices helps them to develop the foundations of critical literacy. Modelled, Shared, and Interactive Writing sessions provide opportunities to demonstrate the types of questions authors ask themselves and how they make choices about these questions.

Purpose and audience
Why am I writing this text?
Who am I writing for?
What do they already know?

Content and form
What do I want to tell them?
What ideas should I include?
What bits will I leave out?
What is the best way to get my message across? (e.g., letter, list)

During these sessions, discussions and demonstrations should include the use of Think-Alouds and metalanguage.

Representing Characters in Literary Texts

Modelled, Shared, or Guided Reading sessions will provide contexts for conversations about how characters are represented in a variety of literary texts. For instance, the class might talk about gender, choice of details, and physical appearance. Ongoing discussions will help build understandings that students can use when writing.

- How are the characters represented in the text? (e.g., Is Hagrid a kind or a mean character?)
- Do you know any people who are like the characters in the story? Who are they? How are they the same? How are they different?
- Why do you think the author chose...as the name for this character?
- What other names would have been suitable for the characters in this text?
- How has the artist chosen to illustrate this character?
- Does the author want us to like or dislike the character?

Representing People and Ideas in Informational Texts

Texts from across the curriculum, together with other authentic reading materials, will provide opportunities for students to discuss how people and ideas have been represented in particular ways. Magazines, advertising brochures, food packaging, posters, as well as science and environmental texts, are effective real-world stimuli for discussions.

- Who wrote the text?
- What do you already know about this topic?
- Does the information in the text match what you already know?
- Who is in the text?
- How is the person (or people) represented in the text?
- Do you know anyone who is like the person in the text? Who is it? How is that person the same? How is that person different?

> For further information about the Contextual Understanding substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 2: Contextual Understanding.

Involving Students

1 Who Can I Write For?

Who Can I Write For? is an activity in which students brainstorm possible audiences for their writing. Considering the audience of each piece of writing they create helps students begin to develop an understanding that texts are modified according to a particular audience.

– Have students brainstorm a list of possible audiences they could write for.
– Write suggestions on a class chart.
– Provide a line master (see below) and have students draw some possible personal audiences for their writing.
– Discuss how writing might meet the needs of particular audiences, e.g., what would we include when recounting a class event to parents?

Figure 4.4 A student's response

2 Change the Audience

The Change the Audience activity helps Role Play writers to develop an understanding that writing has an intended audience. It helps students to realize that when the audience changes, information may be added, deleted, or changed. This activity requires the collaborative construction of a text for a particular audience.

– Discuss the purpose and audience for a piece of writing, e.g., a message to the principal about the class nature walk.

> **Contextual Understanding**
> **Involving Students**
> 1 Who Can I Write For?
> 2 Change the Audience
> 3 It Would Look Like This
> 4 Like or Unlike?
> 5 Text Innovation
> 6 Same, but Different

> This acronym can be usefully applied to revising:
> A - Add
> R - Remove
> M - Move
> S - Substitute

– Have students brainstorm the information to be included in the message. Discuss the needs of the chosen audience.
– Jointly construct the message.
– Discuss how the message would be different for a different specified audience.

3 It Would Look Like This

It Would Look Like This is an activity in which students are encouraged to draw and write about a certain character from a literary text or a person from an informational text. They then compare their drawings with those of their peers, discussing some of the decisions they made. Students experience how and why authors make certain decisions.

– Choose a character from a literary text or a person from an informational text, e.g., **a bear, a dragon, a scientist**.
– Have students close their eyes and imagine what their character or person would look like. Lead a session to help students imagine the character or person; for example, ask questions like these:
  – What colour is your dragon?
  – Is it large or small?
  – Is it winged or worm like?
  – What is your dragon doing?
  – How is your dragon feeling?
  – Provide time for students to draw their pictures.
– Invite students to share their pictures and compare them with those of other class members.
– Discuss some of the decisions made about how the character or person has been represented. Highlight how authors make similar decisions when writing.
– Select one student's drawing and jointly construct a written description of the character or person, emphasizing the decisions made.

My dragon is scary. He has big teeth and a long, pointy tail.

Figure 4.5 A student's picture of a character

As an extension to this activity, read a range of texts featuring the chosen character or person. Have students compare their drawings with the character or person as shown in the texts.

4 Like or Unlike?

Like or Unlike? is an activity that helps students to make connections and comparisons between what they know about the world in which they live and the way characters or people are represented in informational or literary texts. This activity helps Role Play writers to become aware of the decisions authors make when creating texts.

– Select a main character or person from an informational or literary text.
– Before reading the text, invite students to share what they know about the same type of person or thing in real life, e.g., What do we know about teachers? elderly people? ogres? mice?
– Record responses on a class chart.
– Ask students to draw their impressions or ideas of the character or person from the text.
– Have them share their pictures with the whole class, discussing what they have included.
– Read the text to the students.
– Discuss and record how the character or person has been represented in the text.
– Provide time for students to discuss how their drawings are like or unlike the author's description or the illustrator's drawing.
– Discuss why authors and illustrators might have made their decisions.

5 Text Innovation

Text innovation is the process of adapting or changing a text created by another author. By completing text innovation activities with a contextual understanding focus, students are encouraged to alter decisions made by the author and to consider the impact of these changes on the storyline. Changes can be made to characters, character traits, or the setting.

Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning presents text innovation as an effective teaching practice in Chapter 7. The practice is also outlined as it could be used in later phases, including the Transitional and Proficient, in this resource (see pages 206–7 and 286–88).

– Select a text for the innovation.
– Read the text to the students several times.
– Select a feature that could be innovated upon. Innovations could involve
  – changing the gender of one of the characters
  – substituting new characters for existing characters, e.g., How would the story change if Goldilocks had gone to a lion's house?
  – changing a character's traits, e.g., instead of a mean stepsister, have a kind stepsister

– changing the setting of the text, e.g., **set the story of Little Red Riding Hood in the city**

– Jointly innovate on the original text to create a new one (oral or written). Discuss how any changes affected the rest of the text, e.g., **when we changed the stepsister from being mean to being kind, we had to change the end of the story.**

– Encourage students to make comparisons between the original text and the new version, sharing ideas about which one they preferred and why.

– Invite students to illustrate the newly created text. It can be turned into a big book, a class book, or a Wall Story (see p. 58).

– As a whole class, reread the newly created text.

6 Same, but Different

Same, but Different is an activity that involves students in comparing illustrations in two versions of the same story. Fairy-tales are a good source of texts for this type of activity; paper or electronic versions could be used.

Completing this activity will draw students' attention to the way characters are represented in texts and the decisions the author and/or illustrator make about representing them.

– Select two text versions of one story.

– Select one version and discuss the parts of the story that are illustrated.

– Compare these illustrations with those in the second version.

– Discuss and compare the way the characters are represented in each text.

– Discuss possible reasons the author and/or illustrator made particular decisions.

A traditional telling of the Cinderella story could be contrasted with *Yeh-Shen, A Cinderella Story from China*, by Ai-Ling Louie and illustrated by Ed Young.

An alternative way of exploring Same, but Different is to see how a familiar character or person is represented in different media, for example, book and film. Comparing representations of the same character would stretch thinking about how the character behaves and interacts.

CONVENTIONS

Major Teaching Emphases

- **Provide opportunities for students to develop and use new vocabulary.**

- **Begin to build the bank of words students can automatically spell and use,** e.g., personally significant words.

- **Build phonological awareness and graphophonic knowledge, such as**
  - **recognizing, matching, and generating rhymes**
  - **listening for sounds in words**
  - **linking letter names with their sounds, focusing on the regular sound**
- **Teach students the conventions of print.**

- **Model one-to-one correspondence between written and spoken words.**

- **Model the composition of simple sentences, including the use of punctuation,** e.g., capital letters, periods.

Teaching Notes

The focus for supporting Role Play writers in this substrand is organized under the following headings:
- Developing Vocabulary
- Developing Phonological Awareness and Graphophonic Knowledge
- Understanding Conventions of Print
- Understanding Conventions of Grammar and Punctuation

Developing Vocabulary

All students, when they arrive at school, already have an oral vocabulary based on the speech variety and experiences at home. Research has shown that vocabulary acquisition is crucial to academic development (Baker, Simmons, and Kameenui 1998), so it is important for teachers to ensure that Role Play writers have every opportunity to expand their vocabularies across a broad range of contexts and experiences.

Creating a rich language environment that includes reading aloud, reciting poems and rhymes, singing songs, and playing with language is a starting point for developing understandings about written language. Role Play writers can be supported to develop their vocabulary in the following ways:

- valuing and providing time for play and informal talk
- valuing existing speech variety if non-standard or in an additional language or dialect
- modelling the use of language in different contexts
- introducing subject-specific vocabulary across the curriculum, e.g., the language of mathematics
- providing experiences through activities outside the classroom, e.g., trips, and activities inside the classroom, e.g., manipulating materials, inviting guest speakers, or capitalizing on any impromptu events
- discussing written words at every opportunity, pointing out the author's choice and why it is the best fit in the context
- involving students in meaningful word-play activities
- jointly constructing Word Walls featuring the words students are learning, e.g., their names
- providing opportunities for students to read and write for a range of purposes
- immersing students in a range of texts
- using a rich vocabulary in all contexts
- developing language across all curriculum areas, e.g., social studies
- talking about talk

Building a bank of words that are automatically spelled and used

At all phases of development, students copy, recall, and try to spell words during independent writing. The bank of words that can be automatically spelled and used can be made up of high-frequency words, personally significant words, topic or theme words, or signal words. It is important to help Role Play writers begin to develop a small bank of personally significant words. These are words significant to each student, e.g., own name, family names or titles, pet's name, teacher's name.

Exploring and using these words in reading, writing, and any cross-curriculum activities will help reinforce their recognition and use.

Developing Phonological Awareness and Graphophonic Knowledge

Phonological awareness is an ability to hear, combine, and manipulate the different sound units of spoken words. Types of awareness include the following:

- word awareness: spoken language is made up of words; words are representations of objects (cat), emotions (love), and concepts (height); words can rhyme.
- syllable awareness: some words have a single syllable and others have more than one.
- onset and rime awareness: words with a single syllable are made up of onsets and rimes, e.g., sh-op.
- phonemic awareness: words are made up of individual sounds, or phonemes.

When developing phonemic awareness, the following activities may be considered:

- isolation of individual phonemes: through alliteration, position (first, last), generating words with a given sound
- phoneme blending: through putting sounds together to form words, using individual phonemes (c a t), or onset and rime (c at)
- phoneme segmenting: through isolating sounds, hearing and counting sounds in words, producing sounds
- phoneme manipulation: through adding, deleting, or substituting sounds

Graphophonic knowledge is the understanding of sound–symbol relationships as they apply to the alphabetic principle of written language. Role Play writers can be introduced to the following graphophonic understandings:

- alphabet letter names
- letters representing sounds in words

It is recommended that letter names be used when students first begin to ask about print, as letter names are constant, whereas sounds vary. It is critical for students to understand that the letter *G* will always have the name G, but that it represents different sounds in the words *Gerald* and *Gayle*.

Sounds can also vary according to accent or dialect. When beginning to formally introduce sound–symbol relationships, it is important to use both the letter name and the regular sound, for example: "This is the letter *A* and it can represent /a/ as in ran. This is the letter *B* and it can represent /b/ as in ball."

Understanding Conventions of Print

In this phase, it is important to draw students' attention to the conventions of written language. Modelled and Shared Reading and Writing provide a springboard for exploring many of these conventions.

It is important for Role Play writers to begin to understand the following conventions of print.
- In English, print is written from left to right and from top to bottom.
- Print and pictures are different.
- The concepts of first and last can be applied to letters in a word or words on a page.
- A word is a unit of print with space on either side.
- A word consists of letters, as opposed to digits.
- There is a match between spoken and written words.
- Terms such as *letter*, *sound*, *word*, and *sentence* constitute different concepts.
- Digits and letters are different.
- There are two versions of letters: upper case and lower case.
- There are a variety of fonts used in texts, but the alphabet remains constant.
- Print is constant.
- Punctuation is used in written text.

Understanding Conventions of Grammar and Punctuation

At all phases of development, it is important that students are exposed to good models of texts so that attention can be drawn to the conventions of grammar. Modelled and Shared Reading and Writing provide a springboard for exploring many of these conventions with Role Play writers.

Punctuation

It is important to model the use of simple punctuation and to encourage students to try to use punctuation when writing. Model the use of
- capital letters
- periods
- question marks
- exclamation marks

Constructing sentences

It is important to provide many models of how to construct simple sentences. Discuss with students how a sentence is structured. Highlight the following understandings and associated metalanguage.

• A sentence is a group of words that together make sense.

• A sentence must contain at least one thought or idea.

• A sentence must have a subject and a verb.

> For further information about the Conventions substrand, see
> *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition:
> • Chapter 3: Conventions
> • Chapter 1: Use of Texts

Involving Students

1 Word Walls

A Word Wall is a designated space in the classroom devoted to displaying words. As words are discovered, introduced, and discussed, Word Walls are constructed jointly with the students. Words can be sorted according to the current teaching focus; for Role Play writers, the first words to be placed on the Word Wall will usually be the names of the students in the class.

– Jointly create the Word Wall. Begin by displaying enlarged letters of the alphabet (both upper and lower case).

– Add students' names one at a time, pointing out distinctive features, e.g., initial letter, length.

– As students' understandings about print develop, add other words significant to them, e.g., family names, high-frequency words.

– Read, refer to, and use the words on the Word Wall during daily print walks, when modelling, and during writing activities.

Conventions Involving Students
1 Word Walls
2 Word-Sorting Activities
3 The Letter Can
4 Letter Collage
5 Exploring Letter Shapes
6 Star of the Day
7 Elkonin Boxes
8 Sound Hunter
9 Sentence Reconstruction
10 Morning Message
11 Personal Alphabet Chart
12 Generic Games

Our Word Wall

Dd	Ee	Ff
David	Evelyn	friend
Denise	egg	Fredericton
dog		

Figure 4.6

2 Word-Sorting Activities

Word-sorting activities develop students' ability to identify and categorize words according to selected criteria. These activities provide an excellent opportunity for Role Play writers to interact with words and letter combinations in a problem-solving context. Word-sorting activities can also be used to develop phonological awareness, graphophonic understandings, and the recognition of personally significant and high-frequency words.

Word-sorting activities can be organized in a range of ways.
• *Closed sorts* use criteria chosen by the teacher.
• *Open sorts* require the students to choose the criteria.
• *Guess my sort* involves an individual, a group, or the teacher sorting the words and another group deducing the criteria.

Word-sorting activities can be completed using individual word cards provided in envelopes, words on overhead transparencies and an overhead projector, or even participation in physical sorting activities that require students to move around the room holding word cards.

Role Play writers can be involved in a range of word-sorting activities.
• *Picture sorting* can be used as an introductory sorting activity to focus attention on sorting items into categories. Students can begin by sorting picture cards, e.g., **pictures of animals and pictures of people.**
• *Beginning-letter sorts* focus attention on beginning letters, e.g., **words that begin with the letter "d" and words that don't.**
• *Number-of-letter sorts* focus attention on the length of words.
• *Sound sorts* focus attention on words that have a particular sound, e.g., **sorting the pictures into words that have the /t/ sound and those that don't.**

Physical word-sorting involves students moving around the classroom holding a word or picture card.

– Provide each student with a word or a picture on a large card.
– Instruct students to move around the room looking for other students' words that would match theirs in some way. When matches are found, these students form a group.
– At the conclusion of a whole-class sort, ask students to stay in the groups they formed. Each group is then asked to hold up their cards and explain why they are together.

3 The Letter Can

The Letter Can (a bag, container, or box) is an activity to stimulate Role Play writers to continue to develop their graphophonic understandings in the home setting. This activity involves selecting a student to take the Letter Can home and return it to school the next school day filled with items beginning with the nominated letter. It is an excellent way of involving parents or guardians in the learning process (see the letter on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM).

– Decorate a can (with a lid) with bright paper, e.g., alphabet adhesive paper.
– Include in the can instructions for parents or guardians.
– Enclose the selected letter of the alphabet in the can. The same letter may be used over several days.
– The following day, when the Letter Can returns, discuss the items included and list them.
– Send the can home with a different student each school day. Add any new items to the list.
– Create an alphabet centre to display the labelled items students have brought along.
– Leave blank paper and cards in the alphabet centre for students to try making their own alphabet booklets, using the displayed items.

4 Letter Collage

The activity Letter Collage provides students with an opportunity to identify letters and to search for pictures of objects that begin with a focus letter. Students draw pictures, take digital or disposable camera photographs, or find objects beginning with the focus letter, then glue them onto an enlarged letter shape to make a collage. Students can also be challenged to find examples of the focus letter written in different fonts, using upper or lower case.

– To provide the context for the activity, read aloud several alphabet books, such as *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* (Slate and Wolf 2001), *Animalia* (Base 1987), or *26 Letters and 99 Cents* (Hoban 1995).
– Select a focus letter for the activity.
– Have students brainstorm any words they know that begin with the focus letter.
– Organize small groups of students to work under adult supervision.
– Provide each group with an enlarged copy of the focus letter.

Make available single pictures, magazines, old workbooks, old picture dictionaries, old picture books, blank paper, and access to clip art.

– Have students cut out or draw pictures of objects beginning with the focus letter. Glue pictures or letters onto the enlarged letter shapes. Ask the adult supervisors to label the pictures on the letters.
– On subsequent occasions, have additional small groups add to the enlarged letter until the collage has been completed.
– Share the completed letter collages with the whole class.
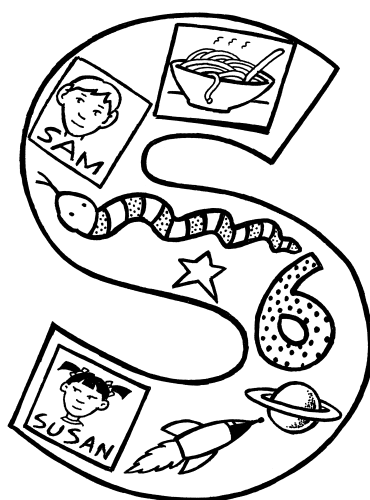
5 Exploring Letter Shapes

This activity helps Role Play writers to become familiar with letter shapes and practise forming letters to create words. A variety of tactile materials, such as Plasticine, playdough, wool, pipe cleaners, sandpaper, sand trays, fingerpaints, and shaving cream, is provided for students to create specified letters and words.

– Give each student some tactile material, e.g., a sand tray, a piece of Plasticine.
– Demonstrate the correct formation of a focus letter.
– Provide time for the students to practise forming the letter and tracing around it.
– Encourage students to also practise forming, tracing, and writing familiar words using the focus letter.

6 Star of the Day

Star of the Day helps students recognize their own names and assists in reinforcing concepts of print. It also helps develop phonological and graphophonic understandings. Star of the Day involves selecting one student's name each day to deconstruct and highlight selected features.

- Write students' names on strips of card, making the strip length relative to the length of the name, e.g., **Bob has a short card; Annaliese has a long one**. Place the strips of names in a container.
- Each day select one card; that student becomes the Star of the Day.
- Generate discussion about the written aspects of the chosen student's name, for example, Nikki:
  - Use the term *word* to describe Nikki's name.
  - Use the term *letter* to describe what makes up the name.
  - Count the letters.
  - Clap the syllables.
  - Compare it with other names.
  - Identify the different letters.
  - Look at the first and other letters using the terms *capital* and *small letter* or *upper and lower case* to describe them.
  - Write *Nikki* in front of the students, pointing out the left-to-right progression.
  - Write the name on another card, cut the letters apart, and have several students, including Nikki, reassemble the name using the original strip as a model.
  - Add the word to the Word Wall.
- Repeat this, using each student's name over successive days.

Extensions
- Have other students ask questions to find out the background and interests of the Star of the Day. Use this information to write sentences about the Star of the Day, which can be compiled into a class book.
- Have the Star of the Day illustrate the page.
- Use the Star of the Day writing as a basis for other activities, such as Sound Hunter (Activity 8).

7 Elkonin Boxes

Elkonin Boxes (Elkonin 1973) support students in identifying the number of sounds in a word; doing this will help writers to represent sounds when they try to write words. The number of sounds in a word is not always the same as the number of letters: for instance, *sheep* has five letters, but only three sounds.

- Draw up an Elkonin Box on an overhead transparency. Ensure that the box has the same number of spaces as there are sounds in the chosen word. (See Figure 4.7.)
- Now ask, for example, "What sound do you hear first in fox?"
- When students respond with the sound, not the letter name, place a counter in the first space.

- Repeat the procedure for each sound in the word, saying, "What sound do you hear next?"
- Place a counter in the second and third spaces respectively when each sound is identified. Finish by counting the number of sounds.
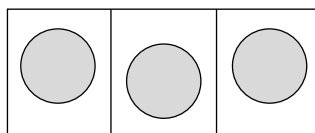

Figure 4.7 Elkonin Box with three counters

As an extension, Elkonin Boxes can be used to help students identify the location of particular sounds in a word. They could be given a word such as *dog* and then asked to put a counter in the space where they hear the sound /g/. See Figure 4.8.
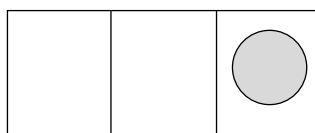
Figure 4.8

Once students are familiar with Elkonin Boxes, they can use them individually to help with the development of phonological awareness. It is possible for them to identify words using pictures instead of the written word.

8 Sound Hunter

Participating in Sound Hunter helps students to develop graphophonic understandings; it is best introduced and practised in the context of a text. Texts such as books, charted songs and poems, modelled writing examples, or written messages can provide contexts for writers to hunt for words. Students' names can also make a good starting point for this activity.

- Choose a specific focus, such as an initial sound, a final sound, or a particular letter.
- Select a text that clearly exhibits the chosen focus, e.g., a morning message, a passage from a big book, or a poem.
- Read the text for enjoyment.
- Revisit the text, hunting for the chosen focus, e.g., words containing the letter "i." Students circle or underline the words with the chosen letter (see Figure 4.9). If using a published text, place a large piece of acetate over it so that students can circle or underline the words with a non-permanent marker.
- Discuss the words and the sound (or sounds) represented by the focus letter. Highlight the regular sound of the focus letter.

- Challenge students to find more examples of words with the chosen letter. Provide a range of resources, such as other books, charts, and magazines.
- Create a chart of the words found by the students. Leave room for more words to be added to the chart.
- Revisit, discuss, and add to the chart on future occasions. Encourage students to use these charts as a reference when writing.

<u>It's</u> <u>Ivy's</u> <u>birthday</u> and she <u>is</u> <u>six</u>.

Figure 4.9 Identifying words with the focus letter

As an extension, involve students in sorting the words according to the sounds made by the focus letter (see Figure 4.10 below).

It's is six	Ivy	birthday

Figure 4.10 Sorting words according to sounds made

9 Sentence Reconstruction

Involving Role Play writers in reconstructing sentences helps to develop their understanding of a sentence as a unit of meaning.

- Write a simple sentence on a sentence strip, chart paper, chalkboard, or whiteboard; for example, Kerry has a pet fish. The complexity of sentences can increase as students' level of understanding increases.
- Read the sentence together with the students.
- Print each word on a separate card and make a punctuation card (see Figure 4.11).
- As a group, match the cards to the words in the sentence. Discuss the order of the words and the use of punctuation.
- Give the cards to selected students.
- Help the students to reconstruct the sentence in the correct order, e.g., ask, "Who has the first word of the sentence? What word comes next?"
- Consider alternative word orders.

– Have the individual cards and sentence strip available for students to reconstruct at other times.

| Kerry | has | a | pet | fish | . |

Figure 4.11

10 Morning Message

Creating a Morning Message is a context in which to introduce and reinforce concepts of print and conventions of grammar and punctuation; a brief Morning Message is created for the students and used as a stimulus for discussion. It should relate to something the students have done or will do during the day.

In the message, students can be encouraged to
• identify letters that occur in their names
• point to the first or last letter of a word
• count the letters in a word
• count the words in a sentence
• match words on individual cards with words in other places, e.g., **on the board, on charts, in books**
• find other words around the room that begin with the same letter
• find a word with a given number of letters

– Decide on a focus, e.g., **rhyming words, punctuation, sound–symbol relationships**.
– Write one or two sentences related to a classroom activity or event, e.g., **Today is Tuesday. It is Jane's birthday.**
– Highlight and discuss the focus: for example, find a word that starts with /t/.

Monday, March 13
Today is Monday. We have Phys. Ed. and library. Did you remember your books?
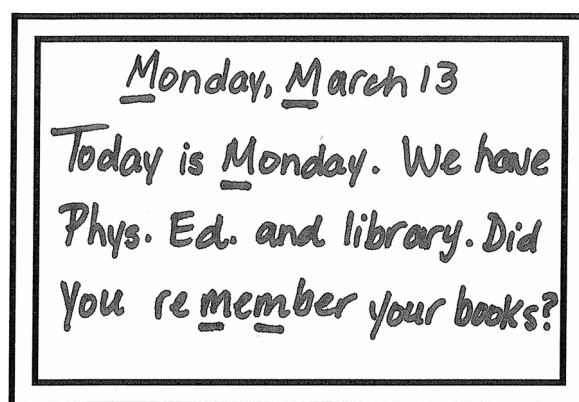
Figure 4.12 A teacher's Morning Message

Extension
– Construct one or two related sentences incorporating the focus; have students help with the writing, for instance, suggesting what to write as a sentence or putting in the punctuation.
– Use the writing for other activities.

11 Personal Alphabet Chart

Creating Personal Alphabet Charts provides opportunities for Role Play writers to build a bank of personally significant words that can be used in their writing. Each student is provided with a blank

alphabet chart and is encouraged to identify, with family support, personally significant items for each letter of the alphabet.

– Provide each student with a large alphabet chart that has space for a word and a picture. Enlarge the chart provided on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.
– Send the chart and an explanatory letter home with the student.
– When the alphabet chart is returned to school, laminate it and attach it to the student's desk as a reference when writing.

> Dear Parent/Guardian,
>
> One way children learn the alphabet is to link each letter with the initial letter of a word that is familiar to them. The word might represent someone or something.
>
> During the next two weeks, talk to your child about people, things, and places he or she knows and the particular letters that the related words begin with. Print the word or name next to the letter, and attach or draw a picture. Start by using names of family, friends, pets, or streets, and then move to choosing favourite foods, places, colours, possessions, TV shows, book characters, and sports teams. When your child knows several words beginning with the same letter, choose the one that seems most important or memorable.
>
> When the chart is returned to school, it will be laminated and attached to your child's desk as a reference when writing.

A letter template appears on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.

Figure 4.13 Jamie's alphabet chart

12 Generic Games

Common games such as I Spy, Bingo, and Concentration can be used to support an understanding of the conventions of print, conventions of grammar, graphophonic understandings, and phonological awareness. Each one can be used to suit a range of purposes. Less common games are listed as additional ways to consolidate understandings, although they are not a replacement for explicit teaching.

When using the games, it is important to
• keep them fun and informal
• use settings that encourage interaction among students
• embed them in the context of work already being done in the classroom
• ensure that the students are fully familiar with how to play them

In this section, the following games are outlined:
    Snap
    Dominoes
    A Trip to the Moon
    I Say... You Say...
    Odd One Out
    Hunting for Words
    What Can You Show Us?
    Tic Tac Toe

Snap
The format of a traditional Snap game is used.
• A set of cards where multiples of four cards match or are related in some way is made up.
• All the cards are dealt to the players.
• In turn, each student overturns one card from his or her hand and places it face up on the table, so forming a central pile.
• When an upturned card matches one on the central pile, the first to place a hand on the central pile says "Snap" and what the criterion for the Snap is, then takes all the cards in the pile.
• The round continues in this way until one student has all the cards.

Dominoes
Make a set of dominoes that has two letters or words on each card. The aim is to join in a line the dominoes sharing a common element, for example, beginning with the same letter, rhyming, or ending with a common sound.

- The game is played in pairs or small groups.
- Each player is dealt the same number of dominoes.
- A student is selected to place the first domino on the playing surface.
- Players take turns to place a domino on the playing surface by selecting a domino that will match one already there. A domino may be added only to the beginning or end of the line, and the player must identify the match. If a player cannot place a domino, the turn is missed. The first to place all his or her dominoes is the winner.

A Trip to the Moon

To play this, students sit in a circle.

- Begin the game by saying, "We're going on a trip to the moon. You can come if you bring something." Students are provided with a criterion for selecting the something; for example, "You need to bring something that rhymes with bay" or "You need to bring something that starts with h."
- Students then take turns to say, "I will bring a…" Provide feedback to each one about the choice.

I Say... You Say...

I Say... You Say... involves a student orally providing words that meet a criterion identified by the teacher.

- Choose a criterion for the game and share it with the students. As an example: "Today we are going to play I Say... You Say... with words that begin with *f*. So let's begin. I say *fat*, you say..."
- Students are selected in turn to provide a word to fill the space until it becomes difficult to find matching words.
- A new criterion is then chosen to continue the game.

Odd One Out

In Odd One Out students are asked to identify a word or parts of a word from a series that contains variation. In a series of three words, two should have something in common, the third being the odd one out. Depending on the words chosen, this activity can be used to develop a range of understandings related to phonological awareness, as shown in the following examples.

- Syllable awareness: "Listen while I say three words. Tell me which one has two parts."
- Rhyme awareness: "Listen while I say three words. Tell me which one doesn't rhyme with the others."
- Matching phonemes: "Listen while I say three words. Tell me which one does not begin with *p*."

As a variation, do not give the criteria. Ask students to pick the odd one out and suggest why it does not belong, for example: "Listen while I say three words. Which does not belong?" However, when beginning to use this variation, make sure the words differ in one aspect only; for instance, if the focus is to identify initial sounds, the words should have the same number of syllables; otherwise, the students may not focus on the aspect being developed.

Hunting for Words
Challenge students to go hunting for words in the classroom, at home, or in the general environment. The words should fulfill a given criterion, such as beginning with *w*, ending with *g*, or having four letters.

Students copy the words into their spy pads, and later they share and discuss them as a class.

What Can You Show Us? (Richgels, Poremba, and McGee 1996)
• Display an enlarged text—for example, a poem or a song—to direct students' attention to different aspects of language.
• Students share with a partner what they notice about the text, such as capital letters, long or short words, known words, or particular sounds.
• Individual students can be asked to show the rest of the class something they notice in the text. They can do this by pointing to features, using a highlighter, or using an erasable marker on plastic laminate over the text.

Tic Tac Toe
Tic Tac Toe is played in the same way as Xs and Os, but instead of using Xs and Os, writers use words to create a sequence of three (diagonally, vertically, or horizontally). Player A may have to choose cards with words that begin with the letter *b* and Player B may have to choose cards with words that begin with the letter *s*.

Figure 4.14

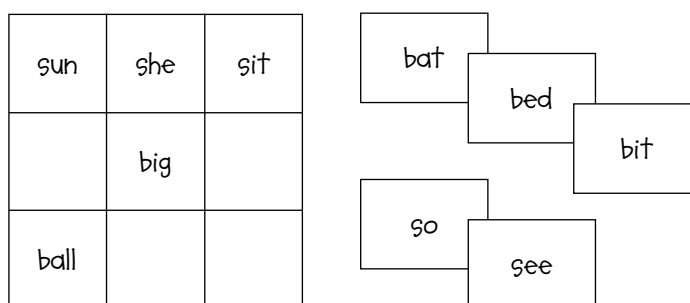Students play the game in pairs.
- Each pair is provided with a playing grid and a selection of cards.
- Each student selects five cards matching the given criterion, such as words that begin with the letter *b* or words that begin with the letter *s*.
- They then take turns to place cards on the grid.
- The winner is the first to place three words horizontally, vertically, or diagonally on the grid.

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES

Major Teaching Emphases

- **Build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge,** e.g., topic knowledge, sound–symbol relationships.

- **Teach strategies used throughout the writing process,** e.g., connecting.

- **Teach spelling strategies,** e.g., sounding out.

- **Model simple publishing alternatives,** e.g., text and illustration.

- **Model how to find required information in texts.**

- **Model how to reflect on the writing process and products,** and encourage students to do the same.

Organization of the Processes and Strategies Substrand

There are several differences in the organization of the Processes and Strategies substrand. Both the Teaching Notes and the Teaching and Learning Experiences (Involving Students) are in *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 4: Processes and Strategies.

The rationale for this difference in organization is that the processes and strategies of spelling and writing are not conceptually hierarchical and therefore not phase specific. In all phases, a variety of writing processes and strategies need to be introduced, developed, and consolidated.

What varies from one phase to the next is the growth in
- the number and integration of strategies used throughout the processes of writing
- the awareness and monitoring of writing processes
- the efficiency in use of the processes of writing
- the ability to articulate the use of the strategies used in the processes of writing
- the awareness of how the use of processes helps with composing texts

Supporting Role Play Writers in the Home

In this phase, students role-play the act of writing, experimenting with ways to represent written language either on paper or electronically. Role Play writers experiment by forming scribbles, letter-like symbols, or random strings of letters, often using letters from their own names. While Role Play writers may read their writing, others cannot.

Role Play writers will benefit from a range of experiences in the home setting. Ideas for providing appropriate experiences are available on Parent Cards located on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM. Teachers can select appropriate cards for each Role Play writer and copy them for parents or guardians to use at home.
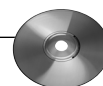
Parent Cards

1 Role Play Writers: How to Support	**2** Encouraging Writing
3 Writing with Your Child	**4** Writing and Reading Links
5 Developing Writing Through Play	**6** Developing Understandings About Print
7 Developing Vocabulary	**8** Building Language Knowledge Through Games

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Available on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM is a parent-friendly version of the Writing Map of Development.

Experimental Writing Phase
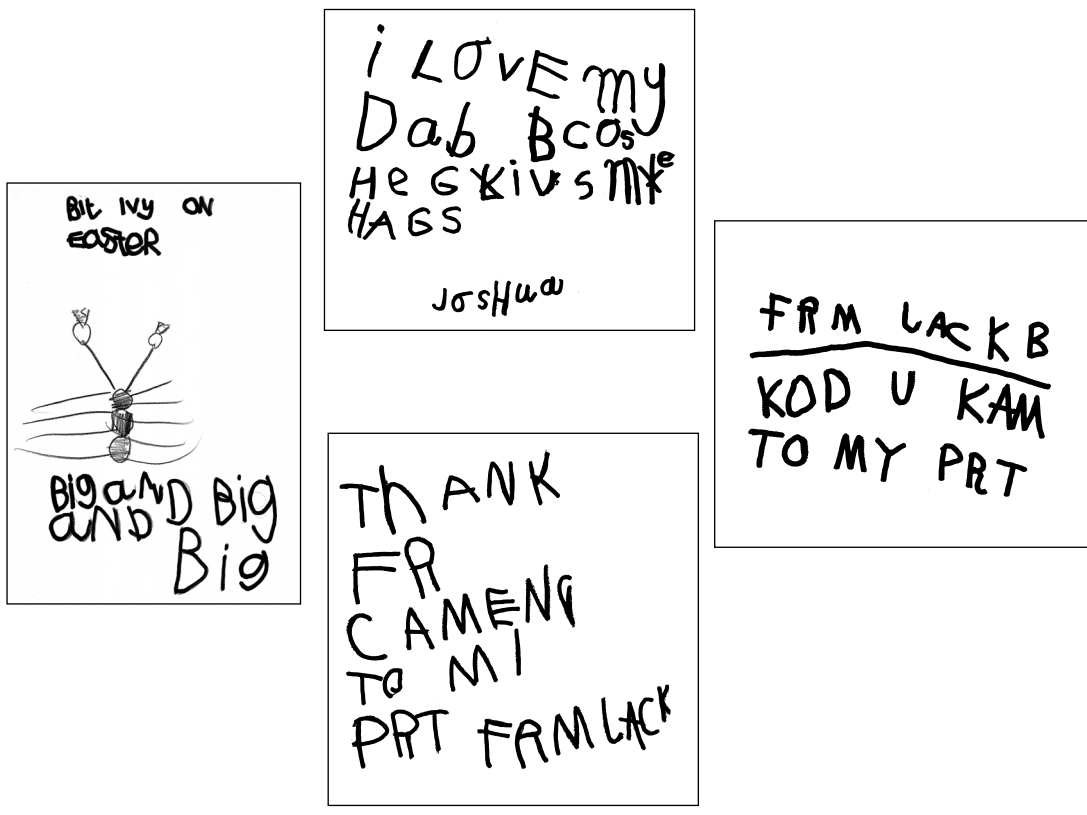
Figure 5.1

Global Statement

In this phase, writers are aware that speech can be written down. Experimental writers rely on familiar topics to generate a variety of texts, such as greeting cards, lists, and letters. They demonstrate an understanding of one-to-one correspondence by representing most spoken words in their written texts. These words may consist of one, two, or three letters, and reflect their developing understanding of sound–symbol relationships.

Experimental Writing Indicators

Use of Texts

◆ **Experiments with familiar forms of writing,** e.g., lists, captions, retellings
◆ **Uses writing with the intention of communicating a message**
◆ **Demonstrates awareness that print contains a constant message,** e.g., recalls the gist of the message over time
◆ **With assistance, finds information in texts appropriate to purpose or interest**
• Writes by repeating the same beginning patterns, e.g., I like cats, I like dogs, I like birds
• Knows that print and drawings can support each other to convey meaning
• Uses familiar topics when writing
• Experiments with the metalanguage associated with writing, e.g., purpose, audience, sentence

Contextual Understanding

◆ **Provides reasons why people write,** e.g., to remember, to say thank you
◆ **States the purpose and audience of own writing,** e.g., I am going to write to Grandma to say...
◆ **Talks about how characters and events are represented in literary texts**
◆ **Talks about how people and ideas are represented in informational texts**
• Expresses a personal opinion within a written text, e.g., I liked the lion at the zoo
• Assumes the reader shares the context, so may not give sufficient background information, e.g., may tell who but not when
• Discusses the purpose of familiar written texts, e.g., signs, lists, storybooks
• Often begins sentences with *I* or *we*

Conventions

◆ **Writes using simple language structures,** e.g., I like..., I see...
◆ **Demonstrates one-to-one correspondence between written and spoken word,** e.g., word-pointing when reading back own writing
◆ **Begins to demonstrate understanding of the conventions of print**
◆ **Identifies the letters of the alphabet by name or by common sounds**

• Uses left-to-right and top-to-bottom orientation of print
• Recognizes the difference between numerals and letters when writing
• Leaves a space between word-like clusters of letters
• Experiments with print conventions and may overgeneralize, e.g., puts a period after each word
• Uses knowledge of letter names to represent a word, e.g., CD—seed
• Knows some simple common letter patterns, e.g., tr, ch
• Represents most words in a sentence using an initial letter
• Represents a whole word with one, two, or three letters, e.g., hp—happy
• Recognizes some words in context
• Uses knowledge of rhyme to spell

Processes and Strategies

◆ **Draws upon semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge when writing,** e.g., topic knowledge, sound–symbol relationships
◆ **Uses a limited range of strategies throughout the writing process,** e.g., connecting
◆ **Uses a limited range of strategies to spell,** e.g., sounding out
◆ **Decides how own text will be presented**
• Relies on the sounds most obvious to him or her to spell unknown words
• Begins to seek correct spelling of some familiar words, e.g. uses environmental print
• Asks for assistance with some words
• Responses about the writing process reflect limited understanding, e.g., T: How do you write? S: You think of a story and write the words
• Talks with others about ideas for own writing
• Creates illustrations that match the text
• Uses words from the environment in own writing, e.g. word wall
• Reads back what has been written

Note: The terms write *and* writing *encompass the use of traditional tools, such as pen and paper, as well as the use of electronic tools, such as computers or cell phones.*

The term texts *refers to both literary and informational texts and includes visual, spoken, or written texts. These may be print, electronic, live, or multimodal.*

Major Teaching Emphases

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., spelling, composing sentences.
- Encourage students to value writing as a social practice.

Use of Texts

- Continue to expose students to a range of text forms, pointing out purpose and audience.
- Provide opportunities for students to compose a range of texts for authentic purposes and audiences.
- Foster students' sense of 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.
- Discuss some of the decisions writers make when composing texts, and provide opportunities for students to do the same.
- Draw students' attention to the different ways characters or events are represented in literary texts.
- Draw students' attention to the different ways people or ideas are represented in informational texts.
- Highlight and encourage the use of simple devices that writers use to influence readers, e.g., print size, colour.

Conventions

- Provide opportunities for students to develop and use new vocabulary.
- Continue to build the bank of words students can automatically spell and use, e.g., high-frequency words.

- Build students' knowledge about words and word parts, e.g., plurals.
- Continue to build phonological awareness and graphophonic knowledge, such as
  – segmenting words into sounds
  – linking letters with their regular sounds
  – representing sounds heard in words with letters written in the order they are heard
  – recognizing that the same letter represents different sounds
- Reinforce conventions of print.
- Teach the use of commonly used punctuation, e.g., question marks, exclamation marks.
- Teach the use of parts of speech, e.g., nouns, verbs.
- Demonstrate the construction of sentences as units of meaning.
- Model how to group information that is related to compose a text.
- Begin to build students' knowledge about different text forms, e.g., procedures instruct, procedures have steps.

Processes and Strategies

- Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge, e.g., word order, text organization.
- Continue to teach strategies used throughout the writing process, e.g., self-questioning.
- Continue to teach spelling strategies, e.g., chunking.
- Model simple ways to plan for writing, e.g., talking, drawing.
- Model simple ways to edit and proofread, e.g., adding words or punctuation.
- Continue to model simple publishing alternatives, highlighting purpose.
- Model how to find, record, and organize information from texts, e.g., alphabetical order, simple retrieval chart.
- Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.

Teaching and Learning Experiences

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTITUDE

Major Teaching Emphases

- **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., spelling, composing sentences.

- **Encourage students to value writing as a social practice.**

Teaching Notes

A classroom community that nurtures Experimental writers views all writers' efforts to communicate as important. Experimental writers can be encouraged to become independent writers if there is emphasis on the message of their writing versus a focus on neatness, punctuation, and accuracy of spelling. The focus for developing positive attitudes towards writing as well as a supportive environment for Experimental writers is organized under the following headings:

• Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment
• Fostering Enjoyment of Writing
• Encouraging Experimentation
• Writing as a Social Practice

Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment

A supportive environment is an environment in which both the physical aspects and the culture of the classroom are considered. In a positive classroom climate, students have opportunities to use and combine print, oral, visual, and digital processes. These opportunities contribute to students' willingness and eagerness to write.

Physical environment

A print-rich environment contains a variety of texts using print for different purposes and can be created in the classroom in

collaboration with students. Doing this will help them understand how written language is used in meaningful ways in everyday lives.

- *Everyday print* can be referred to in the environment, both inside and outside the classroom, so students can continue to build understandings about the purpose of written language and the way it works. You can talk about everyday print, encourage students to bring in examples, prepare charts, and take students for walks around the community, pointing out environmental print.

- *Label* the classroom environment. Ensure that labelling of classroom items is both functional and meaningful, e.g., **Look in this cupboard to find lined paper.** Effective labelling helps students to see how words go together to make sentences and meaning.

- *Word banks* can be jointly constructed and may include names of the students, members of the school community, and classroom helpers, the name of the school with the street, address, and commonly used words. Encourage students to use word banks as a reference when writing.

- *Word Walls* contain words the students are currently learning, e.g., **common sight words, the teacher's name, the name of the school.** Encourage the use of these words in the students' own writing.

- *Charts* that reflect students' current learning and understandings can be jointly constructed. These living or anchor charts are cumulative in that they are added to as new understandings evolve, e.g., **The letter C can make these sounds.**

- *Poems, songs, riddles, and rhymes* that students have been working with can be written on charts and displayed so the students can read them for pleasure or use them as a resource when writing.

- A *reading* or *writing backpack* can be created for students to take home on a rotational basis. It could include literary or informational texts about different topics, suggested writing activities, discussion questions about the text, and suggestions for parents, e.g., **how to use the backpack, topics to write about.**

- A *writing centre* is an area for personal-choice writing where students can experiment with writing in a non-threatening way. Provide a variety of items, such as coloured paper, pencils, simple software packages, and picture or electronic dictionaries for students to use. Suggestions for writing—or links to suitable writing Web sites—may provide stimulus and motivation. A display board placed in this area can be used to show students' completed work.

- A *reading centre* is a relaxed, informal area for independent reading. Providing time for students to read independently helps

them to develop an understanding of the way written language works. Include commercially produced texts, e-texts, and those produced by the class, if possible.

- *Learning centres* allow students to explore print in a variety of settings. Centres can contain developmentally appropriate tasks created around a theme, a topic, or a text form. The materials needed to complete the tasks should be made available.
- *Creative centres* can be set up to encourage students to write for real purposes. Texts and ICT resources associated with the theme of the centre can be included.

Although it is important that a variety of print is displayed, in order to create a supportive classroom environment it is also essential to model how to interact with and make use of this functional print. There are a range of ways.

- Take students on a print walk around the class so that they have the opportunity to read and revisit charts they have made and words they have learned, or to play games, such as matching words or phrases.
- Model the use of the charts during Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing.
- Encourage students to make use of the charts during independent writing time, e.g., You want to spell Mrs. Girdler's name. Which chart might you use to find that word?
- Model the use of a range of ICT tools used when creating texts.
- Display and discuss writing created by other family members, e.g., grandmothers, elders, siblings.

Classroom culture

As well as providing appropriate material and a carefully structured physical environment, it is important to consider how to create a positive classroom culture where students see learning to write as useful and worthwhile.

- Allocate regular periods of time for writing.
- Provide genuine purposes and audiences for writing.
- Have high expectations of all students.
- Provide specific, descriptive feedback to all attempts at writing.
- Display students' writing.
- Provide opportunities for students to choose their own topics.
- Provide a range of ICT resources for students to use to create texts.
- Ensure that students have a clear sense of what is expected of them.
- Allow time for students to share their writing with others.

- Value writing, and convey this attitude to students.
- Use language that fosters both unity and diversity.
- Establish and teach procedures for solving challenges during writing, e.g., run out of ideas, need to confer, spell unknown words.
- Allow students choice within parameters, e.g., choose a text product type, or publishing format, from three provided.
- Incorporate purposeful writing into all curriculum areas.

Fostering Enjoyment of Writing

Foster students' enjoyment of writing in a range of ways.
- Provide time each day for all students to be involved in meaningful writing sessions where the pleasure of writing is experienced.
- Read to students every day, introducing them to a variety of text forms. Discuss the features of these forms.
- If possible, provide opportunities for students to use a range of ICT resources to combine print, images, and sounds, e.g., computers, software programs, interactive whiteboards, digital cameras.
- Provide multiple demonstrations of the strategies effective writers use.
- Model the use of writing as a functional social practice every day, e.g., note to the principal.
- Ensure that there is a wide selection of writing material in the classroom from which students can choose.
- Set up a mailbox to encourage students to write to one another.
- Provide access to a computer to allow students to write and use software programs.
- Plan experiences that will enrich students' language knowledge and provide a shared context for spoken and written activities.
- Make available texts that have been created during Modelled, Shared, and Interactive Writing sessions.
- Provide time for students to share their writing with the whole class or with other significant people.
- Encourage family members to respond to their child's writing.
- Provide opportunities for students to write labels or signs for displays and coming events.
- Encourage and organize visits to the school and local libraries so that students are exposed to a wide variety of text forms.
- Invite authors to visit the classroom and share the experiences they have had in creating texts.
- Provide opportunities for students to practise writing using computer software or Web sites.

Encouraging Experimentation

It is important to help Experimental writers feel confident about experimenting with written language. Students need to know their approximations will be accepted, their attempts to write will be valued, and their work will receive supportive feedback. Experimental writers should be encouraged to reflect on ways to improve in selected focus areas and to experiment with all aspects of writing.

Invite students to
• make use of their personal experiences when creating texts
• try writing a variety of texts for real purposes
• choose their own topics
• use a variety of strategies when writing
• use invented spelling to attempt unknown words, e.g., ktn–kitten
• talk about their writing and the discoveries they have made
• express their opinions about texts read, heard, or written
• use ICT to communicate a message

Writing as a Social Practice

The focus when teaching writing in the classroom is to provide many real-world situations that require the use of written language. The ultimate goal is for students to function in society as literate individuals who can use writing to communicate their ideas, share information, stimulate thinking, formulate questions, gain self-awareness and influence policy and action.

