

## TEACHING WRITING

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***“Writing is a purposeful selection and organisation of experience – Nancy Arapoff.***

- Writing is the most creative language skill.
- Handwriting reflects the writer’s personality. It is the most difficult of the language abilities to acquire.
- According to French, F.G. writing skill is to be considered from two different point of views:
  - a) As penmanship or simple handwriting.
  - b) As a form of exercise in learning the language.

The child requires certain skills and practice when it starts learning to write. There are two methods of learning writing. They are synthetic method and the analytic method. In the synthetic method the strokes and forms common to most letters are taught. This method begins with the simpler tasks and proceeds to complex letters. In the Analytic method writing starts with words. The word being a meaningful unit the pupil is interested in writing.

### Mechanics of writing:

At the beginning the focus is on learning the alphabet, the left-to right direction of English writing, upper and lower case letters, alphabetizing, cursive writing, basic spelling, rules for capitalization, word and sentence punctuation. The basic skills include writing letters, numbers, words, phrases and sentences. Students are provided writing exercises to master writing. They begin with copying and then begin to write from memory. In ‘free writing’ students see the pictures and objects and write the words. So free writing is encouraged to master the mechanics of writing.



### **Writing Readiness:**

Copying words and sentences is an important writing activity. The alphabet is mastered using copying. Proper hand movements in writing letters and words are established. Copying exercises improves fluency in writing. It helps recognizing and using punctuation marks.

The words for writing practice must be familiar to the students. After learning these words, they can copy and do other tasks. The children are influenced by adults writing. They are interested in scribbling and drawing. Children who master the writing skill perform better in their work. Good handwriting must become a “body habit” for the children.

1. The teacher demonstrates the correct formation of the alphabets and words.
2. The children observe the hand and arm movement of the teacher.
3. The children imitate the same movements. They copy the models.
4. Endless copying is not permitted. Do not encourage copying of their own copying. A perfect model is to be copied.
5. Sufficient practice helps them to write the letters automatically.

### **Pre-requisite skills:**

Some skills are essential for the children before they begin “handwriting”.

The skills are:

- Ability to cross the midline.
- Ability to use two hands.
- Ability to recognize the differences and similarities in forms.
- Hand dominance
- Pencil grasp
- Ability to copy lines and shapes

### **Activities:**

1) Tying shoes, windshield wipers, scissor cuts, zipper their coat, buttons their shirts and pants are the tasks mentioned to facilitate development of crossing the midline.

### **2. Activities for “Ability to use Two Hands”**

Tearing paper into small pieces with hands to create art projects, cutting with scissors, tracing letters, making alphabets with yarn or strings, stapling papers, punching holes, wringing out sponges, stringing beads, finger plays & clapping.

### **3. For Understanding directional terms**

Labelling the room objects, puzzles, sorting the different objects, straight line & curved line exploration & read aloud by the teacher for directions.

### **4. Recognizing similarities & differences in forms:**

Drawing: By asking different questions on the pictures.

### **5. Hand Dominance**

Cutting out pictures from paper, drawing with stencils, templates or ruler, using pencil sharpener, opening containers, winding up the toys, wearing a bracelet & ring are some of the tasks for the children.

### **6. Pencil Grasp**

Jigsaw puzzles, molding with clay & sand, colouring, drawing, sketching, tearing paper, folding & cutting paper with scissors, playing with small toys like cars, doll furniture, sponges, funnels, straws & squeeze bottles, zipping, sewing screwing lids, nuts & bolts etc.,

### **7. Ability to copy lines, shapes & basic strokes**

Drawing, painting, sand play, water play, finger painting, connecting dots, tracing, filling in the missing parts of pictures & letters.

#### **Writing tools:**

Pencil is the most familiar and the often used tool in the primary classrooms by the students. Before writing with pencils, they should begin with markers and sketches. They are easy to handle. There is no need to apply pressure to get results. After students had enough practice, students can be taught with pencils.

#### **Pencil grasp:**

It is important that students learn how to hold a pencil. The correct method of holding a pencil is to be introduced from an early age. As the student's hand muscles become stronger, they are tend to evelop a more effective pencil grasp. The correct pencil grasp improves the student's ability to write well.

#### **Power grasp:**

Students holding a writing tool with a closed fist is known as power grasp. They move their writing tool by moving their shoulder. This is an inefficient grasp. It makes them tired soon. It prevents correct movements.

