



Strategies

FOR IMPLEMENTING

Writer's Workshop



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Foreword by Cathy Collier

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Table of *Contents*

Foreword	5
Acknowledgments	7
Introduction	9
<i>Time to Teach</i>	
Chapter 1: Strategies for Building a Community of Writers	11
Chapter 2: Motivating Student Writers	37
Chapter 3: Whole-Group Instruction	51
<i>Time to Write and Confer</i>	
Chapter 4: Independent and Small-Group Instruction	111
Chapter 5: Strategies for Writing in the Content Areas	135
<i>Time to Share</i>	
Chapter 6: Strategies for Publishing Student Writing.....	177
Chapter 7: Strategies for Assessment.....	193
Appendices	
Appendix A: References Cited.	207
Appendix B: Literature Cited	212
Appendix C: Additional Resources.....	219
Appendix D: Digital Resources	255

Foreword

I am a natural-born talker. I have always been comfortable with talking to anyone, anytime, anywhere. My mother often began my parent-teacher conferences with, “I already know Cathy talks too much, what else can you tell me about her?” For me, becoming a reader was a natural progression from my passion for talking, considering that reading is, in fact, storytelling. Reading became another way for me to have a conversation—this time with characters in a book. The characters became friends I could laugh, cry, and grow with through the course of the story and after. I soon learned that taking my love of talking and reading and putting it into written words created a whole new adventure. With writing I could talk to lots of people at once, and share my stories and experiences with others. As a teacher, my love of teaching writing is built on talking and reading. If you can talk about something, you can write about it. Giving my students the necessary tools to become writers is important to me, as I want my students to love writing as much as I do.

Classrooms have changed dramatically over the past several decades. Classrooms of the past provided activities and lessons focused on one level, assuming all students were at that same level at the same time. Assessments were rigid, unbending, and focused on a “norm.” Teachers were expected to set a single stage for a single performer and require a single outcome.

In the differentiated classrooms of today, teachers are looking for something to help all their students. Teaching students at varying levels within the same classroom is now the reality, and the expectation is to meet our students at their current level and help move them forward. Assessments now mean different things to different students at different times. However, the final goal of creating writers remains steadfast. As a teaching veteran with more than 25 years in the classroom, I am always looking for great ideas, lessons, and strategies to help me propel my students into the world of writing, and I believe that *Strategies for Implementing Writer’s Workshop* has done a wonderful job encompassing all of this.

The authors have divided this book into three parts: Time to Teach, Time to Write and Confer, and Time to Share. The sections provide a comprehensive look at each area, providing picture examples, ready-made mini-lessons, forms, anchor charts, and more. The authors take time to set the stage for writing before writing even begins, building routines and establishing norms to create a safe environment for students to craft authentic writing. Just as a student becomes a better soccer or piano player by practicing playing, a student becomes a better writer by practicing writing. Having time to write and talk about writing is an essential part of the process for students. The authors provide a multitude of activities to allow skills to develop and writers to form. In the final section of the book, the authors recognize that every piece of written work is looking for an audience. Sharing writing cannot be underscored; the authors provide a variety of publishing ideas to appeal to different learners. Though assessment is a necessary part of the process, the authors allow teachers and students to make critical decisions about these assessments. Allowing students a hand in the assessment process builds a place of respect and motivation for all learners.

I am excited to recommend this book. Having a single source to help motivate, create, and reward writers is worth its weight in gold.

—Cathy Collier, M.A.Ed.
Reading Specialist
International Literacy Association Board Member

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We are grateful to teachers who invited us to share this project with their students. Marlinton Middle ELA teachers allowed us to photograph, model, and visit at any time, as did Jan Jonese, Stephanie Burns, and Lisa Burns. Teachers at Nutter Fort Elementary School, New River Elementary, Ansted Elementary, and Meadow Bridge Elementary continue to welcome classroom modeling as we try out new strategies, and give us valuable feedback. Valerie Daniels contributed to this project from her kindergarten classroom in Deltona, Florida as did Christine Richards from her middle grade classroom at Southport Middle School in Port Saint Lucie. Terry Morrison, Technology Specialist at Simpson Elementary, partnered with us engaging students in writing through technology.