Experimental writers will begin to understand how writing is used as a social practice through discussions that centre on why people write and what they write. For example, students may identify that Dad chooses to write a shopping list when trying to remember what needs to be purchased at the grocery store; however, when he keeps in touch with friends he writes an e-mail. These situations help students to make connections between writing and life.

For further information about Environment and Attitude, see *Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning*, Chapter 5: Establishing a Positive Teaching and Learning Environment.

USE OF TEXTS

Teaching Notes

The focus for supporting Experimental writers in this substrand is organized under the following headings:
• Exposure to a Range of Text Forms
• Opportunities to Write a Range of Texts
• Crafting Voice and Individual Style
• Developing Metalanguage

Exposure to a Range of Text Forms

Experimental writers will benefit from ongoing opportunities to discuss and interact with a variety of literary and informational texts. Texts selected may include songs, poems, rhymes, fairy or folk tales, traditional or modern stories, simple reports, procedures, messages, timetables, or environmental signs. They could be multimodal, class-made, or published materials presented in a range of text product types, such as books, Web sites, e-mails, CD-ROMs, or software programs.

During Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions, show students how successful writers write in a range of text forms for different purposes, including these:

• to entertain, e.g., rhymes, fairy-tales, fables, speech bubbles
• to recount, e.g., diaries, retellings, journals
• to describe, e.g., simple reports, labels, menus
• to socialize, e.g., invitations, messages, notes
• to explain, e.g., timetables, classroom routines
• to instruct, e.g., directions to play games, lists, labels
• to persuade, e.g., brochures, catalogues
• to inquire, e.g., interviews

Opportunities to Write a Range of Texts

Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions provide opportunities to demonstrate to Experimental writers how to create a range of texts; creating texts collaboratively provides appropriate support and scaffolding for these writers. Many aspects of writing can be demonstrated:

- selecting texts forms for different purposes, e.g., **I want to tell my friend about my trip, so I will write an e-mail message.**
- identifying the audience before writing
- thinking about what the audience might want to know
- understanding the link between spoken and written words
- finding words displayed in the room
- selecting the information to include in the text
- choosing a topic to write about

It is important that Experimental writers be provided with opportunities for purposeful daily writing and be encouraged to experiment with writing different texts. It is through experimentation that these writers develop and consolidate their understandings of written language.

Before, during, and after writing, students can be encouraged to talk about their writing and their message. This process helps them clarify their thoughts. Written responses and feedback from the teacher about the message of the text provide a model for students and can motivate further writing.

Understandings about writing are closely linked to understandings about reading. Experimental writers will learn much about written language through varied reading experiences. During Modelled and Shared Reading sessions, many aspects of written language can be reinforced: for instance, discussions about literary texts can focus on characters, setting, and the sequence of events, thus helping Experimental writers to develop the sense of a story. Discussions after sessions using informational texts can focus on content and organization.

Crafting Voice and Individual Style

Many things, including a writer's purpose, world view, multiple identities, and culture, influence voice within text. Voice in writing is defined in several ways.

Writing words that will make readers listen and be affected.
—Tom Romano, 2004

Voice is the imprint of ourselves on our writing.
—Donald Graves, 1994

Voice in writing has to do with a unique personality-on-paper.
—Ralph Fletcher, 1993

At this phase, it is important to help students understand the concept of voice. You can do this during Modelled, Shared, or Guided Reading sessions, or when reading aloud to students.

• Show and discuss examples of sentences, passages, or entire texts that demonstrate voice.
• Share samples of students' writing that have voice.
• Discuss how the author's voice keeps the reader interested.

Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions can also help Experimental writers to understand and develop voice in their own writing. There are a range of ways:

• modelling how personal thoughts and feelings can add voice to writing
• modelling how words can be changed to add voice: for example, "Cats are good pets" becomes "My cat Rex is the friendliest cat ever."
• providing opportunities for students to write about topics they find personally important
• during class discussions, pointing out examples of voice in published texts (Make a note of these words so that students can begin to use them when they write.)
• modelling or sharing how writing a message changes in voice when an audience changes

Developing Metalanguage

The vocabulary used to talk about language is known as *metalanguage*, and when students are able to use it to talk competently about their own writing and learning, it helps them to understand how language operates. Developing metalanguage also helps students to understand the support and feedback provided by teachers.

To help Experimental writers continue to use terms associated with writing and written language, it is important to use metalanguage as part of everyday teaching: across curriculum areas, as part of targeted discussions, during explicit demonstrations, during one-on-one conversations with students, or as part of planned Modelled, Shared, Interactive, or Guided Writing sessions.

Certain terms tend to be more prominent when focusing on different aspects of writing. For example, when working with Experimental writers, consider the use of the following terms:

- Use of Texts: captions, recipes, menus, procedure, author, narrative, recount
- Contextual Understanding: purpose, audience, characters, events
- Conventions: sound, question mark, plural, nouns, capital letters
- Processes and Strategies: publishing, sounding out, revising, planning

Involving Students

For further information about the Use of Texts substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition:
- Chapter 1: Use of Texts
- Chapter 4: Processes and Strategies

1 Read and Retell

Read and Retell (Brown and Cambourne 1989) is a simple activity that is flexible in its use and provides an opportunity for students to develop an understanding of the purpose, audience, and structure of a text. Retelling requires Experimental writers to listen to a text, organize key information in it they have understood, then share their retelling with others. Retellings at the Experimental writing phase can be created and shared orally, as drawings, or through drama. Traditional children's literature—such as fables, myths, and fairy-tales or songs, rhymes, and picture books—offers excellent texts for retelling with Experimental writers.

Experimental writers will benefit from creating different retellings.
- *Oral to oral*—students listen to a text read aloud by the teacher and retell it orally.
- *Oral to drawing*—students listen to a text read aloud by the teacher and retell by drawing.
- *Oral to drama*—students listen to a text read aloud by the teacher and retell through drama.
- *Written to oral*—students "read" a text and retell it orally.
- *Written to drawing* — students "read" a text and retell by drawing.

The following procedure can be adapted to suit the purpose, context, focus, and type of retelling being used.

– Select a text and display the title.
– Read the text aloud to students.

**Use of Texts
Involving Students**
1 Read and Retell
2 Story Maps
3 Wall Stories
4 Text Innovation
5 Sketch Journal
6 Let's Read Your Voice
7 Guess the Author
8 Writing Bag
9 Class News Book
10 Creative Centres

– Allow students to hear or "reread" the text as many times as necessary.
– Discuss its purpose and form with students.
– Discuss the audience for the students' retelling.
– Provide time for students to prepare their retellings (in any way mentioned above).
– Select some students to share their retellings.

Some ways to support Experimental writers during retelling sessions are
• using puppets as an aid for oral retellings
• using illustrations from a text
• providing simple props
• providing overhead transparencies for students to draw and retell
• having students create Story Maps that can be used when retelling

2 Story Maps

Story Maps are graphic representations of some or all of the elements of a literary text, showing the relationships between elements. They could include characters, setting, events, or objects. Story Maps provide a practical way for students to organize their thinking and develop an understanding of the structure of a range of literary texts. Creating them at the Experimental phase helps students to develop an understanding of the sequence of events in a text.

Story Maps vary greatly according to the purpose and audience of the activity, the phase of development of the students, and the nature of the text. Experimental writers benefit from creating a range of different maps:
• *basic maps*—graphic representations of some of the main elements, such as the setting, characters, events, problem, or resolution
• *chronological maps*—chronological representations of the sequence of events in a clockwise direction
• *geographical maps*—using the setting as the central focus to illustrate how the story unfolds

– Read the text to students or provide time for independent reading.
– Have students draw elements on cards or sticky notes. Using these allows the elements to be moved or positions changed.
– Direct students to place the cards or notes to create a draft Story Map.
– Provide them with time to share and compare their draft maps with others, and to refine them as needed.
– Encourage students to add key words or phrases to their maps.

– Provide time for them to use their maps as a basis for retelling the text to others.

3 Wall Stories

Refer to Chapter 4: Role Play Writing Phase, page 58.

4 Text Innovation

Refer to Chapter 4: Role Play Writing Phase, pages 56–57.

5 Sketch Journal

A Sketch Journal provides Experimental writers with the opportunity to base writing on their personal experiences. Time is provided for them to participate in a walk outside the classroom and to sketch things of interest; the sketches are used as a stimulus for writing. Writing about personal events will help students to develop a sense of voice.

– Provide each student with a Sketch Journal (two or three blank pages stapled together and attached to a clipboard).
– Take students outside on a walk and invite them to find at least three things of interest to sketch. Explain that the pictures need only be sketches, not drawings in great detail.
– Upon returning to the classroom, have students talk in pairs about what they drew and explain the stimulus for an idea to write about.
– Provide time for them each to select one of their drawings and write about it.
– Have some students share their texts with the whole class. Ask each one to explain how he or she chose what to draw and write about, e.g., I drew the swings and wrote about when my grandpa pushed me up high on the swing.
– Discuss how each text is special to that person and how people write from their memories. Explain that writers can share their thoughts and feelings, and that this is the idea of voice in writing.
– Collect students' completed pieces and compile them into a book to be placed in the class library.

6 Let's Read Your Voice

Routman (2000) suggests that having students write poetry is one way to encourage them to use and develop voice as writers. Students can often write more easily, confidently, and with voice about personal experiences and interests, such as sports, school, friends, pets, family, and likes and dislikes. The result of such purposeful engagement is the presence of voice in the work.

– Read aloud poems that use the framework.
– Make the points that a poem can be about anything, does not have to rhyme, may use invented spelling, and may use few words.
– Brainstorm possible topics for poems, e.g., **pets**, **likes**, **sport**, **family**.
– Provide time for students to decide what they will write about. Have several describe to the whole class what they might like to write about.
– Provide time for them to create their poems.
– Invite students to share their completed poems with the class. Orally sharing poems allows other students to hear the voice of the poet.
– Encourage discussion by asking, "What did we learn about the poet that we didn't know before?"
– Collate the completed poems into a class book.

Framework

| Noun |
| Looks |
| Sounds like |
| Feels like |
| Personal response |
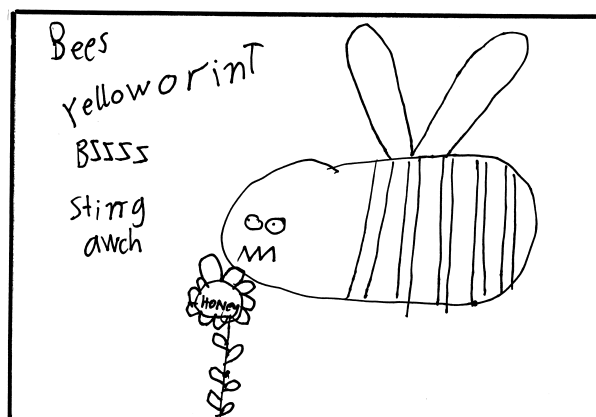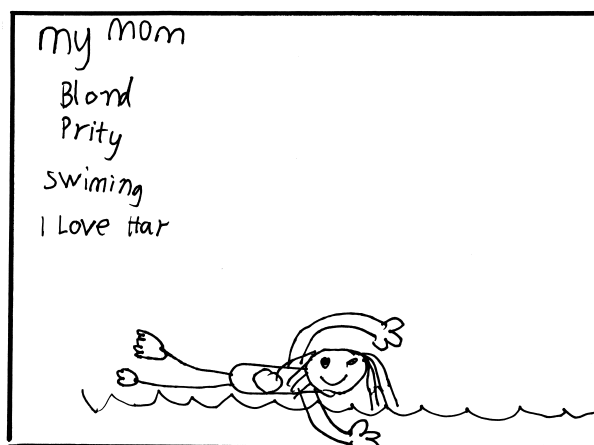
Figure 5.2 Students' voice expressed in poetry

7 Guess the Author

Guess the Author exposes students to chosen authors with the intent of investigating their particular voices; a selection of texts by several authors is needed to complete this activity. Students are required to listen to readings of selected texts and determine which author the lines belong to: for example, ask, "Are these the words of Dr. Seuss or Mem Fox?"

Over a period of time, read a selection of texts by one author, such as Mem Fox or Dr. Seuss. After each reading, discuss the author's writing style and voice.

– Select several sentences from a text written by one of the chosen authors. The text need not be one the students have heard before.
– Read the sentences and have students identify the author.
– Encourage them to discuss their reasons for suggesting a particular author.
– Create a chart with the class, identifying the individual style and voice of the chosen author.
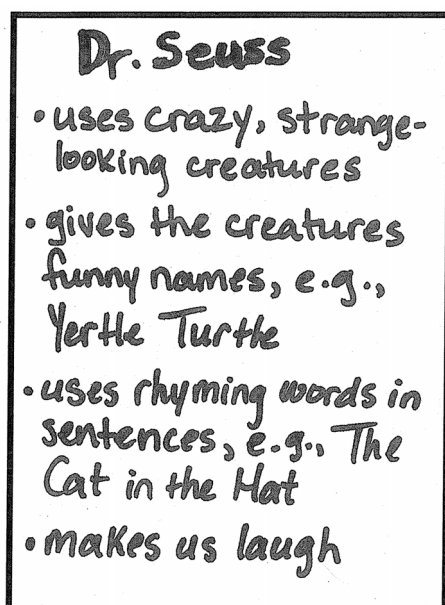
Figure 5.3 A collaboratively created chart

8 Writing Bag

Writing Bag is an activity that provides a school–home link and encourages students to write for real purposes and audiences. It provides an excellent opportunity to foster a sense of voice, as students write about topics that are personally significant. Writing Bag also provides opportunities to write for purposes that may not

be addressed in the school setting, such as an invitation to a family gathering or a thank-you note for a gift.

- – Organize a Writing Bag, a bag, a backpack, or a small box containing
  - – a range of plain, lined, and coloured paper and card
  - – recycled greeting cards
  - – pictures from magazines, catalogues, discarded picture books
  - – small blank books already made up (several blank pages stapled or stitched together with a card cover)
  - – envelopes
  - – pencils and markers
  - – glitter, glue, and tape
  - – a pencil sharpener
  - – an alphabet chart
  - – a list of high-frequency and personally significant words
  - – a written explanation for parents or guardians (see the sample letter on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM)
- – Brainstorm some suggestions with students as to different writing they can do at home.
- – Send the Writing Bag home with a different student each day.
- – Provide time for each to share completed writing with the class.
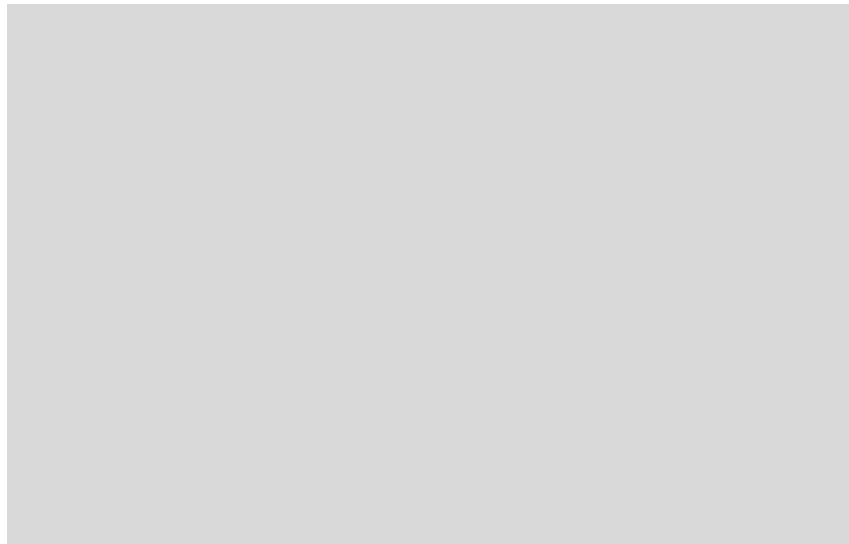- – Create a space where students can display their writing.

Figure 5.4

9 Class News Book

Class News Book is an effective way to help students understand that written messages remain constant. This activity involves modelling the writing of selected students' news each day.

– Make a Class News Book out of large pieces of paper.
– Model the writing of one or two sentences from a selected student's news each day.
– Highlight particular language features, concepts of print, and conventions, e.g., **capital letters, periods, sentences.**
– Invite the selected student to illustrate the sentences.
– Create opportunities for the whole class to reread sentences.

This activity could form part of a home reading sheet or Class Newspaper: students take home a copy of each day's news on a single sheet to share with their families. This page could include illustrations to help students remember the news that they worked on.

10 Creative Centres

Young writers need to be provided with time and encouraged to write independently in meaningful contexts. Access to a variety of Creative centres, based on different themes, will provide them with opportunities to use writing for different purposes. Providing materials associated with the theme will allow them to practise written language in a stimulating, supportive, and familiar setting.

– Set up a Creative centre in the classroom.
– Introduce the students to the items that form part of that centre, paying particular attention to the writing opportunities available.
– Discuss the type of language and actions used in this setting.
– Model some of the types of writing linked to this Creative centre.
– Provide students with the opportunity to "play" in the centre.
– Praise any attempts at using written language as part of the Creative centre.

In addition to a variety of writing implements, other materials, as listed below, could be provided at various centres.

The Shop Centre
• price tags
• order pads
• dockets
• posters
• catalogues
• scanning machine

The Home Centre
• shopping lists
• telephone messages
• address book
• recipe book
• message board
• cell phone
• computer
• answering machine

The Weather Centre
• laminated maps
• pointers
• weather chart with symbols for cloud, sun, rain, wind, lightning
• laminated chart on which to record the weather
• Web site for local weather forecast

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The Medical Centre
- telephone message pad
- appointment book
- In/Out sign
- opening hours sign
- poster about flu shots
- patient notes/files
- eye chart

The Bank Centre
- notepaper
- ATM cards
- ATM machine
- deposit and withdrawal forms
- application forms

The Restaurant Centre
- order book
- menus
- specials board
- bills
- restaurant signs
- name tags
- place mats
- drinks list
- telephone

Order

Table number: 2
Quest name: KEV
Order 1. LRTA
      2. CHICN
      3. IC CREM
Server's name: LACK

Restaurant Bill $ $ $ $

Table number: 2
Cost: $ 10
☐ card
☑ cash $5.00
☐ cheque $10.00

Thanks for eating here.
Server's name: LACK

Figure 5.5 As a Creative centre, a restaurant provides these writing opportunities.

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Major Teaching Emphases

■ **Discuss the purpose and audience of a range of text forms.**

■ **Discuss some of the decisions writers make when composing texts, and provide opportunities for students to do the same.**

■ **Draw students' attention to the different ways characters or events are represented in literary texts.**

■ **Draw students' attention to the different ways people or ideas are represented in informational texts.**

■ **Highlight and encourage the use of simple devices that writers use to influence readers,** e.g., print size, colour.

Teaching Notes

The focus for helping Experimental writers to develop contextual understanding in writing is organized under the following headings:
• Understandings About Purpose and Audience
• Exploring Decisions Writers Make
• Representing Characters and Events in Literary Texts
• Representing People and Ideas in Informational Texts
• Use of Devices

Understandings About Purpose and Audience

Experimental writers continue to benefit from opportunities to develop an understanding that writing has a purpose and communicates a message to an intended audience. While Modelled and Shared Reading sessions provide opportunities to discuss the purpose and audience of different texts, Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions provide opportunities to demonstrate writing for a range of real purposes and audiences: for instance, "Let's write a note to the caretaker to apologize for the paint that got spilled on the carpet."

Students need to develop an awareness that all texts are written for a purpose and that writing serves many functions; identifying texts by their primary purpose enables students to take into account contextual understandings associated with them. This resource categorizes texts according to eight purposes, and writers usually employ certain forms of text to meet these purposes, outlined here:

- to entertain
- to recount
- to socialize
- to inquire
- to describe
- to persuade
- to explain
- to instruct

At this phase, students benefit from having a particular audience for their writing and knowing that this means there will be a response to their writing efforts. Possible audiences for Experimental writers include family, friends, class members, teachers, older students in the school, or a classroom toy. Writing for these audiences helps students see writing as a meaningful experience.

Exploring Decisions Writers Make

Experimental writers need support to develop an understanding that decisions are made when creating texts. Constantly encouraging students to question authors' choices helps them to develop the foundations of critical literacy. Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions provide opportunities to demonstrate the types of questions that authors ask themselves, and how they make choices about these questions.

Purpose and audience
- Why am I writing this text?
- Who am I writing for?
- What do they already know?
- What kind of language do I need to use?

Content and form
- What do I want to tell them?
- What ideas do I need to include?
- What is the best way to get my message across? (e.g., letter, list)
- How will I organize my ideas?

During these sessions, discussions and demonstrations should include the use of Think-Alouds and metalanguage.

Representing Characters and Events in Literary Texts

Shared Reading sessions can also provide an opportunity to highlight and discuss decisions that authors make when creating texts.
- Why do you think the artist has chosen to illustrate the text in a particular way? How else could it have been done?
- How do the illustrations support the text?

- How does the author represent the characters or people in the text? For example: "In this book the pirates are all scary. Are all pirates scary? What other words or pictures could have been used to make the pirates not be scary?"
- Do you know any people who are like the characters in the story? Who are they? How are they the same? How are they different?
- Why do you think the author chose... as the name for this character?
- What other names would have been suitable for the characters or people in this text?
- Who has the power and control in this text?
- Who is missing or who do you wonder about?

Representing People and Ideas in Informational Texts

Texts from across the curriculum—and other authentic reading materials—will provide opportunities for students to discuss how people and ideas have been represented in particular ways. Magazines, advertising brochures, food packaging, posters, as well as science and environmental texts, are real-life stimuli for discussions.

- Who wrote the text?
- Who is in the text?
- How is the person (or people) represented in the text?
- Do you know anyone who is like the person in the text? Who is it? How are they the same? How are they different?
- Have you read any other texts on this topic?
- Did that text say anything different about the topic?
- How do the illustrations, photographs, or diagrams support the text?

Use of Devices

As well as knowing the purpose, the audience, and the content of their writing, writers make decisions about the linguistic and print devices they will use. The focus for Experimental writers is on modelling, discussing, and encouraging the use of simple language and graphic devices that writers use. These could include

- words to describe appearance, e.g., short, thin, tall
- words to describe actions, e.g., ran, jumped, screamed
- words to describe emotions, e.g., scared, sad
- repetition (e.g., It was a big, big spider.)
- print and font size
- different-coloured words, e.g., instructions in red print

For further information about the Contextual Understanding substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 2: Contextual Understanding.

Involving Students

1 Family Message Journals

Wollman-Bonilla (2000) suggests that Family Message Journals are a great way for students to write for real purposes and audiences. These journals are notebooks in which students write messages to their families each day and family members write replies. The messages can be sent via e-mail if students and families have such access. The topics students write about are related to classroom and school events; this writing is personally meaningful and is a powerful communication tool.

– Provide each student with a booklet or notebook to be used as a journal.
– Model the writing of a Message Journal entry. Possible questions might be as follows:
   – Who will I write to? (e.g., **Dear Mom**)
   – What will I tell her about? (e.g., **the science experiment with apples**)
   – What are some of the things I could tell her? (e.g., **how we cut the apple, what colours were inside**)
– Provide time for students to share with a partner who they will write to and what they will write about.
– Allow time for students to write in their Family Message Journals.

It is important to inform parents about the purpose and their role in supporting the use of the Family Message Journal—sending home a letter would be very helpful (see the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM for a template). However, ensure that this activity does not become a chore for the students or their families.

2 Message Board

A Message Board is a place to keep announcements, reminder notes, or other short messages for a range of audiences. Making regular use of a Message Board enables Experimental writers to develop an understanding that writing has different purposes and audiences.

– Jointly design, create, and locate a Message Board for classroom use. Ensure that the board is easily accessible by students and other teachers. A board might also be placed in the schoolyard.
– Model the use of the Message Board by jointly constructing several texts, e.g., **reminders, announcements**.

– Encourage students to post notes to others.
– Once a number of notes have been posted, informally discuss the collection in relation to any of the following:
   – audience, e.g., **parents, teachers, absent students, principal**
   – purpose, e.g., **notes that explain, ask questions, remind**
   – form, e.g., **list, letter, memo**
– Discuss any similarities or differences in the messages.

As an extension, have a special area on the Message Board for messages that celebrate any positive moments of the day. These can be referred to at the end of each day.

3 What Have We Written?

What Have We Written? is an opportunity to model to students how to keep a record of what has been written and for whom. It helps Experimental writers to develop an understanding that there are many different purposes and audiences for writing.

– Enlarge or sketch out the chart provided on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.
– Model how to record the purposes, audiences, and topics that have been covered by the class during Modelled, Shared, and Interactive Writing sessions.
– Add to the record sheet regularly, highlighting the purpose and audience of all writing.

Reflecting on these records throughout the year will help students understand the many different purposes of writing and the numerous audiences a writer writes for.

What Have We Written?		
Why We Wrote (Purpose)	Who We Wrote To (Audience)	What We Wrote About (Topic)
to invite	grandma	stay with us
to tell how to	class	make pancakes
to remember	me	bring my book

Figure 5.6 A class chart

4 What's Needed?

What's Needed? is an activity that helps Experimental writers consider information to be included in a text to suit a particular purpose and different audiences. Audiences require varying amounts of detail according to their knowledge or the occasion involved: for example, an invitation to a community member to attend a class function will need more detail than an invitation to parents or the principal.

– Discuss the purpose for writing, e.g., **invitation to a class open house.**
– Brainstorm different audiences for the message, e.g., **parents, community members, the principal, other classes.**
– Jointly construct an invitation for each audience. Have students note what information is needed in each message and any additional information required. Discuss why this is important.
– Discuss differences between invitations: for example, if the audience is not at the school, the address has to be included.

Encourage students to consider audience needs when writing across all curriculum areas.

5 Text Innovation

Refer to Chapter 4: Role Play Writing Phase, pages 56–57.

6 What Might They Look Like?

What Might They Look Like? allows students to decide how characters, people, or objects in a text can be represented. Creating a drawing of characters, people, or an object before a text has been viewed helps Experimental writers to understand that authors and illustrators make decisions when creating texts.

– Read an unfamiliar text without showing students the illustrations.
– After reading the text, assign students a character, person, or object. Ensure that they have still not seen the illustrations.
– Have them draw their impression of the character, person, or object.
– When the drawings have been completed, discuss the decisions the students had to make.
  – Is your character male or female?
  – Is he or she tall or short, large or small?
  – What clothes is your character wearing?
  – What colour of hair does your character have? Is it long or short?
  – What does your object look like? What is around it?

– Discuss what was heard in the text to help make these decisions: for example, "It said she had blonde hair like straw."
– Invite students to share their drawings.
– Provide time for them to compare their drawings with the illustrations in the text.
– Discuss the similarities and differences found, and speculate on the choices of the author and/or illustrator.

7 Word Choices

Word Choices helps students to understand some of the decisions authors make when creating a text. Students preview a selection of words from a text and determine which form of text the words come from. Useful texts include junk-mail catalogues, greeting cards, school newsletters, and recipes.

– Select 8–10 key words from a chosen text. Write each word on a card.
– Display and read each word with the class.
– Have students make predictions, based on the selected words, about the form of text the words have come from, e.g., **"Is it a narrative or a procedure?"**
– Have them justify their predictions, e.g., **"I think it is a narrative because of the words forest, magic, and talking trees."**
– Have them use the words to make and justify other predictions about the text, e.g., **the characters, the topic.**
– With the students, collaboratively sort the words—for instance, into words about where the text takes place and words about what the characters look like.
– Discuss some of the decisions the author made, e.g., **about setting, characters, details.**
– After the text has been read, compare the predictions made by the students with the content in the text.

8 Catch the Reader

Catch the Reader allows Experimental writers to identify devices used by authors. Raising students' awareness of simple devices is essential as a starting point for them to begin experimenting with devices in their own writing: these could include print size, font selection, colour, size of characters or people, and repetition. At first use, it is beneficial to focus on one device at a time.

- Show students a variety of texts selected because of their use of a chosen device.
- Discuss the different effects created by the device, e.g., **big letters sound like someone shouting, shaky print shows a scary voice.**
- Have students in groups search magazines to find other examples where this device has been used. Allow time for them to create a group chart of their findings.
- Encourage them to use the devices discovered in their own writing and illustrations.

9 Character Visualization

Character Visualization helps Experimental writers to make decisions about what characters look like. This activity involves having them sketch the mental images created when hearing a poem. Short, quirky poems that have strong character descriptions—such as those by Shel Silverstein, Judith Nicholls, John Foster, Michael Rosen, or Spike Milligan— work best for this activity.

- Select a poem and read it to the class. Place a strong emphasis on drawing out the character by the way the poem is read.
- Invite the students to draw a picture of the character they "see" in their head. Encourage them to label the decisions they made about representing the character.
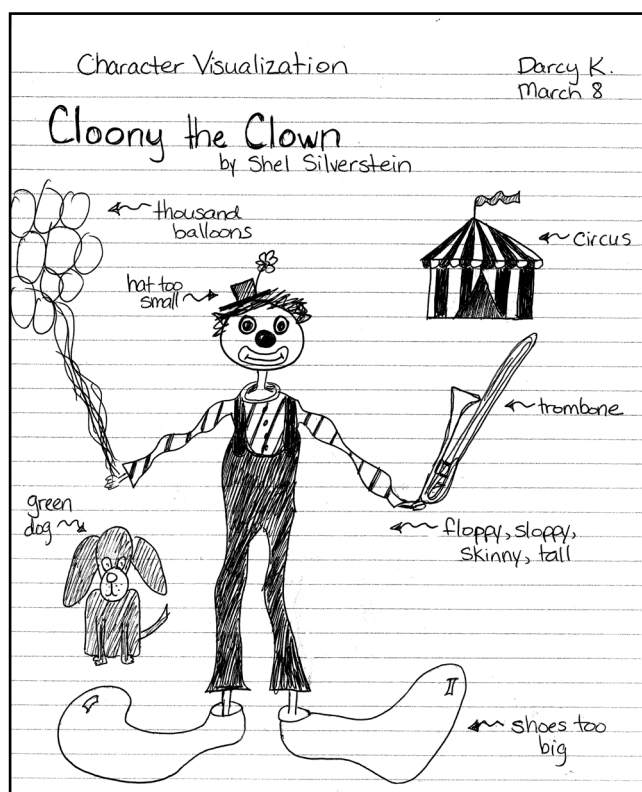
Figure 5.7 A sample character visualization

– Have them share their drawings with a partner.
– Display the drawings with the poem.
– Reread the poem a few days later and invite the students to add to or change their drawings.
– Provide time to discuss any changes, e.g., **"I added tomato sauce on her face because in the poem she eats all the time and I think she's a messy eater."**

As an extension to this activity, give each student a copy of the poem and help them to cut up the text and attach the lines to relevant parts of their drawings.

CONVENTIONS

Major Teaching Emphases

■ **Provide opportunities for students to develop and use new vocabulary.**

■ **Continue to build the bank of words students can automatically spell and use,** e.g., high-frequency words.

■ **Build students' knowledge about words and word parts,** e.g., plurals.

■ **Continue to build phonological awareness and graphophonic knowledge, such as**
  – **segmenting words into sounds**
  – **linking letters with their regular sounds**
  – **representing sounds heard in words with letters written in the order they are heard**
  – **recognizing that the same letter represents different sounds**

■ **Reinforce conventions of print.**

■ **Teach the use of commonly used punctuation,** e.g., question marks, exclamation marks.

■ **Teach the use of parts of speech,** e.g., nouns, verbs.

■ **Demonstrate the construction of sentences as units of meaning.**

■ **Model how to group information that is related to compose a text.**

■ **Begin to build students' knowledge about different text forms,** e.g., procedures instruct, procedures have steps.

Teaching Notes

The focus for supporting Experimental writers in this substrand is organized under the following headings:
• Developing Vocabulary
• Building Word Knowledge
• Developing Phonological Awareness and Graphophonic Knowledge
• Reinforcing Conventions of Print
• Understanding Conventions of Grammar
• Building Text-Form Knowledge

Developing Vocabulary

All students, when they arrive at school, already have an oral vocabulary based on the speech variety and experiences at home. Research has shown that vocabulary acquisition is crucial to academic development (Baker, Simmons, and Kameenui 1998), so it is important for teachers to ensure that Experimental writers have every opportunity to expand their vocabularies across a broad range of contexts and experiences.

Creating a rich language environment that includes reading aloud, reciting poems and rhymes, singing songs, and playing with language is a starting point for developing understandings about written language. Experimental writers can be supported in developing their vocabularies in the following ways:
- valuing and providing time for play and informal talk
- valuing existing speech variety if non-standard or in an additional language or dialect
- modelling the use of language in different contexts
- introducing subject-specific vocabulary across the curriculum, e.g., the language of mathematics
- providing experiences through activities outside the classroom, e.g., trips, and activities inside the classroom, e.g., manipulating materials, inviting guest speakers, or capitalizing on any impromptu events.
- discussing written words at every opportunity, pointing out the author's choice and why it is the best fit in the context
- involving students in meaningful word-play activities
- jointly constructing Word Walls featuring the words students are learning, e.g., high-frequency words
- providing opportunities for students to read and write for a range of purposes
- immersing students in a range of texts
- using a rich vocabulary in all contexts
- talking about talk
- developing language across all curriculum areas, e.g., mathematics and science

Building a bank of words that are automatically spelled and used

At all phases of development, students copy, recall, and try to spell words during independent writing. The bank of words that can be automatically spelled and used may include high-frequency words, personally significant words, topic or theme words, or signal words.

Exploring and using these words in reading, writing, and any cross-curriculum activities will help to reinforce their recognition and use. For some students, ongoing systematic instruction is essential to help them develop automaticity; for others, the repeated reading and writing of texts helps them develop the ability to spell a bank of words automatically.

It is important to help Experimental writers continue to develop a small bank of words that can be automatically spelled and used. Words include the following types.

High-frequency words
These occur frequently in written texts; sources include *Five Hundred Words Most Frequently Used in Children's Writing* (Gentry and Gillet 1993), *One Hundred High Frequency Words* (Fountas and Pinnell 1998), and *One Hundred Most Frequent Words in Writing* (Routman 2000).

Personally significant words
Significant to each student, these words include the names of friends, addresses, the school name, and the name of the town or city.

Building Word Knowledge

As students' understandings of graphophonics develop, it is also beneficial to extend their knowledge of words, word parts, and the way words work. By providing experiences that increase their word awareness, Experimental writers will begin to develop a broader understanding of the English spelling system.

During Modelled, Shared, and Interactive writing sessions with Experimental writers, teachers can model the use of the following:
• plural endings, e.g., s
• contractions, e.g., I'm, can't
• suffixes, e.g., ing, ed
• homophones, e.g., to, two, too
• compound words, e.g., sunshine, butterfly

Developing Phonological Awareness and Graphophonic Knowledge

Phonological awareness is the ability to hear, combine, and manipulate the different sound units of spoken words. Types of awareness include the following:

- word awareness: spoken language is made up of words; words are representations of objects (chair), emotions (love), and concepts (height); words can rhyme.
- syllable awareness: some words have a single syllable and others have more than one.
- onset and rime awareness: words with a single syllable are made up of onsets and rimes.
- phonemic awareness: words are made up of individual sounds, or phonemes.

When developing phonemic awareness, the following progression may be considered.

- isolation of individual phonemes: through alliteration, position (first, last), generating words with a given sound
- phoneme blending: through putting sounds together to form words, using individual phonemes (c a t), or onset and rime (c at)
- phoneme segmenting: through isolating sounds, hearing and counting sounds in words, producing sounds
- phoneme manipulation: through adding, deleting, or substituting sounds

> An awareness of onset and rime can help students spell by analogy. For example, if the word *book* is familiar, they may be able to determine how to correctly spell *cook*, *look*, and *took*.

Graphophonic knowledge is the understanding of sound–symbol relationships as they apply to the alphabetic principle of written language. Experimental writers can be introduced to the following graphophonic understanding:

> A letter has a name and represents different sounds in words: e.g., This is the letter "g" and it represents different sounds in "gate" and "giraffe."

Reinforcing Conventions of Print

In this phase, it is important to continue to draw students' attention to the conventions of written language. Modelled, Shared, and Guided Reading and Writing provide a springboard for exploring many of these conventions.

Experimental writers need to understand the following conventions of print:

- In English, print is written from left to right and from top to bottom.
- Print and pictures are different, but often work together.
- The concepts of first and last can be applied to letters in a word or words on a page.
- A word is a unit of print with space on either side.
- A word consists of letters, as opposed to digits.
- There is a match between spoken and written words.

- Terms such as *letter*, *sound*, *word*, and *sentence* constitute different concepts.
- Digits and letters are different.
- There are two versions of letters: upper case and lower case.
- There are a variety of fonts used in texts, but the alphabet remains constant.
- There is not always a 1:1 match between letter sounds and printed letters.
- Punctuation is used in written text.

Understanding Conventions of Grammar

At all phases of development, it is important that students are exposed to good examples of texts so that attention can be drawn to the conventions of grammar. These include conventions associated with punctuation, parts of language, sentence structure, and overall text construction. It is important that these conventions be introduced, revisited, and practised in meaningful contexts. Modelled and Shared Reading and Writing provide a springboard for exploring many of these conventions.

Punctuation and parts of speech

It is beneficial for Experimental writers to be able to use, talk about, and understand
- punctuation marks, e.g., question marks, exclamation marks
- parts of speech, e.g., nouns, verbs
- functions of parts of speech, e.g., words used to mark questions, such as who, when, what, why

Constructing sentences

It is important to continue to provide many models of how to construct simple sentences. Discuss with students how a sentence is structured. Highlight the following understandings and associated metalanguage.
- A sentence is a group of words that together make sense.
- A sentence must contain at least one thought or idea.
- A sentence must have a subject and a verb.
- A question differs from a statement.

Building Text-Form Knowledge

Building students' knowledge about text forms helps them begin to create a range of texts and to understand the purpose of those texts. Students benefit from reading different examples of the same text form, making comparisons, and identifying defining features.

Modelled, Shared, and Guided Reading and Writing sessions provide opportunities for Experimental writers to build their knowledge of the organization of a range of text forms.

Knowledge about text forms includes understanding the purpose, organization, structure, and language features of a particular form. The focus for Experimental writers includes the following.

Purpose

All texts are written and read for a reason. The purpose may be to entertain or evoke thought, as in most literary texts, or to explain, describe, or inquire, as in some informational texts. Understanding the purpose of a writing event will help students make decisions about text organization (physical framework and features), structure, and language.

Students need to be exposed to a range of texts written for a variety of purposes. Experimental writers should be encouraged to create texts for a range of purposes. For a list of text forms related to purposes, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1.

Text organization

Text organization refers to the way a text is organized—the framework and features. Experimental writers will benefit from understanding text-form frameworks; for example, an e-mail may include a subject line, a message, and a closing greeting.

Experimental writers can be introduced to the function, terminology, and use of a range of organizational, or text, features, such as
• headings
• captions
• diagrams and other visual aids (photographs, graphs, tables, cross-sections)
• bold or italicized words

They can be encouraged to begin experimenting with the use of simple organizational features in their own texts. For a list of further organizational features in different texts, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1.

For further information about the Conventions substrand see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition:
• Chapter 3: Conventions
• Chapter 1: Use of Texts

Involving Students

1 Word Walls

A Word Wall is a designated space in the classroom devoted to displaying words. As words are discovered, introduced, and discussed, a Word Wall is jointly constructed with the students; words can be sorted according to the current teaching focus. For Experimental writers, students' names can provide a springboard for analyzing many other words (see Figure 5.8).

– Jointly create the Word Wall. Begin by displaying enlarged letters of the alphabet (both upper and lower case).
– Add students' names one at a time, pointing out distinctive features, e.g., letter patterns, number of syllables.
– Add other words as they are discovered or introduced, e.g., high-frequency words, days of the week.
– Jointly work with students to sort words in various ways, e.g., by beginning sounds, letter patterns.
– Read, refer to, and use the words on the Word Wall during daily print walks, when modelling, and during all writing activities.
– Encourage students to use the Word Wall as a resource when they are writing.

Our Word Wall

Dd	Ee	Ff
David	Evelyn	friend
Denise	egg	fire
dog		

Figure 5.8

2 Word-Sorting Activities

Word-sorting activities develop students' ability to identify and categorize words according to selected criteria. These activities provide an excellent opportunity for Experimental writers to interact with words and letter combinations in a problem-solving context. Word-sorting activities can be used to develop vocabulary, phonological awareness, graphophonic understandings, spelling generalizations, and an understanding of parts of speech.

Word-sorting activities can be organized in a range of ways.
- *Closed sorts* use criteria chosen by the teacher.
- *Open sorts* require the students to choose the criteria.
- *Guess my sort* involves an individual, a group, or the teacher sorting the words and another group deducing the criteria.

Word-sorting activities can be completed using individual word cards provided in envelopes, words on overhead transparencies and an overhead projector, or physical sorting, where students move around the room holding word cards.

Experimental writers can be involved in a range of word-sorting activities.
- *Beginning/final-letter sorts* focus attention on beginning or final letters, e.g., words that that begin/end with the letter "n."
- *Number-of-letter sorts* focus attention on the length of words.
- *Sound sorts* focus attention on the different sounds a single letter can represent, e.g., sorting "g" words by the sounds it represents.
- *Letter-pattern sorts* focus attention on words that have or don't have a particular letter pattern, e.g., sorting into words that have "ea" and those that don't.
- *Number-of-syllable sorts* focus attention on the number of syllables in a word, e.g., words with one or two syllables.
- *Spelling-generalization sorts* focus attention on specific aspects of spelling, e.g., plurals, contractions, compound words.

Physical word sorting involves students moving around the classroom holding word cards.

– Provide each student with a word on a large card.
– Instruct students to move around the room looking for other students' words that match theirs in some way. Students with matching words form a group.
– At the conclusion of the whole-class sort, ask students to stay in the groups they formed. Each group is then asked to hold up their cards and either explain why they are together or ask other class members to guess the sorting criterion.

3 Magic Words

Magic Words (Hoyt 2000) is an activity that provides an opportunity for students to identify high-frequency words or to focus on parts of words—for example, beginning letters, or suffixes such as *s* and *es*. The use of a familiar text projected onto a wall with an overhead or data projector is the context for Magic Words. Students use a

piece of card and "magic" to isolate selected letters or words from a whole text.

- Read and reread a text with the whole class.
- Select a piece of the text to be copied so it can be projected onto a wall or screen.
- Select a criterion for the magic words, e.g., **I am looking for a word starting with "st."**
- Demonstrate how to lift words from the screen by using a piece of white card. Place the card on the selected word, ensuring it fits the word. Slowly move the card away from the screen, isolating the selected word. As if by magic, the word is now floating on the white card.
- Have students examine the magic word to decide if it fits the criterion.
- Allow them time to take turns lifting words with the identified criteria. They could find
  - words in which a letter represents different sounds
  - words that start or finish with a particular letter
  - words that have a particular onset, rime, or number of syllables
  - punctuation marks

4 Sound Hunter

Refer to Chapter 4: Role Play Writing Phase, pages 76–77.

5 Secret Messages

Secret Messages is an activity that provides students with the opportunity to decode messages (see Figure 5.9). The messages can be created with a focus on graphophonic understandings, vocabulary, and high-frequency words being introduced at the time.

Experimental writers will find it easier to decipher messages that use a combination of words and pictures. The types of clues provided in one message may vary; however, it is appropriate to limit the variation when students are first working with Secret Messages. The types of clues used might include

- removing a consonant from the beginning or end of a word, e.g., **take "h" from "hat"**
- replacing a consonant at the beginning or end of a word, e.g., **take "b" from "bake," add "t" in its place**
- removing a consonant or consonant cluster from a word and blending a new one in its place, e.g., **take "mp" from "lamp," add "st"**
- finding a small word within a word, e.g., **find a three-letter word in "hand"**

- joining two words to form a compound word, e.g., add "shine" to "sun"
- using an alphabet sequence for short words, e.g., the letter before "b"

Modelling the process and collaboratively solving secret messages is critical at this phase.

– Think of a simple sentence or message, e.g., Take out your book.
– Write a series of clues that will enable students to decode the message.
– Ensure that students have access to a copy of the alphabet.
– Work with them to jointly decipher the message.
– Keep a copy of all activities to build a permanent collection for future use.

Secret Message

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	Take *m* from *make* and add *t*.	[take]
2	Take *sh* from *shout*.	[out]
3	Take *f* from four and add *y*.	[your]
4	Sounds like *look* but starts with *b*.	[book]

Message: Take out your book.

Figure 5.9

6 Elkonin Boxes

Refer to Chapter 4: Role Play Writing Phase, pages 75–76.

7 Alphabet Books

Creating class alphabet books allows Experimental writers to develop new vocabulary and make connections between letter names and their regular sounds (see Figure 5.10). Alphabet books can be used as a resource when students are writing.

> Canadian alphabet books include *M Is for Maple* by Mike Ulmer, *Eh? to Zed* by Kevin Major, and *A Canadian ABC* by Lyn Cook.

– Display, share, and read aloud several alphabet books.
– Discuss what information is included—e.g., the letter name, an illustration, a word beginning with the letter—and how the information is laid out.
– Explain that the class will jointly construct an alphabet book, using the school as a theme.
– For each letter of the alphabet, have students brainstorm names of people, places, and events related to the school.
– With the class, decide what the alphabet book will look like and which word will be used for each letter.

– Have each student choose a partner and a letter to work with. Provide time for each pair to create their page on the computer. Help them to create a sentence using the word.
– Print off the completed pages and compile them into a class book or wall display.
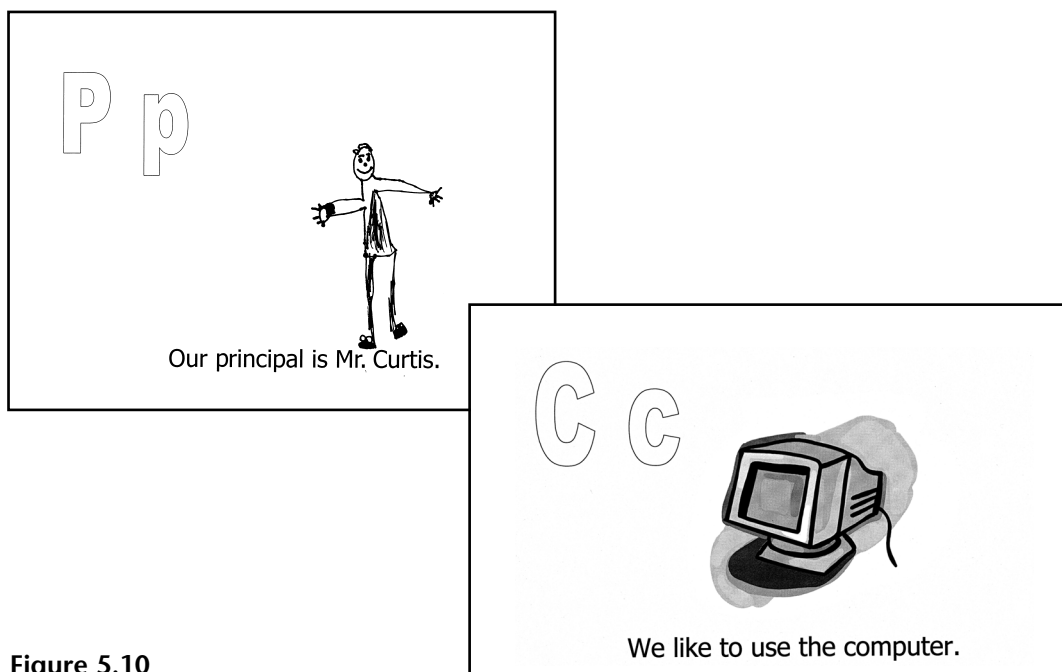
Figure 5.10

8 Exploring Words

Exploring Words is an open-ended activity that provides students with the opportunity to work at their own level to create words. It will help students build their knowledge of spelling generalizations and letter combinations (see Figure 5.11).