**Tripod grasp:**

The most efficient grasp of holding a pencil is called Tripod grasp. The middle finger, the thumb and the index finger are involved. The pencil rests on the knuckle of the index finger. The ring and pinky finger are bent and rest on the table. This is an effective grasp. It requires less energy. It allows small and precise movements.

**Adaptive pencil grips:**

Adaptive grips are used to position fingers correctly on the pencil. The students use for a short period of time. This will give student a chance to get used to the feeling of a new grasp without making them feel discouraged.

**Tips for Improving Handwriting:**

To have a smooth and easy flow of writing, the right muscles must be used. People with good handwriting rest their hands fairly heavily on the paper. Their forearms and shoulders move while writing. Their fingers serve more as guides. Exercises like making lines, loops, circles, spirals & slashes will get control & smoothness of writing.

**1. Writing on the line:**

English is written in a straight line.

A four lined notebook helps the students.

**2. Shape and size of the letters in the handwritten form:**

Forming the basic shapes of some letters and distinguishing between their shapes may cause difficulties for the children.

So the special characteristics of the letters are practiced by the learners to overcome this issue.

Resemblance letters: i, u, l, t,..

Undistinguished letters: p, q, n, m; u, v, w; b, d:

**3. Hand movements:** English uses clockwise, counter-clockwise, top to bottom and bottom to top movements. The conventional way of writing the letters are taught and practiced. This helps in joining letters and speed in writing. Limited freedom in the conventional way is permitted.

**4. Capital letters:** There is a complete set of capital letters in English. The students are taught to recognize the capital and small letters. The clear distinction between the handwritten

form and printed form is also taught. The use and writing of capital letters in different places in the language is mastered by the learners.

Example: 1. the first letter of a sentence.

2. the proper nouns begin with a capital.

3. the pronoun 'I' is in capital in the middle of the sentence.

**5. Small / Lower case letters:** The frequently used small letters in English are introduced to the beginners. The students are expected to recognize the small letters, writing the letters & associate them with their respective sounds in English.

**6. Joining letters:** In English, the conventional way of writing letters is to join them within a word or word like unit. Joining letters needs practice and correct hand movements. Students are to follow the models provided by the teacher. So it is important to show clearly the different combinations of joining letters. Ask students to copy the models several times.

**7. Styles of Hand writing:** There are three styles of handwriting. They are Printing, Simple cursive and Full cursive. In printing style, the letters are written separately. In simple cursive, most letters are joined. The same basic shape as in printing maintained. In full cursive, all the letters are joined. Many have different shapes from printing.

**8. Italics:** It is another style used in printing to bring certain effects.

**9. Ornamental writing:** It has become outdated. It is used in the title of movies, mastheads of newspapers and in certificates. Alphabetical order of learning English is not compulsory. A letter can be extended from simple hand movement to another. **Eg:** u, w, n, m. Associating the first sound or the prominent sound of a word with a letter is the most popular way to learn. a – apple, b – bat. Learned words and sentences are introduced in the written level through copying exercise to strengthen learning. Associating the letter with an object or a picture is yet another way to learn letters.

#### **Common Remedies in Hand writing:**

Problem : 1 Student cannot hold a large or regular size pencil.

Solution: Providing a writing tool that is in the same size of the student's hand.

Problem : 2 Movement of the entire arm while writing.

Solution: Make the students lie on the stomach while writing. Train them to write on vertical surfaces.

Problem : 3 Student does not leave spaces between words.

Solution: Placing stickers, making two finger prints between words, drawing lines etc.,

Problem: 4 Writing with the fingers open or straight.

Solution: Place a small piece of sponge in the last two fingers. Ask the student to hold while writing.

Problem: 5 Pushing down the tool hard when writing.

Solution: Use a mechanical pencil. Make the student write on a piece of foam.

Problem:6 Writing too lightly.

Solution: Use a weighted pencil. Try to correct pencil grip.

Problem:7 Student reverses letters.

Solution: Choose one letter to correct at a time. Students use a slate, chalkboard for enough practice.

Problem:8 Student has poor posture.

Solution: Improper posture is to be corrected. The feet of the student must touch the floor. Place a box or stool for this purpose.

Problem: 9 Poor placement of paper or notebook.

Solution: Right handed students should have the paper parallel to their table. For left hander, the left hand corner of the paper should be higher.

Problem:10 Student does not hold paper with the non-dominant hand.

Solution: Students can also be taught the different functions of a non – dominant hand.

### **CREATIVE WRITING**

Dictation is an activity to co-ordinate the listening skill with the writing skill.