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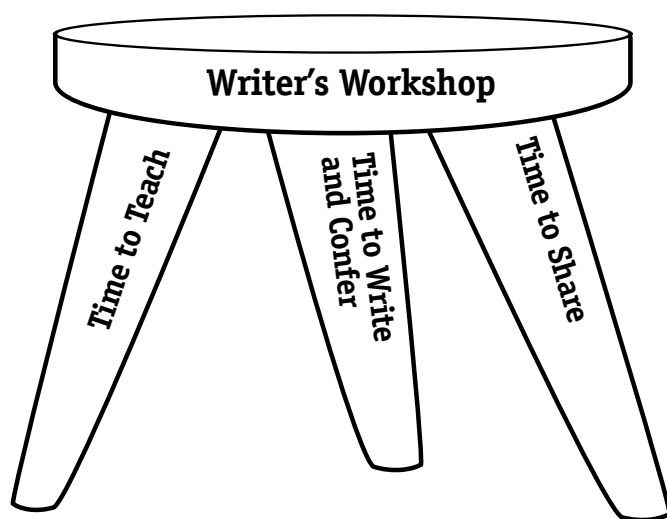
Vickie shouts out to husband Clint and son Luke, and Richard shouts out to Bill Boswell—for standing behind us and offering unfailing support. Love and gratitude for all that you do.

The Three-Legged Stool Model of Writer's Workshop

Strategic teaching is based on planning how to accomplish desired outcomes and then taking action. As a strategic writing teacher, you need great plans of action to achieve your goals. Your most important goal is clear: teach your students how to write.

In this resource, we gathered the best strategies we have seen in our collective 100-plus years of teaching students how to write. These are the strategies that help meet today's standards and that work for us, for our researcher colleagues, and for our hundreds of best-practice-writing teacher friends. The strategies are evidence-based and are compiled in an accessible, easy-to-use format. You can implement them individually, but used together, they make up the successful operating procedures in classrooms where students are becoming writers.

Strategies for Implementing Writer's Workshop is built upon a three-legged stool model for Writer's Workshop. Strategies are included for each of the legs of the stool that Writer's Workshop must stand on: Time to Teach, Time to Write and Confer, and Time to Share. This powerful organizational framework gives you the strategies you need to be successful.



Time to Teach

Chapters 1 through 3 address the leg of “time to teach.” When the strategies for effective classroom management and practices from these three chapters are put in place, instructional time can be maximized.

Chapter 1, *Strategies for Building a Community of Writers*, describes the essential characteristics of the Writer's Workshop community and gives strategies and classroom snapshots for designing and organizing space; establishing routines; managing writing tools and resources; developing learning walls, anchor charts, and writing centers; bringing real-world writing into the classroom; talking writing to writer; and using mentor texts in order to build a foundation for successful writing instruction.

In **Chapter 2**, *Motivating Student Writers*, strategies for engaging and motivating students during instruction are provided. We show you how to read and write like an author, use the language of motivation, motivate student writers with author celebrations, and build classroom morale.

Chapter 3, *Whole-Group Instruction*, shows *how* to teach through engaging mini-lessons, routines, structure, partner talk, and movement that launches effective time to teach.

Time to Write and Confer

Chapters 4 and 5 address the leg of “time to write and confer.” The strategies in these chapters support effective writing practices and help students develop writing prowess and stamina.

Chapter 4, Independent and Small-Group Instruction, focuses on the effective writing conference by organizing and planning for small-group and individual conferences, creating a conference schedule, providing a conference structure, communicating conference expectations, and preparing a conferring toolkit.

In **Chapter 5**, Strategies for Writing Across the Content Areas, the key aspects of building writing skills and stamina are addressed. Strategies are provided to help students read and write increasingly complex text, to link writing to what they are interested in, and to give them ownership and autonomy by selecting their own writing topics.

Time to Share

Although strategies for time to share are provided throughout the book, the real strength that makes this leg stand on its own is in **Chapter 6**, Strategies for Publishing Student Writing. The final step of publishing and sharing for a meaningful and authentic audience is what provides a purpose for writing and increases student motivation. This chapter explains why to publish, provides principles for publishing, and explores a variety of publishing options. This chapter also provides many fantastic ideas for writing celebrations that we have found to be effective in our work.

Finally, **Chapter 7**, Strategies for Assessment, provides an overview of both formative and summative assessments and shares strategies for setting assessment goals and achieving assessment outcomes. This chapter also includes strategies for gathering evidence of student learning from multiple sources and involving students in self-assessment and setting learning goals. It is the culminating piece that brings Writer’s Workshop all together.