– Provide students with a central focus letter or letters, e.g., "o," "in."
– Also provide a selection of letters and letter combinations that could be added to the central focus letters to create words.
– Provide guidelines about the creation of words, e.g., a letter can be used only once in a word; letters can be added to the beginning or end of central focus letters.
– Challenge students to combine the central focus letters with the other letters to create as many words as possible in a given time.
– Provide time to share words and to reflect upon common patterns in the list of words.
– During writing sessions, encourage students to use the words they have created.

Figure 5.11

Words I made:
Cot rod mop dot stop tod

Words I made:
hat that mat bat pat cat
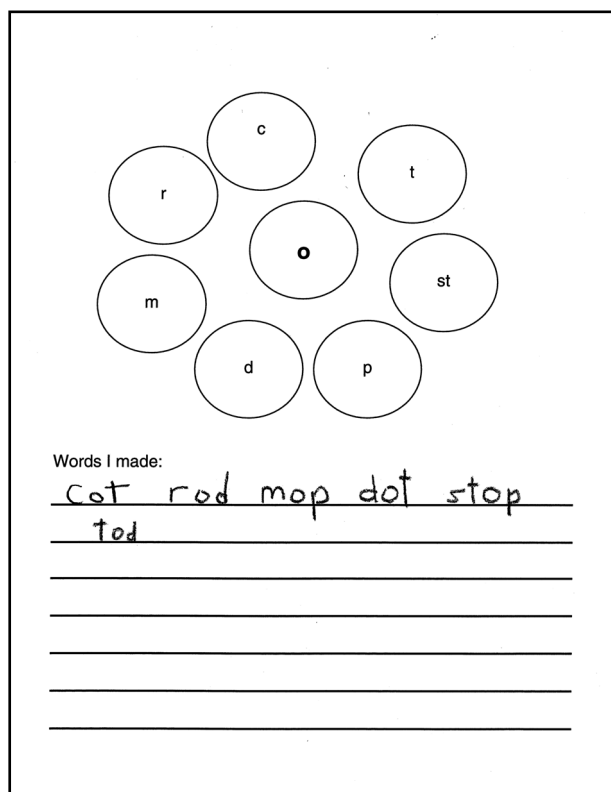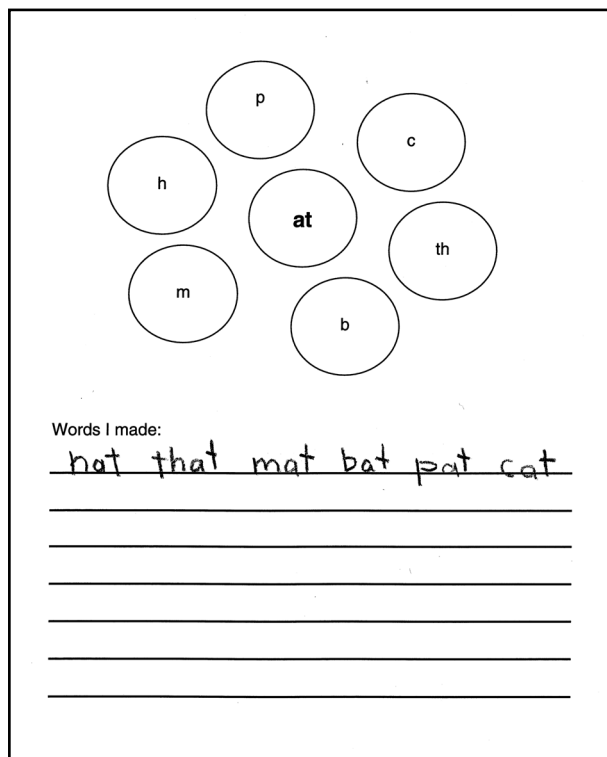
9 Sentence Reconstruction

Involving Experimental writers in activities where they reconstruct sentences helps to develop their understanding of a sentence as a unit of meaning. The cut-and-paste function on the word processor is an invaluable tool for this activity.

– Write a simple sentence (or sentences) on a sentence strip, chalkboard, chart paper, or whiteboard, e.g., Ross went to see a movie.
– Read the sentences together with the students.
– Print each word, phrase, or sentence on a separate piece of card and make punctuation cards.
– Ask some students to use the cards to reconstruct the sentence. Discuss the order of the words and the use of punctuation.
– Have the rest of the students read the sentence to check that it is in the correct order.
– Consider alternative reconstructions.
– Leave the individual cards and the sentence strip in an accessible place for students to reconstruct at other times.

10 Yesterday and Today

Students will benefit from activities in which they see and hear sentences transformed from present tense to past tense, or vice versa. Students can be challenged to transform sentences in a range of ways using a simple yesterday/today framework.

– Provide students with a simple sentence, e.g., **I am walking to the beach.**
– Challenge them to change the sentence to past tense, e.g., **Yesterday I walked to the beach.**
– Discuss words that changed, e.g., **"walking" to "walked,"** and their function in each sentence.

11 Sentence Expansion

Sentence-expansion activities help students learn how to add words and details to existing sentences (see Figure 5.12).

– Write a simple sentence on a sentence strip, e.g., **Ross went to see a movie.**
– Read the sentence together.
– Cut the strip into separate words, being sure to make any needed punctuation cards.
– To elicit further detail, ask students specific questions related to the sentence, e.g., **When did Ross see the movie?**
– Write words that provide new information on separate cards.
– Show students how the additional information can be added to make a more detailed sentence.

| Ross | went | to | see | a | **funny** | movie | **last** | **night** | . |
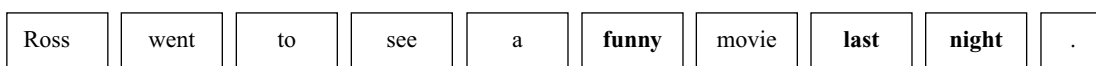
Figure 5.12

12 Chain Writing

Chain Writing is the name given to the gradual expansion of a sentence. Chain Writing helps to develop writers' understanding of a sentence as a unit of meaning and to enrich their vocabularies.

– Select a word related to a topic that the class is exploring, e.g., frogs.
– Have students suggest words that describe frogs. Record these words.

slimy

green   FROGS

slippery

– Ask students what frogs do, and create a list of the suggestions.

slimy		croak
green	FROGS	jump
slippery		swim

– Encourage students to combine any of the words to create sentences. Read their sentences together.

Slimy frogs jump.

Slippery frogs croak.

– Ask students where frogs do these things, and create a new list.

Slimy		croak	in the river.
Green	FROGS	jump	outside my cottage bedroom window.
Slippery		swim	under the bushes.

– Have students orally combine words and phrases to create different sentences and share their sentences with the class.
– Encourage each student to write a favourite sentence, selecting from the brainstormed words and phrases.

The sentences can be illustrated and combined into a class book about frogs.

Extension

To continue the sentence expansion, ask other questions, such as these:

• When do frogs do these things?
• Why do frogs do these things?

13 Physical Sentence Construction

Physical sentence construction is an extension of Chain Writing. Brainstormed words are written on individual cards and are used to

physically create new sentences. Each student becomes responsible for one word, and students work together to arrange themselves into a sentence that makes sense.

– Select a sentence that relates to a current topic or theme, or one from a previous Chain Writing activity.
– Write each word of the sentence on a separate card. Remember to include any needed punctuation cards.
– Distribute the cards to individual students.
– Invite these students to physically arrange themselves as a sentence.
– Have the remaining students read the sentence and decide if it is complete and ordered correctly. Discuss the need for a capital letter to begin the sentence. (The capital letter can be added as a sticky note or the word can be written on both sides of the card using upper and lower case beginning letters.)

Extensions
– Have students suggest other words that could be added to the sentence, e.g., **adjectives, adverbs**. Write their suggestions on sticky notes and invite a student to put them in the sentence in the appropriate places. Invite the class to read the new sentence to ensure it still makes sense.
– Provide opportunities for those students who have the cards to rearrange themselves and make another sentence. Read the new sentence as a whole class to ensure it still makes sense.

14 Sentence Frames

Sentence Frames can be used with Experimental writers to analyze and develop an understanding of simple sentence structures. They can also be used to introduce and teach commonly used parts of speech.

– Introduce students to a simple sentence structure. Any of the following would be appropriate for Experimental writers.
  – I like _____.
  – I see a _____.
  – I can _____.
  – Look at the _____.
  – _____ are big.
  – _____ are small.
  – A _____ is red/yellow/blue.
  – _____, _____ who do you see? I see _____ looking at me.

The *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM provides line masters for the first six sentence structures given, as well as a general line master, "Sentence Frames: Create Your Own."

– Create a series of sentences using the selected structure.
– Brainstorm words to complete the repetitive sentences and record students' suggestions, e.g., I like apples, I like flowers, I like swimming.
– Read the sentences with the students.
– Provide students with a booklet containing the same sentence structure and invite individuals to complete the sentences by filling in the blanks. Students can illustrate their sentences.

15 Punctuation Effects

Punctuation Effects provides students with an opportunity to practise the use of various punctuation marks and note how these affect the meaning of sentences (see Figure 5.13). It is important for students to develop an understanding of the use of punctuation, as it can alter the meaning of simply constructed sentences.

– Create cards showing punctuation marks and known sight words, including students' names.
– Jointly create simple sentences.
– Jointly add different punctuation marks to the sentences. Have students read the sentences and discuss the effect of the punctuation marks on the meaning.

Tania	can	swim	.
Can	Tania	swim	?
Tania	can	swim	!

Figure 5.13

16 Generic Games

Refer to Chapter 4: Role Play Writing Phase, pages 80–83.

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES

Major Teaching Emphases

- **Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge,** e.g., word order, text organization.

- **Continue to teach strategies used throughout the writing process,** e.g., self-questioning.

- **Continue to teach spelling strategies,** e.g., chunking.

- **Model simple ways to plan for writing,** e.g., talking, drawing.

- **Model simple ways to edit and proofread,** e.g., adding words or punctuation.

- **Continue to model simple publishing alternatives, highlighting purpose.**

- **Model how to find, record, and organize information from texts,** e.g., alphabetical order, simple retrieval chart.

- **Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.**

Organization of the Processes and Strategies Substrand

There are several differences in the organization of the Processes and Strategies substrand. Both the Teaching Notes and the Teaching and Learning Experiences (Involving Students) are in *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 4: Processes and Strategies.

The rationale for these differences is that the processes and strategies of spelling and writing are not conceptually hierarchical and therefore not phase specific. In all phases, a variety of writing processes and strategies need to be introduced, developed, and consolidated.

What varies from one phase to the next is the growth in
- the number and integration of strategies used throughout the processes of writing
- the awareness and monitoring of writing processes
- the efficiency in use of the processes of writing
- the ability to articulate the use of the strategies used in the processes of writing
- the awareness of how the use of processes helps with composing texts

Supporting Experimental Writers in the Home

Experimental writers know that speech can be written down; however, they may not always read their writing the same way every time. Often, they will try writing texts they are familiar with, such as letters, recipes, and lists. These writers may represent words using one, two, or three letters, as in "PRT—party." Experimental writers know that there is a purpose for writing and can identify their audience, as in "I am writing a letter to Grandma to say thank you for…"

Experimental writers will benefit from a range of experiences in the home setting. Ideas for providing appropriate experiences are available on Parent Cards located on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM. Teachers can select appropriate cards for each Experimental writer and copy them for parents or guardians to use at home.

Parent Cards

1 Experimental Writers: How to Support	**2** Encouraging Writing
3 Writing with Your Child	**4** Writing and Reading Links
5 Developing Writing Through Play	**6** Developing Understandings About Letters, Words, and Sentences
7 Developing Understandings About Different Types of Writing	**8** Developing Vocabulary
9 Supporting Spelling	**10** Building Word Knowledge Through Games

Available on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM is a parent-friendly version of the Writing Map of Development.

Early Writing Phase

Cats

Cats have fun.

Cats have whiskers on their faces.

Cats are mammals.

Cats live in houses or outside.

Cats chase birds and mice.

Cats like to sleep a lot.

Cats are lots of colours.

Dear Suzie,

I am very excited to be your pen pal. My name is Darlene. Have you ever been to Canada? Our flag looks like this: ◼ ← red

I have brown hair. I look like my mom and my sister. Do you have a brother or a sister? My sister's name's Debora. We are visiting Prince Edward Island this summer and I am excitted to go to the beaches.
I have to go eat dinner now. Please write soon.
Bye! From Darlene

I went to high park. It was fun. My Mom took me to the zoo part. The peacocks were my favourit. I watched them for a long time. My Mom said we had to go so we did.
Ravi

Figure 6.1

Global Statement

Early writers produce a small range of texts that exhibit some of the conventions of writing. Texts, such as retellings, reports, and e-mails, 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.

Early Writing Indicators

Use of Texts

◆ **Attempts a small range of familiar texts, either teacher-directed or self-selected**
◆ **With assistance, finds information in texts and records it through drawing or writing key words**
• Often writes a simple recount of personal events
• Writes simple factual accounts with little elaboration
• Rewrites known stories in sequence
• May include irrelevant detail in written texts
• Innovates on familiar sentence and text patterns
• Chooses topics that are personally significant
• Uses rhyme, rhythm, and repetition in writing
• Attempts to transfer knowledge of text organization to writing, e.g., includes headings/diagrams in a report
• Begins to show evidence of voice
• Uses the metalanguage associated with writing, e.g., recount, edit, plan

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
• Attempts to orient or create a context for the reader, but may assume a shared context
• Explains how writing enables people to communicate over time and distance
• Initiates writing as a social practice, e.g., notes, messages
• Recognizes simple devices that authors and illustrators use to influence readers

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**
• Discusses word formations and meaning, noticing similarities and differences
• Transfers to writing words encountered in speaking and listening, viewing, or reading

• Is beginning to use "book" language where appropriate, e.g., Once upon a time...
• Links ideas using conjunctions, e.g., and, then
• Experiments with a variety of sentence beginnings
• Experiments with the use of dialogue
• Attempts to use varied punctuation, e.g., exclamation marks, questions marks, commas
• May overgeneralize the use of print conventions, e.g., overuse of apostrophes
• Often writes in the first person

Processes and Strategies

◆ **Draws upon semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge when writing,** e.g., text organization, 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 edit and proofread own writing when directed,** e.g., deleting words, adding punctuation
◆ **Creates a published text that is beginning to reflect the intended purpose**
• Chooses letters on the basis of sound without regard for conventional spelling patterns, e.g., kaj (cage), pepl (people)
• Uses self-formulated rules for spelling particular sounds
• Sounds out and represents all substantial sounds in a word
• Represents past tense in different ways according to the sounds heard, e.g., stopt
• Uses some known letter patterns in words, e.g., ing, sh
• Experiments with spelling words in different ways
• Identifies and uses knowledge of similar-sounding words to spell
• Shares ideas for writing with peer or teacher
• Participates in group brainstorming activities to elicit ideas before writing
• Identifies possible spelling errors after completing writing
• Responds to requests for elaboration or clarification of written ideas
• Reads back own writing to clarify meaning
• Experiments with various ways to publish texts, e.g., word processor, audiotape, videotape

Note: The terms write *and* writing *encompass the use of traditional tools, such as pen and paper, as well as the use of electronic tools such as computers or cell phones.*

The term texts *refers to both literary and informational texts and includes visual, spoken, or written texts. These may be print, electronic, live, or multimodal.*

Major Teaching Emphases

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 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, emphasizing
  - purpose, e.g., reports describe
  - text structure, e.g., reports list details
  - text organization, 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 editing and proofreading to refine their writing.
- Continue to model a variety of publishing alternatives, highlighting the purpose and audience.
- Teach students how to find, record, and organize 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.

Teaching and Learning Experiences

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTITUDE

Major Teaching Emphases

- **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.**

Teaching Notes

A classroom community that supports and nurtures Early writers is one that promotes experimentation, problem solving, and sharing to help build and refine students' knowledge about written language. It is important for Early writers to see writing as an enjoyable experience and to see themselves as successful writers. The focus for developing both a positive environment and attitudes towards writing is organized under the following headings:
- Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment
- Fostering Enjoyment of Writing
- Encouraging Experimentation
- Writing as a Social Practice

Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment

A supportive environment is an environment in which both the physical and cultural aspects of the classroom are considered. In a positive classroom climate, students have opportunities to use and combine print, oral, visual, and digital processes. These opportunities contribute to students' willingness and eagerness to write.

Physical environment

Classroom print creates an excellent context for Early writers to extend their knowledge about how letters, words, sentences, and texts work. Early writers benefit from opportunities to explore and

interact with print in authentic, purposeful ways. A jointly constructed, print-rich environment also helps students understand that print has a range of functions, and students can begin to transfer these understandings into their own writing.

- *Labels and captions* can be jointly created for displays of work and for functional use. Ensure that labelling of classroom items is both functional and meaningful, e.g., **Use this computer to publish your writing.**

- *Messages* can be jointly created and sent. This reinforces to students the fact that writing has an authentic purpose and audience beyond the classroom.

- *Songs, poems, and chants* can be written on charts as part of Modelled and Shared Writing sessions; they can be a source of words during independent writing.

- *Word Banks and Word Walls* can be jointly created and may include the names of students in the class, other significant people within the community, and frequently used words. These words can be used as a reference for Early writers during independent writing.

- *Charts* that are jointly constructed are a great way to record any discoveries students make. These "living," or anchor, charts are cumulative in that they are added to as new understandings evolve, e.g., **We Found These Ways to Spell /e/ as in me.** Students can use the charts as sources of words when writing,

- A *writing centre* provides students with an opportunity to practise and consolidate their understandings about writing. Provide a variety of items for students to use, such as coloured paper, pencils, computer software packages, and picture or electronic dictionaries. Suggestions for writing or links to suitable writing Web sites may provide the stimulus and motivation to write. A display board located in this area can be used to display students' completed work.

- A *word-study centre* provides a stimulus for students to develop an interest in words and promotes inquiry into how letters and words work. It can contain letter tiles and boards, pocket charts with word cards, dictionaries, a thesaurus, word games, or crossword puzzles. Electronic word games from the Internet, such as Scrabble, will also encourage students to learn about words.

- A *reading centre* provides a relaxed, informal area for independent reading. A wide range of texts can be made available in the reading centre; they may include dictionaries, atlases, posters, informational texts, magazines, newspapers, comics, class-made texts, interactive CD-ROMs, lists of suitable Web sites, and book and tape sets.

Although it is important that the classroom displays a variety of environmental print, it is also essential that students have ownership of the print, know how to interact with it, and make use of it for different purposes.

- Model the use of charts during Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing, e.g., **"How do I work out this word? Look at the charts. Which one would be the best to use?"**
- Provide opportunities for students to discuss literacy discoveries they are making.
- Take students on a print walk around the class so that they have the opportunity to read and revisit charts they have contributed to. They will gain an opportunity to practise words they have learned or to play games, such as matching words or phrases.
- As students independently create texts, encourage them to continually make use of classroom print as a source of words and correct spelling.
- Model a range of ICT tools used when creating texts, if possible.
- Display and discuss texts written and provided by other family members, e.g., **grandmothers, elders, siblings.**

Classroom culture

As well as providing appropriate materials and a carefully planned physical environment, it is important to consider how to create a positive classroom culture where students see learning to write as useful and worthwhile.

- Allocate uninterrupted blocks of time for writing.
- Provide genuine purposes and audiences for writing.
- Have high expectations of all students.
- Provide opportunities for students to select, within given parameters, their own topics, ways to plan, and text product types.
- Provide a range of ICT resources for students to use to create texts.
- Ensure that students have a clear sense of what is expected.
- Allow time for students to share their writing with others.
- Value writing, and convey this attitude to students.
- Provide specific, criteria-based feedback to students about their writing.
- Display students' writing.
- Establish, teach, and reinforce procedures for solving challenges during writing, e.g., **can't spell a word.**
- Provide opportunities for students to discuss and evaluate their own work.
- Incorporate purposeful writing into all curriculum areas.

> See page 7 of this resource for a range of text product types, or formats for publishing.

Fostering Enjoyment of Writing

Foster students' enjoyment of writing in a range of ways.
- Provide time each day for all students to write for real audiences and compelling purposes.
- Read to students every day to introduce and discuss a variety of text forms.
- Involve students in Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions regularly.
- If possible, provide opportunities for students to use a range of ICT resources to combine print, images, and sounds, e.g., computers, software programs, interactive whiteboards, digital cameras.
- Provide opportunities for students to share and discuss their writing with peers and other significant people.
- Encourage family members to respond to their child's writing.
- Allow time for students to provide feedback to peers, e.g., Author's Chair.
- Ensure that there is a wide selection of publishing options readily available for students to choose from, e.g., access to the computer, poster paper.
- Provide ongoing, targeted feedback and encouragement.
- Create a comfortable physical environment that promotes independent writing.
- Provide multiple demonstrations of the strategies effective writers use.
- Allow students to share their completed writing in a variety of contexts, e.g., read at assembly, display on the noticeboard, post on a Web site.
- Create well-organized, consistent routines for writing about learning experiences.
- Organize visits by authors to speak about their writing and how they go about writing.
- Encourage and organize visits to school and local libraries so that students are exposed to a wide variety of text forms.
- Make available texts that have been created during Modelled, Shared, and Interactive Writing sessions.
- Provide opportunities for students to practise writing using computer software, WebQuests, or special Web sites.

Encouraging Experimentation

It is important for Early writers to feel confident about using written language across a range of contexts. They should be

encouraged to reflect on ways to improve in selected focus areas
and to experiment with all aspects of writing.

You can achieve this by inviting students to
• use a variety of strategies when writing
• write a variety of texts for real purposes
• choose their own topics
• use a variety of spelling strategies when attempting unknown
  words
• extend their vocabularies by solving word puzzles, completing
  crosswords, playing word games
• offer opinions about texts read, heard, or written
• discuss their writing and the discoveries they have made
• experiment with technology to create multimodal texts
• experiment with colour, font size, style, animation, and special
  effects when using presentation software packages

Writing as a Social Practice

The focus when teaching writing in the classroom is to provide
many real-world situations that require the use of written language.
The ultimate goal is for students to function in society as literate
individuals who can use writing to communicate their ideas, share
information, stimulate thinking, encourage self-understanding,
formulate questions, and influence policy and action.

Early writers need to develop the understanding that writing is a
way to get things done and evoke a response from other people, for
example, a note asking the school caretaker to repair a broken chair
or invitations to friends to come to a party. Provide opportunities
for Early writers to share and discuss examples where writing has
been used in this way.

For further information about Environment and Attitude, see
Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning, Chapter 5: Establishing
a Positive Teaching and Learning Environment.

USE OF TEXTS

Teaching Notes

The focus for supporting Early writers in this substrand is organized under the following headings:
• Exposure to a Range of Text Forms
• Opportunities to Create a Range of Texts
• Crafting Voice and Individual Style
• Developing Metalanguage

Exposure to a Range of Text Forms

Early writers will benefit from ongoing opportunities to discuss and interact with a variety of literary and informational texts; these texts can be made available for students to independently read and discuss. Texts should be selected from all areas of the curriculum and also reflect texts used in the community. They could be multimodal, class-made, or published materials presented in a range of text product types, such as books, Web sites, e-mails, faxes, CD-ROMs, or software programs.

During Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions, show students how successful writers write in a range of text forms for different purposes, including these:
• to entertain, e.g., poems, jokes, cartoons
• to recount, e.g., journals, retellings
• to describe, e.g., contents pages, simple reports, labels
• to socialize, e.g., SMS (Short Messaging Service) messages, e-mails, invitations
• to explain, e.g., classroom rules, tables
• to instruct, e.g., directions, road signs, rules

- to inquire, e.g., interview questions
- to persuade, e.g., brochures, catalogues

Opportunities to Create a Range of Texts

Early writers continue to benefit from an environment that provides opportunities to create a range of texts in meaningful situations and for real purposes. Students can be supported in working independently and encouraged to tackle new challenges.

Modelled, Shared, and Interactive Writing sessions provide opportunities to demonstrate both the processes and the products of writing. Students will benefit from seeing how different texts are planned and constructed; with teachers, they can continue to jointly construct a range of texts. Many aspects of writing can be demonstrated and discussed, including any of the following:
- selecting different text forms for different purposes and audiences
- identifying the audience
- choosing a topic
- selecting information to be included in the text or in each paragraph
- choosing appropriate language
- organizing the information
- making use of headings, subheadings, diagrams, and graphs
- planning, revising, editing, proofreading, and publishing writing

Guided Writing, Independent Writing, and writing in other curriculum areas provide opportunities for Early writers to practise applying text forms that have been taught. Students also need opportunities for personal-choice writing. During this time they may choose to practise recently learned text forms and to write as a means of self-expression.

Understandings about writing are closely linked to understandings about reading. Early writers will continue to learn much about written language through varied reading experiences; familiarize them with different text forms during Modelled, Shared, and Guided Reading sessions. Collecting, reading, displaying, and analyzing samples of different forms of text will help prepare students to confidently create a variety of texts.

Crafting Voice and Individual Style

Many things, including a writer's purpose, world view, multiple identities, and culture, influence voice within text. Voice in writing is defined in several ways.

Writing words that will make readers listen and be affected.
—Tom Romano, 2004

Voice is the imprint of ourselves on our writing.
—Donald Graves, 1994

Voice in writing has to do with a unique personality-on-paper.
—Ralph Fletcher, 1993

At this phase, it is important to help students understand the concept of voice and to encourage them to use it in their writing. You can do this in a range of ways.

• Show and discuss examples of sentences, passages, or entire texts that demonstrate voice.
• Share samples of students' writing that have a strong sense of voice.
• Compare the voice in written passages. Discuss how they differ.
• Discuss how the author's voice keeps the reader interested.
• Read several books by one author and identify the voice, e.g., the style and word choice.
• Model how voice can be created in writing, e.g., adding personal thoughts or feelings, using surprise or humour.
• Model how particular words and phrases can be changed to add voice.
• Have students return to journal entries and identify examples where their voice is strong.
• Provide opportunities for students to write about topics they find personally important.

Developing Metalanguage

Students need to be supported in building a vocabulary that they can use to discuss and describe language, their own writing, and the writing process. The vocabulary used to talk about language is known as *metalanguage*, and when students are able to use it to talk competently about their own writing and learning, it helps them to understand how language operates. Developing metalanguage also helps students to understand the support and feedback provided by teachers.

To help Early writers continue to expand and use terms associated with writing and written language, it is important to use metalanguage as part of everyday teaching: across curriculum areas, as part of targeted discussions, during explicit demonstrations, during one-on-one conversations with students, or as part of planned Modelled, Shared, Interactive, or Guided Writing sessions.

Certain terms tend to be more prominent when focusing on different substrands of writing. For example, when working with Early writers, consider the use of the following terms:
• Use of Texts: index, glossary, explanation
• Contextual Understanding: purpose, audience, fact, opinion, device, perspective
• Conventions: antonym, compound word, punctuation, signal words, structure
• Processes and Strategies: editing, proofreading, mnemonic, plan, refine

> For further information about the Use of Texts substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition:
> • Chapter 1: Use of Texts
> • Chapter 4: Processes and Strategies

Involving Students

1 Promoting Independent Writing

Early writers benefit from many opportunities to write for authentic purposes and audiences. Meaningful writing contexts that encourage Early writers to independently create texts include any of the following:
• writing reminder notes and messages for themselves, their parents, or the class, e.g., an invitation to a community member to speak at a school assembly, a reminder note to bring a library book
• creating labels for displays, e.g., Look at Our Clever Artwork
• keeping a diary or reflective journal
• writing a postcard about a school event
• writing e-mails to each other and other classes
• creating signs for the classroom
• creating captions and text about digital photographs taken during a class trip
• writing a monthly newsletter for parents
• creating speeches for school or class assemblies
• contributing to the school newsletter
• writing book reviews for a local bookstore

2 Writingo

Writingo is a writing-incentive scheme that encourages students to create a variety of text forms. A grid, kept in a Writing Journal, sets out a number of examples of different forms; as a student writes an

Use of Texts
Involving Students
1 Promoting Independent Writing
2 Writingo
3 Six-Line Poetry
4 Contact an Author
5 Explorer's Circle
6 Text Diagrams
7 Retelling from the Heart
8 Read and Retell
9 Guess the Author
10 My Authority List
11 E-mail Exchange
12 E-pals

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example of a particular form it is marked off on the grid. An incentive of some kind may be provided once students have completed a Writingo path, which may run up, down, or diagonally, e.g., **three across.**

The grid lists the particular text forms to be written, but not the topics (see Figure 6.2). Providing extra space in the squares for titles and dates allows each student to personalize the grid and record personal writing achievements.

To complete the activity, students
• select a listed text form from the grid
• complete the writing of the chosen text form
• take the written piece to a writing conference
• reflect on the construction of the piece
• ask the conference partner to initial the Writingo grid
• record the title and date in the appropriate square of the grid
• choose another text form from the grid to continue on the path up, down, or diagonally

A recipe Title: _____ Date: _____	**A book review** Title: _____ Date: _____	**An invitation** Title: _____ Date: _____
A set of instructions Title: _____ Date: _____	**An e-mail** Title: _____ Date: _____	**A newspaper report** Title: _____ Date: _____
A poem Title: _____ Date: _____	**A cartoon** Title: _____ Date: _____	**An advertisement** Title: _____ Date: _____

Figure 6.2 A Writingo grid

3 Six-Line Poetry

This activity requires students to research a topic, such as an animal, then write a six-line poem on it. Students search the Web or consult books to locate key words and phrases related to the selected topic—in this case, what the animal looks like, how it moves, what it eats, what it does. Six-Line Poetry provides a context for Early writers to experience success and develop confidence in creating poems.

Before students independently create poems, it is important to model how to combine the selected key words and phrases.

– Provide opportunities for students to collect information on a selected topic.
– Allow time for them to list key words and phrases on the topic.
– Model how to order and reorder the selected key words and phrases to create an interesting poem.
– Allow time for students to create a six-line poem.
– Encourage them to share with others.
– Invite them to illustrate their poems and create a class book.

Figure 6.3

4 Contact an Author

Contact an Author provides opportunities for students to create messages to be sent to authors (see Figure 6.4). These could include comments on new titles, questions about favourite characters, recommendations, or thank-you notes. Many authors' Web sites have live chat rooms, a guest book, or bulletin boards; some may even reply to individual e-mails.

– Support students to plan what they would say to an author in an e-mail, chat room, or guest book.
– Have them visit the Web site of a favourite author to create and send an appropriate message.
– Provide opportunities for them to print out a copy of the message sent and share any responses from the author.

> It is a good idea to ascertain how responsive an author might be to a student message by checking out the Web site first.
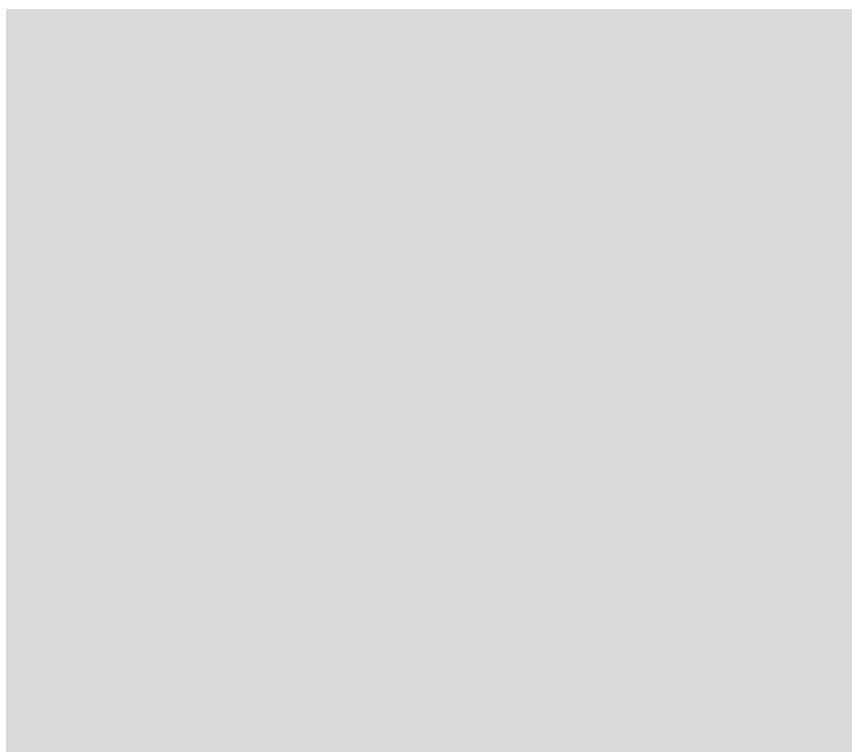
Figure 6.4

5 Explorer's Circle

Explorer's Circle is an ideal activity to use to continue to expose students to a range of text forms. Students are asked to explore the layout, features, and language of given text forms. Explorer's Circle requires a selection of texts of a particular form (see Figure 6.5).

– Provide small groups with a selection of texts of a particular form, e.g., shopping catalogues.
– Allow time for students to discuss the features, layout, and type of language used in this form.
– Have them record their findings on the provided line master.
– Encourage them to report their findings to the class.
– Jointly construct a class chart of the findings and display it with the text samples.

As an extension, ask students to create a piece of writing using their findings.

6 Text Diagrams

Text Diagrams is an activity that exposes students to the organization of a range of text forms. A variety of text structures (using crosses to represent words) should be created and displayed for students, who are then challenged to identify the forms represented in the diagrams (see Figure 6.6).

Figure 6.5

– Using an overhead projector, display some text-structure diagrams.
– Challenge students to identify the structure that would represent
  a particular form, e.g., **a letter, a menu**. Ensure that students
  justify their choices.
– Arrange students in small groups and have them identify which
  forms of text the other diagrams represent.
– Provide each group with a different piece of text, e.g., **a
  newspaper article, an advertisement, a menu**. Provide them with an
  overhead transparency to create their own diagram based on the
  structure of their text.
– Have them share their diagram with the class, and allow time for
  others to identify the form represented.
– Create a display of diagrams and texts.

Figure 6.6 Diagrams illustrating three possible text structures

7 Retelling from the Heart

Retelling from the Heart (Hoyt 1999) is an activity that encourages students to explore and create a personal anecdote. It requires them to write about a personal event by visualizing and using all of their senses to make the story rich in detail (see Figure 6.7). Writing about topics that are personally significant helps students to develop a sense of voice.

- Ask students to reflect on and record three special memories or events.
- Allow time for each student to share these events with a peer.
- Ask students to identify the events they wish to write about.
- Ask them a series of questions that will help trigger the details of the memory, e.g., **"As you imagine yourself there, what do you hear?"** Your questions should appeal to the senses.
- Have them record words or phrases as the questions are asked.
- Invite students to use the recorded words and phrases to write about the experience. Some students' writing may evolve into poetry.
- Provide students with the opportunity to share their writing.

I rember when my dog died. My family was standing around huging in the Kitchen everyone was crying The dog Basket was in the Coner emty. There was no sound of Snowy making funny noses but I could still smell his food and his doggy smell. I felt very sad.
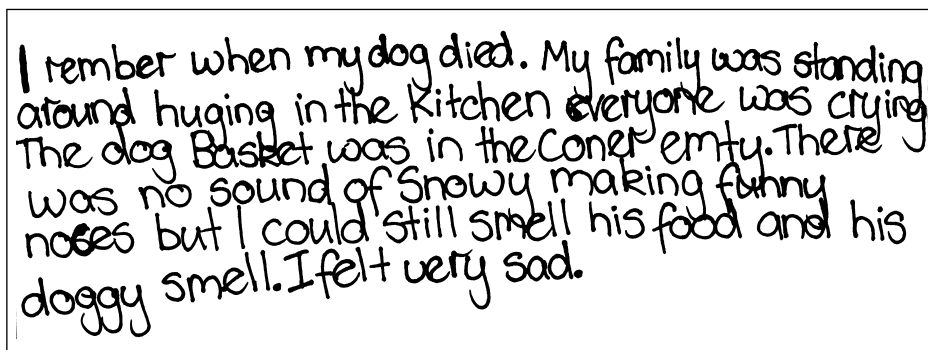
Figure 6.7

8 Read and Retell

Refer to Chapter 5: Experimental Writing Phase, pages 97–98.

9 Guess the Author

Guess the Author exposes students to chosen authors with the intent of investigating their particular voices. A selection of texts by several authors is needed to complete this activity. Students are required to listen to readings of a selected text and determine which author the lines belong to, e.g., **Are these the words of Paul Jennings or Roald Dahl?**

Over time, read a selection of texts by the same author to the class. After each reading, discuss the author's writing style and voice.

- Select several sentences from a text written by one of the selected authors. It need not be a text the students have heard before.
- Read the selected sentences to the students and have them identify the author.
- Encourage them to discuss their reasons for suggesting that author.
- Repeat the process with a different author. Make comparisons between the two.
- With the class, create a chart identifying the individual style and voice of each chosen author.

10 My Authority List

Portalupi and Fletcher (2004) suggest that having students create their own personal authority lists not only helps them to find topics to write about, but also helps them to write with real voice because the topics interest them.

- Model the creation of an authority list. The list will reflect experiences that could be a stimulus for future writing. Consider the following questions:
  - Where are you in the family birth order?
  - Where did you grow up?
  - What pets have you had?
  - What are you good at?
  - What are your interests?
  - What sports do you play?
  - What are some things you know how to do?
- Allow time for students to begin creating personal authority lists.
- Prompt them to share with a friend, and add to their lists.
- Encourage them to add to the lists on an ongoing basis.
- Have them refer to their lists when looking for ideas to write about.

As a variation, provide students with a "feeling" word and have them explore their personal experiences with that feeling. Doing this helps to generate specific information that can be incorporated into writing.

> The *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM provides a line master, "My Authority List," which offers students prompts for creating their own lists.

Feeling Scared
- What did you do?
- What did you say?
- What thoughts went through your head?
- What would other people have noticed about you?

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11 E-mail Exchange

E-mail Exchange is an activity that involves students in writing electronic book reviews to be placed in a common folder accessible to other students in the school. Alternatively, the book reviews can be e-mailed directly to other students. Becoming involved in E-mail Exchange encourages students to write for a real audience.

– Discuss the essential elements of a book review.
– Collaboratively create a template for writing book reviews on the class computer (see Figure 6.8).
– Model the creation of a book review and demonstrate how to post the review on the school Web site.
– Encourage students to use the electronic template to write reviews after reading a text.
– Encourage them to e-mail their book reviews to a friend.
– Work with another class to exchange reviews regularly.
– Help students to find the books they have reviewed in the library.

Book Review — E-mail

Use this template to write a book review and e-mail it to your classmates!

Your first name:

Your age:

Title of book:

Author:

What happens in the story?

What type of story was it?
☐ Animal
☐ Spooky
☐ Adventure
☐ Funny
☐ Magic
☐ Another category _____

Did you like the story? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Figure 6.8 A suggested review framework

12 E-pals

E-pals is an activity equivalent to penpals; however, in this case students communicate with other students around the world via the Internet. E-pals can be set up either for individual students or for a whole class that is interested in working with another class on a collaborative project. This activity is motivating for students, as they write for a real audience and purpose.

– Determine the students' interest in communicating with peers in other schools within the country or overseas.
– Find an online site that assists in finding suitable e-pals, e.g., http://www.epals.com/ or http://www.ks-connection.org. Ensure that whatever site is chosen meets the guidelines for school use according to school board policy.
– Register your interest in finding e-pals on the chosen site.
– Choose appropriate e-pals from the list of responses.
– Discuss e-mail etiquette with students, and create a class chart.
– Discuss information to include in first and subsequent e-mails.
– Encourage students to communicate regularly.

Students may take part in e-mail interviews. For example, if a class wanted to find out about their e-pals' school and area, they could design an interview form to attach to the e-mail.

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.

Teaching Notes

The focus for helping Early writers to develop contextual understanding in writing is organized under the following headings:
• Understandings About Purpose and Audience
• Exploring Decisions Writers Make
• Representing Characters and Events in Literary Texts
• Representing People and Ideas in Informational Texts
• Use of Devices
• Writing to Influence Social Issues

Understandings About Purpose and Audience

Early writers need to extend their awareness that all texts are written for a purpose and that writing serves many functions. Identifying texts by their primary purpose enables students to take into account associated contextual understandings. This resource categorizes texts according to eight writing purposes:
• to entertain
• to recount
• to socialize
• to inquire
• to describe
• to persuade
• to explain
• to instruct

As students read a variety of texts, encourage them to discuss their purpose and why they have been written in a particular way. Doing this will help students understand that when they want to write they can choose the text form that would be the most suitable to achieve their purpose—for example, "If I want to tell you facts about whales, I'll write a report."

Early writers are beginning to develop an awareness that an audience has certain needs and expectations. Students need support to incorporate this knowledge in their writing and to make adjustments where necessary. Early writers still need to write for specific, known audiences, but may also begin to write for general audiences; possible audiences could include themselves, family, friends, class members, teachers, other students, e-pals, or community members.

Exploring Decisions Writers Make

The focus in this phase is helping students understand that when creating texts, authors make decisions about purpose, audience, form, and content. Constantly encouraging students to question authors' choices helps them to develop the foundations of critical literacy. Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions provide opportunities to demonstrate the types of questions authors ask themselves, and how they make choices about these questions. Students can be encouraged to consider these questions when creating their own texts and to discuss how the choices they make may have impact on their readers.

Purpose and audience
• Why am I writing this text?
• Who is the particular audience for this piece of writing?
• What do I know about the audience (age, gender, interests)?
• What does the audience want or need to know about this topic?
• What will the audience/reader expect to see in this text?

Form and organization
• What text form should I use?
• How will I set the text out?
• Will the text need headings and illustrations?
• How will I introduce each new idea? How will I connect to the previous idea?

During these sessions, discussions and demonstrations should include the use of Think-Alouds and metalanguage.

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Content

- What information needs to be included?
- What can I afford to leave out?
- What message do I want to give?
- From what or whose point of view will I write?

Representing Characters and Events in Literary Texts

Discussions will help Early writers develop understandings that authors represent characters and events in different ways for certain reasons. Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions provide opportunities for students to be supported when making decisions about how to represent characters and events in their own literary texts.

- How will I represent my characters in this text?
- What words will I use to represent the characters?
- What events will unfold in this text?
- How will my text end?

Representing People and Ideas in Informational Texts

Discussions during Shared and Guided Reading sessions will help Early writers develop understandings that authors represent people and ideas in different ways for certain reasons. Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions provide opportunities for students to be supported when making decisions about how they will represent people and ideas in their own informational texts.

- How will I represent the people in this text?
- Do I know any real people like the one I am representing? How are they the same? How are they different?
- What words will I use to represent the person in this text?
- What facts, ideas, and events will I include in this text?
- Am I representing the facts, ideas, and events accurately?

Use of Devices

Early writers benefit from ongoing discussions about linguistic and print devices authors have chosen to influence meaning. Model linguistic and print devices, and encourage students to experiment with them in their own writing. Devices could include

- using words that describe appearance, e.g., blue-eyed, red-haired
- using words that describe actions, e.g., skipped, played, fell
- using words that describe emotions, e.g., happy, frightened
- using repetition, e.g., It was a dark, dark wood...
- using different print sizes or fonts, e.g., SCREAM
- placing illustrations or diagrams

Writing to Influence Social Issues

Early writers begin to develop an understanding that writers draw on their social and cultural lives to analyze and represent the world around them. Students can be encouraged to write not only about topics that interest them, but also about social issues from their own perspective.

As a class, students can be involved in creating a range of texts addressing social issues that concern them. Model and jointly construct texts such as posters, Web sites, letters to the editor, surveys, petitions, or pamphlets.

> For further information about the Contextual Understanding substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 2: Contextual Understanding.

Involving Students

1 What Have I Written?

What Have I Written? is an opportunity for students to record why they have written, what has been written, for whom it has been written, and how the text has been produced. This type of record keeping helps Early writers to develop an understanding that there are many different purposes for writing and that some text forms are better suited to particular purposes.

– Provide students with the line master "What Have I Written?" from the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.
– Model how to record the purposes, audiences, topics, and text product types that have been used by the class during Modelled, Shared, and Interactive Writing sessions.
– Allow time for students to begin their record sheets.
– Encourage them to add to the record sheets regularly.

Reflecting on these records throughout the year will help students understand the many different purposes of writing and the numerous audiences a writer addresses.

> **Contextual Understanding Involving Students**
> 1 What Have I Written?
> 2 Text Innovation
> 3 Special Occasions
> 4 Getting the Message Across
> 5 Catchy Advertising
> 6 Highlighting the Senses
> 7 You Be the Artist
> 8 Once upon a Time
> 9 Characters Come Alive
> 10 Who Am I?

Figure 6.9

2 Text Innovation

Refer to Chapter 4: Role Play Writing Phase, pages 56–57.

3 Special Occasions

Special Occasions provides prime opportunities for students to consider the interests of a particular audience when creating a text. Birthdays, festivals, special days (see Figure 6.10), days of national significance, and anniversaries represent authentic reasons to write not only cards, but poems, songs, and speeches. It is meaningful for students to acknowledge these occasions through written activity.

For Early writers, any of these ideas would be appropriate:
• a book of vouchers that promise appropriate favours for the recipient
• a certificate
• a crossword to convey a message of affection
• an expression or metaphor to represent the event in history
• a rap song about a special person
• a poem about a special event or person

It is important to recognize that different social, economic, and cultural circumstances mean that students will attach varying degrees of significance to different occasions. Knowing students well and being flexible about the nature of the task enables teachers to be sensitive to family backgrounds and individual perspectives.
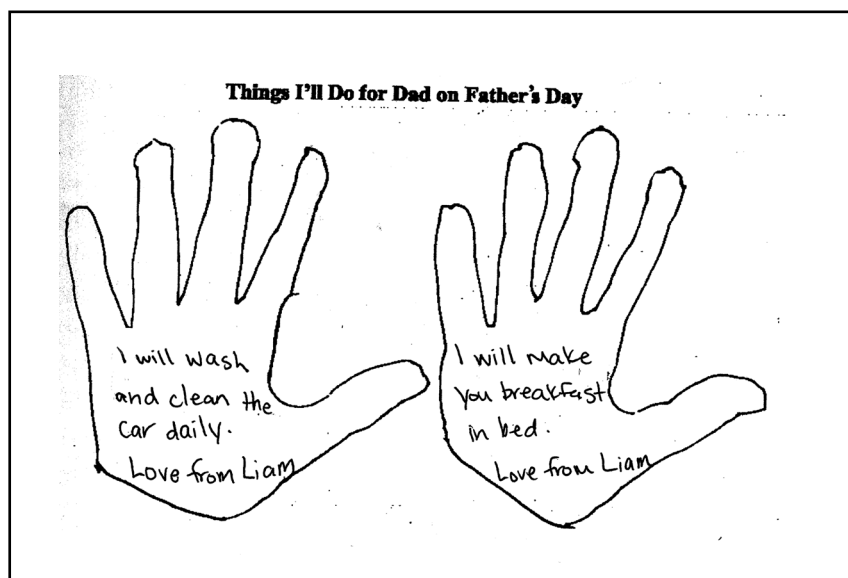
Figure 6.10

4 Getting the Message Across

Getting the Message Across requires students to focus on a particular audience as they re-create a text and to determine the appropriate language. Having students re-create the same story for different audiences helps them to understand and see how authors vary the choice of language to suit particular audiences.

– Provide groups with copies of the same wordless picture book or series of pictures.
– Have the groups orally create stories around the pictures.
– Assign each group a particular audience to write for, e.g., **a very young child, their peers, the wider school community.**
– Have each group collaboratively write the story for their audience.
– Invite the students to share their work with the class.
– Discuss some of the decisions made as the text was created for the given audience.

5 Catchy Advertising

Advertisements are a powerful tool to use when teaching students to identify persuasive devices used by authors. Raising awareness of simple devices used by authors is crucial to have students begin using them in their own writing. In the activity Catchy Advertising, students will identify the target audiences of advertisements, identify the devices used by the authors, and try to replicate use of these devices when creating their own advertisement.

– Discuss with students the purpose of advertisements. The central purpose of all advertising is to sell a product or a service.

Figure 6.11

Figure 6.12

– Provide students with a collection of advertisements aimed at a target audience, e.g., **young children**. Discuss each advertisement, identifying and recording the devices used to attract the reader's attention.
– Brainstorm a list of other products that this target audience would probably be interested in.
– Have each student select one of these products and create an advertisement incorporating some of the devices previously discovered (see Figure 6.11).
– Invite students to share their new advertisements with the whole class and discuss the devices used.