- It is powerful instrument of thinking.
- It helps students to gain control over their thoughts.
- It helps in their personal growth.
- Dictation refers to a person reading some text aloud.
- The listeners write down what is being said.
- Later on the errors are corrected with the original text.

**Dictogloss** : It requires the students to only take notes of the keywords. They listen & then reconstruct the text. The students are expected to understand and re-convey the meaning of the passage.

**From the teacher's point of view:**

- Dictation can be done with any level.
- It can be done for a multi – level class.
- Requires very little preparation.
- It can be dictated to different groups.
- If done by the students, it can develop the four skills of a language.

**Advantages:**

- 1) Students write at least 35 or 40 words in English.
- 2) It improves their writing skill.
- 3) It increases their vocabulary.
- 4) Uniformity is achieved.

**Suggestions for Dictation:**

The selected passages should not exceed 40 words. All the passages are written on the board. Minimum 5 words are explained in the passage. No cheating should take place during dictation.

**Problems:**

Some students and even teachers do not prefer dictation in the class. They developed an aversion. So to encourage the students, the dictation activity may be changed. Make the students focus on meaning as well as accuracy. From single word to sentences in a passage may be covered in the dictation. It can be done in a jumbled manner and the students may arrange it. This dictation becomes more difficult in a multi – level class for the students.

**Learner – centered Dictation:**

1. Teacher oriented dictation is to be discouraged in the class.
2. Each sentence or word in a passage is distributed to each of the students. They take turns in dictating them.
3. Divide the class into pairs. In each pair one will be the “writer” and the other “runner”. The runner dictates from the text & the prescribed passage. They can change their roles.
4. Allow the students to control the speed & the amount of repetition.
5. The teacher calls a word, names a pupil from each team to write it on the blackboard. The first to finish correctly wins a point.

## **Objectives of Creative Writing**

### **Recognize writing as a constructive and recursive process**

- Recognize and use what is known as the writing process.
- Use appropriate pre-writing and planning strategies.
- Develop ideas into draft form.
- Revise compositions.
- Share or present the compositions.

### **Practise the behaviours of effective writers**

- Write attractive introduction for readers.
- Achieve unity of thought & purpose.
- Write effective conclusions.

### **Write fluently & confidently for all occasions**

- Write to reflect, clarify & explore ideas.
- Write to describe, narrate, inform & persuade.
- Present point of view in a personal or reflective essay.
- Outline a multi-paragraph composition.
- Write a paraphrase and précis of a passage.
- Write a literary text analysis.
- Experiment with a variety of forms of writing.

## **Writing Process**

- 1. Pre-Writing**
- 2. Drafting**
- 3. Revising**
- 4. Presentation**

### **Pre-Writing**

- Using pre-writing techniques to gather ideas
- Choosing a purpose & an audience
- Arranging ideas.

### **Drafting**

- Writing ideas down on paper
- Exploring new ideas

### **Revising**



- Editing – considering ideas & organization
- Proof reading – correcting errors
- Polishing

### **Presenting**

- Sharing writing

**I Pre-writing :** Pre-writing engages students in the writing process. It helps them to find out what is important. To become capable writers, the students need guidance. Students are needed direction in writing a topic. Topics can be chosen both from the students and the teachers. The pre-drafting experiences help to identify the topics. Interviewing people, brainstorming, free writing, mapping & webbing, making similies and metaphors, reading written models, viewing pictures, television, films etc., listening to CDs & tapes, role playing & debating, exploring ideas in journals are some of the pre-drafting experiences.

### **The purpose of creative writing:**

- ✓ To describe
- ✓ To express understanding
- ✓ To explore ideas
- ✓ To clarify
- ✓ To explain, inform
- ✓ To retell
- ✓ To evaluate
- ✓ To experiment.

It is to be addressed to specific person, specific group or general audience.

The students need a form to express their ideas.

Autobiographies, biographies, diary entries, poetry, essay, research report, reviews, new stories, editorials, advertisements, speeches, messages, pamphlets, scripts, re□sum□e & correspondence are some of the forms available for the students.

Students must have the skill to organize their ideas in logical sequences through any form.

There are several ways of developing & organizing ideas.

They are

1. Chronological order.
2. Spatial order.
3. Theoretical order.
4. Common logical processes.

A chronological order is a step-by-step arrangement of ideas by time or order of occurrence.

**Eg:** A narration of an incident.

A spatial order is a geometrical or geographical arrangement of ideas. The order may be left to right, top to bottom or circular from general to specific or specific to general.

**Eg:** A description of an object or person.

The theoretical order is the supportive ideas of equal quality to prove a topic.