Our Goal

The goal of this book is to help you strategically develop student writers through the Writer’s Workshop model. After reading this book, you should feel confident in doing the following:

- Building a community of writers
- Motivating student writers
- Maximizing good instruction
- Having students writing every day and in every class
- Having students share writing publicly
- Monitoring writing outcomes through assessment

Don’t forget that being strategic is a mindset. It starts with you. The best strategy for becoming the best teacher of writing you can be is your desire to be one. We hope this book will get you started. If you are already a stellar writing teacher, we hope it will help you continue on that path. Don’t just be a good writing teacher—be strategic. Be amazing!

—Richard, Jan, and Vickie

Strategies for Building a Community of Writers

Chapter 1

Essential Characteristics of a Writer's Workshop Community

A sense of community implies that in the classroom, all aspects of the writing environment will contribute to the comfort of every student. The physical arrangement, use of space, traffic flow, and resources determine the success of any literacy environment. In classrooms with strong classroom communities, student risk-taking is accepted and celebrated by teachers, even as more rigorous standards are implemented. "A classroom that respects what the students bring to it, what they are capable of and interested in, and that welcomes them into an active intellectual community is more likely to achieve rigor" (Beers and Probst 2013, 24).

Moving along the path to an intellectual writing community involves the teacher reducing ownership of the community and distributing that ownership to students. This does not mean relaxing the structure, but rather increasing the structure so that Writer's Workshop can operate without constant teacher oversight. This can be challenging and involves close observation of student behavior in interpersonal interactions, careful note-taking, and a gradual releasing of responsibility with the teacher making adjustments along the way.

The eight essential characteristics below help teachers develop a community of writers where all ideas are valued and where student engagement is rigorous and challenging.

- 1. Teach active engagement.** Classrooms are too often places of "tell and practice" (Richart, Church, and Morrison 2011, 9). Writer's Workshop was never designed in that format. Engaging students in conversation generates ideas. Instead of "tell and practice," a more active approach to learning might sound more like "invite and engage!"
- 2. Teach active listening.** Respectful listening does not happen without sufficient modeling by the teacher and practice by the students. Active listening in action requires student-peer conversations or conversations between team members to sustain the momentum of the conversation by questioning, elaborating, providing support, and complimenting. Active listening is dependent upon peer conversations that are clear, concise, and positive. Active listening grows out of meaningful engagement in student discussions about writing.
- 3. Practice behavior narration.** Behavior narration is a technique that can be used to establish acceptable conduct in the classroom during instruction and work time. Statements of behavior expectations provide students with direction for where to be and what to do. "Jamal is going directly to his seat without wasting time. I see the students at Table 3 have their writing folders opened and are quietly working together." Establishing a supportive relationship through positive statements about behavior can greatly reduce classroom disruptions.
- 4. Know your learners.** Identifying student interests, strengths, weaknesses, controlled techniques, skills, and strategies is an important part of writing instruction. Documenting information helps target the learning in conferences and small literacy groups. Plans of instruction regarding student writing skills and strategies will likely change. As your skills of observation and documentation of student writing grow, you will truly begin to "know your learners."

Chapter 1

5. **Use writing resources in different subjects.** It is difficult to truly teach all of the necessary writing standards unless they are integrated throughout the school day. By getting familiar with different types of writing that are taught at your grade level and selecting mentor texts to match, you can effectively integrate writing across the subject areas. For example, science and social studies resources and techniques can be integrated into the Writer's Workshop block.
6. **Provide immediate feedback.** Feedback should be shared with students quickly. Affirmations and authentic praise throughout the day are also important. For example, *"What a talented young writer you are! I noticed the lead in the beginning of your story sounds just like the author...."* *"You must be so proud that you figured out how to write that word by yourself. Great work!"*
7. **Share details about the day's writing schedule.** Students should not feel as though they are guessing what is intended for writing time. It is important to be clear, yet systematic and engaging, adjusting instruction as needed. These phrases support students in understanding the expectations for writing: *"Yesterday, we..."* *"Today, I will show you..."* *"It will help you..."*
8. **Increase the rigor of read alouds.** Using mentor texts that have rigorous vocabulary is an important way to expand students' word knowledge base. It is also important to consider pre-teaching vocabulary that might confuse students. When reading a word that may not be familiar to students, it can be helpful to stop briefly and give a short, student-friendly definition. The first read aloud of a text is for meaning. In-depth discussion of the writer's craft takes place in a follow-up reading.

A successful writing community should include all of these essential characteristics in a well-organized Writer's Workshop. The strategies presented in this book will help blaze a trail for increased student achievement and motivation, as well as boost your confidence as a writing teacher.