6 Highlighting the Senses

To evoke all the senses of a reader is a powerful device used by authors. Highlighting the Senses (Bernays and Painter 1991) is an activity that supports students in using this device; it involves their analyzing their own writing to identify which senses they are appealing to.

– Share an enlarged piece of text with the whole class.
– Work together to identify parts of the text and the language used to evoke particular senses, e.g., **see, hear, touch, feel**. See Figure 6.12.
– Have each student select a piece of his or her own writing to analyze.
– Allocate a colour for each sense impression:
  – blue — see
  – pink — hear
  – green — touch
  – orange — feel
  – yellow — taste
– Have students highlight their writing, identifying parts of the texts and the language used to evoke particular senses.
– Allow time for students to share their writing with others and discuss which sense they appealed to the most.
– Allow time for them to work on improving their writing, including details to evoke any missing senses.

7 You Be the Artist

Writers use many devices to evoke particular emotions in the reader. Illustrators also make decisions about their art to evoke emotions and to further enhance the text. You Be the Artist requires students

to consider some of the devices illustrators use. It also provides the opportunity for them to explore devices to apply to drawings used to support their own writing.

– Display differently illustrated texts for students to explore.
– Use the questions provided on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM line master to stimulate small-group discussions on the devices used by different illustrators.
– Provide time for students to identify and discuss the type of visual devices that illustrators use, e.g., **colour, size, detail, medium, position on page**.
– Give students the opportunity to select one of their own pieces of writing, discuss it with a peer, and make some decisions about the visual devices that could be used for illustrations.
– Have the students illustrate their work. Provide time for them to share their illustrations and explain any devices used.

> *Mr. Pusskins* by Sam Lloyd makes use of colour to convey character and mood. *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne also provides opportunities to explore visual devices.

8 Once upon a Time

Once upon a Time (www.media-awareness.ca) encourages students to explore the way characters are represented in texts and to create representations alternative to those presented by the authors (see Figure 6.13).

– Have each student record words on the line master provided to describe a particular type of character, e.g., **an ogre**. It is likely that students will suggest words such as *huge, roars, mean, ugly,* or *smelly*.
– Provide time for them to sketch the particular type of character and write a brief description.
– Read students a story in which the character is not represented in a stereotypical way.
– Have students record certain words, then sketch and describe how the character is represented in this story.
– Discuss how the character is the same or different from students' original descriptions and illustrations of that particular type of character.

Figure 6.13

9 Characters Come Alive

To help students represent a character in a specific way—for example, an evil character—it is important to provide many examples of how authors bring characters to life. Characters Come Alive helps students to discover and identify the way authors add life to their characters.

> One Web site to check out for lesson plans and media links to extend Once upon a Time is www.readwritethink. org.

- Over time, read a variety of literary texts to the students.
- After each reading, encourage discussion about the way the author made the characters come alive.
- Create a class chart of things that can be done when writing to help make characters sound real.
- Provide students with a collection of costume pieces, e.g., **hats, shoes, clothes, household objects, bags.** Ask them each to choose one piece and write a brief description of a character associated with the chosen object.
- Encourage students to select and apply ideas recorded on the class chart.
- Provide time for them to share their writing and receive feedback about the character development.

Making Characters Come Alive
- Give them a name.
- Add a physical description.
- Add actions.
- Use dialogue.
- Create other characters.
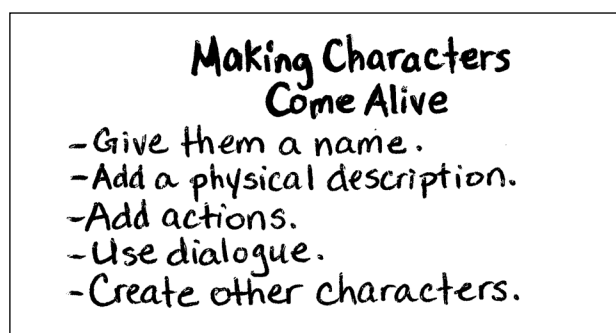
Figure 6.14 Class chart

10 Who Am I?

Who Am I? encourages students to explore different ways of representing characters in literary texts (see Figure 6.15) or people in informational texts. It requires them to reflect on their reading and to write accurate descriptions about selected characters.
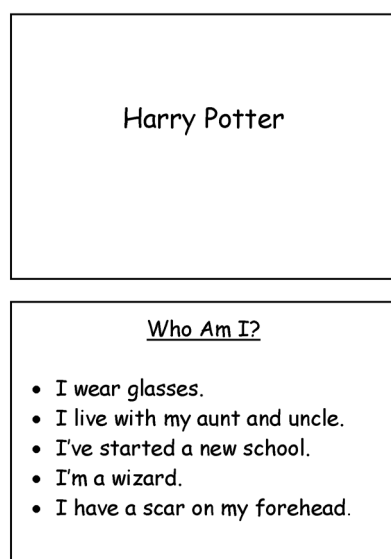
It would be useful prior to this activity to have students brainstorm a list of adjectives that can be used to describe characters and people.

- Invite each student to select a character or a person from a favourite text.
- Provide each student with a card to record the name of the character or person.
- Have them write a description of the character or person on the other side of the card. It could include information about physical features, dress, and actions.
- Organize students to read their descriptions to the whole class, encouraging others to guess each character or person.

Harry Potter

Who Am I?

- I wear glasses.
- I live with my aunt and uncle.
- I've started a new school.
- I'm a wizard.
- I have a scar on my forehead.

Figure 6.15

CONVENTIONS

Major Teaching Emphases

- **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, emphasizing**
  - **purpose,** e.g., reports describe
  - **text structure,** e.g., reports list details
  - **text organization,** e.g., reports use headings
  - **language features,** e.g., reports use present tense

> Refining vocabulary involves learning to catch nuances in meaning when considering words that seem much the same and to make wise word choices when writing.

Teaching Notes

The focus for supporting Early writers in this substrand is organized under the following headings:

- Developing Vocabulary
- Building Word Knowledge
- Developing Phonological Awareness and Graphophonic Knowledge
- Understanding Conventions of Grammar
- Building Text-Form Knowledge

Developing Vocabulary

All students, when they arrive at school, already have an oral vocabulary based on the speech variety and experiences at home. Research has shown that vocabulary acquisition is crucial to academic development (Baker, Simmons, and Kameenui 1998), so it is important for teachers to ensure that Early writers have every opportunity to expand their vocabularies across a broad range of contexts and experiences.

Creating a rich language environment that includes reading aloud, reciting poems and rhymes, singing songs, and playing with language will help refine understandings about written language. Early writers can be supported in developing their vocabulary in the following ways:

- modelling the use of language in different contexts
- valuing existing speech variety if non-standard or in an additional language or dialect
- introducing subject-specific vocabulary across the curriculum, e.g., the language of mathematics
- providing experiences through activities outside the classroom, e.g., trips, and activities inside the classroom, e.g., manipulating materials, inviting guest speakers, or capitalizing on any impromptu events
- discussing written words at every opportunity, pointing out the author's choice and why it is the best fit in the context
- involving students in meaningful word-play activities
- jointly constructing Word Walls featuring the words students are learning, e.g., high-frequency words, topic or theme words
- providing opportunities for students to read and write for a range of purposes
- immersing students in a range of texts
- talking about talk
- using a rich vocabulary in all contexts
- developing language across all curriculum areas, e.g., physical education

Building a bank of words that are automatically spelled and used

At all phases of development, students copy, recall, and try to spell words during independent writing. The bank of words that can be automatically spelled and used can be made up of high-frequency words, personally significant words, topic or theme words, or signal words.

Exploring and using these words in reading, writing, and any cross-curriculum activities will help to reinforce their recognition and use. For some students, ongoing systematic instruction is essential to help them develop automaticity; for others, the repeated reading and writing of texts helps them develop the ability to spell a bank of words automatically.

In this phase, it is important to build on the bank of words that students already know. For Early writers, include the following:

High-frequency words
These occur frequently in written texts; sources include *Five Hundred Words Most Frequently Used in Children's Writing* (Gentry and Gillet 1993), *One Hundred High Frequency Words* (Fountas and Pinnell 1998), and *One Hundred Most Frequent Words in Writing* (Routman 2000).

Personally significant words
These words are significant to a student personally, e.g., words associated with an interest or a hobby.

Topic or theme words
These words are related to topics, themes, or subject areas being studied, e.g., insects, magnets.

Signal words
These are associated with text forms and text structures, and signal the relationships between ideas in the text, e.g., therefore, before, although, because.

Early writers can be encouraged to use Have-a Go pads after writing. Use of these encourages students to identify words they may have misspelled in their writing and also provides a framework for generating alternative spellings for selected words. At this phase, students can also begin to take responsibility for keeping a spelling journal to record words they already know how to spell as well as those they are learning

Building Word Knowledge

As students' understanding of graphophonics expands, it is essential to extend their knowledge of words, word parts, and how words work. It is important to build word awareness through experiences, such as discovering rules, participating in open-ended activities, and playing with words.

The following list may provide a focus for supporting Early writers:

- suffixes e.g., **ing, ed**
- plurals, e.g., **s, es**
- homophones, e.g., **to, two, too**
- contractions, e.g., **I'll, can't**
- compound words, e.g., **football, sunshine**

Developing Phonological Awareness and Graphophonic Knowledge

Phonological awareness is the ability to hear, combine, and manipulate the different sound units of spoken words. Types of awareness include the following:

- word awareness: spoken language is made up of words; words are representations of objects (cat), emotions (love), and concepts (height); words can rhyme.
- syllable awareness: some words have a single syllable and others have more than one.
- onset and rime awareness: words with a single syllable are made up of onsets and rimes.
- phonemic awareness: words are made up of individual sounds, or phonemes.

In this phase, it is important to consolidate students' awareness and understandings of syllables and phonemes.

Graphophonic knowledge is the understanding of sound–symbol relationships as they apply to the alphabetic principle of written language.

Early writers will draw on their knowledge of the different sound–symbol representations when attempting to spell unknown words or to proofread their writing. The focus for Early writers is on the following graphophonic understandings.

- One sound can be represented with different letters or letter combinations, e.g., **read, heed, she'd, received**
- Different sounds can be represented with the same letters or letter combinations, e.g., **head, great, leaf.**

Understanding Conventions of Grammar

At all phases of development, it is important to draw attention to the conventions of grammar used in a range of texts. Conventions are associated with punctuation, parts of language, sentence structure, and overall text construction. It is important that these conventions are introduced, revisited, and practised in meaningful

contexts. Modelled and Shared Reading and Writing provide a springboard for exploring many of the conventions.

Punctuation and parts of speech

It is beneficial for Early writers to be able to use, talk about, and understand the following:
• punctuation, e.g., commas, question marks, exclamation marks
• the function and relationship of parts of speech, e.g., adverbs, adjectives, noun–pronoun agreement, subject–verb agreement

Constructing sentences

Early writers benefit from a focus on developing and refining their understanding of the characteristics of effective sentences.
• Sentences have a subject and a verb.
• Sentences use a variety of connecting words to join phrases or clauses, e.g., and, but, because, therefore.
• Sentences can be expanded or reduced to create specific meaning or add variety.
• The order of words in a sentence influences meaning.

Grouping related information

Students in this phase benefit from ongoing modelling of how to group related information, e.g., "First we will write the sentences about what lions eat and then we will write about how fast they move."

Building Text-Form Knowledge

Building students' knowledge about text forms helps them to successfully construct a range of texts and to understand the purpose, structure, and organization of those texts. Students benefit from reading different examples of the same text form, making comparisons, and identifying defining features.

Modelled, Shared, and Guided Reading and Writing sessions provide an opportunity for Early writers to discuss and build their knowledge about the conventions of structure, organization, and language features of a range of text forms.

Knowledge about text forms includes understanding the purpose, audience, organization, structure, and language features of a particular form.

Purpose

All texts are written and read for a reason. The purpose may be to entertain, as in most literary texts, or to explain, describe, or inquire, as in some informational texts. Understanding the purpose

of a writing event will help students to make decisions about text organization and structure, and the language used.

Students need to be exposed to a range of texts written for a variety of purposes. Early writers should be encouraged to create texts for a range of purposes. For a list of forms related to purposes, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1, page 27.

Text organization

Text organization refers to the way a text is organized—the framework and text features. Early writers will benefit from understanding text-form frameworks; for example, a report begins with a generalization, then has several paragraphs describing characteristics, followed by a conclusion.

Early writers can be introduced to the function, terminology, and use of a range of organizational features, such as
• headings and subheadings
• captions
• diagrams and other visual aids (photographs, graphs, tables, cross-sections)
• tables of contents
• bold or italicized words
• a computer menu
• bullet points or numbering
• blurb

It is important to encourage Early writers to begin using the appropriate organizational features in their own texts. For a list of further organizational features in different texts, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1, under each Social Purpose.

Text structure

Text structure refers to the way ideas, feelings, or information are linked within a text. Structures include
• problem and solution
• compare and contrast
• cause and effect
• listing: logical or chronological sequence, enumeration collection of details

Early writers will benefit from being exposed to a variety of text forms that use different structures.

Language features

The term *language features* refers to the type of vocabulary and grammar used in a text. Each text form has specific language features that are appropriate to it. For example, a retelling may include the following features:

• specific participants, e.g., my family and I
• simple past tense, e.g., chased, went, saw
• personal pronouns, e.g., I, we, hers, his
• linking words to do with time, e.g., first, then, yesterday, after that

Students can be introduced to appropriate language features while learning about new forms of writing. For a detailed description of language features linked to text forms, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1, under each Social Purpose.

For further information about the Conventions substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition:
• Chapter 3: Conventions
• Chapter 1: Use of Texts

Involving Students

1 Word-Sorting Activities

Refer to Chapter 5: Experimental Writing Phase, pages 120–21.

2 String Poems

Creating String Poems helps students to develop, refine, and use new vocabulary. In this activity, they generate adjectives related to a topic and manipulate their placement to construct a poem.

– Select a noun from a current topic or theme, e.g., dinosaurs.
– Have the noun written on at least 12 separate cards or sticky notes.
– Place three noun cards.
– Ask small groups to suggest and write three adjectives on cards provided to describe the chosen noun.
– Collect the cards from all groups.
– Place three cards on a new line and add the noun card to the end.
– Continue placing three adjectives and a noun card on each line.
– Reread the cumulative poem as new lines are added.
– Complete the poem by placing three noun cards on the last line—the same noun as that on the first line.
– Reread the whole poem.

Conventions Involving Students
1 Word-Sorting Activities
2 String Poems
3 Secret Messages
4 Sound Hunter
5 What Comes Next?
6 Tired Words
7 Word for a Word
8 Base Words
9 Controlled Cloze
10 Crazy Cloze
11 Chain Writing
12 Physical Sentence Construction
13 Sentence Expansion
14 Sentence Joining
15 What Is a Topic Sentence?
16 This Goes with That
17 Generic Games

– Have students write new words on blank cards and add them to the poem, or create their own String Poem based on another noun.

Extensions
– If the poem has been constructed with sticky notes, students can rearrange the words to come up with new poems. Keep the cards in envelopes or containers so that they can be used for future activities, such as word sorting.
– Introduce parameters for the adjectives included in each line, e.g., one-, two- and three-syllable words; three words that start with the same letter; three words that rhyme.

3 Secret Messages

This activity provides students with the opportunity to decode messages. Secret Messages can be created with a focus on new vocabulary, spelling generalizations, or graphophonic understandings being introduced or consolidated.

Students will enjoy deciphering messages that use a combination of clues; however, limit the variation when they are first working with Secret Messages. The types of clues used might include
• removing prefixes or suffixes from words, e.g., take the suffix "ing" from "jumping"
• adding prefixes or suffixes to words, e.g., add the prefix "un" to "happy"
• combining syllables from different words, e.g., add the first syllable of "monkey" to the last syllable of "Saturday"
• removing a consonant or consonant cluster from a word and blending a new one in the same place, e.g., take "sh" from "shop" and replace it with "st"
• finding a small word within a word, e.g., "ball" in "balloon"
• creating compound words, e.g., add "house" to the end of "light"
• using an alphabet sequence for short words, e.g., add "m" after the first letter of the alphabet

Modelling the process and collaboratively solving Secret Messages is beneficial at this phase.

– Think of a meaningful sentence or message, e.g., Have your project ready by Monday.
– Write clues that will enable students to decode the message.
– Ensure that students have access to a copy of the alphabet.
– Provide time for them to solve the Secret Message. They could record the message in their journals.

– Keep a copy of all activities to build up a permanent collection for future use.

Once students are familiar with the procedure for deciphering Secret Messages, challenge them to write messages for the class to decipher.

4 Sound Hunter

Participating in Sound Hunter helps students continue to develop graphophonic understandings, expand their awareness of spelling generalizations, and increase vocabulary. It is best introduced and practised in the context of a text. Texts, such as books, charted songs and poems, magazines, brochures, Web pages, modelled writing examples, or written messages, can provide contexts in which to hunt for words.

– Choose a specific focus. It could be words
  – with a particular sound (see Figure 6.16)
  – with a particular letter pattern
  – of a particular type, e.g., **contractions, compound words, a particular prefix or suffix**
– Select a text that clearly exhibits the chosen focus.
– Read the text for enjoyment.
– Revisit the text, hunting for the chosen focus, e.g., **words with the /a/ sound.** Have students identify and record words with this focus.
– Discuss the words, and ask students to sort them into subgroups, e.g., **according to the letter pattern used to represent the /a/ sound.**
– Create a chart of the words the students found. Leave room for more words to be added to the chart.
– Challenge students to find more examples of words with the chosen focus.
– Revisit, discuss, and add to the anchor chart on future occasions. Encourage students to use the chart as a reference when writing.

Figure 6.16

5 What Comes Next?

What Comes Next? is an adaptation of the game Hangman; however, What Comes Next? requires students to guess the letters in the correct order rather than randomly (see Figure 6.17).

As a daily activity, What Comes Next? can provide an excellent context for reinforcing vocabulary and spelling generalizations, and exploring sound–symbol relationships. Understandings that can be developed include these:

- Letters together represent the specific sounds in a word.
- Prefixes and suffixes can be added to words.
- An ending can be added to make a word plural.
- Past tense can be indicated by the ending *ed* or *t.*
- Some words that are pronounced the same are spelled differently and have different meanings—homophones, e.g., **whole, hole; piece, peace.**

- Choose a word from a familiar context that features a letter pattern or a spelling generalization, or is a part of speech. Draw lines representing each letter in the word.
- Provide a specific clue for the first letter, e.g., **the first letter is a consonant in the second half of the alphabet.** When students guess the correct letter, record it on the first line.
- Invite students to guess the remaining letters of the word.
- As they guess the letters, write any guess that is incorrect but has a possible letter sequence in the Could Be column. Incorrect guesses without possible letter sequences should be recorded in the Couldn't Be column as single letters (not modelling incorrect letter patterns). When students guess a letter that could not be right, a segment of a mouse outline is drawn.
- Continue this until the correct letters are given and recorded.
- The game ends if the drawing of the mouse is completed before students guess the word.

As an extension, students can be challenged to find other words linked to the letter pattern, spelling generalization, or part of speech identified in the game word; for example, if the chosen word was *climbing,* groups of students could be challenged to find words with *cl*, silent *b*, or *ing.*

Once students are familiar with the game, encourage them to play What Comes Next? with a partner.

Figure 6.17

6 Tired Words

Tired Words encourages students to develop, refine, and use new vocabulary. In this activity students critically analyze the choice of describing words they use in their writing.

– Choose an overused or tired word, e.g., **said**, from a sample of writing.
– Have students brainstorm words or scan through texts to locate words that could replace the overused or tired word, e.g., **yelled, whispered, roared, questioned, commented.**
– Write these words on a chart, discussing the differences in meaning. Challenge students to create oral sentences using the suggested words.
– Have them collect other suitable words, and add these to the chart.
– Provide time for students to analyze a previously created piece of personal text to identify if and where they may have used the tired word. Encourage them to select a replacement word from the newly created chart.

7 Word for a Word

Word for a Word helps students understand and use the names and functions of parts of speech. It involves their transforming a sentence by taking turns to change one word at a time; a noun must be changed for a noun (see Figure 6.18), or a verb for a verb. While it is important that the same part of speech is substituted, nonsensical sentences are acceptable.

– Create a simple sentence and write each word on a separate card.
– Identify a part of speech in the sentence to be transformed, e.g., **a noun, an adjective.**
– Have students provide alternative words for the selected part of speech, and record these on new cards.
– Overlay the substitute words and reread the transformed sentence together.
– Discuss how the meaning of the sentence is altered when a particular word is changed.
– Repeat the process, substituting a different part of speech.

Most	students	are	good	singers	.
	teachers				
	boys				
	mothers				
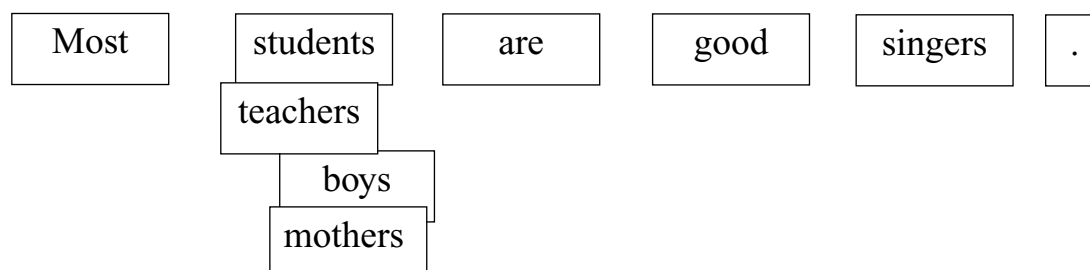
Figure 6.18

8 Base Words

Base Words is an open-ended activity that provides small groups of students with an opportunity to work at their own level to create and investigate the spelling of new words. Early writers enjoy the challenge of creating as many words as possible using a given base word and selected prefixes and suffixes.

– Provide students with a focus base word and a selection of prefixes and suffixes (see Figure 6.19).
– Provide guidelines for the creation of words, e.g., **all words must include the base word; the last letter of the base word may be changed or deleted when adding suffixes; all words must be real words.**
– Challenge students to make as many new words as possible in a given time, adding prefixes, suffixes, or both to the base word.
– Allow time for them to share words and reflect upon the lists created. Have them investigate the meaning of the new words and their relationship to the base word.
– Record patterns or spelling generalizations the students discover.

See how many new words you can make by adding to the base word "happy."
Sometimes you may need to change or remove a letter when adding a suffix.

un	mis		es	
er				es
pre		happy		
	ing			ly
	s		est	

Make sure the words you make are real words.

Words We Made

happily
unhappy
happiest
happier

Figure 6.19

9 Controlled Cloze

Completing Controlled Cloze activities helps students to understand the conventions of grammar, such as use of parts of speech and punctuation, and sentence structure. Controlled Cloze involves challenging students to replace missing parts of a sentence.

– Provide students with a piece of text that contains a number of sentences in which selected parts have been deleted.
– Have them read the text and provide suggestions for the missing words or punctuation marks.
– Provide time for them to share their completed texts.

10 Crazy Cloze

In Crazy Cloze, one particular part of speech in a text is deleted. Students are asked to suggest replacement words without seeing the text, often producing a nonsensical, humorous text. It is critical to then use this nonsensical text to discuss how and why the words selected affected meaning.

– Organize students to work in pairs.
– Have each pair list 10 examples of a particular part of speech, e.g., **adjectives**.
– Provide a passage from which 10 examples of this part of speech have been removed.
– Allow time for students to record words from their lists in the spaces. Words should be recorded in the order they are listed (see Figure 6.20).
– Have students read their completed passages aloud. Discuss any mismatches in meaning. Identify any word that may not be the required part of speech and the influence it has on the sentence. Make any amendments where necessary.

11 Chain Writing

Refer to Chapter 5: Experimental Writing Phase, page 127.

12 Physical Sentence Construction

Refer to Chapter 5: Experimental Writing Phase, pages 127–28.

13 Sentence Expansion

Refer to Chapter 5: Experimental Writing Phase, page 126.

14 Sentence Joining

Students can learn how to make simple sentences into more detailed sentences by joining two or more thoughts together. This activity is one way to encourage them to write compound sentences, using conjunctions.

– Create a collection of simple sentences on sentence strips.
– Have one student select a sentence, e.g., **It is raining today,** and challenge a second student to identify another sentence that could be joined to the first, e.g., **We will play inside.**
– Invite the class to brainstorm conjunctions that could be used to join the two sentences, e.g., **so, because, and.**

1. blue
2. happy
3. small
4. round
5. fluffy
6. fat
7. enormous
8. rough
9. angry
10. kind

Macy wandered down to the beach. It was a _blue_, _happy_ day and there were _small_ people everywhere. She found herself a _round_ space and laid out her _fluffy_ beach towel. The water looked _fat_ so she decided to go for a _enormous_ swim. She found some of her _rough_ friends and chatted to them before deciding to buy a _angry_ ice-cream and walking home to her _kind_ house.

Figure 6.20

An alternative to Crazy Cloze is Mad Libs, where there is a short story with many key words replaced by blanks. Beneath each blank is a specific category, such as noun, verb, or place. Participants contribute words without knowing the context. The result is usually comic; the game points to the importance of context and can be used to promote learning of parts of speech.

- Write appropriate conjunctions on blank cards and place each in turn between the sentences.
- Have students read the new sentences and discuss how the meaning is altered with each conjunction used, e.g., **It is raining today, so we will play inside.**
- Repeat the activity using different sentences.
- Have students find two short sentences in their own writing and challenge them to select an appropriate conjunction to join the sentences.
- Provide time for students to share their new sentences.

Extension
Provide a sentence stem and a list of conjunctions. Prompt students to create appropriate endings to the sentence using the list of conjunctions. Read the sentences and discuss the meaning associated with each conjunction, for example:

> She went swimming *because* it was a hot day.
> She went swimming *after* school on Thursday.
> She went swimming, *then* went home for dinner.
> She went swimming, *but* wanted to go horseriding.

15 What Is a Topic Sentence?

This activity provides students with the opportunity to match topic sentences to simple paragraphs. Participating in the activity helps students to understand that a topic sentence tells the reader what the next group of sentences is about.

- Provide students with examples of simple paragraphs without beginning topic sentences.
- Provide matching clear, well-structured topic sentences on separate cards.
- Challenge students to work in small groups to match topic sentences and paragraphs.
- Provide time for them to talk about and explain topic sentences.
- Have groups share their discoveries.
- As a whole class, create suitable topic sentences for other paragraphs.

16 This Goes with That

This Goes with That helps students understand that when creating texts, related information is grouped together and the resulting text is a paragraph. The activity involves students in brainstorming facts and information they know related to a familiar topic. The facts and

information are then sorted according to type and used as a basis for creating related sentences.

– Select a topic, e.g., **weather patterns, volcanoes.**
– Have students brainstorm a list of facts related to the topic. List the facts on separate cards or large sticky notes.
– Support students in clustering related facts together.
– Organize students into groups. Give each group one of the clusters and ask each group to write a heading to cover those facts, e.g., **when volcanoes erupt.**
– Provide time for the groups to read through the facts and write an appropriate topic sentence.
– Have students use the brainstormed facts to create three supporting sentences.

17 Generic Games

The games listed below are generic because they can be used to support an understanding of the conventions of grammar, graphophonic understandings, and spelling generalizations. Each one can be used to suit a range of purposes. Games are a great way to consolidate understandings, although they are not a replacement for explicit teaching.

When using games, it is important to
• keep them fun and informal
• use settings that encourage interaction among students
• embed them in the context of work already being done in the classroom
• ensure that the students are fully familiar with how to play them

The following games are outlined in this section:
    Word Back Spied Her
    Name Game
    Tic Tac Toe
    How Long Is a Piece of String?
    Add a Letter
    Crosswords
    Spelling Tennis
    Words, Glorious Words
    Online Games

> The generic games outlined on pages 80–83 are also great ways to consolidate understandings. These games are as follows:
> • Snap
> • Dominoes
> • A Trip to the Moon
> • I Say... You Say...
> • Odd One Out
> • Hunting for Words
> • What Can You Show Us?

Word Back Spied Her

Word Back Spied Her can be used for a wide range of purposes and is an excellent game to support the development of vocabulary and word knowledge. Words are printed on sticky labels, and a mystery word is placed on the back of each student. Students are challenged to work out, from a list provided, which particular word they have.

- A sticky label containing a mystery word is placed on each student's back. Ensure that the student does not see the word.
- Students are then provided with a list of possibilities; the number and type of words on the list should vary according to student needs and abilities. Individualized lists can be created if necessary.
- Discuss the guidelines for the game.
    1. Questions need to be related to the features of the word, for example:
        Does my word start with the letter ____?
        Does my word have more than one syllable?
        Does my word have a suffix (prefix/silent letter)?
        Does my word have the letter pattern ____?
        Is my word a verb (adjective/noun/contraction/plural)?
    2. Responses can be only yes or no.
    3. A student can ask another student only one question before moving on.
    4. A student who is unable to answer a question may say, "Pass."
- Teach students how to eliminate and mark off words from their list as they ask questions.
- Direct them to move into designated groups as their words are determined: for example, groups could have words categorized as contractions, in alphabetical order, or as parts of speech.

It is critical that either during or at the end of the game students are given the opportunity to reflect on and discuss the types of questions asked. Doing this will help them to distinguish between useful and less useful questions, and so may be a guide for future questioning.

Name Game
- Players stand in a circle.
- Introduce a simple sentence pattern, such as one consisting of a proper noun, a verb, and an adverb, e.g., Susie skates skilfully.
- Players take turns to suggest words in the designated sequence.

Player 1 says, "John."
Player 2 says, "jumps."
Player 3 says, "joyfully."
Player 4 says, "Tania."
Player 5 says, "talks."
• A player who is unable to supply an appropriate word sits down.

When players are familiar with the game, they can suggest their own rules: for instance, "Can you say Philip photographs flies? Does the sentence have to make sense?"

Tic Tac Toe
Tic Tac Toe is played the same way as Xs and Os, but instead of using Xs and Os writers create a sequence of three words (diagonally, vertically, or horizontally). Player A may have to write words with a particular sound, e.g., /e/, and Player B may have to write words with a particular spelling pattern, e.g., ir.

Students play the game in pairs.
• Have each pair draw a 3-by-3 grid, making a total of nine squares.
• They then take turns to write a word with the established focus, attempting to complete a sequence of three squares.

As students become familiar with Tic Tac Toe, they can select the focus for their words. A great advantage of Tic Tac Toe is that students at different developmental levels can play together: for example, Player 1 writes words with the prefix *dis*, while Player 2 writes words containing a /tr/ sound.

How Long Is a Piece of String?
In this game, students change one consonant or vowel in a given word to create a string of new words. They work against a timer to create the longest piece of string (the strip with the most new words).
• Students each have a long strip of paper.
• Call out a beginning word, e.g., bag. Ask students to write this on their paper.
• Challenge them to create as many new words as possible in the time provided, but only by changing one letter at a time, e.g., bag-bat-mat-met.
• An egg timer as a timing device provides great motivation.
• Have the students count the number of new words made in the allotted time.

Variation

Give students a beginning word and an ending word. Now they have to change one letter at a time until they have made the end word, for example, moving from *head* to *toes*.

HEAD LEAD LEED LEES TEES **TOES**

Add a Letter

The challenge in this game is to add and rearrange letters to make the longest word possible.

• Start with a one- or two-letter word.
• Add one letter at a time to make a new word (three letters, four letters, five letters).
• The order of the letters can be changed, but the word must be a real word each time, e.g., at ate rate crate traces craters.
• Continue to add letters, trying to make the longest word possible.

Crosswords

Students can use personal word lists or class topic words to make crosswords for their classmates to solve. Crosswords are best made on grid paper, and students will need two grids: one for the answers and one for the clues (see Figure 6.21).

Each setter follows these steps.

• Select 10 words to be the basis of the crossword.
• Place them in the answer grid. Words may overlap.
• Put a number in each square where a word starts.
• Place the numbers in the same position in the blank grid.
• Shade in the squares that won't be used on that grid.
• Write the clues to the words in the answer grid.
• Give the blank grid to a classmate to solve the puzzle.

M	O	O	N		P	L	U	T	O
		C							
		E		N					S
S	P	A	C	E	C	R	A	F	T
A		N		P					A
T				T					R
U				U					S
R				N					
N				E	A	R	T	H	

Figure 6.21

ACROSS
1. Men have landed on here
3. The planet furthest from the sun
6. How you might get to space
7. The planet we live on

DOWN
2. Where space capsules used to land when returning to earth
4. A planet that has the same name as the Roman god of the sea
5. The sun is the closest of these
6. The sixth planet from the sun

Spelling Tennis

Spelling Tennis can be played by two people or two teams. It is played and scored like a tennis match. Words can come from personalized spelling lists or class topic words.
• Player 1 calls out a word; Player 2 has to spell it correctly.
• If Player 2 doesn't spell it correctly, the score becomes 15 – love.
• If it is spelled correctly, the score is love –15.
• Player 2 then calls out a word for Player 1 to spell.
• The scoring continues as in tennis.

Words, Glorious Words

Providing students with opportunities to learn and use new vocabulary is an important part of language development. Demonstrating a love of words through an activity such as Words, Glorious Words will encourage students to discover and use interesting vocabulary.
• Write a favourite word, e.g., **cinnamon**, on a piece of card.
• Say the word aloud to the students.
• Ask students to close their eyes while you say the word again.
• Say the word slowly, emphasizing the different sounds in it.
• Have students say the word in different ways, e.g., **fast, slowly, loudly, softly.**
• Where possible, give them a concrete example, e.g., **give them a stick of cinnamon to smell.**
• Use the word in a sentence.
• Encourage the students to use the word as many times as they can during the day.
• Introduce a new word each day and encourage students to choose a favourite word to share with the class. Words from different languages could also be used.
• Add these words to the Word Wall.

Online Word Games

The World Wide Web provides a host of exciting word games suitable for students to use. Some—such as Scrabble—can be played with more than one person (see Figure 6.22). Use a search engine to find an abundance of games using keywords, such as *spelling games* or *word games*.
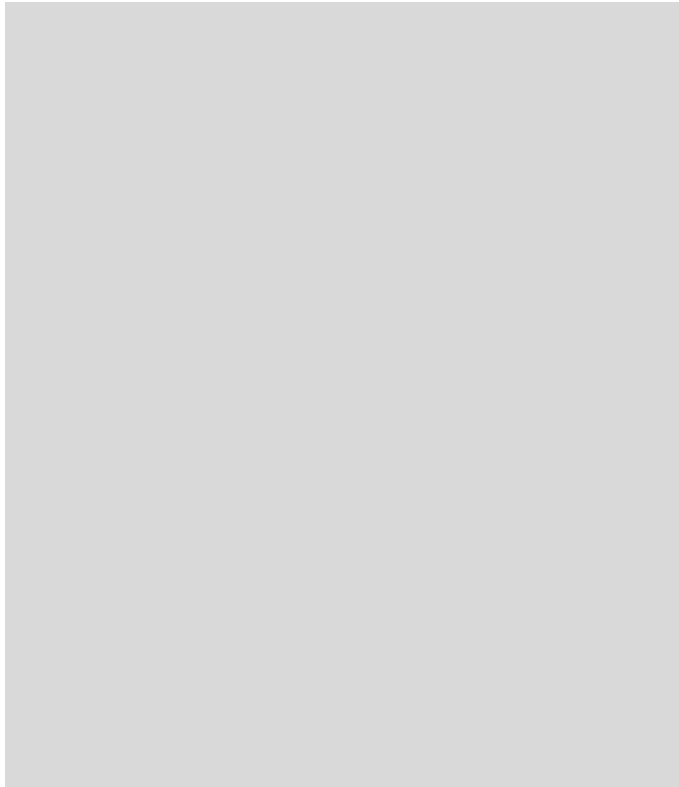
Figure 6.22

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES

Major Teaching Emphases

- **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 revise, edit, and proofread to refine their writing.**

- **Continue to model a variety of publishing alternatives, highlighting the purpose and audience.**

- **Teach students how to find, record, and organize 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.**

Organization of the Processes and Strategies Substrand

There are several differences in the organization of the Processes and Strategies substrand. Both the Teaching Notes and the Teaching and Learning Experiences (Involving Students) are located in *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 4: Processes and Strategies.

The rationale for these differences is that the processes and strategies of spelling and writing are not conceptually hierarchical and therefore not phase specific. In all phases, a variety of writing processes and strategies need to be introduced, developed, and consolidated.

What varies from one phase to the next is the growth in
- the number and integration of strategies used throughout the processes of writing
- the awareness and monitoring of writing processes
- the efficiency in use of the processes of writing
- the ability to articulate the use of the strategies used in the processes of writing
- the awareness of how use of processes helps with composing texts

Supporting Early Writers in the Home

Early writers create a small range of texts such as stories, greeting cards, and reports. These students begin to select information to include in their writing according to the purpose and the audience. They write simple sentences using correct punctuation, and know how to spell some frequently used words automatically. When writing unknown words, Early writers often select letters on the basis of sound—for example, *becos*.

Early writers will benefit from a range of experiences in the home setting. Ideas for providing appropriate experiences are available on Parent Cards located on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM. Teachers can select appropriate cards for each Early writer and copy them for parents or guardians to use at home.
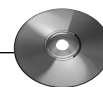
Parent Cards

1 Early Writers: How to Support

2 Encouraging Writing

3 Writing with Your Child

4 Writing and Reading Links

5 Supporting the Writing Process

6 Supporting Punctuation and Grammar

7 Developing Understandings About Different Types of Writing

8 Developing Vocabulary

9 Supporting Spelling

10 Building Word Knowledge Through Games

Available on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM is a parent-friendly version of the Writing Map of Development.

Transitional Writing Phase

Grade 3
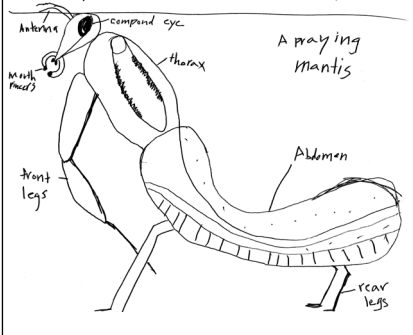
My life so far in Grade 3 is ok.
My first day in Grade 3 was good,
not quiet as good as the days
after but what I ment was good
for a first day. But there has
to be something bad and there
definitely was in this situayshun.
Ms. Parks got very mad and angry
sometimes, from some nawty people.
I am not going to mention any names
but some people got quiet anoying.
And they were mean it. But things
seemed geting better when Ms.
Parks came up with the idea of
the stamp chart, and even better,
I won the first week we dit it! A
few weeks later the kids moved
into rows and I got next to my friends

Ahmed and Sam. My favourite thing
we have done so far is researching a
nocturnal animal. I researched the
owl. They have thick feathers and
talons. They can't move their eyes but
have to move their whole head to see.
I can't wait until we do our good
copy of our reports on nocternal animals.

✓ Well done! Some great
thoughts here!

Please proofread and edit!

Dear Loving Mother,

I would like for you to consider these long lasting shoes.
The ones that I have now are shot! I bet the Salvation Army
wouldn't even accept them as a donation.

They are the best because my feet stopped growing yesterday
so I won't need anymore. As you can see everyone in my
class has them. Everyday I know that everyone will be
wearing them because they're so trendy. They'll also last
me for ages people test them at shoe factories to make sure
they don't fall apart. If you buy them I will always do
everything you ask me. (Even wash the dishes)

Love your sweet daughter,
Maki

P.S. - I've noticed your looking better and thinner
everday.

A praying mantis gets it's name by holding it's front legs
in front of it's body. A praying mantis has a pair of 3
legs a pair of two wings and a head, a thorax and an
Abdomen

A praying mantis is one of the most vist insects
in the world. It can kill and eat lots of other
things including a spider and a scorpion even
though they aren't insects they are arachnids.

Antenna — compound eye
Mouth parts
thorax
A praying mantis
Abdomen
front legs
rear legs

Figure 7.1

Global Statement

Transitional writers show increasing control over the conventions of writing, such as punctuation, spelling, and text organization. They consider audience and purpose when selecting ideas and information to be included in texts. They compose a range of texts, including explanations, narratives, brochures, and electronic presentations. Writing shows evidence of a bank of known words that are spelled correctly. Transitional writers are moving away from a heavy reliance on sounding out and are beginning to integrate visual and meaning-based strategies to spell unknown words.

Transitional Writing Indicators

Use of Texts

◆ **Composes a range of texts, but may not fully control all elements**
◆ **Composes texts by finding, recording, and organizing information appropriate to purpose**
• Includes essential information and brief elaboration or description
• Uses rhyme, rhythm, and repetition for effect, where appropriate
• Demonstrates knowledge of differences in organization, structure, and language features of a range of texts when writing
• Writes simple conclusions with some attempt to summarize or provide a resolution
• Establishes place, time, and situation in literary texts
• Imitates complications from well-known stories
• Composes texts that move beyond drawing on personal experiences
• Shows evidence of personal voice
• Uses the metalanguage associated with writing, e.g., procedure, noun, punctuation

Contextual Understanding

◆ **Explains the purpose and audience of a range of text forms**
◆ **Selects ideas to include in own text to suit purpose and audience**
◆ **Discusses alternatives about how to represent characters and events when composing literary texts**
◆ **Discusses alternatives about how to represent people and ideas when composing informational texts**
◆ **Experiments with the use of devices,** e.g., repetition of words or phrases
• Sometimes represents characters or people in stereotypical ways, e.g., the brave prince, the wicked witch
• Considers the audience and includes some background information
• Can select an appropriate form of writing from a small range
• Chooses topics likely to appeal to a particular audience

Conventions

◆ **Varies vocabulary to add interest**
◆ **Spells and uses an increasing bank of known words correctly**
◆ **Knows less common letter patterns and the sounds they represent,** e.g., tion, ph
◆ **Writes a variety of simple and compound sentences, using correct punctuation**
◆ **Groups related information, sometimes without regard for paragraphing conventions**
• Uses a small range of appropriate conjunctions, e.g., but, because, so, if
• Uses appropriate subject–verb agreements
• Uses appropriate noun–pronoun agreements
• Writes in both first and third person
• Usually maintains appropriate tense for the text form, e.g., timeless present tense, past tense

• Attempts to use passive tense, e.g., The environment was damaged by pollution.
• Writes dialogue, but the reader has difficulty in deciding who said what
• Uses titles and headings appropriately
• Experiments with the use of less common punctuation marks, e.g., colons, dashes, semicolons
• Is aware of the importance of standard spelling for published work

Processes and Strategies

◆ **Draws upon semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge when writing,** e.g., vocabulary knowledge, text-structure knowledge
◆ **Uses an increasing range of strategies throughout the writing process,** e.g., determining importance
◆ **Uses an increasing range of strategies to spell unknown words,** e.g., using visual memory
◆ **Begins to organize ideas before writing,** e.g., brainstorming, drawing, jotting.
◆ **Revises, edits, and proofreads own writing when directed**
◆ **Plans for and creates a published text that reflects the intended purpose and needs of the audience**
• Uses letters to represent all vowel and consonant sounds in a word, placing vowels in every syllable
• Is beginning to use common letter patterns and critical features to spell
• Uses visual knowledge of common English letter sequences when attempting to spell unknown words, e.g., doller (dollar), thousend (thousand)
• Includes all the correct letters, but may sequence them incorrectly, e.g., thier (their), recieve (receive)
• Usually represents all syllables when spelling a word, e.g., uncontrollabley (uncontrollably)
• Draws on some spelling generalizations to spell unknown words
• Is able to recognize if a word doesn't look right and to think of alternative spellings
• Selects relevant information from a variety of sources before writing
• Brainstorms to elicit ideas and information before writing
• Uses planning aids to help organize ideas, e.g., flowchart, story map
• Attempts to reorder text to clarify meaning, e.g., moves words, phrases, sentences
• Attempts to use editing and proofreading guide after composing
• Refines writing after peer or teacher conference
• Experiments with various ways of publishing information, e.g., using word processors or tape recorders, making charts

Note: The terms write *and* writing *encompass the use of traditional tools, such as pen and paper, as well as the use of electronic tools, such as computers or cell phones.*

The term texts *refers to both literary and informational texts, and includes visual, spoken, or written texts. These may be print, electronic, live, or multimodal.*

Major Teaching Emphases

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., new forms, devices, vocabulary.
- 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 craft a range of texts for authentic purposes and audiences.
- Foster students' sense of voice and individual writing style.
- Continue to teach students the metalanguage associated with writing, and encourage its use.

Contextual Understanding

- Discuss some of the reasons writers choose one particular text form over others.
- Encourage students to explain their decisions about
  - text form selected
  - information and ideas included or omitted
  - language used
- Teach students how to represent characters and events to create specific effects in literary texts.
- Teach students how to represent people and ideas to create specific effects in informational texts.
- Teach students the use of devices, and discuss how they may influence the audience, e.g., flashback, illustration size.
- Encourage students to use writing to influence change about social issues that concern them.
- Discuss how writers' knowledge, experiences, and perspective influence the composition of a text.

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., less common words, subject-specific words.
- Continue to build students' knowledge about words and word parts, e.g., prefixes, suffixes, homophones.
- Continue to build students' graphophonic knowledge, such as using less common sound–symbol relationships, e.g., o<u>ce</u>an, na<u>ti</u>on, fa<u>sh</u>ion.
- Extend students' knowledge of the use of punctuation, e.g., apostrophes, quotation marks.
- Extend students' knowledge and use of parts of speech and their relationships, e.g., noun–pronoun agreement.
- Teach students to construct and manipulate a variety of sentences, e.g., using conjunctions, using phrases and clauses.
- Teach students how to group sentences about similar information together to form a paragraph.
- Continue to build knowledge of different text forms, emphasizing
  - purpose, e.g., explanations explain phenomena
  - text structure, e.g., explanations use cause and effect
  - text organization, e.g., explanations include diagrams or cutaways
  - language features, e.g., explanations use signal words to show cause/effect

Processes and Strategies

- Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge, e.g., world knowledge, linguistic features.
- Continue to teach strategies used throughout the writing process, e.g., synthesizing.
- Continue to teach spelling strategies, e.g., using analogy.
- Continue to teach students to plan for writing in a variety of ways, e.g., graphic organizers, storyboards.
- Continue to teach students how to use revising, editing, and proofreading to refine their writing.
- Encourage students to select and use text product types that best suit purpose and audience, e.g., Web page, slide show, poster.
- Continue to teach students to find, record, and organize information from texts, e.g., using graphic organizers.
- Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.

Teaching and Learning Experiences

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTITUDE

Major Teaching Emphases

- **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., new forms, devices, vocabulary.

- **Encourage students to value writing as a social practice.**

Teaching Notes

A classroom community that supports and nurtures Transitional writers is supportive and challenging. As Transitional writers come to terms with the complexity of the writing process, there need to be many opportunities to experiment with new aspects of writing. The focus for developing positive attitudes towards writing as well as a supportive environment for Transitional writers is organized under the following headings:

- Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment
- Fostering Enjoyment of Writing
- Encouraging Experimentation
- Writing as a Social Practice

Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment

A supportive environment is an environment in which both the physical and cultural aspects of the classroom are considered. In a positive classroom climate, students have opportunities to use and combine print, oral, visual, and digital processes. These opportunities contribute to students' willingness and eagerness to write.

Physical environment

It is beneficial to construct a print-rich environment with Transitional writers. A diverse range of print, created and displayed,

will illustrate the many functions of print. Owocki (1999) classifies print in the following ways:

- *environmental*—print that gives information about the world, e.g., labels on maps, messages on the notice board
- *occupational*—print associated with jobs, e.g., print for a homemaker: could include catalogues, school newsletters, newspapers, Web pages
- *informational*—print for storing, retrieving, and organizing information, e.g., a homework schedule, a train timetable
- *recreational*—print for leisure activities, e.g., magazines, instructions for games, e-mails for socializing

Transitional writers need to be encouraged to use classroom print as a resource when creating their own texts. Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions present ideal opportunities to demonstrate how to use print from the environment to support writing.

Classroom culture

As well as providing appropriate materials and a carefully planned physical environment, it is important to consider how to create a positive writing culture in the classroom.