**Eg:** Reasons stated to convince.

The common logical processes are definitive, classification, order of importance, comparison & contrast, cause-effect, problem-solution, inductive, deductive, pros & cons., and dialectic. (thesis.)

**II. Drafting :** In drafting, the writers produce a first draft. Additional drafts can also be written. The teachers should encourage the students to say what they mean & write from their own part. It must be as though they were telling the reader about the topic. The following strategies will help them to write good drafts. Mapping ( creating additional ideas) writing-off leads, free writing, personal letters, conferences, reflecting & questioning.

**III. Revising: Editing & proof – reading.** Drafts are rough and incomplete writing. Revising brings a work to completion. It is a process of changing, deleting, adding or retaining points. It is the post writing procedure. It involves editing of ideas and form. Proof reading is revising for sentence, structure, spelling & punctuation.

**Strategies for Revising:**

1. Students can read compositions aloud.
2. Students can examine composition for clarity.
3. Students use a revision process.

**Some examples for editing:**

Edit for truth & accuracy, organization, para structure, sentence structure, word choice, spelling, punctuation, conciseness & clarity.

**Proof – reading:**

Proof reading is the process of checking a draft. Proof-reading & drafting are inter linked. It is a formal reading. It is done to check para structure, syntax, diction, usage, spelling, punctuation & appearance.

## Conferences

Conferences can take many forms. Students must be encouraged to discuss their writings with others for advice, sharing and revising. Students must know to maintain a helpful and supportive relationship in peer conferences.

- Be positive
- Be helpful
- Be specific

The PQP Method: **P**raise **Q**uestioning **P**olishing

Basic ways for revision: **CARE**

- C** – Cross out ideas
- A** – Add new ideas
- R** – Rearrange to make sense
- E** – Exchange for vivid words

## STORY WRITING

A story map is a visual depiction of the settings. It is the sequence of major events or actions of story characters. It is a personal interpretation of stories for better understanding. It is a framework for storytelling and an outline for story writing.

Story Mapping includes: The Setting, Characters, Place, Time, The Problem, The Goal, The Events and Ending.

The major part of the story is visualized. It has three main elements. They are the Beginning, the Middle and End. Students identify the important events of three main elements. The students are trained to concentrate on the most important events of these three elements.

Setting  
Characters  
Plot  
Conclusion  
Final summary

1. The students must be familiar with the story.
2. The teacher draws an outline of the story map on to the board.
3. The students note down the main events in all the three elements.
4. The students recall the story orally.
5. Write the summary.

**Summary blue-prints:**

This method helps the students read content area texts.

They collect main information in all the three elements.

Setting  
Characters  
Problem  
Event (s)  
Resolution

1. The teacher discusses the blueprint.
2. The students read the text.
3. The students complete the summary with the help of blue print.
4. The students create a summary.
5. The students share & discuss their work.

This strategy helps plot development and resolution. It has a graphic organizer with two columns. The first column consists of setting, characters, problem, events & resolution. The students read and gather information to fill up the second column.

1. The teacher introduces the graphic organizer.
2. The students read the content.
3. The students gather information to fill up the second column.
4. The students share & discuss their work.
5. The students may add illustration.

**Assessment & Evaluation:**

1. Students ability to identify the characters & events.
2. Ability to sequence the story events.
3. The level of understanding of the story is revealed.
4. The story maps illustrate their personal illustration.

**List out the language games for “promoting writing skills”:**

1. Familiar things. (List out the known things from a set. E.g.: school, kitchen etc.,)
2. Collecting Signs. (Signboards, notices in hospitals & public places)
3. Completing words.
4. Just one word (Completing a sentence beginning from one word)

5. Drawing a map ( showing direction from house to school etc.,)
6. Places around us
7. Writing about pictures ( answering from advertisement)
8. Making poetry ( group activity)
9. Write what you know ( riddles, puzzles, etc.,)
10. a) Finding similar words, odd man out  
b) Words beginning with un---, dis--, il—etc.,  
c) Words with letter correspondence. E.g.: work, word, worm  
d) Vowel sound correspondence.  
e) Consonant sound correspondence.  
f) Words with end correspondence: f-ought, b-ought  
g) Presenting incomplete words. A P\_\_ man .....  
h) Prepare antonyms  
i) Prepare synonyms  
j) Familiar paradigms  
k) Preparing shopping list, personal list etc.,

**The Convention of writing:**

Good writing needs skill in content, organization and style. The mechanics of language are the conventions of writing. They are

- form ( para, essay etc.,)
- sentence structure
- diction
- usage
- spelling
- punctuation
- appearance

**Form:** Form is a basic to all writing. During writing ideas are given shape. Practice with many models of forms helps the students understand the forms well.