With our eight essential characteristics of a writing community as a foundation for the classroom, it's time to visualize where that community will reside by designing and organizing space.

Designing and Organizing Space

Efficient use of classroom space for writers can look very different depending on the grade level. The important thing to keep in mind is that students need to be able to move easily around the classroom for whole-group mini-lessons; small, guided writing groups; and peer/partner conferences. Space and resources also need to be available for gathering information for research projects.

The following strategies will help support successful classroom design and organization:

- Use space efficiently
- Visualize traffic flow
- Purge nonessential resources



Strategy 1: Use Space Efficiently

Using space efficiently in the classroom does not happen by accident. It takes thoughtful planning and consideration. Creating a classroom map on paper will help give you a clear starting point for using the space efficiently. This reduces the stress of moving and rearranging. It also saves time and increases productivity. Moving furniture around can be done on paper much more easily than actually moving real furniture.

Never underestimate your ability to utilize space efficiently. Window ledges, the floor, and baskets from a local dollar store can become units of storage. Organizing space to improve student achievement requires only an ability to think outside of the box. For example, crates in the whole-group meeting area can be used for teacher or student storage, serve as chairs for pulling students into a mini-lesson, or to add punch and vitality to a meeting area. Add a board with hinges, cover with filling and colored fabric, and you have created added space and a place where students of all ages can come to receive essential literacy information.



Strategy 2: Visualize Traffic Flow

Movement in the classroom should be without distraction and should help to maximize learning. Visualize where and how students move for each activity throughout the school day and prepare the classroom accordingly. Consider space for whole-group instruction, small groups, partner work, and work centers. Students need to be able to move throughout the room as their writing assignments require. There needs to be space made for partners to conference during revision time, and room for modeled writing during small-group work. Students should be able to move effortlessly and feel comfortable in their own space without infringing upon the personal space of others. Teach students how to move from place to place beginning on day 1, and with review and practice at all developmental levels, it will be remembered by learners and will develop strong classroom management.

Managing is a key component of student achievement and promotes writers as independent learners. One simple consideration is the placement of trash or recycling bins. Writing is often messy and requires drafts and more drafts. Placing a small container within each pod of students rather than near the door or teacher's desk eliminates the need for students to constantly get out of their seats to throw paper away. A strategically placed can of pencils with a sign—Pencil Sharpener Closes at 10:15—can also eliminate a disruption or unnecessary movement throughout the day/class period.



Strategy 3: Purge Nonessential Resources

Throw away or donate all the classroom materials that you don't need. Nonessential resources should be boxed up and stored. Students come to the classroom with different levels of structure in their lives, but they all need to see an inviting, organized environment that supports them in their work. By getting rid of nonessential items, necessary writing tools such as paper, scissors, highlighters, sticky notes, and tape become more easily accessible and students can manage their own time without interrupting the teacher or other students.