Develop such a culture for Transitional writers in any of the following ways.
- Encourage students to write for genuine purposes and audiences.
- Have high expectations of students and ensure that they know what these are.
- Provide opportunities for students to select their own topics, ways to plan, and publishing formats.
- If possible, provide a range of ICT resources for use in creating texts.
- Encourage students to take responsibility for refining their own writing.
- Allow time for students to share their writing with others.
- Value writing, and demonstrate this attitude to students.
- Establish, teach, and reinforce procedures for solving challenges during writing.
- Provide opportunities for students to assess their own work and that of peers and discuss the judgments they have made.
- Incorporate purposeful writing into all curriculum areas.

Fostering Enjoyment of Writing

It is important for Transitional writers to see writing as a purposeful and worthwhile social practice. Foster students' enjoyment of writing in the following ways.

- Provide opportunities for daily independent writing on topics of personal choice.
- Provide multiple demonstrations of the strategies effective writers use.
- If possible, provide opportunities for students to use a range of ICT resources when combining print, images, and sounds, e.g., computers, software programs, interactive whiteboards, digital cameras.
- Provide authentic writing experiences that are linked to students' interests and experiences, and have a clear purpose.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for students to take part in focused conversations about writing. These may happen in an informal way when students discuss their writing with a peer; Author's Chair provides for a more formalized opportunity to talk about writing and provides a supportive structure for this to take place.
- Encourage an interest in words. Allow students to play with words, do crosswords, and work out rules for doing them. Look at word sleuths, palindromes, words inside words, rebus words, and other word-study activities.
- Encourage and praise all attempts to spell new words, while helping students to aim for conventional spelling.
- Provide ongoing, targeted feedback and encouragement.
- Encourage students to publish their work online.
- Involve students in setting their own writing goals.
- Develop author sharing time with another class in the school where students can read their writing to an audience. If completed writing is left for others to read and make comments about it on a feedback sheet, students will see themselves as real writers.
- Provide comfortable and quiet spaces to encourage independent reading. Display students' writing alongside commercial publications.
- Read to students every day, exposing them to different literary and informational texts.
- If possible, have a range of software packages available for students to use, e.g., AppleWorks, Storybook Weaver Deluxe, Print Shop Deluxe.

Encouraging Experimentation

Transitional writers should be encouraged to reflect on ways to improve in selected focus areas and to experiment with all aspects of writing.

Invite students to
• explore writing in different forms and genres for real purposes
• choose their own topics
• use a variety of strategies when writing
• use a multistrategy spelling approach to write unknown words
• investigate words and their meanings
• extend their vocabulary
• discuss writing strategies and any discoveries made
• experiment with different technology to create multimodal texts, e.g., adding images
• experiment with colour, font size, style, animation, and special effects when using presentation software packages

Writing as a Social Practice

The focus when teaching writing in the classroom is to provide many real-world situations that require the use of written language. The ultimate goal is for students to function in society as literate individuals who can use writing to communicate their ideas, share information, stimulate thinking, encourage self-understanding, formulate questions, and influence policy and action.

Continue to provide opportunities where Transitional writers see themselves as writing for real reasons and able to influence the actions of others; for example, create and conduct a school survey on a particular issue and use the results to try to sway decision makers.

> For further information about Environment and Attitude, see *Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning*, Chapter 5: Establishing a Positive Teaching and Learning Environment.

USE OF TEXTS

- Continue to expose students to a range of text forms, and discuss the features of each.

- Provide opportunities for students to craft a range of texts for authentic purposes and audiences.

- Foster students' sense of voice and individual writing style.

- Continue to teach students the metalanguage associated with writing, and encourage its use.

Teaching Notes

The focus for helping Transitional writers in this substrand is organized under the following headings:
- Exposure to a Range of Text Forms
- Opportunities to Craft a Range of Texts
- Crafting Voice and Individual Style
- Using Metalanguage

Exposure to a Range of Text Forms

Transitional writers will benefit from ongoing opportunities to read, reread, interact with, and discuss a variety of increasingly sophisticated literary and informational texts. These may come from cross-curriculum areas, popular culture, the Internet, or the community. They could be multimodal, class-made, or published materials encompassing books, Web sites, e-mails, faxes, CD-ROMs, and software programs.

During Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions, show students how successful writers write in a range of text forms for different purposes, including these:
- to entertain, e.g., song lyrics, plays, myths
- to recount, e.g., biographies, autobiographies
- to describe, e.g., indexes, glossaries
- to socialize, e.g., SMS (Short Messaging System) messages, e-mails, chat-room conversations
- to explain, e.g., complaint forms, flowcharts, graphs
- to instruct, e.g., road directions, manuals
- to inquire, e.g., interview questions, surveys
- to persuade, e.g., expositions, job applications, advertisements

Opportunities to Craft a Range of Texts

Transitional writers benefit from being taught the writing skills that are valued and important for success at school and beyond. It is vital that students have a clear understanding of the purpose and intended audience for all their writing.

Although students are familiar with most aspects of the writing process, they will continue to gain from daily modelling of writing behaviours. Modelled, Shared, and Guided Writing sessions provide opportunities to demonstrate, discuss, and practise many aspects of writing. These could include any of the following:
• selecting different text forms for different purposes and audiences
• organizing texts
• structuring texts
• selecting information to be included in the text or in each paragraph
• using language features
• using headings, subheadings, diagrams, and graphs
• planning, drafting, refining, and publishing writing

Transitional writers may derive enjoyment and consolidate their skills and strategies by writing texts that have similar structure and language features. Doing this allows them to build understandings about a particular text form. However, if one type of text dominates a student's independent writing to the exclusion of all others, it is possible that that student may not become familiar with the structure, features, and vocabulary of a wider range of text forms. There are many ways to extend the repertoire of text forms students use.
• Provide a variety of contexts for writing by including writing in all curriculum areas, e.g., explanation in health, biography in art.
• Provide time for personal-choice writing.
• Collect, read, display, and analyze samples of different text forms.
• Construct frameworks with students as a starting point for planning to write a new form.
• Allow time for practice, then help students to assess their written work using the framework as a guide for discussion.
• Provide explicit feedback about particular aspects of students' writing.
• Arrange for authors to visit and discuss their craft.
• Encourage students to talk about their writing and to take responsibility for improving it.
• Continue reading aloud daily to expose students to new text forms.

- Provide both reading and oral-language programs that complement the writing program.
- Set up Author's Chairs in and between classes so that students can openly discuss their writing.

Crafting Voice and Individual Style

Many things, including a writer's purpose, world view, multiple identity, and culture, influence voice within text. Voice in writing is defined in several ways:

> Writing words that will make readers listen and be affected.
> —Tom Romano, 2004

> Voice is the imprint of ourselves on our writing.
> —Donald Graves, 1994

> Voice in writing has to do with a unique personality-on-paper. —
> —Ralph Fletcher, 1993

At this phase, it is important to help students continue to develop their understanding and use of voice. You can do this in a range of ways.

- Show and discuss examples of sentences, passages, or entire texts that demonstrate voice.
- Share samples of students' writing that have a strong sense of voice.
- Compare the voice in passages of writing. Discuss how it differs.
- Discuss how the author's voice creates interest.
- Read several books by one author and identify the voice, e.g., **the style and word choice**.
- Model how the choice of language can create or change voice, e.g., **formal and informal**.
- Discuss how sentence length can affect voice.
- Prompt students to return to journal entries and identify examples where their voice is evident.
- Have students identify and share a passage where an author's voice is strong.

Using Metalanguage

Students need to be supported in building a vocabulary that they can use to discuss and describe language, their own writing, and the writing process. The vocabulary used to talk about language is known as *metalanguage*, and when students are able to use it to talk competently about their own writing and learning, it helps them to

understand how language operates. Developing metalanguage also helps students to understand the support and feedback provided by teachers.

To help Transitional writers continue to expand and use terms associated with writing and written language, it is important to use metalanguage as part of everyday teaching: across curriculum areas, as part of targeted discussions, during explicit demonstrations, during one-on-one conversations with students, or as part of planned Modelled, Shared, Interactive, or Guided Writing sessions.

Certain terms tend to be more prominent when focusing on different substrands of writing. For example, when working with Transitional writers, consider the use of the following terms:
• Use of Texts: editorial, opinion, rhyming couplet
• Contextual Understanding: representation, validity, point of view
• Conventions: derivatives, word origins, cause and effect
• Processes and Strategies: refining, summarizing, questioning

In some school districts, Transitional writers would also focus on literacy devices, such as metaphor, simile, personification, and onomatopoeia.

For further information about the Use of Texts substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition:
• Chapter 1: Use of Texts
• Chapter 4: Processes and Strategies

Involving Students

1 2C2D (Collecting, Comparing, Displaying, Discussing)

2C2D refers to collecting, comparing, displaying, and discussing specific text forms or parts of texts for the purpose of analysis. Providing this opportunity gives students exposure to a range of text forms and the chance to discuss the features of each.

Apart from entire texts, students can collect samples of
• beginnings
• endings
• plot fragments
• settings
• character descriptions
• dialogue
• work by one author
• devices that authors use, e.g., similes, metaphors

Collecting is inspired by a personal interest, e.g., "I enjoyed the way this author wrote in a diary form, so I asked the librarian if there were any other books written like that." Collecting allows comparisons to be made between a variety of texts, such as books, movies, songs, poems, CD-ROMs, and Internet sites.

Comparing can be simply a mental process of comparing the features of texts, but it could be represented by a table, a diagram, an oral presentation, or a written piece, e.g., "I couldn't help but notice that both of these texts have similar beginnings—both of them use flashbacks." An innovative way of encouraging students to make comparisons is to provide a question to promote inquiry, for instance: "What do the stories x, y, and z have in common? They all have..."

Displaying representations of compared texts and text parts provides
• models: "You've now read three books that tell the story in the form of a flashback. What about trying that writing style when you next write a story?"
• ongoing referencing opportunities: "The television program that was on last night had the sort of characters described in the three books I compared in my 2C2D chart."
• inspiration: "I love the way that Thomas Rockwell uses humour in his books. I am going to keep a copy of these in my writing folder."

Discussing focuses on similarities and differences, including how and why a text is crafted in a particular way, e.g., Science fiction novels often start with an event that is happening in that time and then go back to tell us how that came to be.

– Direct students to collect over a given time examples of texts or parts of texts each containing a chosen criterion, e.g., dialogue.
– Provide time for them to individually compare the use of the criterion in the chosen texts.
– Have them represent their comparisons and display their representations.
– Provide time for them to discuss their comparisons.
– Encourage students to experiment with the chosen criterion in their own writing.

2 Read and Retell

Read and Retell (Brown and Cambourne 1989) is a simple activity that is flexible in its use. It provides an opportunity for students to develop an understanding of the purpose, audience, and structure of a text. Retelling requires Transitional writers to listen to or read a text, organize key information they have understood, then share and compare their retelling with others.

Retelling provides an excellent context in which to expose students to the features of a range of text forms and to use this knowledge when writing. Transitional writers can be involved in retelling both literary and informational texts. Students will benefit from creating different retellings.

• *Written text to written retelling*—students read a text and retell in writing.
• *Diagram to written retelling*—students "read" a diagram and retell in writing.
• *Drama to written retelling*—students view a dramatic presentation or a movie and retell it in writing.

The following procedure can be adapted to suit the purpose, context, focus, and form of the text being used.

– Select a text and display the title.
– Ask students to predict the plot and the vocabulary that may be used in the text. Prompt them to share their predictions in small groups.

– Direct the students to read the text.
– Allow them to reread it as many times as is necessary.
– Provide time for them to create a written retelling.
– Have them share retellings with a partner, in a small group, or with the whole class.
– Provide time for them to compare their retellings with a partner.

3 Writingo

Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, pages 143–44.

4 What's Your Opening Line?

What's Your Opening Line? helps students focus on the craft of writing effective introductions. It involves their analyzing and creating effective opening sentences with the goal of understanding that these help writers to catch the reader's attention and give a glimpse of what is to follow.

– Read aloud texts with a variety of types of opening sentences, e.g., a quote, a question, a statistic.
– Reread the opening lines and discuss the way each lead has been written.
– Have students group similar leads and create a label for each type.
– Display a selection of intriguing pictures, prints, or photographs.
– Have students work in pairs to write two or three different opening sentences for one of these. They should be encouraged to imitate the type of leads discovered in the previously read texts.
– Invite pairs to select the most effective opening sentence and share it with the whole class.
– Attach opening sentences to the pictures, prints, or photographs, and display them.
– Create a class chart of the types of leads discovered by the students.

Types of Leads

- Posing a question—What does international hockey bring to mind?
- Presenting a short retelling—The car careered off the road, smashed into a street light, and rolled onto the grass.
- Addressing the reader directly—Imagine standing at the top of the ski run.
- Providing a vivid description—He was wet, bedraggled, and forlorn looking as he stumbled towards the door.
- Starting with a quotation—"You will be fine," he said. "Diving is so easy."
- Taking a stand on a contentious issue—The logging of old growth forests is greed in action.
- Offering an interesting fact or statistic—Women in Canada have had legal status as persons just since 1929.
- Using a famous quote—"It ain't over till it's over."
- Stating an alarming fact—There are at least 250 million child labourers in the world today.
- Sharing an engaging story or showing an action—Potatoes soared through the air. Carrots were launched across the table with guided missile–like accuracy. It was lunch on the last day of camp, and we got ourselves into a lot of trouble.

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5 Everyday Poetry

Everyday Poetry (Rowe and Carter 1998) is a simple way for students to begin developing their own voice in writing. Students use everyday situations or events as a stimulus to create simple poems. The use of familiar topics allows them to express personal thoughts and feelings and to develop the use of voice in their writing.

– Introduce the guidelines or framework for creating an everyday poem (see the box at left below).
– Model the creation of an everyday poem.
– Have students follow the guidelines and create their own poems.
– Collect all their poems and read them aloud to the class. Invite students to discuss who they think wrote each one and why they chose that person. Discuss the evidence of the writer's voice.
– Create a class book of everyday poems that can be read during independent reading time.

> *Kids' Poems* is a series of books covering Kindergarten to Grade 4 by Regie Routman. The books feature free verse poems by young students and are intended to promote a love of writing poetry about things children know and care about.

Guidelines for an Everyday Poem

Write the name of a familiar situation or event.
Write something someone would say.
Write something you would say.
Write a noise you would hear.
Write something you would think.

Choose one line to repeat (as often as you wish).

Lunchtime
I want to go home!
Aarrrhh!
Not this again!
Aarrrhh!
Wish I could go and play.

Written by Sophia M.
Grade 5

Figure 7.2

6 Feelings

This activity helps Transitional writers to develop a sense of voice in their writing. Students read a variety of texts, then discuss and record the ways authors express the same feeling in different ways.

– Select passages that try to express a similar feeling, e.g., suspense, anger, happiness, loneliness, love.
– Read or have students read the selected texts.
– Have students identify words or phrases that helped them sense the feeling being expressed by each author. Discuss similarities and differences in the authors' voices.
– Invite students to write passages to express the same selected feeling, using voice to help portray this.
– Provide time for them to share passages and discuss the voices heard.

7 Authors' Apprentice

Authors' Apprentice provides Transitional writers with opportunities to practise writing particular parts of a text. It involves the teacher reading aloud to students, stopping at a chosen point, then inviting students to become apprentice writers. Students can complete a variety of parts of a text. Any of the following ideas are appropriate for Transitional writers:

• writing a sequel to a text read
• writing a prequel to a text read
• writing an alternative ending
• writing an alternative beginning
• changing the setting of an event
• adding a chapter to the text
• transforming a text into a different mode, medium, or text product type, e.g., **changing a book into a radio play**
• changing the time of the text, e.g., **to present, past, or future**

8 My Authority List

Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, page 149.

9 Become a Script Writer

Become a Script Writer provides the opportunity for students to prepare simple scripts from familiar texts. It involves their working in small groups to make decisions about how to create a performance reading of a text. Students create dialogue for each character based on the storyline presented.

For Transitional writers, script writing should begin with short, familiar literary texts with a range of characters and some action. Transitional writers will require ongoing modelling and scaffolding while creating the scripts.

– Have students read and reread the text.
– Organize them in small groups.
– Assign character and narrator roles.
– Discuss the difference between text to be read and a script to be performed, e.g., **actions are not included in a script.**
– Have each group list the key events that will take place in the performance.
– Provide time for each student to identify and highlight the parts of the text where a given character is involved.
– Have the whole group reread the text together, stopping at each part to discuss and record the dialogue that would be used. Students collaboratively write the script, including parts spoken by a narrator.

– Allow time for groups to rehearse and refine the performance reading of the prepared script.
– Provide an opportunity for students to present the reading to an audience.

10 Retelling from the Heart

Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, page 148.

11 E-pals

Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, page 151.

12 Choose Your Own Adventure Story

Writing Choose Your Own Adventure stories is a great way to help students understand how to create electronic texts containing hyperlinks and alternative pathways (see Figure 7.3). This activity allows students to see that texts can be non-linear and non-sequential. Groups of four work together to determine the settings, time, and main characters for a narrative, pose questions, and develop possible scenarios to complete the text.

– Divide the class into groups of four. In each group, label the students A, B, C, and D.
– Provide each group with seven cards labelled as Introduction, Scenario 1, Scenario 2, Ending 1, Ending 2, Ending 3, Ending 4.
– Have the group work together to create the introduction to their story. In this section, they establish the setting, the time, and the main characters.
– Direct students to finish this section with a question that requires a yes or no answer, e.g., Will Sarah go to the party?
– Have students A and B work together to write the events for Scenario 1 as if the answer to the question is yes; have students C and D write the events for Scenario 2 as if the answer to the question is no.
– Ensure that each pair finishes a scenario with another yes/no question.
– Assign to each student in the group the writing of an ending.
– Provide time for each to write an ending to follow a yes or a no answer.
– Arrange to show students how to publish their texts on a school Web site, using hyperlinks between the sections.

Once students are familiar with creating Choose Your Own Adventure stories in small groups, they can be challenged to begin creating their own hypertexts.

INTRODUCTION

Students work in groups of 4: A B C D

YES
SCENARIO 1
Students work in pairs: A B

NO
SCENARIO 2
Students work in pairs: C D

Students work individually
to create 4 endings.

YES
ENDING
Student A

NO
ENDING
Student B

YES
ENDING
Student C

NO
ENDING
Student D
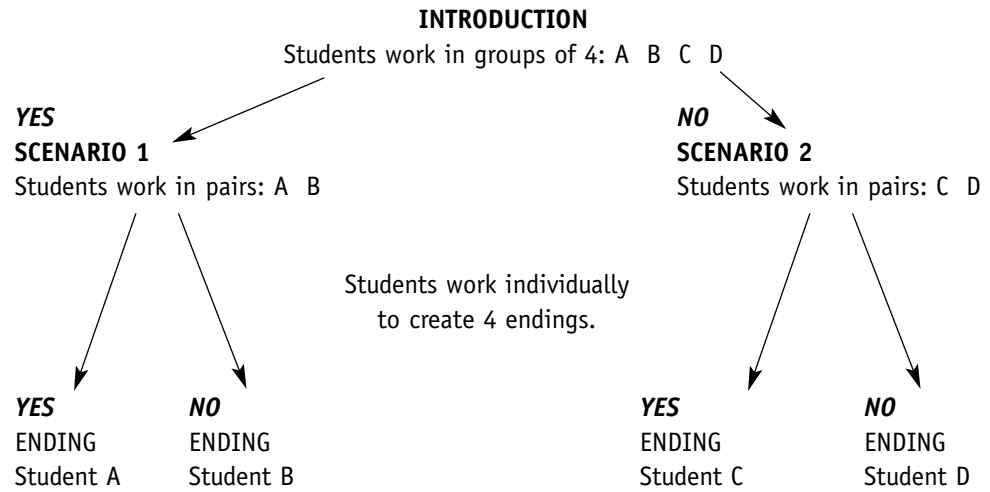
Figure 7.3 A sample flowchart for a Choose Your Own Adventure Story

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Major Teaching Emphases

- **Discuss some of the reasons writers choose one particular text form over others.**

- **Encourage students to explain their decisions about**
  – **text form selected**
  – **information and ideas included or omitted**
  – **language used**

- **Teach students how to represent characters and events to create specific effects in literary texts.**

- **Teach students how to represent people and ideas to create specific effects in informational texts.**

- **Teach students the use of devices, and discuss how they may influence the audience,** e.g., flashback, illustration size.

- **Encourage students to use writing to influence change about social issues that concern them.**

- **Discuss how writers' knowledge, experiences, and perspective influence the composition of a text.**

Teaching Notes

The focus for helping Transitional writers to develop contextual understanding in writing is organized under the following headings:
- Choosing Text Forms
- Exploring Decisions Writers Make
- Representing Characters and Events in Literary Texts
- Representing People and Ideas in Informational Texts
- Use of Devices
- Writing to Influence Social Issues
- Discussing the Writer's World View

Choosing Text Forms

While Transitional writers understand that different text forms have different purposes, the focus in this phase is on discussing which text form best suits a particular purpose and audience, and why. Discussions could include scenarios where students need to justify which form they would choose in different situations. For example, students could discuss which text form would be most appropriate for situations such as the following:

- describing how you completed a science experiment
- thanking your Grandma for a birthday present
- remembering the items you need to buy from a convenience store
- persuading the school council to buy more balls for play at recess

Transitional writers need support to make adjustments in their writing as they broaden their understanding of audience needs and expectations. They benefit from crafting texts for a range of audiences, including audiences where the effect on the reader may be unknown, for example, writing a letter to the editor.

Exploring Decisions Writers Make

It is important for Transitional writers to understand the impact that purpose and audience have on the choices a writer makes about text form, content, and language. The focus in this phase is to support students to make informed choices as they write.

Transitional writers benefit from opportunities for ongoing conversations about the decisions authors and illustrators make when creating texts. Modelled, Shared, and Interactive Writing sessions provide opportunities to demonstrate the types of questions authors ask themselves, and how they make choices about these questions.

> Thinking aloud about decisions authors and illustrators might make and how they arrive at those decisions is very helpful for students to hear.

Purpose and audience
- Why am I writing this text?
- Who is my target audience?
- What do I know about my audience? (age, gender, interests)
- What does my audience want or need to know?
- What will my audience/reader expect to see in this text?
- What will I do to appeal to the audience?

Form and organization
- What text form will I choose?
- What organizational features can I incorporate?
- How will the reader expect to see this set out?
- What is the best way to present or publish this information?

Content
- What information needs to be included or left out?
- What points do I want to make?
- From what or whose point of view will I write?
- What is the most appropriate language to use?
- Do I need to find further information?
- What resources could I use to find relevant information?

During these sessions, discussions and demonstrations should include the use of Think-Alouds and metalanguage.

Representing Characters and Events in Literary Texts

Discussions during Shared and Guided Reading sessions will help Transitional writers to consolidate understandings that authors create specific effects by the way they represent characters and events. Shared and Guided Writing sessions provide opportunities for students to be supported in making decisions about how they will represent characters and events to create specific effects in literary texts.

- What special effect do I want to create in this text? (e.g., a mean character)
- How will I represent this character in the text?
- What language will I use to represent the character?
- What events will happen in this text?
- How will my text end?
- If I include illustrations, how will they support the specific effect?

Beyond the opportunities to consolidate understanding that Shared and Guided Reading sessions provide, there may, of course, be one-on-one opportunities through teacher–student conferences.

Representing People and Ideas in Informational Texts

Discussions during Shared and Guided Reading sessions will help Transitional writers to consolidate understandings that authors create specific effects by the way they represent people or facts. Shared and Guided Writing sessions provide opportunities for students to be supported in making decisions about how they will represent facts or people to create specific effects in informational texts.

- How will I represent the people in this text?
- Do I know any real people like the person I am representing? How are they the same? How are they different?
- What words will I use to represent the person in this text?
- What is the purpose of writing this text?
- What facts do I want to include in this text?
- What facts do I want to exclude from the text?
- Am I representing the facts accurately?

Use of Devices

Through focused reading experiences, Transitional writers will be aware that authors and illustrators use different linguistic and print devices, depending upon audience and purpose. During Shared and Guided Reading, discussing the devices, speculating on the author's reasons for choosing them, and assessing their effectiveness will give Transitional writers a deeper understanding of how devices have impact on readers' interpretation of texts. In this phase, the focus is to teach students how to use some of these devices in the texts they create and to consider their possible effect.

Model and encourage the use of devices such as
- choice of language, e.g., **descriptive, emotive**
- inclusion or omission of details,
- foreshadowing, or giving a hint of things to come (e.g., **As he lay waiting, he heard a noise through the open window.**)
- understatement, used to downplay the gravity of a situation (e.g. **"I'm fine," muttered Lionel as he tried to stem the flow of blood above his eye.**)
- opinions disguised as facts, e.g., **It has been widely reported that...**
- statistics, e.g., **seventy-five percent of children surveyed...**
- choice of print size
- font selection
- choice of colour
- including appropriate amount of detail
- size of characters, tables, or diagrams relative to others

Writing to Influence Social Issues

As Transitional writers begin to develop an understanding that writers draw on their social and cultural lives to analyze and represent the world around them, they can be encouraged to write not only about topics that interest them, but also about social issues. Students should be encouraged to maintain involvement in issues that matter—or that bother or confuse them. As part of group social-action projects, students can be encouraged to create a range of texts, such as posters, Web sites, letters to the editor, surveys, petitions, and pamphlets.

Discussing the Writer's World View

Opportunities to discuss a writer's world view can be used to build Transitional writers' understanding of how one's knowledge, experiences, and perspectives influence the creation of a text.
- What experiences have you drawn upon to create this text?
- What do you know about this topic?
- Why did you choose to represent...in such a way?
- From whose point of view have you written the text? Why did you do this?
- From what other point of view could the text have been written? How would this change the text?
- How do you think your background has affected the way you wrote the text?

For further information about the Contextual Understanding substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 2: Contextual Understanding.

Involving Students

1 Interviewing

Participating in Interviewing supports Transitional writers in building information they can use when making decisions about how characters or people are represented.

Interviewing involves pairs role-playing an interview situation. One student takes the role of a character or person, while the other asks the questions. The student role-playing the character or person is required to respond orally to the questions. Students conducting the interviews need to create questions to find out about the character. It is important to model the types of questions that will help students focus on finding out details about the character or person's actions, feelings, and behaviours.

Students would benefit from watching and analyzing several interviews before this activity and then discussing the types of questions and answers that elicited the most information about the interviewees.

– Organize students in pairs. Have them develop a plan for creating a text together. This plan should include a list of characters or people.
– Each pair selects a main character or person from their list.
– They work together to develop appropriate questions to elicit information about the chosen character or person. Questions might relate to likes, dislikes, fears, hobbies, habits, hopes, dreams, strengths, and relationships.
– Provide time for the students to conduct their interview.
– Provide them with a line master to record decisions about how the character or person will be represented (see Figure 7.4).
– Provide time for them to write the text, incorporating the decisions made about the character or person.

> **Contextual Understanding**
> **Involving Students**
> 1 Interviewing
> 2 Changing the Point of View
> 3 Spot the Devices
> 4 Text Innovation
> 5 Imitate the Author
> 6 Characters Come Alive
> 7 Buy, Buy, Buy!
> 8 Picture Clues
> 9 Key Moments
> 10 Highlighting the Senses
> 11 You Be the Artist
> 12 Writer's Notebook
> 13 What's the Theme?

Figure 7.4

2 Change the Point of View

Change the Point of View provides students with the opportunity to discuss a text, identify the point of view from which it is written, and consider how it would change if written from a different point of view. After discussions, students are encouraged to re-create texts or excerpts from a different point of view.

– After students read a text, discuss whose point of view is represented in it. Ask students to identify sections of the text that led them to their conclusions.
– Discuss with them whose point of view is not presented.
– Arrange students in small groups and have them discuss a particular event from a different point of view, e.g., **that of another character or a group not represented in the text.**
– Have students write an account of the event from the different point of view chosen.
– Invite several groups to share their writing, explaining aspects that they adapted to suit the new point of view.

3 Spot the Devices

In Spot the Devices, writers hunt for words, expressions, or images that have been used by an author or illustrator in an attempt to influence the reader. Newspapers, magazines, travel brochures, and catalogues are ideal texts to use for this activity. Students can then be encouraged to create their own advertisements, newspaper reports, catalogues, or magazine articles replicating the use of a range of devices.

– Select an extract from a known text. Have students hunt for and highlight words, expressions, or images and speculate why they have been chosen to influence the reader.
– Use an overhead projector to highlight the particular words and phrases.
– Invite students to discuss the words, expressions, or images, speculating about the author or illustrator's intent.
– Prompt them to use the devices discovered to create a similar text.

4 Text Innovation

Text innovation refers to the process of adapting or changing a text created by another author. By completing text-innovation activities with a contextual understanding focus, students can change the audience, change the setting, and adapt characters and their traits.

They will develop an understanding of the devices used by authors and decisions they make when creating texts.

– Select a text for the innovation.
– Have students read the text several times.
– Select a feature that could be innovated upon. Innovations could involve
  – changing the gender of one of the characters
  – substituting characters for original characters, e.g., **the main character becoming a child, an old man, an heiress, or a journalist**
  – changing a character's traits, e.g., **instead of a naughty child, a well-behaved child**
  – changing the setting, e.g., **from an urban to a rural area**
  – changing the time of the text, e.g., **setting it in the future**
  – changing the dialogue between characters
  – changing the socio-cultural group, age, occupation, values, or beliefs of the main character
– Organize students in small groups to create the new text.
– Invite several groups to read their text innovation to the whole class.
– Have students compare the original text with new versions, justifying which they prefer and why.
– Identify and discuss how the changes made affected the creation of the whole text.
  – If the nationality of a character changed, how was the language changed to suit?
  – If the beliefs of a character changed, was there any effect on the events?
  – When a character's socio-cultural group was changed, how was the text changed?
  – What changes happened when the setting or time of the text was altered?

> As noted in Chapter 7 of *Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning*, text innovation is a way of scaffolding. Students use the works of authors as a base from which to experiment with text.

5 Imitate the Author

Imitate the Author provides opportunities for Transitional writers to examine a range of texts written by the same author. Students make generalizations about the devices used to influence audiences and then try to imitate the author's style in their own writing.

– After sharing a text, discuss different aspects of it. For literary texts, students could examine the language, style, theme, or target audience. For informational texts, they could examine the word choice, the selection of details, or the point of view presented.

– As more texts by this author are analyzed, have students record observations on the line master provided (see Figure 7.5).

first steps

Writing Map of Development, p. 207

Name: Amanda H.   Date: Dec. 10

Imitate the Author

AUTHOR: Lemony Snicket

Text	Target Audience	Language	Theme	Style	Devices
The Bad Beginning	10-14 year olds	uses weird words and explains what they mean	Tragic events of the three	Posh	Humour
The Reptile Room	10-14 year olds		children who are all	describes absolutely	amount of detail
The Miserable Mill	10-14 year olds		related to each other.	everything.	
The Grim Grotto	10-14 year olds			unhappy events	

My paragraph using the writing style of __Lemony Snicket__

If you have picked this book up in hopes that it will have happy events than you will need to reconsider your choice. This book only contains miserable events that happen to three young siblings.

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Figure 7.5

– Encourage them to discuss, compare, and make generalizations about the author's style and the devices used.
– Challenge the students to write a paragraph imitating the style of this author.

6 Characters Come Alive

Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, pages 159–60.

7 Buy, Buy, Buy!

Buy, Buy, Buy! involves the critical analysis of advertisements in order to determine the devices authors use to influence different audiences. Students make generalizations about them and then try to use similar devices when creating their own advertisements.

Before to conducting this activity, have students collect a wide range of advertisements from different contexts, such as junk mail, newspapers, and magazines.

– Create small groups and supply each group with three or four advertisements.
– Have each group discuss the advertisements and record the intended audience (considering age, gender, and interest) and the devices used to attract the reader's attention.
– As a whole class, cluster the advertisements according to target audience, e.g., **young children, males, teenaged girls.**

– Provide a cluster to each group. Have students analyze the advertisements, record common devices used, and speculate why those devices were chosen for that target audience.
– Prompt students to select another product appropriate for their target audience and provide time for them to create an advertisement incorporating the devices discovered during their analysis.
– Have groups share their new advertisements with the whole class and highlight the devices used.

8 Picture Clues

Picture Clues provides students with the opportunity to discover how their own knowledge, experiences, and perspectives influence the creation of their texts. This activity involves students re-creating a written text based on seeing only the illustrations or diagrams.

– Ask the students to work in small groups.
– Provide a copy of a selected text to each group, having first covered all words, leaving only pictures and diagrams visible. It is important that students have not previously read the text.
– Provide time for the groups to create the text for each page.
– Have each group read and compare their written pieces with those of other groups.
– Share the original text with the whole class.
– Provide time to discuss the similarities and differences in the texts, and the possible reasons why the differences exist.

9 Key Moments

Key Moments encourages students to use their own knowledge, experiences, and perspectives to speculate on the thoughts of a character in a text. It invites students to focus on one character at a selected key moment in the text and to write as if they were that character.

– Read or have students read a selected text.
– As a whole class, select one character from the text and identify key moments for that character.
– Select one of the key moments, e.g., **Harry Potter finds out he is a wizard**, and model *burst writing*, or uninterrupted writing for two minutes, from the character's perspective, at the selected key moment. It may encompasses thoughts, feelings, wishes, regrets, disappointments, plans, and general reactions.

- Have students select another key moment from those identified and complete two minutes of burst writing.
- Create a class book with the pieces of burst writing sorted under the key moments.

Extension
Identify one key moment and have each student burst-write from different characters' perspectives. Discussions can centre on the different perspective each character has at that key moment.

10 Highlighting the Senses
Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, page 158.

11 You Be the Artist
Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, pages 158–59.

12 Writer's Notebook
Refer to Chapter 8: Conventional Writing Phase, page 252.

13 What's the Theme?
Refer to Chapter 8: Conventional Writing Phase, page 252.

CONVENTIONS

Major Teaching Emphases

- **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., less common words, subject-specific words.

- **Continue to build students' knowledge about words and word parts,** e.g., prefixes, suffixes, homophones.

- **Continue to build students' graphophonic knowledge, such as using less common sound–symbol relationships,** e.g., o<u>ce</u>an, na<u>ti</u>on, fa<u>shi</u>on.

- **Extend students' knowledge of the use of punctuation,** e.g., apostrophes, quotation marks.

- **Extend students' knowledge and use of parts of speech and their relationships,** e.g., noun–pronoun agreement.

- **Teach students to construct and manipulate a variety of sentences,** e.g., using conjunctions, using phrases and clauses.

- **Teach students how to group sentences about similar information together to form a paragraph.**

- **Continue to build knowledge of different text forms, emphasizing**
  - **purpose,** e.g., explanations explain phenomena
  - **text structure,** e.g., explanations use cause and effect
  - **text organization,** e.g., explanations include diagrams or cutaways
  - **language features,** e.g., explanations use signal words to show cause/effect

Teaching Notes

The focus for supporting Transitional writers in this substrand is organized under the following headings:
- Developing Vocabulary
- Building Word Knowledge
- Building Graphophonic Knowledge
- Understanding Conventions of Grammar
- Building Text-Form Knowledge

Developing Vocabulary

All students, when they arrive at school, already have an oral vocabulary based on the speech variety and experiences at home. Research has shown that vocabulary acquisition is crucial to academic development (Baker, Simmons, and Kameenui 1998), so it is important for teachers to ensure that Transitional writers have every opportunity to expand their vocabularies across a broad range of contexts and experiences.

Reading provides models of rich language that help students to learn many new words, and writing provides authentic contexts for them to use those words and develop ownership of them.

Transitional writers can be supported in developing their vocabulary in the following ways:
- modelling the use of language in different contexts
- introducing subject-specific vocabulary across the curriculum, e.g., the language of science and technology
- valuing existing speech variety if non-standard or in an additional language or dialect
- providing experiences through activities outside the classroom e.g., trips, and activities inside the classroom, e.g., manipulating materials, inviting guest speakers, or capitalizing on any impromptu events
- discussing written words at every opportunity, pointing out the author's choice and why it is the best fit in the context
- involving students in meaningful problem-solving activities, word games, and investigations
- jointly constructing Word Walls featuring the words students are learning
- providing opportunities for students to read and write for a range of purposes
- immersing students in a range of texts
- using a rich vocabulary in all contexts
- developing language across all curriculum areas, e.g., music

Building a bank of words that are automatically spelled and used

At all phases of development, students copy, recall, and try to spell words during independent writing. The bank of words that can be automatically spelled and used can be made up of high-frequency words, personally significant words, topic or theme words, or signal words.

Exploring and using these words in reading, writing, and any cross-curriculum activities will help to reinforce their recognition and use. For some students, ongoing systematic instruction is essential to help them develop automaticity; for others, the repeated reading and writing of texts helps them develop the ability to spell a bank of words automatically.

In this phase, it is important to build on the bank of words that students already know. For Transitional writers, include the following:

High-frequency words
These occur frequently in written texts; sources include *Five Hundred Words Most Frequently Used in Children's Writing* (Gentry and Gillet 1993), *One Hundred High Frequency Words* (Fountas and Pinnell 1998), and *One Hundred Most Frequent Words in Writing* (Routman 2000).

Personally significant words
These words are significant to a student personally, e.g., words associated with an interest or hobby.

Topic or theme words
These words are related to topics, themes, or subject areas being studied, such as
• English, e.g., journal, audience, argument, debate
• Mathematics, e.g., volume, length, position, calculate
• Science, e.g., mammal, experiment, carnivore
• Health, e.g., healthy, behaviour, responsibility
• Technology, e.g., systems, investigate, technology

Signal words
These are associated with text forms and text structures; they signal the relationships between ideas in the text, e.g., therefore, before, although, because.

In this phase, students can take responsibility for keeping a spelling journal to record words they already know and words they wish to learn. The use of Have-a-Go pads will encourage writers to generate alternative spellings to unknown words.

Building Word Knowledge

As students' understanding of graphophonics expands, it is essential to extend their knowledge of words, word parts, and how words work. It is important to build their word awareness through experiences such as discovering generalizations, participating in open-ended activities, and playing with words.

The following list may provide a focus for supporting Transitional writers:

• suffixes, e.g., ing, ed
• prefixes, e.g., un, dis
• plural endings, e.g., s, es, ies
• homophones, e.g., their, there
• contractions, e.g., wasn't, don't
• compound words, e.g., breakfast

Building Graphophonic Knowledge

Graphophonic knowledge is the understanding of sound–symbol relationships as they apply to the alphabetic principle of written language.

Transitional writers will draw on their knowledge of the different sound–symbol representations when trying to spell unknown words or to proofread their writing. The focus for Transitional writers is on the following graphophonic understandings using less common letter patterns.

• One sound can be represented with different letters or letter combinations, e.g., ocean, nation, fashion.
• Different sounds can be represented with the same letters or letter combinations, e.g., obedient, soldier, society.

Understanding Conventions of Grammar

At all phases of development, it is important to draw attention to the conventions of grammar used in a range of texts. Conventions include those associated with punctuation, parts of language, sentence structure, and overall text construction. It is important that these conventions are introduced, revisited, and practised in meaningful contexts. Modelled and Shared Reading and Writing provide a springboard for exploring many of them.

Punctuation and parts of speech

It is beneficial for Transitional writers to be able to use, talk about, and understand the following aspects:

• punctuation, e.g., commas, hyphens, brackets, quotation marks
• the function and relationship of parts of speech, e.g., prepositions; present, past, and future tense; active and passive verbs

Constructing sentences

Students in this phase continue to benefit from knowing how to construct and manipulate a variety of sentences, including statements, questions, commands, or exclamations. Transitional

writers can be encouraged to create both simple, compound, and complex sentences.
- Sentences can be joined to add variety and make the text flow.
- The order of phrases and clauses in sentences can be varied to add interest to writing.
- The length of sentences helps to create specific effects, e.g., short sentences for excitement.

Forming paragraphs

Paragraphs are the basic unit of organization in writing. A paragraph usually includes a number of sentences that contain related information. Students in this phase benefit from continued modelling and support in how to group together sentences about similar things.

Transitional writers will benefit from a focus on developing and refining their understanding of the following characteristics of paragraphs.
- Paragraphs have a topic sentence that concisely states the key point.
- The sentences that follow the topic sentence are called *supporting sentences*; they contain facts, details, or examples that expand on the topic or give more information.
- Paragraphs may have a closing sentence that reiterates the main point.

Building Text-Form Knowledge

Building students' knowledge about text form helps them to successfully construct a range of texts and to understand the purpose, structure, and organization of those texts. Students benefit from reading different examples of the same text form, making comparisons, and identifying defining features.

Modelled, Shared, and Guided Reading and Writing sessions provide an opportunity for Transitional writers to discuss and extend their knowledge about the conventions of the structure, organization, and language features of a range of text forms. These sessions can also include a focus on texts that break the rules to achieve a specific purpose or to enhance impact; for example, a literary text may be used to persuade, or a procedural text to entertain.

Knowledge about text forms includes understanding the purpose, audience, text organization, text structure, and language features of a particular form.

Purpose

All texts are written and read for a reason. The purpose may be to entertain, as in most literary texts, or to explain, describe, or inquire, as in some informational texts. Understanding the purpose of a writing event will help students to make decisions about text organization and structure, and the language used.

Students need to be exposed to a range of texts written for a variety of purposes. Transitional writers should be encouraged to create texts for a range of purposes. For a list of forms related to purposes, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1, page 27.

Text organization

Text organization refers to the way a text is organized—the framework and features. Transitional writers will benefit from understanding text-form frameworks: for example, a narrative may include an introduction to orient the reader, conflict, and resolution.

Transitional writers can be introduced to the function, terminology, and use of a range of organizational, or text, features, such as
• headings and subheadings
• captions
• diagrams and other visual aids (photographs, graphs, tables, cross-sections)
• tables of contents and indexes
• glossaries
• paragraphs
• hyperlinks

It is important to encourage Transitional writers to use appropriate organizational features in their own texts. For a list of further organizational features in different texts, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1, under each Social Purpose.

Text structure

Text structure refers to the way ideas, feelings, or information are linked within a text. These could include
• problem and solution
• compare and contrast
• cause and effect
• listing: logical or chronological sequence, enumeration, collection of details

Transitional writers will benefit from being exposed to a variety of text forms that use different text structures. Encourage writers to use a variety of structures in their own texts.

Language features

The term *language features* refers to the type of vocabulary and grammar used in a text. Each text form has specific language features that are appropriate to it. For example, an explanation may include the following features:
• generalized participants, e.g., volcanoes, cyclones
• mainly action verbs, e.g., falls, rises, erupts
• some passive verbs, e.g., is saturated, was caused
• timeless present tense, e.g., are, happens, turns
• signal words to show time, e.g., finally, following

Students can be introduced to appropriate language features in the context of learning about new forms of writing. For a detailed description of language features linked to text forms, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1, under each Social Purpose.

> For further information about the Conventions substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition:
> • Chapter 3: Conventions
> • Chapter 1: Use of Texts

Involving Students

1 Word Cline

A Word Cline helps students to build, refine, and use new vocabulary as they generate synonyms and discuss connotations and nuances of meaning. They generate words with similar meaning and arrange them to show a graduating intensity, according to a given criterion.

– Select a relevant key word, e.g., family. It is important for students to be able to generate at least four synonyms for the chosen key word.
– Have students generate synonyms (or words that are closely related) for the key word, e.g., relatives, people, folks, ancestors, relations. These could be recorded on the line master.
– Invite students to arrange the words in rising intensity against a criterion such as distant relationship to close relationship.
– Organize students in small groups to discuss the words and reach a consensus about the order of the arrangement.

Conventions Involving Students
1 Word Cline
2 Words, Words, Words
3 Secret Messages
4 What Comes Next?
5 Sound Hunter
6 Word Stems
7 Word Observations
8 Word Challenge
9 Base Words Plus
10 Vocabulary Squares
11 Sentence Reduction
12 Sentence Transformation
13 Alliterative Sentences
14 Changing the Meaning
15 Scrambled Paragraph
16 Writing a Hamburger
17 Generic Games

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- Have them reflect on the factors that influenced the choice of placement.
- As a whole class, discuss how the use of the different words from the Word Cline could have an impact on writing.
- Provide time for students to review a selected piece of their own writing and identify vocabulary that could be replaced with more specific words.

2 Words, Words, Words

Participating in this activity helps Transitional writers to identify different parts of speech—such as adjectives, nouns, and verbs—in sentences, and the role each plays in writing. In Words, Words, Words, students analyze text and make generalizations about the use of a selected part of speech.

- Highlight a selected part of speech in a chosen text, e.g., **all the adjectives**.
- Have students read the text and discuss, in small groups, the function of the highlighted words.
- Encourage them to explore the position of the highlighted word or words in each sentence.
- Provide time for them to create a definition of the selected part of speech.
- Invite students to share their definitions with the class and come to consensus on a class definition. Ensure that the vocabulary used by the students forms part of the definition.
- Include some examples on a collaboratively created class chart.
- Encourage students to use the selected part of speech in their own writing.

3 Secret Messages
Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, page 168.

4 What Comes Next?
Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, pages 169–70.

5 Sound Hunter
Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, page 169.

6 Word Stems
Word Stems involves students in investigating how words are related by examining the meaning of common parts. Having knowledge of word stems helps students to build vocabulary and to use knowledge of meaning when trying to spell unknown words.

– Select a word from a current classroom context and highlight the word stem, e.g., <u>tele</u>phone.
– Discuss the meaning of the word, referring back to the text.
– Ask students to brainstorm any other words that have the same word stem. List the words and their meanings, e.g., <u>tele</u>scope—an instrument for looking at distant objects; <u>tele</u>vision—an object that shows images of distant objects or events; <u>tele</u>photo lens—a lens that is able to take shots of distant objects.
– Have students infer the meaning of the word stem from the collected definitions.
– Record the words and their meaning on a class chart.
– Challenge students to find other words with the same stem.

7 Word Observations

Word Observations (Brand 2004) encourages students to look closely at a range of features of selected words. Observing words and sharing discoveries helps Transitional writers to make spelling generalizations and strengthen their vocabularies.

– Select a class word to observe, e.g., **environment**.
– Demonstrate the spelling of the word. Have students record it.
– Provide time for students to observe the word and record any features in it that are meaningful to them (see Figure 7.6).
– Invite them to share observations with the whole class. Record and discuss all observations.
– As students become more familiar with Word Observations, time can be provided each day for them to record observations about self-selected words.
– Create a class chart that lists the types of observations that can be made about words. See "Observing Words" below.
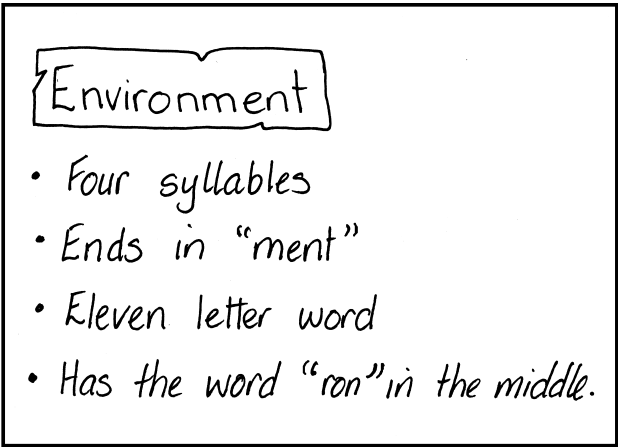
Environment

• Four syllables
• Ends in "ment"
• Eleven letter word
• Has the word "ron" in the middle.

Observing Words
• What part of speech is it?
• Does the word have a base or root word?
• How many syllables?
• How many letters?
• Any particular letter patterns?
• Is it a compound word?

Figure 7.6

8 Word Challenge

Word Challenge is designed to help students build vocabulary and use new words in meaningful contexts. It involves a student presenting a word of the day to the class; the word of the day is explained and used in a sentence by the student setting the challenge. Other students are then challenged to spell the word.