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Prose form:</b> Description - | Paragraphs, essay, character, sketch                |
| Narration -                      | Para, journal, biography, short story               |
| Exposition -                     | Report, articles, newspaper column, business letter |
| Persuasion -                     | Review, column, editorial                           |

## **ASSESSMENT OF WRITING**

### **Process Assessment:**

It is very important to assess the learning experiences of the student. There are two types of assessments. They are Process Assessment and Product Assessment. In process assessment, teachers monitor the process students go through as they write. In product assessment, teachers assess the students' finished composition. Continuous assessment gives a reliable and clear picture about the progressing of the students. Teachers watch students as they engage in writing. They learn about the students' attitude & interests in writing. The informal questioning by the teacher during the writing process helps the learners become better and more confident writers.

### **Conferencing:**

It is a way of assessing the writing process. It is a discussion about the work-in-progress. The teacher learns the problems faced by the students in writing. He guides the students to take responsibility for discussing and thinking. A conference can occur at various points of the writing process like pre-writing, drafting, revising & presentation. Anecdotal records and checklists provide teachers with details about students' writing.

### **Self Assessment:**

Students assess their own writing and writing processes. It develops a sense of responsibility. The quality and effectiveness of the writing is judged by the students. It helps to meet the requirements for the given assignment. Sample self assessment questions can be clearly introduced by the teacher.

Students reflections and insights are an important element of evaluation. Teacher should communicate their expectations regarding evaluation. Comments and suggestions on the following 'Headings' like General, Beginnings and Endings, Organisation, Clarity, Structure and Language & Usage and Mechanics can help students develop writing skills. Grading can be done under two ways.

They are Holistic Scoring &  
Analytic Scoring.

### **Holistic Scoring:**

Teachers read for a general impression. Numerical score or grade is awarded according to this impression. The content, the convention and the mechanics of writing is evaluated on the whole. This approach is rapid in judging the overall performance of the writer.

**Analytic Scoring:**

It is focused on a pre-determined list of criteria. It is more time consuming. It specifically identifies the performance of writing under different 'Headings' like Quality & Development, Organization, Style and Mechanics. It provides a detailed feedback.

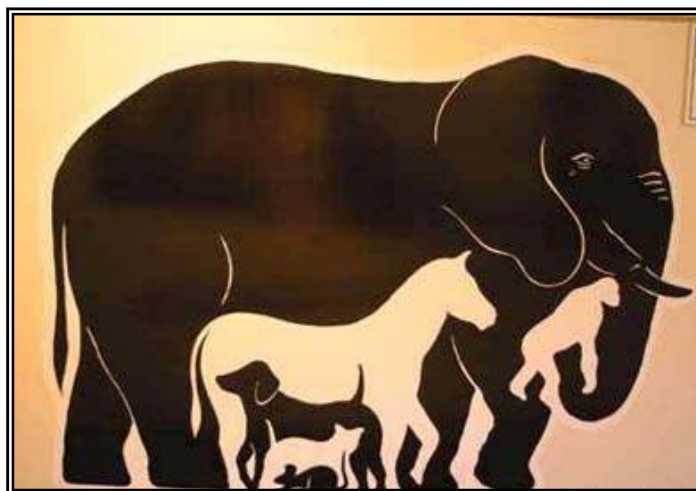
**Book Review:**

Writing a review of books is an advanced writing skill. In the school level, the students must be exposed to book reviews and in newspapers. This skill needs to be developed gradually. The teacher can motivate the students by sharing his reading of personal views about a book. The teacher should develop a desire in the pupil to read books in the school library.

**Translation:**

Translation is a complex task. It is a language development skill. Every language has its own very specific rules and one needs to be aware of and respect. Language is actually one of the best indicators of the complexity of mankind's nature. It is the interpretation of the meaning of a text. It ends up in producing of an equivalent text. It communicates the same message in another language. The text to be translated is called 'the source text'. The language which it is to be translated is called the 'Target language'. The final product is called the 'Target Text'. It takes into account the rules, the mechanics, conventions, idioms & phrases of both the languages. Word-for –word translation cannot take into account grammar & conventions. A linguistic hybrid is possible in Translation. Translation of literary works like novels, prose pieces, short stories, plays and poems is considered a literary pursuit in its own right.

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