Chapter 1

Figure 1.1 Sample Classroom Design and Organization 1

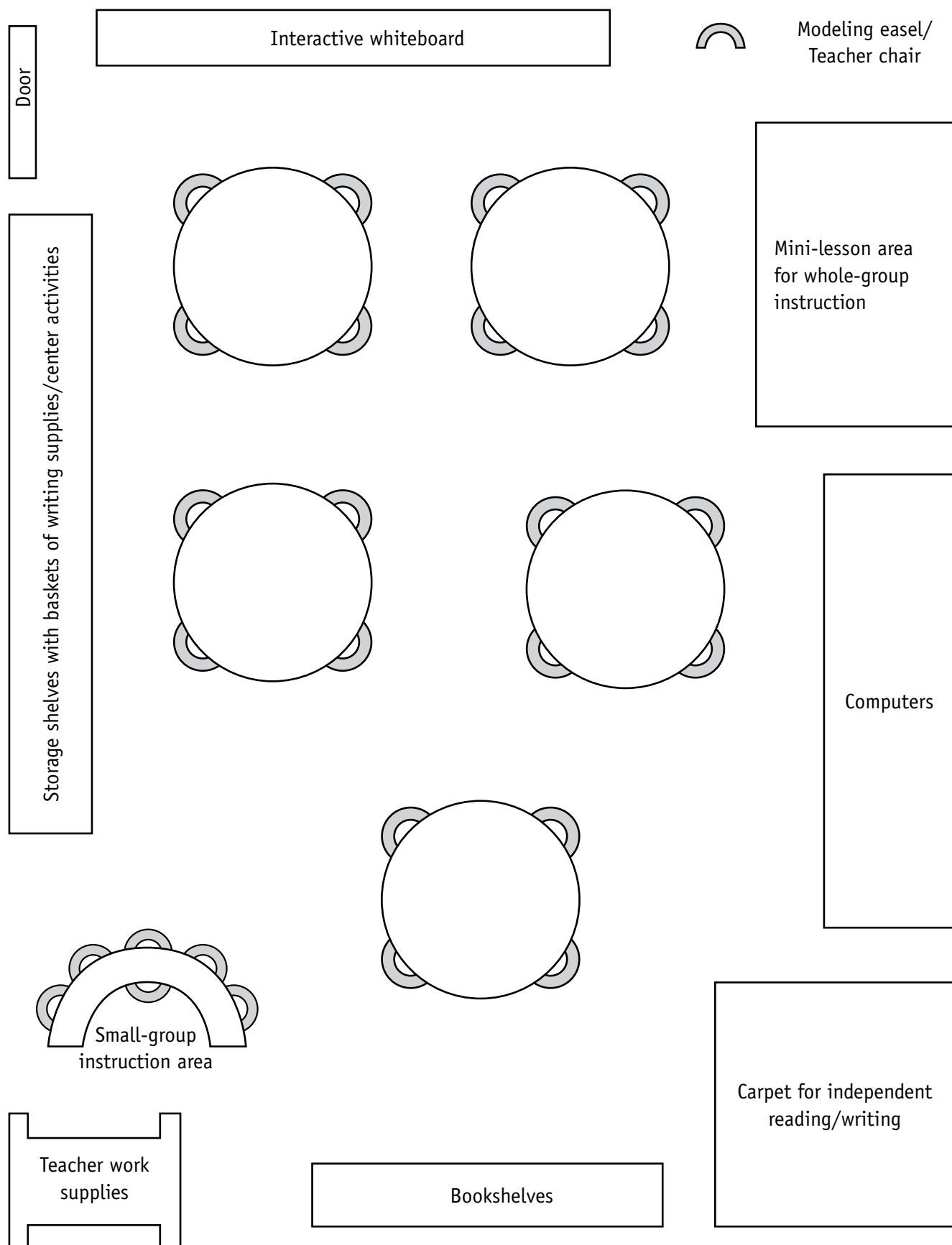