- Provide time for the selected student to present the new word and the challenge to the class. Ensure that the meaning of the word is explained. If a word has more than one meaning, these must be presented.
- Provide time for students to try spelling the new word.
- Discuss the strategies used to spell the word, e.g., **breaking the word into parts; using knowledge of what sounds are represented by what letters; noting the position of sounds in the word; noting small words in bigger words; and knowing words with similar meanings.**
- Record the class consensus spelling of the word.
- Invite the selected student to check the class spelling of the word, highlighting correct and incorrect features.
- Encourage all students to use the new word at least three times during the day, either orally or in writing.
- The new word can be added to a Word Wall.

9 Base Words Plus

Base Words Plus is an open-ended activity that provides students with an opportunity to work at their own level to create and investigate the spelling of new words. Transitional writers enjoy the challenge of creating as many words as possible by adding prefixes and suffixes to a given base word.

- Provide students with a focus base word and a selection of prefixes and suffixes.
- Provide guidelines for the creation of words, e.g., **all words must include the base word; the last letter of the base word may be changed or deleted when adding suffixes; all words must be real words.**
- Challenge students to make as many new words as possible in a given time by adding prefixes or suffixes (or both) to the base word.
- Provide time for students to share their words and reflect upon the lists of words created. Have them investigate the meanings of the new words and their relationship to the base word.
- Encourage students to search for other words that use the base word.
- Share spelling discoveries made about adding prefixes or suffixes to a focus base word.

10 Vocabulary Squares

Creating Vocabulary Squares (Burke 2000) helps writers further develop their understanding of the spelling of selected words used in their writing. In this activity, students complete a Vocabulary Squares line master (see Figure 7.7), recording information about a chosen word.

– Provide students with a Vocabulary Squares line master.
– Provide time for each student to select a word for Vocabulary Squares. The word chosen should be one that the student has difficulty remembering how to spell.
– The student then records the selected word in the centre and completes each section.
– Encourage students to share discoveries with a partner.

Figure 7.7

11 Sentence Reduction

Sentence Reduction helps students create concise sentences that do not contain irrelevant details. In this activity, students are challenged to see if they can take away parts of a sentence without losing meaning or important information.

– Provide students with a sentence containing superfluous information and multiple details. Write each word of the sentence on a separate card.
– Have students read the sentence and select one word or phrase at a time to be removed.
– Ensure that the sentence is read in its entirety after each word or phrase is removed, to check for meaning.
– Challenge students to reduce the sentence to the smallest possible unit.
– Repeat this process with additional sentences.
– Provide time for students to identify sentences in their own writing that need reduction, to make the reductions, and to share the refinements with others.

12 Sentence Transformation

Students will benefit from activities in which they transform sentences. It is most appropriate to focus on one type of transformation at a time. Students can be challenged to do this in a range of ways:
- changing words from singular to plural (or vice versa)
    - Kate is eating an orange.
    - Kate and Simon are eating oranges.
- changing the tense of the sentence to present, past, or future
    - I am going for a swim.
    - I went for a swim.
    - I will go for a swim.
- changing a statement to a question
    - Morning break is at 10 a.m.
    - Is morning break at 10 a.m.?
- making an affirmative statement negative
    - I'll drive my car to the grocery store.
    - I won't drive my car to the grocery store.

13 Alliterative Sentences

Alliterative Sentences involves students in constructing and manipulating sentences. It is an excellent activity to help them expand vocabulary and spell new words. The students work in groups: each group writes the first word of a sentence, then passes it on to other groups who, in turn, add words. The challenge is to see how many words in the sentence can start with the same letter.

- Divide the class into small groups. Give each group an envelope and a number of blank cards.
- Ask each group to record on a card a noun (singular or plural) that represents a person or an animal, e.g., skydiver, moose.
- Direct each group to put their card in the envelope and pass it to the next group.
- Have each group read the new card and add another word that will make a complete sentence, e.g., Moose move.
- The two words are then put back in the envelope and passed on.
- The next group reads the new sentence and adds another word to make a different sentence. e.g., Marvellous moose move.
- Continue this process, with each group adding words or phrases.
- When the envelope returns to the original group, provide time to share the final sentence, e.g.,Marvellous, mild-mannered moose move memorably up the mountain.
- Discuss the parts of speech contained in each sentence.

14 Changing the Meaning

It is beneficial to provide Transitional writers with opportunities to explore the effect of different conjunctions in sentences. Changing the Meaning helps enable students to select the most appropriate conjunctions in their own writing.

– Provide students with a sentence stem, e.g., **The terrified child rolled down the hill...**
– Brainstorm a list of conjunctions that could be used as a linking word to complete the sentence, e.g., **because, when, after, while, but.**
– Record sentences suggested by students, e.g., **The terrified child rolled down the hill while her mother stood at the top and screamed.**
– Discuss the effect the conjunction had on the meaning of the sentence.
– Provide a new sentence stem and invite small groups to brainstorm conjunctions.
– Provide time for groups to create sentences using each of the conjunctions.

15 Scrambled Paragraph

Completing this activity provides students with the opportunity to reconstruct a paragraph that has been cut into sentences. Students are required to use their knowledge of a topic sentence and supporting detail to rearrange the sentences into a cohesive paragraph.

– Provide small groups with envelopes each containing a paragraph cut into separate sentences.
– Have students work together to reorganize the sentences into a cohesive paragraph.
– Let each group share and compare its paragraph with others. Have students provide reasons for their organization and for the sequence of sentences.
– Discuss the text clues that assisted them with the task, e.g., **topic sentence, supporting detail, closing summary.**

16 Writing a Hamburger

Although limited in scope, Writing a Hamburger is a way to focus students on the information contained in a paragraph. In this activity, students create topic and concluding sentences for chosen paragraphs.

- Locate about five paragraphs in familiar texts. Remove the topic and concluding sentences from each one; the remaining text forms the middle of the hamburger.
- Explain the concept behind Writing a Hamburger. The top of the bun is the place for the topic sentence and the bottom of the bun is the sentence that concludes the paragraph. In between the two is the meat, being the body of the paragraph.
- Have students work in pairs to write the topic and concluding sentences for each hamburger.
- Invite students to share their paragraphs.
- Highlight examples of effective topic and concluding sentences created by the students.

17 Generic Games

Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, pages 175–80.

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES

Major Teaching Emphases

- **Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge,** e.g., world knowledge, linguistic features.

- **Continue to teach strategies used throughout the writing process,** e.g., synthesizing.

- **Continue to teach spelling strategies,** e.g., using analogy.

- **Continue to teach students to plan for writing in a variety of ways,** e.g., graphic organizers, storyboards.

- **Continue to teach students how to use revising, editing, and proofreading to refine their writing.**

- **Encourage students to select and use text product types that best suit purpose and audience,** e.g., Web page, slide show, poster.

- **Continue to teach students to find, record, and organize information from texts,** e.g., using graphic organizers.

- **Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.**

Organization of the Processes and Strategies Substrand

There are several differences in the organization of the Processes and Strategies substrand. Both the Teaching Notes and the Teaching and Learning Experiences (Involving Students) are located in *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 4: Processes and Strategies.

The rationale for these differences is that the processes and strategies of spelling and writing are not conceptually hierarchical and therefore not phase specific. In all phases, a variety of writing processes and strategies need to be introduced, developed, and consolidated.

What varies from one phase to the next is the growth in
- the number and integration of strategies used throughout the processes of writing
- the awareness and monitoring of writing processes
- the efficiency in use of the processes of writing
- the ability to articulate the use of the strategies used in the processes of writing
- the awareness of how the use of processes helps with composing texts

Supporting Transitional Writers in the Home

Transitional writers are able to write a variety of texts, such as explanations, narratives, and brochures. They consider the purpose and the audience when making decisions about what to include. Transitional writers are developing control over conventions, such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and the way texts are organized. They are beginning to use a range of strategies to spell unknown words.

Transitional writers will benefit from a range of experiences in the home setting. Ideas for providing appropriate experiences are available on Parent Cards located on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM. Teachers can select appropriate cards for each Transitional writer and copy them for parents or guardians to use at home.

Parent Cards

1 Transitional Writers: How to Support

2 Writing and Reading Links

3 Supporting the Writing Process

4 Supporting Punctuation and Grammar

5 Building Understandings About Different Types of Writing

6 Developing Vocabulary and Spelling

7 Building Vocabulary and Spelling Knowledge Through Games

8 Supporting Project Work— Accessing and Using Information

Available on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM is a parent-friendly version of the Writing Map of Development.

CHAPTER 8

Conventional Writing Phase

International Food Week
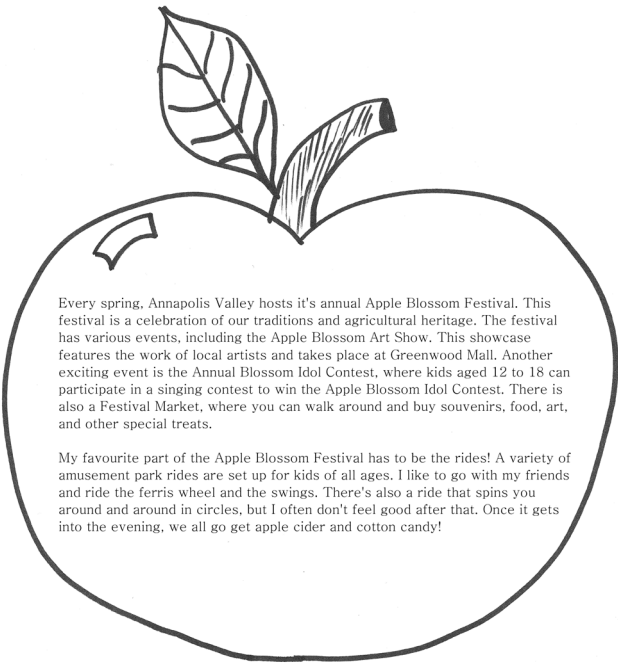
As part of International Food Week, our class brought in some tasty treats from home from all over the world, including burritos, souvlaki, pasta, baklava, sushi, jerk chicken, and gelato. The food was out of this world! Here is what I thought of it.

The gelato was my favourite dish. As the lemon flavour touched my tongue, I felt like I had just been woken up. ~~It was like eating runny ice cream.~~ The cool, soft liquid melted in my mouth and cooled me all over. I could feel the citris flavour and coolness down my throat. It was just like heaven!

My second favourite dish was the chicken souvlaki. The moist pieces of chicken were warm and flavourful. They slid right off the skewers into the fluffy mountain of rice, creating a vision of tasty delight. The tzatziki sauce added to the scrumptious flavours.

The room was decorated with pictures, flags, and artifacts from a lot of the countries. It was like an international festival, complete with music and dancing. We had an amazing time tasting all of the delightful food and talking with each other about our countries. It allowed us to taste foods that we might not normally eat at home. I liked them all! I want to be an international food taster for the rest of my life so I can always have such great flavours and scents around me! I loved it!!!!!!

Bon Appetit!

Every spring, Annapolis Valley hosts it's annual Apple Blossom Festival. This festival is a celebration of our traditions and agricultural heritage. The festival has various events, including the Apple Blossom Art Show. This showcase features the work of local artists and takes place at Greenwood Mall. Another exciting event is the Annual Blossom Idol Contest, where kids aged 12 to 18 can participate in a singing contest to win the Apple Blossom Idol Contest. There is also a Festival Market, where you can walk around and buy souvenirs, food, art, and other special treats.

My favourite part of the Apple Blossom Festival has to be the rides! A variety of amusement park rides are set up for kids of all ages. I like to go with my friends and ride the ferris wheel and the swings. There's also a ride that spins you around and around in circles, but I often don't feel good after that. Once it gets into the evening, we all go get apple cider and cotton candy!

Figure 8.1

Global Statement

Conventional writers demonstrate control over the conventions of writing and most components of the writing process. While composing, they take responsibility for adjusting the language and content to suit specific audiences and purposes. Conventional writers craft a variety of literary and informational texts, such as biographies, Web pages, and documentary scripts. In this phase, writers use an increasing bank of known words and select from a wide vocabulary. They integrate a range of strategies to spell unknown words.

Conventional Writing Indicators

Use of Texts

◆ **Crafts a wide range of texts, demonstrating control over all elements**

◆ **Composes texts by retrieving, recording, and organizing information appropriate to purpose and audience**

- Demonstrates an ability to develop a topic
- Demonstrates knowledge of differences in organization, structure, and language features of a range of texts when writing
- Is developing a personal style of writing
- Has sufficient ideas to fulfill selected writing tasks
- Experiments with adaptations of standard text forms
- Generates, explores, and fully develops topics and ideas
- Writes to express creativity
- Shows evidence of strong personal voice
- Uses the metalanguage associated with writing, e.g., structure, function, device

Contextual Understanding

◆ **Explains why a particular text form may be more appropriate to achieve a purpose for an intended audience**

◆ **Adjusts the language and ideas to include in own texts to suit purpose and audience**

◆ **Selects ways to represent characters and events to create specific effects in literary texts**

◆ **Selects ways to represent people and ideas to create specific effects in informational texts**

◆ **Uses devices when attempting to influence the reader,** e.g., incentives, humour

- Subverts stereotypical representations of characters and people in own texts
- Identifies likely audience and adjusts writing to achieve impact
- Attempts to involve the reader by the use of devices that require commitment from the reader, e.g., use of imagery, metaphors
- Expresses a well-reasoned point of view in writing
- Provides more than an exclusively personal perspective in informational texts
- Experiments with designing a text for one audience and then altering it for another

Conventions

◆ **Selects vocabulary to create precise meaning**

◆ **Spells and uses a large bank of known words correctly**

◆ **Knows and uses less common letter patterns correctly,** e.g., aisle, reign

◆ **Writes a variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences using correct punctuation**

◆ **Develops a paragraph by writing a topic sentence and including supporting information**

- Includes specific vocabulary to enhance meaning
- Uses vocabulary to suit the intended audience and purpose

- Uses a range of conjunctions appropriate to the text form, e.g., the use of however, therefore, moreover when writing persuasive texts
- Writes effectively in both first and third person
- Uses dialogue effectively in texts
- Maintains appropriate tense throughout texts
- Accurately uses less common punctuation marks, e.g., hyphen, colon, ellipsis
- Organizes paragraphs logically
- Is aware of a writer's obligations to readers in the area of spelling

Processes and Strategies

◆ **Draws upon semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge when writing,** e.g., world and cultural knowledge, linguistic features

◆ **Selects appropriate strategies to use throughout the writing process**

◆ **Selects appropriate strategies to spell unknown words**

◆ **Plans for writing in a range of ways,** e.g., graphic organizers, storyboard

◆ **Independently revises, edits, and proofreads own writing**

◆ **Selects appropriate text product types to enhance audience understanding and impact**

- Applies spelling generalizations, and is able to apply them to new situations, e.g., rules for adding suffixes, selection of appropriate letter patterns (ion)
- Recognizes and uses word origins to make meaningful associations
- Uses knowledge of word meanings to spell unknown words
- Spells inflectional endings conventionally
- Recognizes most misspelled words and attempts corrections
- Plans writing through discussion with others and by making notes and lists, or drawing diagrams
- Uses a variety of drafting techniques, e.g., cutting and pasting, using arrows and carets
- Refines text during writing
- Works to clarify meaning before continuing with writing
- Transforms, expands, reduces, and rearranges sentences to achieve an intended meaning
- Chooses appropriate combinations of written text, image, and colour to publish texts
- Applies knowledge of copyright regulations when composing texts

Note: The terms write *and* writing *encompass the use of traditional tools, such as pen and paper, as well as the use of electronic tools, such as computers or cell phones.*

The term texts *refers to both literary and informational texts, and includes visual, spoken, or written texts. These may be print, electronic, live, or multimodal.*

Major Teaching Emphases

Environment and Attitude

- Create a supportive classroom environment that nurtures a community of writers.
- Foster students' enjoyment of writing.
- Encourage students to experiment with difficult facets of writing, e.g., manipulating forms, use of devices.
- 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 craft a range of texts for authentic purposes and audiences.
- Encourage students to experiment with the manipulation of elements to compose a text.
- Foster students' sense of voice and individual writing style.
- Continue to teach students the metalanguage associated with writing, and encourage its use.

Contextual Understanding

- Provide opportunities for students to explain their choice of
  – text
  – information and ideas included or omitted
  – devices used
- Encourage students to represent characters and events to create specific effects in literary texts.
- Encourage students to represent people and ideas to create specific effects in informational texts.
- Encourage students to select devices to influence a particular audience.
- Encourage students to use writing to influence change about social issues that concern them.
- Continue to discuss how writers' and readers' knowledge, experiences, and perspectives affect the composition and interpretation of texts.

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., technical terms.
- Continue to build students' knowledge about words and word parts, e.g., derivatives and word origins.
- Extend students' knowledge of the use of punctuation, e.g., colons, hyphens.
- Extend students' knowledge and use of parts of speech and their relationships, e.g., active and passive verbs.
- Continue to teach students to construct and manipulate a variety of sentences.
- Teach students different ways to develop cohesive paragraphs.
- Continue to build knowledge of different text forms.
- Build knowledge of texts where combinations and adaptations of text structure and organization have been used.

Processes and Strategies

- Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge, e.g., orthographic knowledge, cultural knowledge.
- Continue to teach strategies used throughout the writing process.
- Consolidate known spelling strategies.
- Encourage students to discuss the effectiveness of various ways they plan for writing.
- Encourage students to use revising, editing, and proofreading to refine their writing.
- Continue to encourage students to select and use text product types that best suit purpose and audience, e.g., Web site, portfolio.
- Encourage students to evaluate their effectiveness in retrieving, recording, and organizing information from texts and to critique own texts.
- Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.

Teaching and Learning Experiences

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTITUDE

Major Teaching Emphases

- **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., manipulating forms, use of devices.

- **Encourage students to value writing as a social practice.**

Teaching Notes

Conventional writers benefit from an environment in which they feel supported, challenged, and engaged in meaningful writing situations. It is important to provide a variety of contexts for writing that will help extend students' knowledge of a wide range of text forms. Conventional writers need to be encouraged to solve problems, evaluate their own work, and take responsibility for improving their own writing. The focus for developing positive attitudes towards writing as well as a supportive environment for Conventional writers is organized under the following headings:
- Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment
- Fostering Enjoyment of Writing
- Encouraging Experimentation
- Writing as a Social Practice

Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment

A supportive environment is an environment in which both the physical and cultural aspects of the classroom are considered. In a positive classroom climate, students have opportunities to use and combine print, oral, visual, and digital processes. These opportunities contribute to students' willingness and eagerness to write.

Physical environment

Continuing to create a print-rich environment is important for Conventional writers. Print should be created by or in consultation with the students in order to foster ownership and use. This print can be developed according to student and classroom needs. Owocki (1999) classifies print in the following ways:

- *environmental*—print that gives information about the world, e.g., **almanacs, directories, reference books**
- *occupational*—print associated with one's job, e.g., **for an accountant: policy manuals, order forms, accounts, tax returns**
- *informational*—print for storing, retrieving, and organizing information, e.g., **a flowchart explaining manufacturing from raw materials to final products**
- *recreational*—print for leisure activities, e.g., **manuals, periodicals, text messages**

Conventional writers need to be encouraged to use classroom print as a resource when creating their own texts. Modelled, Shared, Interactive, and Guided Writing sessions present ideal opportunities to demonstrate how to use print from the environment to support writing.

Classroom culture

As well as providing appropriate materials and a carefully planned physical environment, it is important to consider how to create a positive writing culture in the classroom.

Develop such a culture for Conventional writers in any of the following ways.

- Encourage students to write for genuine purposes and audiences.
- Have high expectations of students and ensure that they know what these are.
- Provide opportunities for students to select their own topics, ways to plan, and publishing formats.
- If possible, provide a range of ICT resources for use in creating texts.
- Encourage students to take responsibility for refining their own writing.
- Allow time for students to share their writing with others.
- Value writing, and demonstrate this attitude to students.
- Establish, teach, and reinforce procedures for solving challenges during writing.
- Provide opportunities for students to evaluate their own work and discuss the judgments they have made.
- Incorporate purposeful writing into all curriculum areas.

Fostering Enjoyment of Writing

It is important for Conventional writers to see writing as a purposeful and worthwhile social practice. Foster students' enjoyment of writing in the following ways.

- Provide opportunities for daily independent writing on topics of personal choice.
- Provide authentic writing experiences that have a clear purpose and a real audience.
- If possible, provide opportunities for students to use a range of ICT resources combining print, images, and sound, e.g., computers, software programs, interactive whiteboards, digital cameras, tape and video recorders, scanners, photocopiers.
- Read aloud daily to enable students to appreciate patterns, rhythms, and nuances of language.
- Provide multiple demonstrations of the strategies effective writers use.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for students to be involved in focused conversations about writing.
- Provide time to share books by favourite authors. Discuss how these authors are able to attract and hold the attention of the reader.
- Expose students to a range of quality informational and literary texts.
- Discuss the types and features of texts from different curriculum areas.
- Involve students in setting their own writing goals.
- Encourage the extension of vocabulary through playing with words.
- Provide ongoing, focused feedback and encouragement.
- Encourage students to publish their work online.
- Organize visits by authors to speak about their texts.
- Encourage and organize participation in writing competitions when appropriate.
- Develop a buddy system with another class in the school. Have buddies share their writing and provide feedback to each other.
- As much as possible, make available a range of software packages for students to use, e.g., AppleWorks, Storybook Weaver Deluxe, Print Shop Deluxe.

Encouraging Experimentation

Conventional writers should be encouraged to reflect on ways to improve in selected focus areas and to experiment with all aspects of writing.

Invite students to
- extend the diversity of texts they write for real purposes
- manipulate elements of texts according to purpose
- use a variety of strategies throughout the writing process
- explore issues from perspectives other than their own
- use a multistrategy approach to spell unknown words
- investigate words and their meanings
- extend their vocabulary
- critically analyze their own writing
- discuss writing strategies and reflect on their effectiveness
- experiment with technology to create multimodal texts, e.g., adding images and audio files
- experiment with colour, font size, style, animation, and special effects when using presentation software packages

Writing as a Social Practice

The focus when teaching writing in the classroom is to provide many real-world situations that require the use of written language. The ultimate goal is for students to function in society as literate individuals who can use writing to communicate their ideas, share information, stimulate thinking, gain self-understanding, formulate questions, and influence policy and action.

Continue to provide opportunities where Conventional writers use writing for real reasons, and help them to develop the understanding that writing has the power to influence others. For example, writing minutes of meetings, speeches for school events, and letters to the editor can help students understand some of the functions that writing can serve.

> For further information about Environment and Attitude, see *Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning*, Chapter 5: Establishing a Positive Teaching and Learning Environment.

USE OF TEXTS

Teaching Notes

The focus for helping Conventional writers in this substrand is organized under the following headings:
• Exposure to a Range of Text Forms
• Opportunities to Craft a Range of Texts
• Crafting Voice and Individual Style
• Using Metalanguage

Exposure to a Range of Text Forms

Conventional writers will continue to benefit from ongoing opportunities to read, reread, interact with, and discuss a variety of increasingly sophisticated literary and informational texts. These texts may come from cross-curriculum areas, popular culture, the Internet, or the community. They could be multimodal, class-made, or published materials presented in a range of formats, or text product types.

During writing sessions, continue to discuss with students how successful writers craft a range of text forms for different purposes. Highlight how authors create texts
• that may have more than one purpose, e.g., to entertain and to describe
• where elements in the text have been manipulated in order to achieve a purpose, e.g., a narrative being used to persuade

Opportunities to Craft a Range of Texts

Although writers in this phase are able to use a variety of text forms, they will benefit from continued support in consolidating their understandings and refining their ability to craft texts. To extend their knowledge of the writer's craft, focus on how the elements in texts can be manipulated.

Writing sessions provide opportunities to demonstrate, discuss, and practise many aspects of writing. These could include any of the following:
• selecting different text forms for different purposes and audiences
• organizing and structuring texts
• using language features
• recognizing how organization, structure, and language features of texts can be manipulated
• planning, drafting, refining, and publishing writing

Conventional writers continue to need many opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Such opportunities allow them to experiment with different forms and hone their writing skills. There are many ways to extend the repertoire of texts students write.
• Provide a variety of contexts for writing by including writing in all curriculum areas.
• Provide time for personal-choice writing.
• Collect, read, display, and analyze samples of different text forms.
• Collect, read, display, and analyze samples of texts where elements have been manipulated.
• Encourage students to construct frameworks as part of their planning.
• Help students to evaluate their written work.
• Display and discuss texts that show different writing styles.
• Arrange for authors to visit and discuss their craft.
• Provide time for students to imitate or innovate on different writing styles.
• Encourage students to talk about their writing and to take responsibility for improving it.
• Provide specific descriptive feedback about particular aspects of students' writing.
• Continue reading aloud daily to expose students to new text forms.
• Provide both reading and oral-language programs that complement the writing program.
• Set up Author's Chair in and between classes so that students can openly discuss their writing.

Crafting Voice and Individual Style

Many things, including a writer's purpose, world view, multiple identities, and culture, influence voice within text. Voice in writing is defined in several ways.

Writing words that will make readers listen and be affected.
—Tom Romano, 2004

Voice is the imprint of ourselves on our writing.
—Donald Graves, 1994

Voice in writing has to do with a unique personality-on-paper.
—Ralph Fletcher, 1993

At this phase, it is important to help students continue to develop their use of voice. There are a range of ways.
• Show and discuss examples of sentences, passages, or entire texts that demonstrate voice.
• Share samples of students' writing that have a strong sense of voice.
• Compare the voice in passages of writing. Discuss how it differs.
• Discuss how the author's voice creates interest.
• Read several books by one author and identify the voice, e.g., **the style and word choice**.
• Model how choice of language can create or change voice, e.g., **emotive, colloquial**.
• Discuss how sentence length can affect voice.
• Have students return to previous writing and identify examples in which voice is evident.
• Have students identify and share a passage where an author's voice is strong.

Using Metalanguage

Students need to be supported in building a vocabulary that they can use to discuss and describe language, their own writing, and the writing process. The vocabulary used to talk about language is known as *metalanguage*, and when students are able to use it to talk competently about their own writing and learning, it helps them to understand how language operates. Developing metalanguage also helps students to understand the support and feedback provided by teachers.

To help Conventional writers continue to expand and use terms associated with writing and written language, it is important to use metalanguage as part of everyday teaching: across curriculum areas,

as part of targeted discussions, during explicit demonstrations, during one-on-one conversations with students, or as part of planned Modelled, Shared, Interactive, or Guided Writing sessions.

Certain terms tend to be more prominent when focusing on different substrands of writing. For example, when working with Conventional writers, consider the use of the following terms:
• Use of Texts: ballad, chronological sequence, hypertexts
• Contextual Understanding: devices, foreshadowing, irony
• Conventions: footnotes, slang, colons
• Processes and Strategies: paraphrasing, analogy, evaluating

> For further information about the Use of Texts substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition:
> • Chapter 1: Use of Texts
> • Chapter 4: Processes and Strategies

Involving Students

1 Transformations

Completing Transformations provides students with opportunities to practise and reinforce their control of the conventions used in a range of text forms. Transforming one text form, mode, or medium into another is a way of helping them to develop control of the forms. Students need to be familiar with both the original and the new type of text.

Examples of Transformations suitable for Conventional writers include
• a narrative into a recount
• a procedure into a recount
• a poem as a story
• an informational text rewritten as a feature news or magazine article
• an informational text re-created as a board game
• a report re-created as an electronic presentation
• an excerpt from a novel re-created as a serialized radio program
• a short story represented as a comic strip
• a poem represented as a performance

Transformations require the student comprehending the original text to create a new text. They vary greatly in degree of difficulty according to the text content and text form, and degree of compatibility between the original and the new text form.

> **Use of Texts**
> **Involving Students**
> 1 Transformations
> 2 2C2D
> 3 Read and Retell
> 4 Writingo
> 5 Book for My Buddy
> 6 The End
> 7 Hidden Sentences
> 8 Let's Start at the Beginning
> 9 Responding to Texts
> 10 Become a Script Writer
> 11 Shrinking Poetry
> 12 Choose Your Own Adventure Story
> 13 Design and Create Web Sites

> The last five Transformations, in particular, will bring students' attention to the idea of multimodal texts, or texts shared or presented in a variety of forms.

Although a fairy-tale may be familiar to a student, the structure and organization of a newspaper article may not. Similarly, a student may have played many board games, but rarely considered how one might be constructed.

Students attempting transformations require significant support in understanding and manipulating the two text forms. Teachers can best support students with extensive modelling, sharing, and guiding.

2 2C2D (Collecting, Comparing, Displaying, Discussing)

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, pages 194–95.

3 Read and Retell

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, pages 195–96.

4 Writingo

Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, pages 143–44.

5 Book for My Buddy

Book for My Buddy provides an opportunity for Conventional writers to craft a text for a specific audience. The activity involves each student being assigned to a younger student in the school as a buddy and then creating a text for the buddy. The challenge is for the student to incorporate the buddy into the text.

– Provide a range of picture books for students to explore. Identify features of the picture books.
– Assign a buddy from a lower grade to each student.
– In small groups, have students discuss the type of information that might be useful to collect about their buddies to incorporate in the text, e.g., **name, age, sibling's names, interests, sports played.**
– Have each student create an interview sheet consisting of key questions and response space.
– Organize a time for students to meet and interview their buddies.
– Share ideas on how they could incorporate the buddies in the texts.
– Provide time for students to write the first draft of their buddies' picture books.
– Arrange a presentation meeting where students and their buddies meet. Have each student read the picture book aloud to the buddy, sign the text as the author, and hand it over to the new owner.

6 The End

The End helps students to focus on the craft of creating effective endings in a piece of text. It involves their creating possible endings for a given text, discussing their effectiveness, and developing a set of guidelines for writing strong endings.

– Select a suitable short story.
– Read the story to the students, stopping just before the ending.
– Have students work in small groups to write an ending for the story.
– Give copies of all endings to each group and have students rank them from most effective to least effective. For each ranking, they must record their justifications.
– Regroup as a whole class, discuss rankings, and list justifications.
– Provide time for students to create guidelines for writing effective story endings.
– Share and collate these as a whole class.
– Read the ending from the original text and discuss it.
– As new texts are explored and insights are gained about story endings, refine the class guidelines.
– Encourage students to use the guidelines as they create their own texts.

As more forms of text are explored, students may discover different guidelines for creating effective endings.

Guidelines for Endings
- Link back to the opening of the story.
- Wrap up the main idea of the text.
- Let the reader know how you feel, such as expressing a wish or a hope.
- Provide a moral to the story, if appropriate.
- Use a flashback or flash-forward in time.
- Evoke a chosen emotion.
- Imply the theme of the story.
- Explain or reiterate the title.
- Ask a question of the reader.
- Create a visual image.
- Make the reader laugh.

---

7 Hidden Sentences

Hidden Sentences provides students with the opportunity to imitate an author's writing style and voice. Students are asked to insert sentences into a paragraph selected from a text.

– Invite students to select a paragraph from a text; alternatively, provide preselected paragraphs.

- Provide time for students to read and reread their paragraphs, identifying the style and voice of the author.
- Provide time for them to insert one or two sentences into each existing paragraph. Encourage them to imitate the voice of the author so that their sentences cannot be detected by others.
- Organize students to read their new paragraphs in groups while group members try to identify the sentences that were inserted.

8 Let's Start at the Beginning

Let's Start at the Beginning provides an opportunity for students to investigate interesting beginnings and also helps them to focus on crafting effective beginnings in their own writing. Students investigate pairs of beginnings to identify reasons for one being more effective than the other.

- Organize students in small groups and distribute several texts of the same type—e.g., **adventure, mystery, or science fiction**—to each group.
- Have groups read the beginning of each text and brainstorm a list of the words, phrases, and sentence stems that have been used. Discuss the style, characteristics, and effectiveness of each beginning.
- Have groups then apply what they noticed in the sample texts to create a beginning for a new text.
- Allow time for groups to share their new beginnings.
- As a whole class, discuss any commonalities of creating effective beginnings across the different types of text, e.g., **setting the scene, leaving the reader wanting more.**

9 Responding to Texts

Written responses to texts read or viewed will provide Conventional writers with the opportunity to craft a wide range of texts, manipulate elements of texts, and continually broaden their repertoire of written texts. It is important to ensure that any response activity is purposeful and appropriate for the context of the text being used. Jack Thomson contributed many of the following ideas to the *First Steps* Reading Developmental Continuum (1992).

Have students create responses to texts in the following ways.
• Write a lost-and-found advertisement for a significant object belonging to one of the characters or people in the text. Tell why the object was chosen and explain its significance to the character or person.

- Rewrite a section of the text, taking part in it as a character.
- Assume the role of one of the characters or people and write a diary with at least five entries.
- Create a new character. Tell how the text would change with this new character added.
- Write an unsigned letter from the point of view of one character or person, and have the rest of the class work out who it is.
- Write an imagined biography of one of the characters or people.
- Write an account of what they might have done if in a predicament experienced by one of the characters or people.
- Write a letter addressed to the author, sharing the response to the text.
- Write an imagined dialogue between characters or people from two different texts.
- Write a report of an incident as it might have appeared in a newspaper in the time and culture of the text.
- Rewrite a scene in the text as if it took place at a different time, e.g., past or future.
- Rewrite a scene in the text as if it took place in a different location, e.g., on a desert island, in Antarctica, on an ocean liner, in your town.
- Create a newspaper report covering an event in the text from the point of view of a witness.
- Write a report from the perspective of a private detective assigned to follow the main character or person over a period of time. Tell where he or she went, who was seen, and what was done. Draw conclusions about the motives, values, and lifestyle of the character or person.
- Write a report as a psychologist offering advice to the main character or person. Explain what the problem is and what advice would be given.
- Have a written conversation with a partner to explore thoughts and questions about a text. The partners take turns writing on the same sheet of paper.
- Write a poem to describe a historical event.

10 Become a Script Writer

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, pages 198–99.

11 Shrinking Poetry

Shrinking Poetry helps students to create new text and encourages them to manipulate the elements to create an effective poem. It requires them first to write about a topic, then reduce it to its simplest form to create a poem (see Figure 8.2).
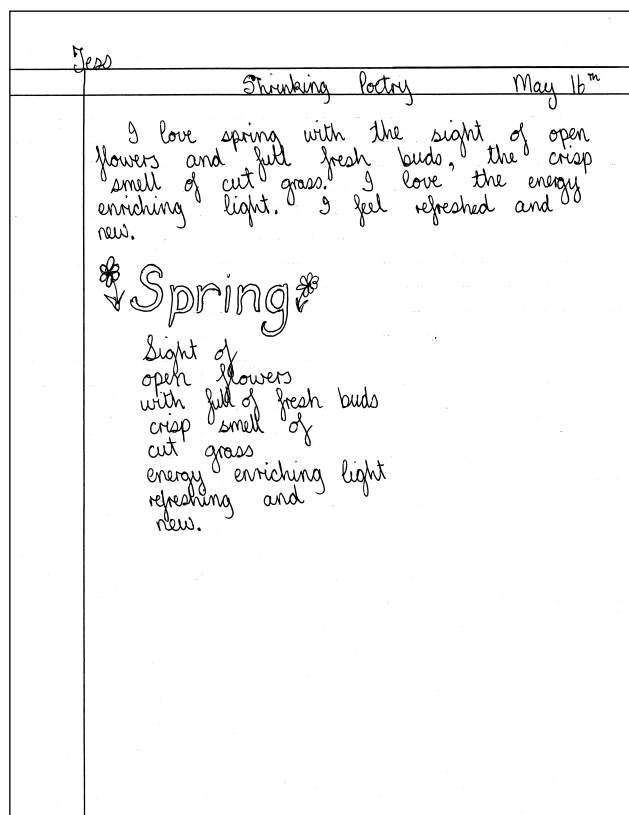
Figure 8.2 Shrinking Poetry

– Provide a list of simple beginning stems for the initial writing. Allow students to select from a variety of stems, such as these: "I like…," "I wonder…," "I see…," "I wish…"
– As a whole class, brainstorm a variety of topics.
– Have each student identify a topic and brainstorm single words or phrases around it.
– Provide a short time for students to write continuously about the topic, using the ideas from their brainstorm. More words may be added.
– Ask students to reduce their writing to a series of single words or short phrases, which can be arranged down the page to create a poem.

12 Choose Your Own Adventure Story

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, pages 199–200.

13 Design and Create Web Sites

Refer to Chapter 9: Proficient Writing Phase, page 281.

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Major Teaching Emphases

■ Provide opportunities for students to explain their choice of
  – text
  – information and ideas included or omitted
  – devices used

■ Encourage students to represent characters and events to create specific effects in literary texts.

■ Encourage students to represent people and ideas to create specific effects in informational texts.

■ Encourage students to select devices to influence a particular audience.

■ Encourage students to use writing to influence change about social issues that concern them.

■ Continue to discuss how writers' and readers' knowledge, experiences, and perspective affect the composition and interpretation of texts.

Teaching Notes

The focus for helping Conventional writers to develop contextual understanding is organized under the following headings:
• Exploring Decisions Writers Make
• Representing Characters and Events in Literary Texts
• Representing People and Ideas in Informational Texts
• Selecting Devices
• Writing to Influence Social Issues
• Discussing the Writer's World View

Exploring Decisions Writers Make

Through reading and discussing a wide range of texts, Conventional writers consider how authors have made selections based on purpose, audience, background, point of view, and cultural influences. Guided Writing sessions and writing conferences provide opportunities for discussions related to choices students have made in their own texts.

Purpose and audience
• Why am I writing this text?
• Who is my target audience?

- What do I know about my audience (age, gender, interests)?
- What does my audience want or need to know?
- What will my audience/reader expect to see in this text?
- What will I do to appeal to the audience?

Form and organization
- What text form will I choose?
- What organizational features can I incorporate?
- How will the reader expect to see this set out?
- What is the best way to present/publish this information?

Content
- What information needs to be included or left out?
- What points do I want to make?
- From what or whose point of view will I write?
- What is the most appropriate language to use?
- Do I need to find further information?
- What resources could I use to find relevant information?

During these sessions, discussions and demonstrations should include the use of Think-Alouds and metalanguage.

Representing Characters and Events in Literary Texts

Guided Writing sessions and writing conferences provide opportunities for students to be supported in making decisions about how they will represent characters and events to create specific effects in literary texts.
- What specific effect do I want to create in this text? (e.g., suspense)
- How will I represent this character in the text?
- What language will I use to represent the character?
- How do I want the reader to feel or think about the characters?
- What will happen in this text?
- How will my text end?
- If I include illustrations, how will they support the specific effect?

Representing People and Ideas in Informational Texts

Guided Writing sessions and writing conferences provide opportunities for students to be supported in making decisions about how they will represent ideas or people in informational texts.
- How will I represent the people in this text?
- Do I know any real people like the person I am representing? How are they the same? How are they different?
- What words will I use to represent the person in this text?
- What is the purpose of writing this text?

• What facts do I want to include in this text?
• What facts do I want to exclude from the text?
• Am I representing the facts accurately?

Selecting Devices

Conventional writers have developed understandings about how authors use different linguistic and print devices, according to audience and purpose. In this phase, the focus is to encourage students to select devices for impact in the texts they create. Discussing the devices and the reasons for choosing them will help Conventional writers to determine the effectiveness of their texts.

Model and encourage the use of devices such as these:
• choice of language, e.g., formal, informal
• inclusion or omission of details
• foreshadowing, giving a hint of things to come (e.g., As she sat watching television, there was a loud noise outside.)
• irony, wit, humour
• flashback—interrupting the text to show something that happened earlier
• understatement, which is used to downplay the gravity of a situation (e.g., "I have a small tumour in my lung. It is nothing to worry about.")
• symbolism—objects used to represent other things, e.g., a red rose to represent love
• opinions disguised as facts, e.g., It has been widely reported that...
• statistics, e.g., Eighty-five percent of dentists surveyed...
• selection of evidence and proof
• print size
• font selection
• choice of colour
• appropriate amount of detail
• size of characters, tables, or diagrams relative to others
• composition of the page, e.g., placement of visuals
• artistic style, e.g., abstract rather than realistic

Writing to Influence Social Issues

As Conventional writers begin to understand that writers draw on their social and cultural lives to analyze and represent the world around them, they can be encouraged to write not only about topics that interest them, but also about social issues. Doing this helps them develop an interest in addressing real-life problems that

occur outside the school setting. Students can be encouraged to maintain involvement in issues that matter—or that bother or confuse them. As part of individual or group social-action projects, students can be challenged to create a range of texts, such as posters, Web sites, letters to the editor, surveys, petitions, and pamphlets.

Discussing the Writer's World View

Conventional writers will benefit from opportunities to discuss how their knowledge, experiences, perspectives, beliefs, and values influence the creation of texts. They will also benefit from discussions about how readers brings certain knowledge, experiences, and perspectives to their reading of a text, and how this may influence their interpretation.

- What expertise or authority do you have for writing about this topic?
- What experiences have you drawn upon to create this text?
- What do you know about this topic?
- Why did you choose to represent...in such a way?
- From whose point of view have you written the text? Why did you do this?
- From what other point of view could the text have been written? How would this change the text?
- How do you think your background has affected the way you wrote the text?
- How might readers' backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives influence their reading of the text?
- What have you done to help the reader understand and navigate your text?
- What readers will find your text most appealing?
- Are there any groups of readers who would disagree with what you have written?

For further information about the Contextual Understanding substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 2: Contextual Understanding.

Involving Students

1 Literary Lifeboat

Literary Lifeboat (Johnson 1988) provides Conventional writers with the opportunity to represent characters in a way that appeals to a particular audience and to make decisions about the information and ideas to be included or omitted in a text. It involves assigning groups a character from a literary text. A situation is presented to

the students: one character needs to be removed from the text. The challenge for the groups is to create a written defence of the character, explaining why he or she should stay in the text.

– Select a text that has five or more significant characters.
– Read or have the students read the selected text.
– Present the challenge and provide guidelines for writing a defence, e.g., **make the justification persuasive; base it on facts in the text; specify the character's role and explain the probable consequence of that character's absence.**
– Create small groups and assign each group a character.
– Provide time for groups to revisit the text and identify events, actions, and dialogue that could be incorporated in their character's defence.
– Have each group write a defence of their character.
– Prompt each group to present their defence to the class.
– After all defences have been heard, allow the class to vote and declare the survivors.

Contextual Understanding Involving Students
1 Literacy Lifeboat
2 Buy, Buy, Buy
3 Weave a Story
4 Who Are You?
5 The Real Me!
6 Interviewing
7 Change the Point of View
8 Spot the Devices
9 Text Innovation
10 Imitate the Author
11 Connect and Compare
12 Identification Kit
13 Writer's Notebook
14 What's the Theme?

2 Buy, Buy, Buy!

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, pages 208–9.

3 Weave a Story

Weave a Story provides an opportunity for students to analyze how authors create specific effects in literary texts. Students read several texts of the same type and look for common elements that are used to create characters, settings, events, problems, and solutions (see Figure 8.3). They are then given the opportunity to apply the use of identified elements to create a text of the same type.

– Have students revisit a range of texts of a chosen type, e.g., **mystery.**
– Provide time for them to examine and discuss the elements of each text, e.g., **elements within the setting, characters, events.**
– Encourage students to use the line master provided to record generalizations about the information found in each text, for example:
  – Settings are usually dark and gloomy and in less than appealing places, such as abandoned cemeteries.
  – Characters are represented as sinister by their choice of clothing and appearance.
– Students use the generalizations made to create a text of the same type.

first steps				Writing Map of Development, p. 247

Name: _Ami Tran_   Date: _____

Weave a Story

My fictional form of text is _Narrative_

Setting	Characters	Events	Problems	Solutions
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft + Wizardry	• Harry • Ron • Hermione • Voldemort	• finds out he's a wizard • goes to wizard school • meets Ron + Hermione	• Voldemort/dark wizard has reappeared • protecting philosophers stone/holds power of immortality	• Harry retrieves stone • Dumbledore destroys stone • Voldemort vanishes again
7th Grade School - country school - 1st day of class	• "Surfer Dude"-Jocky • mum, dad, sister • nice + mean teacher • Vicky (girlfriend) • "loner" boy	• moves to new school • shows he can surf • meets Vicky (girlfriend)	• no friends • weird family • gets bullied • in trouble at school	• gets respect + friends (by surfing) • accepts friends • thinks they're not so weird

Figure 8.3

4 Who Are You?

Who Are You? (Strong 2001) encourages students to visualize a character from a literary text or a person from an informational text, basing the visualization on a list of items that belong to the character or person. Students are asked to use the list to create a personality for the character or person. The activity helps students understand that characters or people can be represented in many different ways according to a writer's knowledge, experiences, and perspectives.

– Discuss with students how a person's personal effects and keepsakes often reflect the personality. Items can often give clues to a person's identity and life history.
– Use items from your own life, or that of a student volunteer, to illustrate the above point.
– Divide the class into small groups and explain that each group will be given a list of personal items and keepsakes belonging to a character or person, e.g., a black-and-white photo of a baby, a pair of reading glasses, an antique-looking key, some knitting, a newspaper clipping.
– Provide time for students to consider the items carefully and to discuss the type of person or character that may be associated with them.
– Have students individually sketch and write a description of this character or person.
– Provide time for them to share their descriptions and sketches.

5 The Real Me!

The Real Me! helps to promote the understanding that a writer's knowledge, experiences, and perspectives affect the creation of a text, especially of the characters. Students consider public and private self, and use this knowledge to create characters that have greater depth and will appeal to the readers.

– Discuss with students how everyone has a public self and a private self. Have them make suggestions as to what makes up the public self, e.g., **appearance, known accomplishments, and biographical information in the public domain.** Discuss what would make up the private self, e.g., **emotions, strengths, fears, and personality traits.**
– Provide time for students to record features of their public and private selves (see Figure 8.4).
– Have students use this information to create a simple description titled "The Real Me."
– Provide time for them to share their descriptions.
– Have students return to a piece of their own writing and encourage them to consider how they could add to the public and private sides of a chosen character or person.

first steps · Writing Map of Development, p. 249

Name: *Ruth* Date: *March 10*

The Real Me!

My Public Self	My Private Self
· confident · well spoken · well organized · well dressed · member of the school swim team and debating team	· scared of heights · shy at first · sense of humour · moody in mornings

Description—The Real Me:
The Real Me appears confident and well spoken but when I first meet people my stomach fills with butterflies and I worry about saying the wrong thing. In the mornings I take a while to wake up and can be snappy around family members however as the day goes by my sense of humour kicks in.

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Figure 8.4

6 Interviewing

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, page 205.

7 Change the Point of View

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, page 206.

8 Spot the Devices

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, page 206.

9 Text Innovation

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, pages 206–7.

10 Imitate the Author

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, pages 207–8.

11 Connect and Compare

Connect and Compare encourages Conventional writers to begin to consider how their world view affects the creation of texts. By analyzing characters previously developed, students make connections and comparisons between what they know about the world in which they live and the way they choose to represent a character or person in a text.

– Have students select a main character in a literary text or a person in an informational text they have previously created.
– Invite them to identify the role of the character or person, e.g., Michelle is a teenage girl; Mr. Flint is a teacher.
– Have students record what they know about a real-life person who falls into the same category.
– Have students reread their previously created text.
– Provide time for them to identify and record how the person or character has been represented in the text.
– Have them identify any differences or similarities in what they know and how the character or person has been represented in the text.
– Provide opportunities for students to consider how they could change the way the character or person is represented and the impact this would have on the text.

12 Identification Kit

Completing the Identification Kit activity aids Conventional writers in understanding that writers' own knowledge, experiences, and perspectives affect the way they create characters or people and

represent events or facts in texts. This activity helps enable students to create detailed characters in their own writing. They use their power of observation to analyze a person's features and create a detailed character description.

– Group students in pairs.
– Provide each pair with a picture of a person and have them study the person's features.
– Prompt students to orally describe the face they have observed.
– Provide students with an Identification Kit, or a list of features, e.g., **oval face, square jaw, balding, long blond hair, green eyes, heavy-set eyebrows, crooked nose, moustache, scar, missing front tooth**. See the line master on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.
– Have each pair revisit the person they orally described and use the Identification Kit to write a paragraph as a witness description.
– Collect all the witness descriptions and matching pictures. Shuffle them, have a student read a randomly chosen description, and see if the other students can find the matching picture.

Extension
Invite students to investigate and include descriptions of more features of their characters, e.g., **body appearance, size, mannerisms, vocation, hobbies, family, friends, personality, and temperament.**

Identification Kit

Face shape: oval, round, square, pointed

Hair: bald, balding, long, short, straight, curly, wavy, spiked, blond, brown, black, red, brunette, side part, central part; wore a cap, beanie, scarf, wig, tuque

Eyes: round, oval, brown, hazel, blue, heavy eyebrows, fine brows, glasses

Nose: crooked, pointed, bulbous, big, broad, long

Mouth: big lips, thin lips, missing front teeth, braces

Facial hair: beard, sideburns, moustache

Distinguishing features: scars, tattoos, freckles, birthmarks, piercings

Skin colouring: fair, dark, olive, sallow

Jewellery: necklace, earrings

To whom it may concern:

We have recently been studying about the use of animals for testing on makeup and other beauty products. We are appalled at this inhumane use of animals. Animals are for being pets or living in the wilderness. They should not be locked up in laboratories, suffering with ill treatment. This is a form of torture and it must be stopped.

We urge you to stop testing cosmetics on animals. Not only is this inhumane, but it is also not one hundred percent accurate. Your test results are only those of animals, which are different from people in many ways. Therefore, the results that you find in your tests may not apply to humans. This is why you must stop this torturing of innocent animals.

There are other alternatives to animal testing that will provide you with more accurate results and that will not mean making animals suffer. One of these is using computer models instead of animals.

Please take this letter seriously. We are a group of students concerned about the welfare of animals. Animal testing must stop!!

Stephen Bard
Joseph Kline
Aisha Hormel
Klarissa Jones

Figure 8.5 A student's letter of protest

13 Writer's Notebook

Writer's Notebook (Bomer and Bomer 2001) provides students with an avenue for recording reflections, observations, and thoughts about everyday events or social issues they believe should be addressed. These events may happen in school, in the community, or at home; they may be seen on television or read about in a newspaper. Students are encouraged to make regular entries in a writer's notebook about these topics which pertain to things they feel are unfair or unjust.

Selected entries are then used as a stimulus for creating a plan of action around the topic or issue. Students can work individually or in groups to move forward with their action project by creating various texts for selected purposes and audiences. Figure 8.5 provides an example.

14 What's the Theme?

In *Lifetime Guarantees*, Shelley Harwayne observes that real-world writing experiences promote morale and energy and help students achieve real goals.

What's the Theme? helps students to begin to use writing as a means of addressing social issues or problems. It involves writers in reading a text, analyzing it to identify a theme, and then making connections between the text and personal life experiences. These connections are used as a basis for writing to induce some form of positive change in real life. The types of themes or issues that might be explored through literature could include crime, bullying, gangs, guns, gender roles, war, peace, separation of families, racial violence, or environmental issues.

- Select a text on a chosen social issue or theme, e.g., landmines.
- Have students read the text.
- Provide time for them to work in small groups to discuss the text and identify the theme or social issue raised.
- Invite them to complete a response sheet, as provided on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM. Encourage each student to make a personal connection to the issue raised in the text.
- As a whole class, discuss possible actions to address the issue.
- Provide time for students to work alone or in small groups to create texts for selected purposes and audiences in an effort to bring about some form of change.

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., technical terms.

- **Continue to build students' knowledge about words and word parts,** e.g., derivatives and word origins.

- **Extend students' knowledge of the use of punctuation,** e.g., colons, hyphens.

- **Extend students' knowledge and use of parts of speech and their relationships,** e.g., active and passive verbs.

- **Continue to teach students to construct and manipulate a variety of sentences.**

- **Teach students different ways to develop cohesive paragraphs.**

- **Continue to build knowledge of different text forms.**

- **Build knowledge of texts where combinations and adaptations of text structure and organization have been used.**

Teaching Notes

The focus for supporting Conventional writers in this substrand is organized under the following headings:
- Developing Vocabulary
- Building Word Knowledge
- Understanding Conventions of Grammar
- Building Text-Form Knowledge

Developing Vocabulary

All students, when they arrive at school, already have an oral vocabulary based on the speech variety and experiences at home. Research has shown that vocabulary acquisition is crucial to academic development (Baker, Simmons, and Kameenui 1998), so it is important for teachers to ensure that Conventional writers have every opportunity to expand their vocabularies across a broad range of contexts and experiences.

Reading provides models of rich language that help students to learn many new words, and writing provides authentic contexts for them to use those words and develop ownership of them.

Conventional writers can be supported in developing their vocabulary in the following ways:
• modelling the use of language in different contexts
• valuing existing speech variety, including non-standard or in an additional language or dialect
• introducing new subject-specific vocabulary across the curriculum, e.g., the language of science and technology
• providing experiences through activities outside the classroom e.g., trips, and activities inside the classroom, e.g., manipulating materials, inviting guest speakers, or capitalizing on any impromptu events
• discussing written words at every opportunity, pointing out the author's choice and why it is the best fit in the context
• involving students in meaningful problem-solving activities, word games, and investigations
• jointly constructing Word Walls featuring the words students are learning
• providing opportunities for students to read and write for a range of purposes
• immersing students in a range of texts
• using a rich vocabulary in all contexts

Building a bank of words that are automatically spelled and used

At all phases of development, students copy, recall, and try to spell words during independent writing. The bank of words that they can automatically spell and use include high-frequency words, personally significant words, topic or theme words, or signal words.

Exploring and using these words in reading, writing, and any cross-curriculum activities will help to reinforce their recognition and use. For some students, ongoing systematic instruction is essential to help them develop automaticity; for others, the repeated reading and writing of texts helps them develop the ability to spell a bank of words automatically.

In this phase, it is important to build on the bank of words that students already know. For Conventional writers, include the following:

Personally significant words

These words are significant to a student personally, e.g., words associated with an interest or hobby.

Topic or theme words

These words are related to topics, themes, or subject areas being studied, such as

- Science, e.g., environment, resources, elements, ecology, osmosis
- English, e.g., representation, perspective, nuance
- Mathematics, e.g., algorithm, theorem
- Health, e.g., circulatory, pulmonary, cardiovascular
- Technology, e.g., hydraulic, computational

Signal words

These words are associated with text forms and text structures, and signal the relationships between ideas in the text, e.g., therefore, before, although, because.

At this phase, students can begin to take responsibility for keeping a spelling journal to record words they already know and words they wish to learn. Encourage writers to generate alternative spellings for unknown words.

Building Word Knowledge

As students' understanding of graphophonics expands, it is essential to extend their knowledge of words, word parts, how words work, and the etymology of words. It is important to build their word awareness through experiences, such as discovering generalizations, participating in open-ended activities, and playing with words.

The following list may provide a focus for supporting Conventional writers:

- suffixes, e.g., -ist, -less, -er
- prefixes, e.g., auto-, fore-, im-
- plurals, e.g., antennae, oases
- homophones, e.g., air, heir
- contractions, e.g., haven't, there's
- compound words, e.g., breakfast, earthworms, half-brother
- word origins, e.g., aqua, pasta, bravo, poncho

Understanding Conventions of Grammar

At all phases of development, it is important to draw attention to the conventions of grammar used in a range of texts. Conventions are associated with punctuation, parts of language, sentence structure, and overall text construction. These conventions need to be introduced, revisited, and practised in meaningful contexts. Modelled and Shared Reading and Writing provide a springboard for exploring many of them.

Punctuation and parts of speech

It is beneficial for Conventional writers to continue to build their knowledge about the use of
- punctuation, e.g., **colons, semicolons, hyphens, ellipses**
- the function and relationship of parts of speech, e.g., **present and past participles, active and passive verbs, comparative and superlative adjectives**

Constructing sentences

Students in this phase continue to benefit from knowing how to construct and manipulate a variety of sentences, including statements, questions, commands, exclamations, or greetings. Conventional writers can be encouraged to create simple, compound, and complex sentences.
- Sentences can be joined to add variety and make the text flow.
- The order of phrases and clauses in sentences can be varied to add interest to writing.
- The length of sentences helps to create specific effects, e.g., **short sentences for excitement.**

Construction of paragraphs and texts

In constructing coherent texts, Conventional writers continue to benefit from a focus on developing and refining their understanding of the characteristics of cohesive paragraphs. A cohesive paragraph hangs together by means of cohesive devices, such as the use of synonyms, pronouns, and repetition.

Synonyms
Words with similar meaning are substituted for words already used. For example: Honey bees <u>collect</u> nectar from flowers to make honey. These insects travel many miles to <u>gather</u> the nectar.

Pronouns
These words refer back to nouns or other pronouns. For example: <u>Honey bees</u> collect nectar from flowers to make honey. <u>They</u> travel many miles to collect the nectar.

Repetition

Deliberate repetition of key words, related words, or phrases is one cohesive device. For example, a paragraph about the process of mummification might include *mummy*, *mummies*, *mummify,* and *the process*.

A cohesive text may have all of the above devices, but still lack coherence. A text has coherence when the ideas in it are related and sequenced in such a way that the reader understands the relationships between them. Coherence includes having a single idea or topic, using an appropriate text structure, and organizing a logical sequence of sentences and paragraphs. Consistency in point of view, verb tense, and number are also important aspects of coherence. Conventional writers can explore how coherence in electronic texts is created in ways different from those used for linear texts—for example, with the use of hyperlinks and multiple connections.

Building Text-Form Knowledge

Building students' knowledge about text forms helps them to successfully construct a range of texts and to understand the purpose, structure, and organization of those texts. Students benefit from reading different examples of the same text form, making comparisons, and identifying defining features.

Modelled, Shared, and Guided Reading and Writing sessions provide an opportunity for Conventional writers to discuss and extend their knowledge about the conventions of the structure, organization, and language features of a wide range of text forms. These sessions can also include a focus on combining and adapting text structures and organizational features to create hybrid texts in order to achieve a specific purpose and enhance impact; for example, a literary text may be used to persuade, or a procedural text to entertain.

Knowledge about text forms includes understanding the purpose, audience, text organization, text structure, and language features of a particular form.

Purpose

All texts are written and read for a reason. The purpose may be to entertain, as in most literary texts, or to explain, describe, or inquire, as in some informational texts. Understanding the purpose of a writing event will assist students to make decisions about text organization and structure, and the language used.

Students need to be exposed to a range of texts written for a variety of purposes. Conventional writers should be encouraged to create texts for a range of purposes. For a list of text forms related to purposes, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1, page 27.

Text organization

> Organizational features are commonly referred to as text features.

Text organization refers to the way a text is organized—the framework and features. Conventional writers will benefit from understanding text-form frameworks in order to determine whether a framework is to be adhered to or adapted.

Conventional writers can be introduced to the function, terminology, and use of a range of organizational features such as these:
• diagrams and other visual aids (photographs, graphs, tables, cross-sections)
• tables of contents
• indexes
• glossaries
• paragraphs
• appendixes
• bibliographies
• hyperlinks
• footnotes
• prefaces

It is important to encourage Conventional writers to use appropriate organizational features in their own texts. For a list of further organizational features in different texts, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1, under each Social Purpose.

Text structure

Text structure refers to the way ideas, feelings, or information are linked in a text. Structures include
• problem and solution
• compare and contrast
• cause and effect
• listing: logical or chronological sequence, enumeration, collection of details

Conventional writers will benefit from being exposed to a variety of text forms that use different structures. Encourage writers to use a variety of structures in their own texts.

Language features

The term *language features* refers to the type of vocabulary and grammar used in a text. Each text form has specific language features appropriate to it. For example, an exposition may include the following features:

- generalized participants, e.g., recreational fishers
- frequent use of passives, e.g., were caught, is influenced by
- mainly timeless present tense, e.g., are, happens, turns
- nominalization, e.g., computation, calculation
- signal words, e.g., therefore, so, because of

Students can be introduced to appropriate language features in the context of learning about new forms of writing. For a detailed description of language features linked to text forms, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1, under each Social Purpose.

> For further information about the Conventions substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition:
> - Chapter 3: Conventions
> - Chapter 1: Use of Texts

> In nominalization, verbs are changed to nouns in an effort to make text seem more objective and formal.

Involving Students

1 Modifying Sentences

Modifying Sentences (Strong 2001) helps students to combine and extend sentences. Students create complex sentences by building on a main clause. Extending simple sentences by adding relevant information helps them begin to understand how to create clear pictures for their readers.

- Provide students with a simple sentence consisting of a main clause, e.g., A parent approached the principal's office.
- Pose questions to students to help them generate further information, e.g., Who was the parent? What did he look like? What was his attitude? What was his purpose?
- After discussing possible responses to the questions, have each student modify the sentence to incorporate new information.
- Encourage students to experiment with alternative combinations.
- Allow time for them to share their sentences and discuss the effectiveness of each one.

2 Scrambled Texts

Scrambled Texts helps students to use semantic and syntactic clues

> **Conventions Involving Students**
> 1 Modifying Sentences
> 2 Scrambled Texts
> 3 Word Cline
> 4 Base Words Plus
> 5 Scary Words
> 6 Word Origins
> 7 Changing Tense
> 8 Playing with Words
> 9 Word Observations
> 10 Sentence Manipulation
> 11 Tree Diagrams
> 12 Generic Games

to create cohesive and coherent texts. Students reconstruct texts broken into sections and discuss the effectiveness of their sequences.

- Provide pairs of students with an envelope containing a text cut into paragraphs.
- Have students read the paragraphs and sort them to form a cohesive and coherent text.
- Prompt them to share and compare their completed texts with others. Encourage them to discuss the effectiveness of any sequences that differ.
- Highlight the conventions that linked the paragraphs and helped students to create a coherent text, e.g., **topic sentences, repetition, time order, conjunctions, cause and effect.**
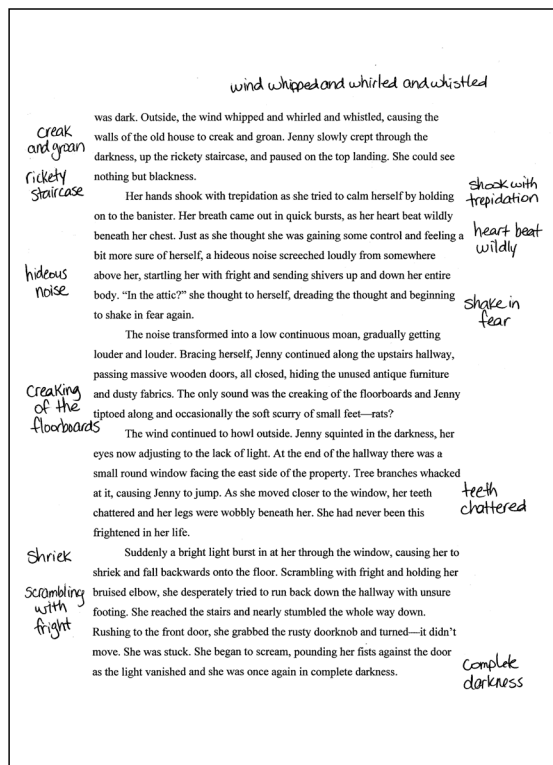
3 Word Cline

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, pages 217–18.

4 Base Words Plus

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, page 220.

5 Scary Words

Figure 8.6 Brainstorming words to create suspense

This activity helps students generate words and phrases used in thriller, mystery, or horror texts. They analyze a variety of texts and brainstorm words or phrases that achieve suspense.

- Provide students, in groups, with an example of a selected text type, e.g., **mystery.**
- Have them skim and scan the text to identify the language used to create suspense.
- Invite the groups to record words and phrases used in the text on sticky notes (see Figure 8.6).
- As a whole class, collate the words and phrases into categories, e.g., **noises, emotions, events, setting.**
- Provide time for the groups to collaboratively create a mystery text incorporating the language recorded on the class list.

This activity could be employed for the building of vocabulary associated with other types of texts.

6 Word Origins

Word Origins involves students in investigating how words from different countries and cultures have been incorporated into the English language. Providing time for students to investigate where selected words came from will help develop vocabulary and encourage them to incorporate new words into their writing.

– Discuss how words from various countries and cultures have made their way into everyday use in the English language.
– Provide time for students to brainstorm words that originated in another country or culture.
– Record these words randomly on a chart. Add to the brainstormed list; an Internet search using keywords, such as *borrowed words,* will provide numerous examples.
– Assign words to small groups of students and provide time for them to investigate the origin of each word.
– Challenge them to find other words from the same source.
– Provide time for them to share their findings and sort words on the class chart according to country/culture of origin, e.g., France—boutique, café; Germany—blitz, hamburger; Japan—origami, geisha.
– If appropriate, have students write the words on a map to indicate the country of origin (see Figure 8.7).
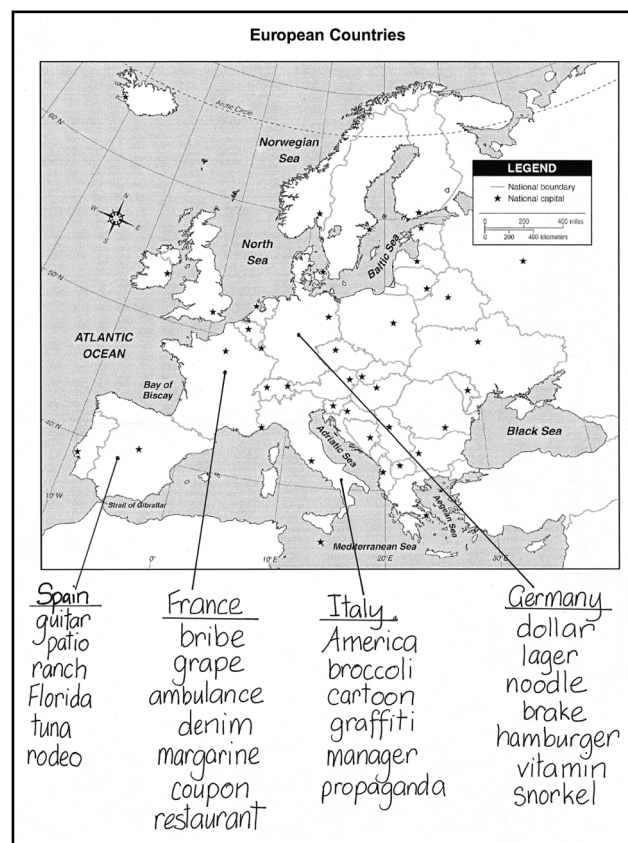
Figure 8.7 How one student linked English words with selected European countries

7 Changing Tense

Changing Tense helps Conventional writers to discover the changes that need to be made to a text when rewriting it in a different tense. Students are challenged to identify the tense of a particular text and re-create it in a different tense, e.g., past to present, present to future.

– Provide students with a short text or an extract from a text.
– Have them read through the text and identify the tense used.
– Provide time for them to discuss how the text needs to be changed when rewriting it in a new tense.
– Have students rewrite the text in this tense.

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– Provide time for them to share newly created texts and identify the parts of speech that were altered according to the new tense.
– Create a class chart of generalizations about writing in the past, present, and future tenses.

8 Playing with Words

Although Conventional writers have usually gained control of the English spelling system as well as learned what to do when they cannot immediately spell a word, it is still important to provide a range of relevant challenges that help them continue to expand their vocabularies. Students will benefit from opportunities to refine their spelling knowledge through exploring the way words are combined, extended, and changed to suit meaning. The following activities can be used across a range of curriculum areas.

- Use prefixes and suffixes to form new words from base words, e.g., port: transport, report, support, portable, important.
- Group words selected from reading or writing texts according to meaning.
- Investigate the meaning of Latin or Greek roots.
- Identify and explore acronyms, such as NASA, scuba, radar, and Unesco.
- Identify and discuss abbreviated words.
- Identify and discuss portmanteau words (words put together to form new words), e.g., horrible and tremendous form horrendous.
- Identify and discuss onomatopoeic words (words that have been created to resemble sound), e.g., creak, boom, hiss.
- Identify words derived from people's names or titles, e.g., sandwich from Earl of Sandwich, pavlova from Anna Pavlova.
- Sort and classify words according to their origins.
- Collect metaphors, similes, palindromes, and idioms.

> Another portmanteau word is *brunch*, a blending of *breakfast* and *lunch*. The term *portmanteau* was first coined by Lewis Carroll in *Through the Looking Glass*.

> Examples of palindromes are *rotor*, *eye*, and *deed*.

9 Word Observations

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, page 219.

10 Sentence Manipulation

Time spent on sentence manipulation activities is invaluable in supporting Conventional writers to create cohesive and coherent texts with varying sentence length. Students can be encouraged to write short sentences to create a sense of urgency and excitement or long sentences to describe a scene or a character. Manipulation activities could include any of the following:

- changing one type of sentence into another type, e.g., **using types such as command, exclamation, question, statement**
- transforming a sentence by experimenting with the position of words, clauses, and phrases
- expanding sentences by adding further relevant information
- reducing sentences by removing words, clauses, or phrases

> One way to manipulate sentences is to have students highlight all sentence beginnings in a piece of their work and then experiment with alternative ways of beginning different sentences.

11 Tree Diagrams

Involving small groups of students in collaboratively constructing branching tree diagrams helps them to refine vocabulary and create a plan for writing about a particular topic. Tree diagrams are most effective when used in the context of different curriculum areas.

- Provide groups of students with a central focus that has been selected from a relevant topic of study, e.g., **pioneer life**.
- Invite one student in each group to record this on a large sheet of paper. This sheet should then be passed to a second student to record two associated words, e.g., **farming, work bees**.
- Direct a third student to brainstorm two associated words for each of the previous categories.
- Have students continue this process until the range of associated words for the tree diagram has been exhausted (see Figure 8.8).
- Provide time for students to use the tree diagram to help plan the creation of a related text on the topic provided.
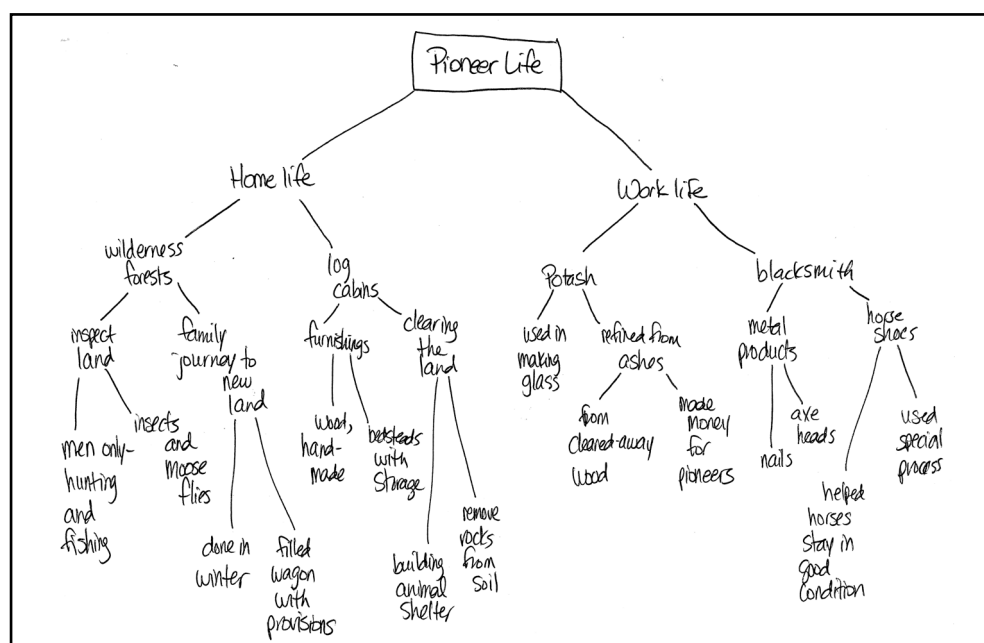
Figure 8.8

12 Generic Games

Refer to Chapter 6: Early Writing Phase, pages 175–80.

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES

Major Teaching Emphases

- **Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge,** e.g., orthographic knowledge, cultural knowledge.

- **Continue to teach strategies used throughout the writing process.**

- **Consolidate known spelling strategies.**

- **Encourage students to discuss the effectiveness of various ways they plan for writing.**

- **Encourage students to use revising, editing, and proofreading to refine their writing.**

- **Continue to encourage students to select and use text product types that best suit purpose and audience,** e.g., Web site, video, portfolio.

- **Encourage students to evaluate their effectiveness in retrieving, recording, and organizing information from texts and to critique their own texts.**

- **Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.**

Organization of the Processes and Strategies Substrand

There are several differences in the organization of the Processes and Strategies substrand. Both the Teaching Notes and the Teaching and Learning Experiences (Involving Students) are located in *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 4: Processes and Strategies.

The rationale for these differences is that the processes and strategies of spelling and writing are not conceptually hierarchical and therefore not phase specific. In all phases, a variety of writing processes and strategies need to be introduced, developed, and consolidated.

What varies from one phase to the next is the growth in
• the number and integration of strategies used throughout the processes of writing

- the awareness and monitoring of writing processes
- the efficiency in use of the processes of writing
- the ability to articulate the use of the strategies applied in the processes of writing
- the awareness of how the use of processes helps with composing texts

Supporting Conventional Writers in the Home

Conventional writers create a wide variety of texts such as biographies, Web pages, and documentary scripts. They can adjust their writing to suit specific purposes and audiences. Conventional writers write cohesive paragraphs and demonstrate control over the use of grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary. They have developed a large range of strategies for spelling unknown words.

Conventional writers will benefit from a range of experiences in the home setting. Ideas for providing appropriate experiences are available on Parent Cards located on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM. Teachers can select appropriate cards for each Conventional writer and copy them for parents or guardians to use at home.

Parent Cards

1 Conventional Writers: How to Support

2 Writing and Reading Links

3 Supporting the Writing Process

4 Supporting Punctuation and Grammar

5 Building Understandings About Different Types of Writing

6 Supporting Vocabulary and Spelling

7 Supporting Project Work— Accessing and Using Information

Available on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM is a parent-friendly version of the Writing Map of Development.

Proficient Writing Phase
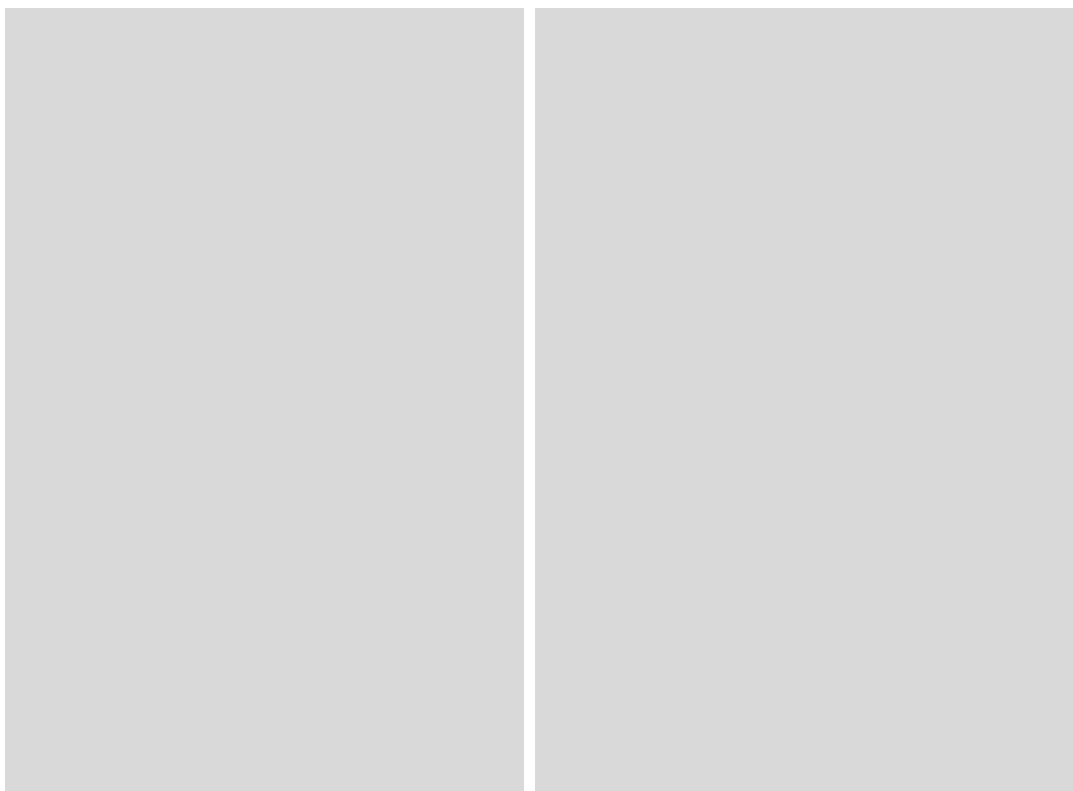
Figure 9.1

Global Statement

Proficient writers demonstrate control over all components of the writing process. They understand how purpose and audience have impact on writing and are able to craft and manipulate texts to suit. They compose texts such as research papers, newspaper articles, expositions, and hypertexts. Proficient writers are able to convey detailed information and explore different perspectives. They have developed an extensive vocabulary and use a multistrategy approach to spelling.

Proficient Writing Indicators

Use of Texts

◆ **Controls the crafting of a large repertoire of texts**
◆ **Critiques own texts by evaluating the information retrieved, recorded, and organized**
• Manipulates known text forms to create hybrid texts
• Constructs sustained and unified literary texts
• Writes extended informational texts using a variety of sources of information
• Develops topics fully
• Writes texts containing complex and abstract themes or issues
• Writes to define, clarify, and develop ideas and express creativity
• Writes with conviction, using a strong personal voice
• Uses the metalanguage associated with writing, e.g., perspective, nuance, linguistic conventions

Contextual Understanding

◆ **Makes critical choices about the composition of a text to suit different purposes and to influence audiences**
◆ **Consciously provokes positive or negative responses through the representation of characters and events in literary texts**
◆ **Consciously provokes positive or negative responses through the representation of people and ideas in informational texts**
◆ **Selects devices designed to enhance impact or to influence a particular audience**
• Uses devices to evoke reader response
• Expresses a well-reasoned point of view in writing
• Can write about one topic from different points of view
• Demonstrates ability to view writing from a reader's perspective
• Deliberately leaves gaps in texts to actively involve the audience

Conventions

◆ **Selects vocabulary for its shades of meaning and effect**
◆ **Has accumulated an extensive bank of known words that are spelled and used correctly**
◆ **Is aware of the many letter patterns that are characteristic of the English spelling system**
◆ **Uses grammatically complex sentences appropriately and correctly**

◆ **Organizes paragraphs logically to form a cohesive text**
• Chooses appropriate words to create atmosphere and mood
• Discusses the choice of words, clauses, or phrases, and their impact on style
• Sustains appropriate language throughout
• Discusses and accurately uses a range of conjunctions, e.g., although, neither
• Judges the effectiveness of using active or passive voice in texts
• Uses punctuation to enhance meaning
• Deliberately contravenes some linguistic conventions to manipulate the reader, e.g., incomplete sentences, no punctuation

Processes and Strategies

◆ **Consciously adds to semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge as required, when writing**
◆ **Selects appropriate strategies to use throughout the writing process**
◆ **Accurately spells, using a multistrategy approach**
◆ **Plans for writing in efficient and effective ways**
◆ **Refines writing to deepen impact**
◆ **Makes critical choices about the publication of texts to suit different purposes and to create impact**
• Accurately spells words with uncommon spelling patterns or with irregular spelling, e.g., aisle, quay, liaise
• Uses similarities, differences, relationships, and origins of words to spell unknown words
• Uses spelling references such as dictionaries, thesauruses, and spell-checkers appropriately.
• Selects relevant planning processes from a broad repertoire
• Takes notes, selects, and synthesizes relevant information and plans text sequence
• Edits and proofreads for precision
• Reviews writing holistically to ensure effectiveness
• Selects computer software for efficient and effective publication of different texts
• Applies knowledge of copyright and plagiarism regulations when creating texts

Note: The terms write *and* writing *encompass the use of traditional tools, such as pen and paper, as well as the use of electronic tools, such as computers or cell phones.*

The term texts *refers to both literary and informational texts and includes visual, spoken, or written texts. These may be print, electronic, live, or multimodal.*

Major Teaching Emphases

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., creating hybrid texts, refining texts.
- Encourage students to value writing as a social practice.

Use of Texts

- Encourage students to explore and discuss a wide range of literary and informational texts.
- Encourage students to craft a range of literary and informational texts for authentic purposes and audiences.
- Encourage students to manipulate elements to craft a range of texts, e.g., hybrid texts, multimodal texts.
- Foster students' sense of voice and individual writing style.
- Encourage students to independently use the metalanguage associated with writing.

Contextual Understanding

- Continue to provide opportunities for students to discuss the choices they have made when crafting texts, such as
  – text form
  – devices used to influence
  – the representation of people and ideas
  – the representation of characters and events
- Encourage students to use writing to influence change about social issues that concern them.
- Explore how the ideologies of the writer and the reader combine to create an interpretation of the text.

Conventions

- Encourage students to take responsibility for extending, refining, and using new vocabulary.
- Reinforce to students their obligation to use spelling and grammar that is appropriate to the context.
- Continue to teach students how to compose cohesive paragraphs and coherent texts.
- Encourage students to build their knowledge of different text forms, as required.
- Continue to explore texts where combinations and adaptations of conventions have been used.

Processes and Strategies

- Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge.
- Consolidate strategies used throughout the writing process.
- Consolidate spelling strategies.
- Encourage students to be selective in the way they plan for writing.
- Encourage students to refine their texts holistically to ensure they are effective.
- Encourage students to be selective in their choice of publication formats.
- Continue to encourage students to evaluate their effectiveness in retrieving, recording, and organizing information from texts and to critique own texts.
- Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.

Teaching and Learning Experiences

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTITUDE

Major Teaching Emphases

- **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., creating hybrid texts, refining texts.

- **Encourage students to value writing as a social practice.**

Teaching Notes

Proficient writers benefit from an environment that fosters independence, creativity, and self-reliance. Students should feel free to express opinions that may differ from those of the teacher or peers; the environment should enable full discussion and debate about a variety of texts and challenge students to justify, generalize, compare, refer to, and assess their own writing. Proficient writers thrive on meaningful cross-curricular projects that require their sustained engagement and motivation. The focus for developing positive attitudes towards writing as well as a supportive environment for Proficient writers is organized under the following headings:

- Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment
- Fostering Enjoyment of Writing
- Encouraging Experimentation
- Writing as a Social Practice

Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment

A supportive environment is an environment in which both the physical and cultural aspects of the classroom are considered. In a positive classroom climate, students have opportunities to use and combine print, oral, visual, and digital processes. These opportunities contribute to students' willingness and eagerness to write.

Physical environment

An environment that supports Proficient writers is stimulating. The type of print available in the classroom ought to reflect both student and classroom needs. It should be functional, frequently referred to, and created in consultation with the students in order to foster ownership and use.

Such print may include
- suggestions to study particular authors and their associated writing style
- questions for self-reflection
- charts and diagrams from different curriculum areas, e.g., The Circulatory System
- a wide range of text examples, e.g., advertisements, hybrid texts, scripts

Classroom culture

As well as providing appropriate materials and a carefully planned physical environment, it is important to consider how to create a positive writing culture in the classroom.

Develop such a culture for Proficient writers in any of the following ways.
- Provide opportunities for students to write a wide range of texts for genuine purposes and audiences.
- Encourage students to make informed selections about all aspects of the writing process.
- If possible, provide a range of ICT resources for use in creating texts.
- Have high expectations of students and ensure that they know what these are.
- Encourage students to take responsibility for all aspects of writing.
- Establish guidelines where risk-taking is respected and encouraged.
- Allow time for students to share their writing with others.
- Encourage students to read their writing from the perspective of another reader.
- Provide opportunities for students to evaluate their own work and discuss the judgments they have made.
- Incorporate purposeful writing into all curriculum areas.

Fostering Enjoyment of Writing

It is important for Proficient writers to see writing as a purposeful and worthwhile social practice. Foster students' enjoyment of writing in the following ways:

- Provide opportunities for daily independent writing tasks that students can complete successfully and within set times.
- Provide multiple demonstrations of effective writing strategies and post the language for everyday referral.
- If possible, provide opportunities for students to use a range of ICT resources when combining print, images, and sound, e.g., computers, software programs, interactive whiteboards, digital cameras, tape and video recorders, scanners, photocopiers.
- Encourage and praise students for exploring new forms of writing.
- Provide opportunities for peers to give focused feedback.
- Encourage students to publish their work online. (For example, they might check out Teen Ink: Publishing Opportunities and Resources.)
- Share how writers approach writing, including solving difficulties, listening, and responding sensitively to students' comments.
- Facilitate learning that promotes independence as a writer.
- Value students as learners and experts, and invite them to share their learning with their peers.
- Assist students to set achievable goals based on realistic expectations, outcomes, and timelines.
- Recognize and value effort throughout the writing process.
- Differentiate instruction to meet individual needs.
- If possible, have a range of software packages available for students to use, e.g., AppleWorks, Storybook Weaver Deluxe, Print Shop Deluxe.

Encouraging Experimentation

Proficient writers should be encouraged to reflect on ways to improve in selected focus areas and to experiment with all aspects of writing.

Invite students to
- increase the diversity of texts they write for genuine purposes and audiences
- critically analyze their own writing
- respond to others' writing by providing focused feedback
- reflect on and evaluate the success or otherwise of the strategies used throughout the writing process
- write from another's point of view
- understand the relationship between writer and reader
- use a multistrategy approach to spell unknown words
- experiment with technology to create multimodal texts, e.g., adding images and audio files
- experiment with colour, font size, style, animation, and special effects when using presentation software packages

Writing as a Social Practice

The focus when teaching writing in the classroom is to provide many real-world situations that require the use of written language. The ultimate goal is for students to function in society as literate individuals who can use writing to communicate their ideas, share information, stimulate thinking, gain a greater sense of self-understanding, formulate questions, and influence policy and action. Writing applications, petitions, reports, résumés, and letters is socially powerful, so it is important that all students understand and are able to write effectively in these ways.

> For further information about Environment and Attitude, see *Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning*, Chapter 5: Establishing a Positive Teaching and Learning Environment.

Use of Texts

Teaching Notes

The focus for supporting Proficient writers in this substrand is organized under the following headings:
• Exposure to a Range of Text Forms
• Opportunities to Craft a Range of Texts
• Crafting Voice and Individual Style
• Using Metalanguage

Exposure to a Range of Text Forms

Proficient writers will continue to benefit from ongoing opportunities to read, reread, interact with, and discuss a variety of increasingly sophisticated literary and informational texts. These texts may come from curriculum areas, popular culture, the Internet, or the community. They could be multimodal, class-made, or published materials presented in a range of text product types.

During writing sessions, continue to discuss with students how successful writers craft a range of text forms for different purposes.

Opportunities to Craft a Range of Texts

Proficient writers are able to write, evaluate, and reflect upon their own writing of a variety of texts, but they benefit from continued support in consolidating their understandings and refining their ability to craft texts. To strengthen this ability, encourage students

to manipulate elements within texts, read their writing from another's perspective, and make changes where necessary.

Writing sessions provide opportunities to demonstrate, discuss, and practise many aspects of writing. These could include any of the following:
• selecting different text forms for different purposes and audiences.
• organizing and structuring texts
• using language features
• recognizing how organization, structure, and language features of texts can be manipulated
• planning, drafting, refining, and publishing writing
• reading own writing from another's perspective

Often, Proficient writers have developed a distinctive writing style and are capable of crafting a wide range of texts. It is important to encourage them to continually broaden the repertoire of texts they write as well as to pursue their own particular interests. Doing this allows them to experiment with different forms and hone their writing skills. There are many ways to extend the repertoire of texts students write.
• Provide a variety of contexts for writing by including writing in all curriculum areas.
• Provide time for personal-choice writing.
• Collect, read, display, and analyze samples of different text forms.
• Collect, read, display, and analyze samples of texts in which elements have been manipulated.
• Encourage students to construct frameworks as part of their planning.
• Display and discuss texts that show different writing styles.
• Arrange for authors to visit and discuss their craft.
• Provide time for students to imitate or innovate on different writing styles.
• Encourage students to talk about their writing and to take responsibility for improving it.
• Provide specific, descriptive feedback about particular aspects of students' writing.
• Provide opportunities for independent reading and encourage students to read new text forms.
• Provide both reading and oral-language programs that complement the writing program.
• Provide time for conferences where students can discuss aspects of their writing.

• Set up Author's Chair in and between classes so that students can openly discuss their writing.

Crafting Voice and Individual Style

Many things, including a writer's purpose, world view, multiple identities, and culture, influence voice within text. Voice in writing is defined in several ways, including these:

Writing words that will make readers listen and be affected
—Tom Romano, 2004

Voice is the imprint of ourselves on our writing
—Donald Graves, 1994

Voice in writing has to do with a unique personality-on-paper —
—Ralph Fletcher, 1993

At this phase, it is important to help students continue to develop their writing voice. You can do this in a range of ways.

• Show and discuss examples of sentences, passages, or entire texts that demonstrate voice.
• Share samples of students' writing that have a strong sense of voice.
• Compare the voice in passages of writing. Discuss how it differs.
• Discuss how the author's voice creates interest.
• Read several books by one author and identify the voice, e.g., the style and word choice.
• Model how the choice of language can create or change voice, e.g., formal and informal.
• Discuss how sentence length can affect voice.
• Have students return to journal entries and identify examples in which voice is evident.
• Invite students to identify and share a passage where an author's voice is strong.

Using Metalanguage

Students need to be supported in building a vocabulary that they can use to discuss and describe language, their own writing, and the writing process. The vocabulary used to talk about language is known as *metalanguage*, and when students are able to use it to talk competently about their own writing and learning, it helps them to understand how language operates. Developing metalanguage also helps students to understand the support and feedback provided by teachers.

To help Proficient writers continue to use terms associated with writing and written language, it is important to use metalanguage as part of everyday teaching: across curriculum areas, as part of targeted discussions, during explicit demonstrations, during one-on-one conversations with students, or as part of planned Modelled, Shared, Interactive, or Guided Writing sessions.

Certain terms tend to be more prominent when focusing on different substrands of writing. For example, when working with Proficient writers, consider the use of the following terms:
• Use of Texts: anthology, episodes, synopsis
• Contextual Understanding: wit, flattery, sarcasm, ideology
• Conventions: hyperlinks, parentheses, appendixes
• Processes and Strategies: orthographic, critiquing, analyzing

> For further information about the Use of Texts substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition:
> • Chapter 1: Use of Texts
> • Chapter 4: Processes and Strategies

Involving Students

1 Transformations

Completing Transformations provides students with opportunities to practise and reinforce their control of the conventions used in a range of text forms. Transforming one text form, mode, or media into another is a way of helping them to develop control of the forms. Students need to be familiar with both the original and the new type of text.

Examples of Transformations suitable for Proficient writers include
• a narrative rewritten as a feature news or magazine article
• an information report re-created as an electronic presentation
• an excerpt from a novel re-created as a radio program
• a fairy-tale as a sitcom script
• a poem re-created as a script for a performance
• a biography as a Web site

Transformations require the student to comprehend the original text in order to create a new text. The texts can vary greatly in degree of difficulty according to the content and form, and degree of compatibility between the original and new form. Although a biography may be familiar to a student, the structure and organization of a sitcom may not. Similarly, a student may have

Use of Texts
Involving Students
1 Transformations
2 What's the Voice?
3 Hidden Sentences
4 Responding to Texts
5 Dictogloss
6 Little More Conversation
7 Simply the Best
8 Written Conversations
9 Design and Create Web Sites

used many Web sites, but rarely considered how one might be constructed.

Students who engage in transforming texts require significant support in understanding and manipulating the two text forms. Teachers can best support students with extensive modelling, sharing, and guiding.

2 What's the Voice?

Inviting students to analyze authors' voices in writing helps to develop an understanding of how to further develop voice in their own texts. Students are invited to analyze a range of texts to identify the way an author talks about a topic, expresses beliefs or feelings, and reveals personality through the text (see Figure 9.2).

– Review the meaning of *voice* in writing.
– As a whole class, brainstorm a list of words that could be used to describe an author's voice. Record responses on a class chart, e.g., **humorous, authoritative, lively, engaging, pretentious, personal, chatty, aloof.**
– Provide small groups with a range of short texts. These should include pieces that have examples of strong voice.
– Invite students to discuss each text and identify the voice of the author. Direct them to use the "What's the Voice?" line master to record the best words to describe the author's voice, providing examples of linguistic devices and vocabulary to justify responses.
– Have students work in pairs to share pieces of their own writing, then use adjectives to describe their own voices when writing.

first steps   *Writing Map of Development, p. 278*

Name: **Ashleigh Salter**   Date: **April 8**

What's the Voice?

Use the following table to record your analysis of the author's voice in each of your texts.

Text Title	Words to Describe Author's Voice	Where I Saw Evidence of This in the Text
Golden Pavillions – Robert Brunton	sincere thought provoking	But what we do to this rusty old guie can affect our soul.
Huckleberry Fun – Mark Twain	strong, humorous	You don't know about me, without doubt you have read a book by the name of.
Home – Jayne Anne Phillips	passionate engaging	Mom I say, maybe he's just resting.

Figure 9.2

3 Hidden Sentences

Refer to Chapter 8: Conventional Writing Phase, pages 239–40.

4 Responding to Texts

Refer to Chapter 8: Conventional Writing Phase, pages 240–44.

5 Dictogloss

> Dictogloss demands intensive listening comprehension.

To complete Dictogloss, students record key words and phrases as they listen to a short piece of text being read to them. They then work in pairs or small groups first to clarify or add information and then to reconstruct a version of the original text that contains the main messages.

– Read the selected text (of up to 12 sentences) aloud at normal speed, inviting students to listen for key words that will help them reconstruct the text in their own words.
– Reread the text aloud, pausing at appropriate places and again inviting students to record key words and phrases.
– Have each student work with a partner to compare notes, clarify, and add information if necessary.
– Invite each pair to then work with another pair to repeat the sharing, adding, and clarifying process.
– Provide time for students to use their combined notes to reconstruct the text in pairs, small groups, or individually.
– Invite students to share their completed Dictogloss with a group or with the whole class.

6 Little More Conversation

Inviting students to have conversations about texts read may encourage others to discuss and write a wider range of literary and informational texts. Little More Conversation provides a context for students to refine their language and be able to talk about texts. They complete a Little More Conversation Card after exploring a selected text.

– After reading a text, invite students to determine a rating for it. Then, on a Little More Conversation Card, they record the rating, write a descriptive comment, and identify the key characteristics (see Figure 9.3). This card can then be used as a focus for conversation with other students.
– Provide time for students to work in pairs or small groups to have conversations about the chosen texts.

first steps

Name: *Darcy*

Little More Conversation Card

I rated *a Thousand White Women* as *Excellent* because *I loved the premise of the book, and the female characters.*

It's about *a conversation that took place between the U.S. President and a chief from a Native American tribe who suggested that the president should give him 1000 white women and he would give the president 1000 horses.*

Key characteristics of this text are *the author creates distinctive "voices" for each of the characters; written as a diary; descriptive setting.*

Signature *Darcy Jonas.*

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Figure 9.3

7 Simply the Best

In Simply the Best, students are challenged to collect pieces of text or whole texts that constitute the best examples of a given criterion, such as the best setting, factual description, dialogue, excitement build-up, voice, or ending. Each student presents the chosen piece and justifies its selection. Students can then vote for overall best in the entire collection.

- Provide the challenge and the time for students to collect the single best example of a text or piece of text for the selected criterion.
- Have students read their nominations aloud, using appropriate expression, tone, and volume. Each reading should be followed by an explanation justifying its choice as an award-winning piece of writing.
- Jointly discuss and record the features of the nominated pieces of texts, e.g., **fresh, accurate adjectives, variation in sentence length, believable lines**.
- Generate a class anchor chart and encourage students to use the list of features when writing their own texts.
- Have the whole class vote on which example is the overall best. The finder of the winning nomination receives due credit for discovering the piece of text.

8 Written Conversations

Written Conversations (Burke 2000) are an excellent way for Proficient writers to discuss a text through writing. The conversations can focus on many different aspects of the writing process, such as writer's voice, text structure, text organization, creation of characters, and development of the plot.

Burke suggests the following approaches to Written Conversations.

Journal conversations
- After students have read a text or texts, have them write in their journals on the selected focus.
- When they have finished writing, each trades with another student, who then responds to the writing.
- That student trades once again with another student. This one responds to both of the previous entries.
- Each journal is returned to its owner, who reads what has been written and synthesizes the contributions to the written conversation.