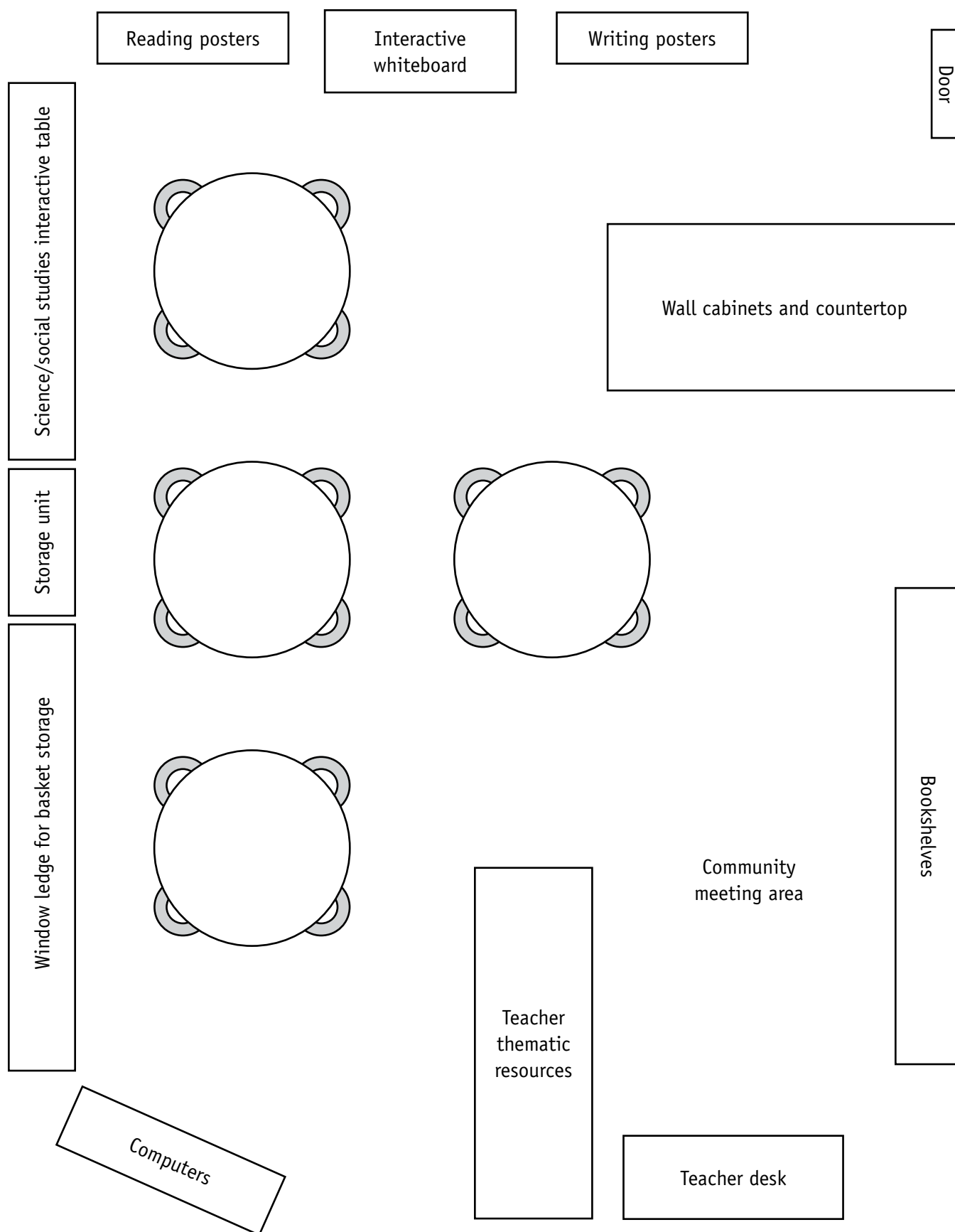
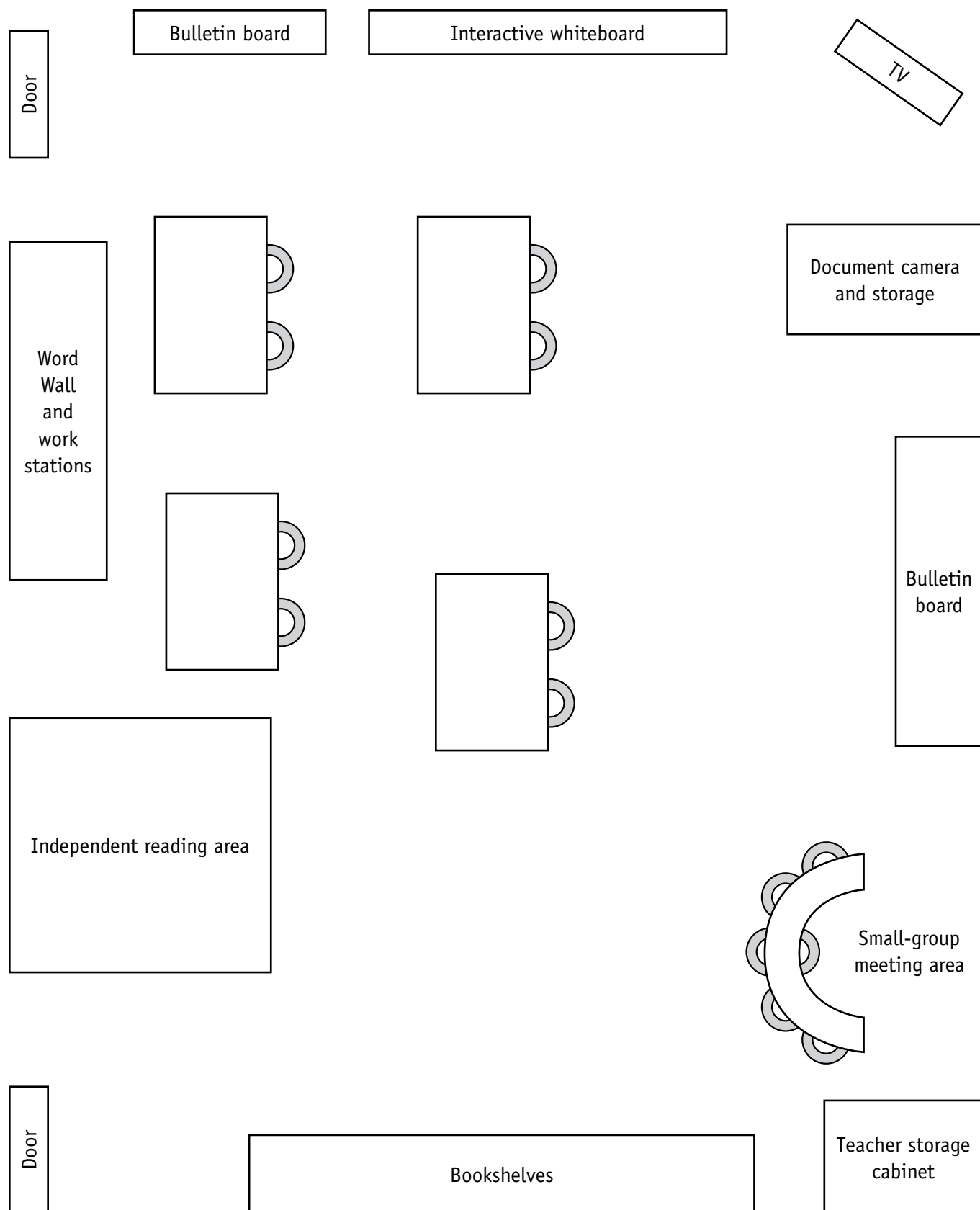


Figure 1.2 Sample Classroom Design and Organization 2



Chapter 1

Figure 1.3 Sample Classroom Design and Organization 3



Establishing Routines and Transitions

In our work as consultants over the last 20 years, we have heard comments from student teachers, teachers, principals, and district administrators about the importance of classroom management, routines, and movement.

We know about routines and transitions that have been tried successfully hundreds, if not thousands, of times in classrooms across the globe. However, what we hope you walk away with is something new, something different; perhaps even something that may contribute to your becoming a trailblazer in terms of classroom management. What you see in classroom examples may give rise to an exciting new twist in your own implementation of a community of writers.

The following strategies will help support successful classroom routines and transitions:

- Build a routine chart together
- Integrate movement



Strategy 1: Build a Routine Chart Together

Writing structures and routines are highly respected when students retain ownership. We often invite students to have input into the various routines we use in Writer's Workshop. For example, one routine chart we use focuses on what Writing Workshop looks like, sounds like, and feels like. Keep in mind there are certain expectations that are non-negotiable that you add to the chart. After discussing non-negotiable routines, allow students to create an even higher standard of excellence by adding their own expectations. The sample chart (Figure 1.4) is one routine chart created with students as an anchor chart for how we want our classroom to look, sound, and feel. This routine chart, created with student input, works not only for Writer's Workshop but also for everyday writing in the subject areas at all grade levels. Add your own personal ideas to this list.

Figure 1.4 Sample Routine Chart for Writer's Workshop

Looks Like	Sounds Like	Feels Like
Anchor charts	Beehive/buzz	Productive
Students active	Questions asked and answered	Comfortable
Regulated behavior	Two voices	Exciting
Visuals placed appropriately	Conversation/affirmations	Relaxed
Vocabulary available	"I can" attitude	Confident
Students engaged	Quiet during think time	Organized "chaos"
Organized and colorful	Pauses and action	Purposeful
Individualized and differentiated	Students making decisions	Comfortable sharing thoughts



Strategy 2: Integrate Movement

The expression “a rolling stone gathers no moss” is a perfect visual when thinking about getting students engaged, on task, and keeping their brains active. If students are moving and chanting, they are less likely to be off task or misbehaving during transition time. Charles Hillman, a neuroscientist specializing in kinesiology, compared brain functions of “high fit” and “low fit” children. He reported that exercisers made greater gains in fitness and on cognitive tests. These results confirm that students who move outperform their peers on self-regulation, working memory, cognitive flexibility, and multitasking (Pappano 2015). If this is the case, why not adjust classroom routines to include simple movements as part of Writer’s Workshop?

Movement from one activity to another—from seats to whole-group mini-lesson, from mini-lesson to writing practice time, and from practice time to small-group instruction—should weave in movement activity. Movement can also be added at the beginning of the writing lesson, in the middle when students need a “brain break,” or when sending them off to work independently or with partners. Regardless of how you decide to incorporate movement in the day, do it in a way that works for you and your students. If jumping jacks get your students too wild, try something less vigorous such as toe touches. The important part is not how big the movement is, but that it is incorporated strategically throughout the day.

Mini-lesson: Writing a Friendly Letter Grades K–2

1. Tell students that there are five parts of a friendly letter (heading, greeting, body, closing, signature).
2. Touch head with both hands for the first part of a friendly letter, saying “Heading!”
3. Wave at students for the second part of a friendly letter, saying “Greeting!”
4. Sweep with both hands down the body, saying, “Body!”
5. Smack both hands on knees, saying “Closing!”
6. Pretend to write your name in the air, moving from your left to right, (directionality), saying “Signature!”
7. Transition students to seats for their guided/independent writing by chanting/singing, “We’re going to write a letter.” Repeat three times.