Chat-room conversations
– Have each student imagine that a piece of paper is a blank computer screen and everyone else in the class is part of an online chat room.
– After reading a text, provide time for students to write on the selected focus.
– Once the writing is completed, the papers are passed around (writing is anonymous). The class keeps writing, responding, and passing on their "computer screens" for as long as is desired.

Students could be asked to write a synthesis of the online discussion as a conclusion to the activity. They could also participate in written conversations through a real chat room, threaded discussion, or via e-mail.

Fictional conversations
– Have students create written conversations between any of the following:
    – themselves and an author
    – themselves and a character or person from a text
    – characters or people from different texts
    – people from different times in history
– Encourage the use of appropriate dialogue and style.

9 Design and Create Web Sites

Cross-curriculum contexts can provide Proficient writers with opportunities to design and create Web sites for real purposes. Creating Web sites encourages writers to compose a variety of text forms, experiment with a range of media, and manipulate elements within texts. Proficient writers will benefit from exploring a range of elements used in the construction of effective Web sites, which may include any of the following:
• experimenting with layout and text elements, e.g., font, bullets, colour
• use of graphics/sound and video
• use of internal and external navigation tools, e.g., menus, images, icons, links to other Web sites
• inclusion of copyright and contact-person information
• provision of updated information

CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Major Teaching Emphases

■ **Continue to provide opportunities for students to discuss the choices they have made when crafting texts, such as**
   – **text form**
   – **devices used to influence**
   – **the representation of people and ideas**
   – **the representation of characters and events**

■ **Encourage students to use writing to influence change about social issues that concern them.**

■ **Explore how the ideologies of the writer and the reader combine to create an interpretation of the text.**

> The term *ideologies* has been used to indicate that as sophisticated as Proficient writers are, the way in which they approach texts is coloured by existing values, attitudes, and beliefs. On the other hand, Accomplished writers consciously provoke responses, recognize how their values, attitudes, and beliefs affect how they compose or react to text, and consciously consider how they will deal with audience expectations—they go beyond ideologies.

Teaching Notes

The focus for helping Proficient writers to develop contextual understanding is organized under the following headings:
• Exploring Decisions Writers Make
• Writing to Influence Social Issues
• Discussing Ideologies

Exploring Decisions Writers Make

Proficient writers make many decisions when crafting texts, so it is important to provide opportunities for them to evaluate the choices they make and discuss the effectiveness of their writing. To ensure they meet the purpose for writing and the needs of the audience, Proficient writers can adjust the decisions they make throughout the writing process.

Discussions could be based on any of the following questions:
• What is the purpose of my text? (e.g., Am I aiming to entertain, persuade, share personal thoughts, express my discontent?)
• Who is the audience for my text? (e.g., Have I taken into consideration age, cultural background, socio-economic status, academic background? Is it a known audience or am I making assumptions based on what I want to say?)
• What will the audience expect from my text? (e.g., Do they need to read it all or can they pick out points of interest?)
• Why have I represented characters, people, ideas, or facts in a particular way? (e.g., Will they appeal to a particular group? Am I presenting a certain point of view?)

- How will I publish my text in a way that will best suit my audience and purpose? (e.g., Is it appropriate to use hyperlinks, make a poster display, send out a brochure?)
- What devices will I use to best suit my audience and purpose? For example:
  - choice of language, e.g., descriptive, emotive
  - inclusion or omission of details
  - foreshadowing—giving a hint of things to come (e.g., As the warning alarm sounded everyone rushed to take cover, waiting for the fury of the storm to hit.)
  - irony, wit, humour
  - flashback—interrupting the text to show something that happened earlier
  - understatement, which is used to downplay the gravity of a situation (e.g., "It will be cheap to fix, it's just a slight dent...")
  - symbolism—objects used to represent other things (e.g., a rose to represent love)
  - opinions disguised as facts (e.g., It has been widely reported that...)
  - statistics (e.g., Sixty-five percent of women surveyed...)
  - selection of evidence and proof
  - print size
  - font selection
  - choice of colour
  - amount of detail
  - size of characters, tables, or diagrams relative to others
  - composition
  - artistic style

Writing to Influence Social Issues

As Proficient writers continue to develop an understanding that writers draw on their social and cultural lives to analyze and represent the world around them, they can be encouraged to write about social issues. Encourage students to maintain involvement in issues that matter or that bother or confuse them. As part of individual or group social-action projects, students can be encouraged to create a range of texts, such as posters, Web sites, letters to the editor, surveys, petitions, and pamphlets.

Discussing Ideologies

Proficient writers continue to benefit from opportunities to discuss how their ideologies—set values, attitudes, and beliefs—influence

> Writing to influence social issues reinforces that all writing has a purpose. As Calkins (1994, 24) wrote: "When engaged in writing tasks for real purposes related to authentic personal experiences, students learn the power and importance of written language."

the creation of texts. They will also benefit from discussions about how readers also bring certain ideologies to the reading of a text, and how this may influence their interpretation.

Facilitate discussion by asking a variety of questions.
- What expertise or authority do you have for writing about this topic?
- What experiences have you drawn upon to create this text?
- What do you know about this topic?
- Why did you choose to represent...in the way you did?
- From whose point of view have you written the text? Why did you do this?
- From what other point of view could the text have been written? How would this change the text?
- How do you think your background has affected the way you wrote the text?
- How might readers' backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives influence their reading of the text?
- What have you done to assist the reader to understand and navigate your text?
- What readers will find your text most appealing?
- Are there any groups of readers who would disagree with what you have written?

Encourage writers to reflect upon trends in their own writing. They might consider these questions.
- Do I have a preferred style of writing?
- What types of characters do I tend to create?
- What types of settings do I tend to use?
- Do I suggest certain values? (e.g., Boys shouldn't cry.)

> For further information about the Contextual Understanding substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 2: Contextual Understanding.

Involving Students

1 News, News, News!

News, News, News! provides students with the opportunity to explore how one topic can be presented in different ways according to the ideologies of the writer. Invite students to compare and contrast news articles written about the same topic by different authors. Students then re-create the article from a different perspective, allowing them to see how ideologies—set values, attitudes, and beliefs—may influence writing.

– Provide students with several newspaper articles about the same topic, e.g., **reports about an NHL game written by people from different cities or about the seal hunt in Newfoundland and Labrador from provincial and international perspectives.** Alternatively, time could be provided for students to access news articles on the Web about the same topic from different countries.
– Invite students to read each article and discuss the similarities and differences in the way the information has been reported.
– Allow time for students to explore reasons why the information may have been presented differently. Encourage them to consider the author's identity, country of origin, and role or relationship to the topic, and how these may have influenced the text.
– Invite students to select another point of view or perspective from which to report the news item.
– Provide time to create the alternative version, encouraging students to consider what needs to be changed to reflect the ideologies of the perspective chosen.
– Facilitate the sharing of the re-created news articles.

2 Panel Discussions

Participating in panel discussions helps students to understand how the ideologies of reader and writer combine to create an interpretation of a text. Panel discussions are based on one text, with members of the panel either presenting their own views or being assigned a role. The remainder of the class, as the audience, makes comments or asks questions of what has been presented.

– After reading a text, select a number of panel members.
– Assign a role to each member, e.g., **the author, a teenager, an elderly woman, a critic.**
– Provide time for each member to consider the text from a given perspective, then write a short presentation about that character's views of the text.

– During this time, have the audience brainstorm a series of possible questions that could be directed to each of the panel members.
– Invite each member of the panel to make a presentation.
– At the conclusion of the panel presentations, invite the audience to comment and to ask individual members questions about what they have presented.
– Lead a discussion in which students can compare the different responses given by the panel members and speculate on how knowledge and experience influence the perspectives taken.

3 Text Innovation

See Chapter 7 of *Linking Assessment, Teaching and Learning* for a general outline on text innovation as an effective teaching and learning practice.

Text innovation refers to the process of adapting or changing a text created by another author. By completing text innovation activities with a contextual understanding focus, Proficient writers can change the audience, change the setting, adapt characters and their traits, or write from a different point of view. Certain text innovation activities allow students to identify the biases and ideologies of the author.

– Select a text for the innovation.
– Have students read the text several times.
– Select a feature that could be innovated upon. Innovations could involve
  – changing the gender of one of the characters
  – substituting new characters for original characters, e.g., **the main character becoming a child, an old man, an heiress, or a journalist**
  – changing a character's traits, e.g., **the main character becoming a coward, a fool, or a cheat**
  – changing the setting of the text, e.g., **from a farm to a restaurant or a political meeting**
  – changing the time of the text, e.g., **setting it in the past, present, or future**
  – changing the dialogue between characters
  – changing the socio-cultural group, nationality, age, occupation, values, or beliefs of the main character
  – creating an imitation or parody
– Provide time for students to create the new text.
– Invite several students to read their text innovations to the whole class.
– Have students compare the original text with new versions, justifying which they prefer, and why.
– Identify and discuss how the changes made affected the creation of the whole text.

– If the nationality of a character changed, how was the language changed to suit?

– If the beliefs of a character changed, was there any effect on the action or the events?

– When a character's socio-cultural group was changed, how did the text change?

– What happened when the setting or time of the text was altered?

4 Deconstructing Texts

Deconstructing texts involves Proficient writers in analyzing a text, section by section, to uncover the devices that have been used. Deconstructing texts in this way helps students to understand how ideologies are constructed and communicated, and how they can use this knowledge in their own writing.

Deconstructing activities could include

• identifying the language of character construction, e.g., **nuances, the adverbs and adjectives used**

• identifying the language that evokes the reader's sympathy or antipathy

• identifying the author's viewpoint and the values being promoted or denigrated by it, and how this is revealed in language choices, e.g., **use of pronouns he, we, they**

• comparing sections of different texts by the same author to discover common devices used

• identifying the devices authors use to communicate mood, emotion, and atmosphere in specific passages

• identifying the language that confirms or modifies previous expectations and interpretations

• discussing the effects of—and possible motives for—specific revisions in several drafts of a professional writer's work

– Create small groups focused on previously read texts.

– Challenge students to analyze the texts according to either a self-selected or an assigned criterion (from the list above).

– Provide time for sharing the analysis. Have students comment on the devices that were identified and the impact they had on influencing a reader to take a particular view.

– Encourage Proficient writers to use these devices in their own writing.

5 Change the Point of View

Refer to Chapter 7: Transitional Writing Phase, page 206.

6 Waterfall of Thought

Waterfall of Thought is useful in helping students to examine the language use in their texts and to make decisions about which words are necessary and which may be superfluous. It can lead to excellent descriptive prose writing or poetry.

– Have students write a *waterfall of thought*. They write about a self-selected or assigned topic for 1 to 3 minutes. It is important that they write without stopping.
– When the time is up, ask students to count the number of words they have written.
– Provide time for them to then cut the number of words in half. To do this, they should cut out any words that they feel are unimportant, repetitive, or boring. Only 50 percent of the words in the original piece of writing should remain.
– Provide time for students to repeat this process, halving the number again so that they end up with only 25 percent of the original number. The key challenge is to keep the most critical points of the text intact.
– Direct students to transform these remaining words into a piece of poetry.
– Ask for volunteers to share their poems.

7 The Real Me!

Refer to Chapter 8: Conventional Writing Phase, page 249.

8 Who Are You?

Refer to Chapter 8: Conventional Writing Phase, page 248.

9 Connect and Compare

Refer to Chapter 8: Conventional Writing Phase, page 250.

10 Writer's Notebook

Writer's Notebook (Bomer and Bomer 2001) provides students with an avenue for recording reflections, observations, and thoughts about everyday events or social issues they believe should be addressed. These events may happen at school, in the community, or at home; they may be seen on television or read about in a newspaper. Students are encouraged to make regular entries in a writer's notebook about what they feel is unfair or unjust.

Selected entries are then used as a stimulus for creating a plan of action around the topic or issue. Students can work individually or in groups to move forward with their action project by creating various texts for selected purposes and audiences (see Figure 9.4).

> October 19
>
> The other day I was hanging out in the park with my friends. We were really bored. There is never anything to do. We sometimes hang out at each other's houses and watch TV or play video games. Or we sometimes go to the mall and hang out in the food court or try on clothes. On the weekends we have to do chores at home or hang out with our families sometimes. It seems like there is never anything fun to do. It would be cool if we had some fun activities organized for us after school so we don't just hang around and be lazy and so we don't get into trouble because we're bored. The school should organize some of these activities or encourage students to organize them. I'm sick of being bored!

Letter to the principal of our school

Dear Mrs. Kilgour,

I am writing on behalf of myself and my fellow classmates. Lately, it seems like there is nothing productive for us to do after school and on the weekends. For fun, we hang out at each other's houses and watch TV or play video games. Or sometimes we go to the mall and hang out there. But it's the same no matter where we are: there's nothing fun to do!

We feel that there should be more organized activities for us after school and on weekends so that we have something exciting to look forward to after a hard days work at school. Some ideas are casual sports games, or helping out in the community, or doing something creative like art or music. For the weekends, we could do things like trips to various sights in the town like museums or art galleries. Or we could organize picnics in the park.

I know you are very busy, but we feel like this is a very important issue. Could you please respond to this letter and inform me how I can get something like this organized? Who would be good to talk to about this? Is there anything I can do myself? Are there organizations you are aware of that provide activities such as this that my friends and I could look into? Or can the school provide these opportunities?

Thank you for your time in responding to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Catherine Fisher

Figure 9.4 Student responses to an issue of concern: A notebook entry and an action letter

11 What's the Theme?

What's the Theme? helps students to begin to use writing as a means of addressing social issues or problems. It involves writers in reading a text, analyzing it to identify a theme, and then making connections between the text and personal life experiences. These connections are used as a basis for writing to induce some form of positive change in real life. The types of themes or issues that might be explored through literature include crime, gangs, guns, poverty, bullying, gender roles, war, peace, separation of families, racial violence, or environmental issues.

– Select a text on a chosen social issue or theme, e.g., landmines.

- Have students read the text, then work in small groups to discuss the text and identify the theme or social issue raised.
- Invite them to complete a response sheet (see Figure 9.5), as provided on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM. Encourage each student to make a personal connection to the issue raised in the text.
- As a whole class, discuss some possible actions pertaining to the issue.
- Provide time for students to work alone or in small groups to create texts for selected purposes and audiences in an effort to bring about some form of change.

first steps   Writing Map of Development, pp. 252, 289

Name: Larissa   Date: December 8

What's the Theme?

Text Title: Religions of the World – Islam in Focus

The important issue or theme in this text is...	I was surprised by...
raising the issue of the Islamic culture	The connectedness between all the religions of the world. Often they are portrayed in opposing beliefs.
The perspective presented in this text is...	A personal connection I made with this theme is...
There are many perspectives presented because numerous people are interviewed, however, overall a balanced and moderate view is presented.	to be cautious about making assumptions of others based on their culture or religion.

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Figure 9.5

CONVENTIONS

Major Teaching Emphases

■ **Encourage students to take responsibility for extending, refining, and using new vocabulary.**

■ **Reinforce to students their obligation to use spelling and grammar that is appropriate to the context.**

■ **Continue to teach students how to compose cohesive paragraphs and coherent texts.**

■ **Encourage students to build their knowledge of different text forms as required.**

■ **Continue to explore texts where combinations and adaptations of conventions have been used.**

Teaching Notes

The focus for supporting Proficient writers in this substrand is organized under the following headings:
• Developing Vocabulary
• Understanding Conventions of Spelling and Grammar
• Building Text-Form Knowledge

Developing Vocabulary

All students, when they arrive at school, have an oral vocabulary based on the speech variety and experiences at home. Research has shown that vocabulary acquisition is crucial to academic development (Baker, Simmons, and Kameenui 1998), so it is important for teachers to ensure that Proficient writers have every opportunity to expand their vocabularies across a broad range of contexts and experiences.

Reading provides models of rich language that help students to learn many new words, and writing provides authentic contexts for them to use those words and develop ownership of them.

Proficient writers can be supported in developing their vocabulary in the following ways:
• modelling the use of language in different contexts
• introducing new subject-specific vocabulary across the curriculum, e.g., the language of history

- encouraging students to seek direct or vicarious experiences (Direct experiences can be gained from taking field trips or excursions, manipulating materials, or interviewing guest experts. If direct experiences are not possible, vicarious experiences, such as viewing, further reading, or speaking and listening, can be encouraged.)
- discussing written words at every opportunity, pointing out the author's choice and why it is the best fit in the context
- involving students in meaningful problem-solving activities, word games, and investigations
- encouraging the use of new vocabulary
- providing opportunities for students to read and write a range of texts for different purposes and audiences
- immersing students in a range of texts
- using a rich vocabulary in all contexts
- developing language across all curriculum areas, e.g., history

Building a bank of words that are automatically spelled and used

At all phases of development, students copy, recall, and try to spell words during independent writing. The bank of words that can be automatically spelled and used can be made up of high-frequency words, personally significant words, topic or theme words, or signal words. Exploring and using these words in reading, writing, and any cross-curriculum activities will help to reinforce their recognition and use.

Understanding Conventions of Spelling and Grammar

Proficient writers have reached a stage in their writing development where they are able to make decisions about use of the conventions of spelling and grammar. These writers have a strong sense of purpose and audience and are able to adjust the use of conventions to deepen impact. For example, students may use any of the following in their crafted texts:

- non-standard spelling, e.g., eezy, kwik
- abbreviations
- unconventional grammatical patterns, e.g., "I been going to the store."
- first, second, or third person
- active and passive voice
- unusual punctuation conventions
- eye dialect, or the use of non-standard spelling to represent how some people talk, e.g., "It's gonna be touch 'n' go."

Although Proficient writers can make decisions about whether or not to use standard spelling and grammar, they also need to be reminded of their social obligation to use them when appropriate.

In constructing coherent texts, Proficient writers continue to benefit from a focus on developing and refining their understanding of the characteristics of cohesive paragraphs. A text has coherence when ideas in it are related and sequenced in such a way that the reader understands the relationships between them. The text has a single idea or topic, an appropriate text structure, and a logical sequence of sentences and paragraphs. Consistency in point of view, verb tense, and number are also important aspects of coherence. Proficient writers can explore how coherence in electronic texts is created in ways different from those used for linear texts—for example, with the use of hyperlinks and multiple connections.

> Demonstrating a spelling conscience means taking responsibility for using standard spelling, which is clearest to readers; however, Proficient writers may make alternative decisions for effect.

Building Text-Form Knowledge

Students will continue to benefit from reading and writing different text forms, making comparisons with other texts, and identifying the defining features of each one.

Continue to provide opportunities for Proficient writers to analyze and discuss different texts to help consolidate understandings about the purpose, organization, structure, and language features of a wide range of texts. Modelled, Shared, and Guided Reading and Writing sessions provide an opportunity to focus on combining and adapting text structures and organizational features to create hybrid texts in order to achieve a specific purpose and deepen impact.

Knowledge about text forms includes understanding the purpose, audience, text organization, text structure, and language features of a particular form.

Purpose

All texts are written and read for a reason. The purpose may be to entertain, as in most literary texts, or to explain, describe, or inquire, as in some informational texts. Understanding the purpose of a writing event will assist students to make decisions about text organization and structure, and the language used.

Students need to be exposed to a range of texts written for a variety of purposes. Proficient writers should create texts for a range of purposes. For a list of forms related to purposes, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1, page 27.

Text organization

Text organization refers to the way a text is organized—the framework and featues.

Proficient writers can be encouraged to use a range of organizational features to enhance the impact of their texts. These include

- diagrams and other visual aids (photographs, graphs, tables, cross-sections)
- indexes
- glossaries
- appendixes
- bibliographies
- hyperlinks
- footnotes
- prefaces
- forewords
- homepages
- legends
- sidebars
- site maps

For a list of further organizational features in different texts, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1, under each Social Purpose.

Text structure

Text structure refers to the way ideas, feelings, or information are linked within a text. Structures include

- problem and solution
- compare and contrast
- cause and effect
- listing: logical or chronological sequence, enumeration, collection of details

Proficient writers will benefit from being exposed to a variety of text forms that use different structures. Whole texts rarely use only one structure; they usually have a combination of several. Proficient writers benefit from understanding the purpose of each part of their texts so that they will be able to select the structure that best suits their needs.

Language features

The term *language features* refers to the type of vocabulary and grammar used in a text.

Proficient writers, having a good understanding of the language features of a range of texts, are able to determine whether to adhere to these features or adapt them for impact. For a detailed

description of language features linked to text forms, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 1, under each Social Purpose.

> For further information about the Conventions substrand, see *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition:
> • Chapter 3: Conventions
> • Chapter 1: Use of Texts

Involving Students

1 Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy

Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (Rudell and Shearer 2002) is designed to encourage students to take responsibility for extending, refining, and using new vocabulary. Every week each student selects a word to study and nominates it for the class list. The words could be selected from any source, including content area or recreational reading, television, conversations, or popular music.

– Students nominate words for the class list. In the nomination process, they have to define each word and tell
  – where they found it
  – what they thought it meant
  – why they thought it should be on the list
– As a class, decide on the words for the week.
– Hone the definitions and once the class has done so, have students record both words and definitions in their vocabulary journals (see Figure 9.6).

> **Conventions Involving Students**
> 1 Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy
> 2 At the End
> 3 Follow the Lead
> 4 Verbed
> 5 Precise Words
> 6 Meaning Continuum
> 7 Playing with Words
> 8 Word Observations
> 9 Translations

VOCAB JOURNAL

WORD	WHERE FOUND	RATIONALE FOR CHOOSING	DEFINITION
ambience	restaurant review in a magazine	liked the sound of the word	a feeling or mood associated with a particular place
gesticulate	drama teacher	end-of-year production	to make gestures, especially when speaking
epitome	newspaper article	great word to use in own writing – plus mom couldn't read it	a typical or ideal example.
blog	website	Sounded made-up, silly.	a website that contains personal journal with reflection

Figure 9.6

2 At the End

At the End is a whole-class activity that encourages students to extend, refine, and use new vocabulary. The challenge is for two teams to create sentences that end with specific, predetermined words. The object is for one team to stump the other.

– Divide the class into two teams.
– Invite team 1 to provide a word for team 2. They should not use *a*, *an*, *and*, or *the*.
– Provide time for team 2 to create a sentence that ends in the word. The sentence should be written on the chalkboard or on chart paper. Sentence stems that can be used generically are not acceptable, as any word could fit at the end, e.g., "How do you spell...?" or "He said..."
– Score one point for team 2 if they succeed in meeting the challenge of providing a sentence. Team 1 should continue to provide words until team 2 is unsuccessful.
– Invite team 2 to provide the words for the opposition.
– The challenge can continue until a team reaches a designated score, e.g., the first to score 10 points.

3 Follow the Lead

Follow the Lead is a small-group activity that encourages students to refine their understanding of the characteristics of cohesive paragraphs. Collaboratively creating a text that is built up in a cumulative way focuses students' attention on the need for unity and clarity within and between sentences. Follow the Lead requires students to take turns at adding a sentence to the group's text. Each additional sentence is written based on a reading of only the previous sentence.

– Organize students in groups of about six.
– Provide them with a topic sentence relevant to an area of study.
– Invite the first person in each group to copy the topic sentence, then to add a sentence without letting the other group members see it.
– Direct the first person to fold the paper so that only the new sentence can be seen and pass it on to group member 2. This member reads the sentence and adds another one that makes sense and is cohesive.
– Provide enough time for each group member to add a sentence to the text. Ensure that students read only the previous sentence before adding to the text.

– After all group members have added a sentence, ask the group to read the entire text and collaboratively create an ending.
– Encourage students to discuss the cohesion of the completed text and the relationship between the sentences.

4 Verbed

Verbed is an activity in which students analyze texts, draw conclusions, and select verbs that best describe or encapsulate the situation or outcome for each character or person. This activity helps students extend their vocabularies and works best with newspaper or magazine articles, short informational texts, and literary texts with strong characterization.

– Ask students in small groups to read a selected text and list characters or people in it.
– Students then work individually to generate a past-tense verb for each character or person listed.
– Invite students to share and justify their selected words in the group. Have them discuss the words and choose the most effective. Discussion could revolve around
  – justifying the choice of verb by referring to the text
  – considering the vocabulary used by the author
  – identifying the perspective chosen—through whose eyes were the verbs selected?
– Have groups share their texts and selected verbs, providing justification.

> After reading a magazine article about the eruption of Mt. St. Helens, the students identified various groups of citizens and selected these words to describe how the groups were feeling:
>   Forest workers — devastated
>   Local residents — unperturbed
>   Tour operators — concerned
>   Vulcanologists — exhilarated
>   Campers — terrified

5 Precise Words

Precise Words helps Proficient writers to play with language and find precise words to communicate the nuances of their thoughts. In this activity, students select words that are similar in meaning, but create different connotations in a sentence or text.

– Provide students with a sentence in which an adverb or adjective has been omitted, e.g., Ron looked up and...watched the silent battle of wills in progress.

- Direct students to fill the blank with a suitable word, e.g., **angrily**.
- Have them then generate at least four possible synonyms for the inserted word, e.g., **irately, heatedly, irritably, furiously, crossly.**
- Organize students to work with a partner to share each new sentence and discuss how each different word has an impact on the meaning of the sentence.
- As a whole class, discuss how the use of the different words has an impact on the text.
- Have students review a piece of their own writing to identify words that do not portray the precise meaning intended.
- Provide time for them to generate alternative words and select the most precise ones to convey their thoughts.

6 Meaning Continuum

Creating meaning continua encourages students to look at words and their nuances of meaning. Students also have the opportunity to generate and discuss alternatives to vocabulary presented either in a text or in their own writing.

- Ask students to select an adjective or an adverb from their writing.
- Have them draw a horizontal line, placing the chosen word at the far left of the continuum. A word that is opposite in meaning is placed at the far right of the continuum.
- Students then brainstorm and list words related to those at each end of the continuum.
- Invite students to select several words from this list to be arranged in the best order possible along the continuum, beginning on the left-hand side with the word closest in meaning and intent to the specified word and moving along the continuum to the opposite meaning on the right-hand side (see Figure 9.7). The line master on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM outlines this procedure.

fast ⟸   speedy   rapid   swift   leisurely   unhurried   dawdling   sluggish   ⟹ slow
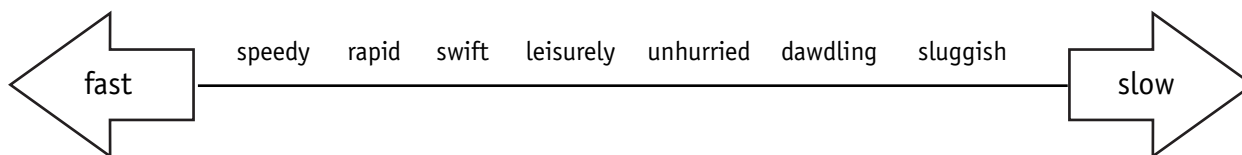
Figure 9.7 A sample continuum

- Challenge students to substitute one or more of the brainstormed words for a word in their original text. Have them discuss any substituted words, identifying how the choice of a word can alter the intended meaning.

7 Playing with Words

Although Proficient writers have usually gained control of the English spelling system as well as learned what to do when they cannot immediately spell a word, it is still important to provide a range of relevant challenges that help them continue to expand their vocabularies. Students will benefit from opportunities to refine their spelling knowledge through exploring the way words are combined, extended, and changed to suit meaning. The following activities can be used across a range of curriculum areas.

– Use prefixes and suffixes to form new words from base words, e.g., **port: transport, report, support, portable, important.**
– Group words selected from reading or writing texts according to meaning.
– Investigate the meaning of Latin or Greek roots.
– Identify and explore acronyms, such as NASA, scuba, radar, and Unesco.
– Identify and discuss abbreviated words.
– Identify and discuss portmanteau words (words put together to form new words), e.g., <u>horr</u>ible and tre<u>mendous</u> form horrendous.
– Identify and discuss onomatopoeic words (words that have been created to resemble sound), e.g., **creak, boom, hiss.**
– Identify words derived from people's names or titles, e.g., **sandwich from Earl of Sandwich, pavlova from Anna Pavlova.**
– Sort and classify words according to their language of origin.

8 Word Observations

Word Observations (Brand 2004) can be a daily classroom activity that enhances students' power to look closely and systematically at words, be able to talk about word features, and develop the ability to monitor misspellings in their own writing. Students can select a word from their own writing, select a word of interest from another source, or use a word assigned by the teacher.

– Invite students to record a chosen word on the "Word Observations" line master, which is found on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM.
– Review with them the types of observations that can be made about words. The different features can be observed by asking any of the following questions:
  – How many letters are in the word?
  – How many syllables are in the word?
  – What part of speech is the word?
  – Is the word a compound word?

- Does the word contain any double letters? any silent letters?
- Is the word plural or singular?
- How many consonants are in the word? How many vowels?
- Does the word have a prefix? a suffix?
- Does the word have a base or root word?

- Provide time for students to make observations about the chosen word and record the observations on the line master provided.
- Provide time for them to share their observations with others.
- Review the importance of rereading one's writing to monitor misspellings through word observation.

9 Translations

Translations is an activity that helps Proficient writers to identify figurative language in texts and translate it into a common meaning, and to speculate on the author's choice and use of these words. Figurative language analyzed in this way could include idioms, clichés, and similes. *Eye dialect*, the use of non-standard spelling to represent the way a person speaks, can also be included. Students often begin to make use of figurative language in their own writing after spending time analyzing other work.

- Have students collect examples of figurative language as they come across it in texts. Record these on a chart, noting the type of figurative language and the translation.
- Once several examples have been identified and recorded, invite small groups to search for further examples of a particular type of figurative language, e.g., similes.
- Ask the groups to share examples discovered, providing the text, the identified sentence or phrase, and the translation.
- Allow time to discuss the purpose and possible reasons for authors' use of the particular types of figurative language. Add this information to the class chart.
- Encourage students to use figurative language in their writing.

A class-generated translation chart

Text	What It Said	Translation	Language Feature	What's the Reason?
Poem written by Selina [class student]	Getting to know people is like peeling onions...	People have many layers to their personalities.	simile	To make it clearer to the audience
Boy by Roald Dahl	His face was as still and white as virgin snow and his hands were trembling.	He was very scared.	simile	To create a vivid image in as few words as possible

PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES

Major Teaching Emphases

- Continue to build students' semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge.
- Consolidate strategies used throughout the writing process.
- Consolidate spelling strategies.
- Encourage students to be selective in the way they plan for writing.
- Encourage students to refine their texts holistically to ensure that they are effective.
- Encourage students to be selective in their choice of text product types.
- Continue to encourage students to evaluate their effectiveness in retrieving, recording, and organizing information from texts and to critique own texts.
- Model how to reflect on the writing process and products, and encourage students to do the same.

Organization of the Processes and Strategies Substrand

There are several differences in the organization of the Processes and Strategies substrand. Both the Teaching Notes and the Teaching and Learning Experiences (Involving Students) are located in *Writing Resource Book*, Canadian Edition, Chapter 4: Processes and Strategies.

The rationale for these differences is that the processes and strategies of spelling and writing are not conceptually hierarchical and therefore not phase specific. In all phases, a variety of writing processes and strategies need to be introduced, developed, and consolidated.

What varies from one phase to the next is the growth in
- the number and integration of strategies used throughout the processes of writing
- the awareness and monitoring of writing processes
- the efficiency in use of the processes of writing
- the ability to articulate the use of the strategies used in the processes of writing
- the awareness of how the use of processes helps with composing texts

Supporting Proficient Writers in the Home

Proficient writers control all substrands of writing. They write a wide range of sophisticated texts, such as research papers, newspaper articles, and hypertexts, and understand how purpose and audience influence writing. Proficient writers are able to convey detailed information and explore different perspectives. They have developed an extensive vocabulary and use many strategies to spell.

Proficient writers will benefit from a range of experiences in the home setting. Ideas for providing appropriate experiences are available on Parent Cards located on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM. Teachers can select appropriate cards for the parents or guardians of each Proficient writer.
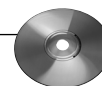
Parent Cards

1 Proficient Writers: How to Support

2 Writing and Reading Links

3 Supporting the Writing Process

4 Building Understandings About Different Types of Writing

5 Supporting Project Work— Accessing and Using Information

Available on the *First Steps Writing Map of Development* CD-ROM is a parent-friendly version of the Writing Map of Development.

CHAPTER 10

Accomplished Writing Phase

Is human life sacred? Discuss.

Increased understandings of the biology of life and advances in the mechanics of sustaining life add renewed vigour to the quest for the meaning of life, and the search for a shared morality. One of the most often asked questions, 'Is human life sacred?' plays a major part in many current public forums. Abortion, euthanasia, stem cell research, life support for permanently comatose patients... acquiring a moral stance on any of these hotly debated issues requires some perspective on the sanctity of life.

I shall go on to suggest that there is general widespread underlying fundamental belief that life *is* sacred. Because of the influence of religion maybe? Our biological makeup? Our historical and evolutionary past? The law? Somehow, the notion of the sanctity of life is well and truly inbuilt in society and human nature; humans everywhere would find it hard to refute the statement that life has unique and distinct value. However, if I choose such a premise for sanctity, and almost go so far as to claim that a definition of life would include sanctity as a defining trait, then there must be some other explanation for the moral dilemmas and great debate that surrounds the aforementioned issues encompassing the sanctity of life. I think this concept of life being sacred shifts from being an inherent value of every human being to being a moral construct when we start to impose conditions upon it. And this is where controversy develops. We can accept life is sacred, but then insert 'human' into the equation, and limitations appear. If human life is of great distinct value, then we exclude non-humans from the same level of respect and reverence by requiring a definition of 'human life'. Although there is a tendency to conform to common understandings of what it means to be human, there are already several of those, and if morality is entirely subjective, then we can see there is potential for infinite number of definitions of what it means to be human, so far as there is infinite number of lives. Debate about whether or not we hold human life sacred is therefore unavoidable as long as there are so many varying perceptions of what exactly human life is. Yes, we can agree something is sacred; it is just far harder to reach a shared understanding of what exactly that something is.

The concept of human life is possibly best defined by looking at some of its proposed boundaries. Such definition would, by necessity, encompass a view of what makes us human. Lawrence Becker identified two propositions about the boundaries of human life that have direct bearing on the moral controversy that surrounds this issue:

"1 – That there is no decisive way to define, in purely biological terms, either the point at which a human life begins, or the point at which it ends

2 – If the end points are going to be used as moral divides, they should be defined in terms of morally relevant characteristics, not purely biological ones." (Becker, 1988)

He then however attacks these propositions and poses decisive biological boundaries, and the notion that for moral theory such biological boundaries are in fact more useful. But biological or moral, people everywhere have their own understanding of the boundaries of life, influenced by a number of spheres: religion, legality and the widely accepted view of their society. There is, therefore, much debate over where life begins, and what is an appropriate stage to consider its endpoint.

The beginning of life: conception or birth?
The debate over the beginning of life has two major sides – those who believe life starts at conception, and those who believe it starts at birth. There are some arguments for life starting at various points during foetal development, but their principles fall mainly into one or the other of the major poles, so for the confines of this essay I will focus on the conception vs birth debate. The point of contention is the becoming/being boundary. Those in favour of birth as the

Figure 10.1

Global Statement

Accomplished writers are able to make critical choices about all components of writing—including style, vocabulary, and content—as they craft a wide range of texts. They are able to develop complex ideas, sustain coherence, and present information clearly. Writers in this phase reflect on, evaluate, and critique their own writing to ensure that they have achieved their specific purpose for the intended audience.

Accomplished Writing Indicators

Use of Texts

- Controls the crafting of a large repertoire of texts
- Critiques own texts by evaluating the information retrieved, recorded, and organized
- Is able to write using a dispassionate style that conceals personal bias
- Is able to write using an emotive style that makes ideas more appealing
- Writes with conviction, using a strong voice
- Uses the metalanguage associated with writing

Contextual Understanding

- Makes critical choices about the composition of a text based on an analysis of the purpose and the intended audience
- Consciously provokes positive or negative responses through the representation of characters and events in literary texts
- Consciously provokes positive or negative responses through the representation of people and ideas in informational texts.
- Selects devices designed to deepen impact or to influence a particular audience
- Recognizes how one's values, attitudes, and beliefs have impact on the composition of a text

- Accommodates or resists the likely expectations of particular audiences

Conventions

- Deliberately selects words to convey meaning economically and precisely
- Accurately spells a wide range of words
- Consciously selects sentence structure and associated punctuation to achieve impact
- Organizes ideas and information clearly, sustaining coherence throughout texts
- May choose to deviate from the conventions of writing to deepen impact

Processes and Strategies

- Consciously adds to semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic knowledge as required, when writing
- Selects appropriate strategies to use throughout the writing process
- Accurately spells, using a multistrategy approach
- Competently uses an extensive range of processes to plan, draft, and refine writing
- Makes critical choices about the publication of texts based on an analysis of the purpose and the intended audience

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Major Teaching Emphases and **Teaching and Learning Experiences** are not provided for this phase as Accomplished writers are able to take responsibility for their own ongoing writing development.

Glossary

active voice	the subject performs the action, e.g., **The factory caused the pollution**
adjective	a word that adds information to a noun or a pronoun
adverb	a word that gives information about a verb, an adjective, or another adverb
affix	a morpheme that changes the meaning or function of a root word or stem
alliteration	the repetition of the initial sound in consecutive words, often used to create tongue twisters
analogy	drawing a comparison in order to show a similarity in some way, e.g., **operating a computer is trying to understand the brain**
analyzing	a teaching and learning practice involving the examination of the parts to understand the whole
anthology	a collection of literary works
antonym	a word with the opposite meaning to another
Author's Chair	an opportunity for students to voluntarily share their writing and receive constructive feedback
automaticity	bringing information to mind with little or no effort because a skill or understanding is so well known
base word	a word to which affixes may be added to create related words
bias	a prejudiced view or a one-sided perspective
blurb	a short piece of writing, often on the cover or jacket of a text, designed to interest the reader in the product
brackets	markers used in writing to surround words or thoughts; content is usually of secondary importance.
chunking	the process or result of grouping or reorganizing smaller units into larger more meaningful ones
clause	an expression including at least a subject and a verb
code-mixing	where language learners borrow words, phrases, or sentences from their first language to help clarify meaning
colon	a punctuation mark used to introduce more details about something that has already been stated
compound sentence	two or more simple sentences joined with a conjunction, e.g., **Robert stood in front of the hockey net, and he tipped the puck into it.**
compound word	a word as a single unit of meaning but consisting of two separate words, e.g., **sunshine, butterfly**

context	the broad linguistic, social, and cultural experiences that are brought to a situation and influence writing
Contextual Understanding	a substrand of writing that involves an understanding of how the context affects the choices made by the author and illustrator, and the interpretation by the reader; broader than critical literacy
Conventions	a substrand of writing that focuses on the structures and features of texts, including spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and text organization (framework and features)
creative centres	themed classroom areas containing appropriate literacy materials to encourage young writers to write for different purposes
critical literacy	a process of taking an in-depth look at what is present in a text and what is not in order to determine the author's world view and purpose in writing and how the reader feels about this; related to social justice
critiquing	appraising critically by examining, reviewing, and giving a judgment
cueing system	a system of signals or prompts, especially the graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic; part of prior knowledge
derivative	a word formed by adding to a root or stem, e.g., disrepair, repaired
device	a technique used by authors and illustrators to influence the construction of meaning, e.g., simile, font, print size
drafting	the process or result of putting ideas into writing in a rough form, often edited later for publication
editing	as defined in *First Steps*, part of a three-part process of refining writing at the sentence level
Elkonin Boxes	boxes with counters that help students identify the number of sounds in a word and indicate that the number of sounds may not equal the number of letters
ellipsis	a punctuation mark consisting of a series of dots that shows something has been left out
evaluating	making judgments from data gathered
eye dialect	use of non-standard spelling to represent the way a person speaks, especially colloquial or uneducated, e.g., gonna, bin (been)
first person	writing from the point of view of the main character
genre	category of written texts, such as literary or informational
graphophonics	the study of sound–symbol relationships
Guided Writing	the provision of scaffolded support to a group of students with similar needs

Have-a-Go	an approach that recognizes a student may need to generate alternative spellings to misspelled words before determining the correct spellings
homographs	words that are spelled the same, but pronounced differently and have different meaning, e.g., **tear and tear, minute and minute**
homonyms	words that are spelled the same and pronounced the same, but have different meanings, e.g., **scale (fish), scale (music)**
homophones	words that are pronounced the same, but spelled differently and have different meanings, e.g., **here and hear, aisle and I'll**
hybrid text	a text consisting of a combination of text forms
hyperlink	a link from one hypertext file to another location or file, usually activated by a highlighted word or icon
hypertext	machine-readable text that is not sequential, but organized so that related items of information are connected
ideology	as understood here, the set values, attitudes, and beliefs held by Proficient writers; the body of ideas that reflect the beliefs, values, symbols, and devices of a doctrine, social movement, class, or large group, e.g., **socialism**
idiom	an expression that does not mean what it literally says, e.g., **"pay through the nose"**
Independent Writing	the independent application of previously learned writing understandings, processes, and strategies to own texts
indirect speech	a report of something said or written, e.g., **Peter said it was not the right thing to do**
information and communication technology (ICT)	the study of the technology used to handle information and aid communication
informational text	a text that is more factual than creative in nature presenting information in an ordered way, e.g., **a report, a biography, a recipe**
instructional approaches	characterized by a number of widely accepted steps or stages and generally applicable to all phases of development, several approaches taken by teachers are used for implementing a comprehensive approach to teaching the writing or reading processes in meaningful contexts.
Interactive Writing	a teacher-managed process in which teacher and students compose and construct texts collaboratively with a "shared pen"
invented spelling	the result of an attempt to spell a word whose spelling is not already known, based on the writer's knowledge of the spelling system and how it works
irony	a figure of speech in which the literal meaning of words is the opposite of their intended meaning; also a literary technique used to imply, through plot or character, that the situation is different from that which is presented

Language Experience Approach	to use an experience shared by teacher and students as a basis for jointly constructing a text; closely associated with Shared Writing
language features	varying according to the purpose of a text, these refer to the type of vocabulary and grammar used in a text; they encompass types of tense, such as past and present; vocabulary, including technical; signal words; style, ranging from chatty to objective; and sentence parts, including verbs and adjectives.
literary text	a fictional form of text, such as a narrative
Major Teaching Emphases	teaching priorities appropriate to phases of development
metacognition	thinking about one's own thought processes
metalanguage	language used to describe and analyze natural language; language about language
metaphor	a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is used to equate one thing to another to which it is not literally connected, e.g., **The road was a ribbon of moonlight...**
mnemonic	a device, such as a formula or a rhyme, used as an aid in remembering
mode of communication	a primary way of categorizing types of communication texts; *First Steps* pays particular attention to the oral, written, and visual modes.
Modelled Reading	an instructional approach to reading typified by the teacher selecting and reading a text to students and thinking aloud selected processes being used
Modelled Writing	the explicit demonstration of writing behaviours and verbalization of the thinking processes used by effective writers
multimodal texts	texts utilizing more than one mode, that is, **visual, spoken, or written**
nominalization	verbs changed to nouns in an effort to sound more objective and formal
noun	a part of speech that names or denotes persons, places, things, qualities, or acts
onset	the part of the word preceding the rime (*see* rime): usually the consonant or consonant cluster that precedes the vowel, e.g., <u>tr</u> in truck
organizational framework	organizational, or text, framework is the way a text is physically organized or laid out; it varies depending on the text form and topic.
orthographic knowledge	knowing about the spelling of words in a given language according to established use
paraphrasing	rephrasing in another way something either spoken or written

parentheses	punctuation marks that bracket or enclose texts
passive voice	the subject receives the action, the verb often preceding the words "by the...," e.g., **The pollution was caused by the factory**
phoneme	the smallest sound unit of speech, e.g., **/k/ in cat**
phrase	two or more words in sequence, forming a grammatical expression but not containing a finite verb, e.g., **in the kitchen after midnight**
point of view	the stance an author has chosen to take; revealed through devices used in the text, e.g., **words and actions in a literary text or information included or omitted in a factual text**
pragmatic cueing system	seen by some as a fourth major cueing system, the pragmatic links the semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic cueing systems with the context; cues relate to knowledge of audience, purpose of writing, and situation.
prefix	an affix added to the beginning of a word, e.g., **as in <u>un</u>happy, <u>re</u>wind, <u>anti</u>biotic**
preposition	a word that shows the relationship of one word in a sentence to another word
prior knowledge	the knowledge a writer draws on when composing texts; made up of the knowledge within such cueing systems as the semantic, graphophonic, and syntactic
Processes and Strategies	a substrand of writing involving the application of knowledge and understandings to comprehend and compose texts
pronoun	a word that takes the place of a noun, e.g., **I, we**
proofreading	closely reading a text and marking corrections, particularly those at the word level, such as in spelling and punctuation
recursive	a process where the stages are fluid and dynamic rather than fixed or linear; the nature of the writing process
refining	as defined in *First Steps*, the process used to improve draft writing, namely, revising, editing, and proofreading
revising	part of a three-part process used to refine draft writing at the whole-text and meaning level; may involve adding, cutting, and moving bits of text, even starting again
rhyming couplet	a stanza of two rhyming lines of the same length
rime	a vowel and any following consonants of a syllable, e.g., <u>ip</u> in "trip"
root word	the basic part of a word that carries the meaning, e.g., **read, health**; a foreign root is the basic part of a word that carries the meaning but originates in a foreign language, e.g., **auto, manus**
scaffolding	strategic leads, prompts, and support given to students in the form of modelling, sharing, guiding, and conferencing with the aim of developing autonomy

semantics	study of the meaning of language
Shared Reading	an interactive instructional approach to reading in which students see the text, observe a good model (usually the teacher) reading, and may be invited to read along
Shared Writing	a teacher-managed process in which a piece of writing is composed and constructed collaboratively with the teacher acting as scribe
sidebar	a short, often boxed news story that is printed beside a longer article and that typically presents additional, contrasting, or late-breaking news
signal words	words associated with text forms and text structures, signalling relationships between ideas in the text, e.g., therefore, before, though, because
simile	a figure of speech making a direct connection, e.g., as brave as a lion, as white as snow
simple sentence	a sentence with one subject and one verb, e.g., Jason ran.
site map	a textual or visual index of a Web site's contents
spelling conscience	what a student is developing when taking responsibility for using standard spelling, which is clearest to readers
stereotype	a perception conforming to a set image or type based on culturally dominant ideas, e.g., boys are tough
strategy	the mental processes used to do something you want to do
substrand	as presented in *First Steps*, under each strand of Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Speaking and Listening, there are substrands that help capture the nature of each strand; these provide opportunity for more specialized analysis, and the Maps of Development are framed on them.
suffix	an affix attached to the end of a base, root, or stem that changes the meaning or grammatical function of the word
synopsis	a brief summary
syntax	the formation of sentences and the grammatical rules that govern this formation
text	any means of communication using words, graphics, sounds, and images, in print, oral, visual, or electronic form, to represent information and ideas to an audience. These ideas can be shared over distance and time.
text features	the physical organizational features of a text that clarify and support text meaning; these appear within the text framework. Text features include headings, and bold and italic fonts.
text form	a category of text with specific characteristics; with a structure and organization that flows from its purpose, a text form—for example, an editorial—provides a way for writers and readers to think about purpose and intended audience.

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text organization	*see* text features and organizational framework.
text product type	a choice made by a writer on how best to present or publish text of an identified purpose; formats ranging from book and magazine to e-mail and DVD
text structure	refers to the way ideas, feelings, or information are linked in a text. Common structures include problem and solution, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and listing, as in logical or chronological sequence.
third person	the grammatical category of forms that designate a person or thing other than the speaker or the one spoken to
topic sentence	a sentence intended to express the main idea in a paragraph or a passage
Use of Texts	a substrand of writing involving the composition and comprehension of texts
verb	a word that shows action or being
voice	the author's unique personality coming through the written text to connect with and engage readers in some way; influenced by purpose, world view, identity, and culture
wit	the ability to perceive and express in an ingeniously humorous manner the relationship between seemingly incongruous or disparate things
word stem	the part of a word to which a suffix is or can be added

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