Mini-lesson: Sentence Fluency Grades 3–5

1. Explain to students that an appositive is a noun or noun phrase that adds additional details in sentence writing.
2. Build an anchor chart and model how to add interesting information and variety to sentences. Here is an example to begin the chart: “My dog, Cooper, (appositive) loves to run and chase birds.”
3. Show students that the appositive can be removed without changing the meaning, but that it does add details, and needs to be enclosed with commas. Incorporate multiple examples into the chart, using the names of your students.
4. As you model the lesson, weave in an “appositive action” movement by completing a karate chop motion to indicate where the commas enclosing the appositive are to be placed. Say: “We call this ‘appositive action karate chop.’”
5. Consider giving students a challenge item such as “Kudzu, a giant plant with enormous leaves, was brought to this country from Japan” and apply “appositive action.”
6. Have students transition to the appropriate places in the room for guided and independent writing practice.

Mini-lesson: Writing Conventions Grades 6–8

1. Explain to students that writing multisyllabic words can be a challenge. Yet, with an understanding of the six common syllable rules, using the patterns makes spelling conventions easier.
2. Over several days, build the following chart:

Rule 1: CVC closed syllable/short vowel condensation	Rule 2: CV open syllable/long vowel microscopic	Rule 3: CVCe consonant/vowel/consonant, silent <i>e</i> complete
Rule 4: R-controlled the vowel sound is changed by the <i>r</i> sound coronation	Rule 5: Vowel teams when a syllable has two vowels, the first vowel is usually long. impeachment	Rule 6: Stable/Consonant le the syllable has a consonant that precedes the <i>le</i> , usually found on the end of words. sprinkle

3. Each day have students search reading material for examples of the six syllable rules and record on sticky notes. They must provide evidence of their reasoning.
4. Have students come to the front of the room each holding a letter card for a multisyllabic word, such as 12 kids holding the letters c-o-n-d-e-n-s-a-t-i-o-n. Have students move to get into syllable-pattern groups and time them to see how long it takes.
5. Have each syllable group do a chant for their syllable. For example, the c-o-n group will choose the syllable rule that applies then clap and chant “c-o-n is CVC Rule 1!” The d-e-n group does the same, respectively. The s-a group will chant, “s-a is CV open syllable, Rule 2!” The t-i-o-n group would recognize that their syllable is different and chant “Exception!”
6. When students are ready to share their writing, have them provide evidence that shows how they used multisyllabic words accurately.

Managing Writing Tools and Resources

Once students begin writing several different pieces, they need a place to store their important work. In grades K–8, we recommend that students use two writing folders/notebooks. Students use writing folders/notebooks to organize the writing they are currently working on and to store support tools like word lists, editing checklists, and personal word walls. They use portfolio folders/notebooks to hold their non-published and published work representative of their growth as writers.

Take a look at the following strategies and examples:

- Creating the writing folder/notebook
- Creating the portfolio folder/notebook
- Designing and organizing a writer’s folder/notebook
- Examples of writing folders/notebooks



Strategy 1: Creating the Writing Folder

A writing folder is an excellent tool for storing writing samples. Inserts can be provided, which scaffold student achievement on many different levels. Depending on developmental level, you might want to include the following inserts in the student's writing folder:

Grades K–2	Grades 3–5	Grades 6–8
Alphabet chart	Vowel teams	Writing rubric
Months of the year and days of the week	Vowel digraphs	Chart of the six syllable rules
Family words	Graded high-frequency word list	Transition words for informative, narrative, and opinion writing
Short vowels/long vowels	Checklist for assessments/rubric	Vowel digraphs and diphthongs
Consonant digraphs and consonant blends	Transition words for informative, narrative, and opinion	Self-publishing ideas
High-frequency graded word list	Commonly misspelled words	

Personal preference will guide your decisions on a management system that works for your needs. Here is a suggestion for how to create a writing folder.

1. Select a durable, two-pocket, three-prong folder for each student.

- The left inside pocket is for pieces that students are currently working on. For grades K–2, place a green dot on the pocket. For grades 3–8, write “In Progress” on the pocket.
- The right inside pocket is for pieces that students have completed or want to save for a later date. For grades K–2, place a red dot on the pocket. For grades 3–8, write “Completed” on the pocket.
- Provide time for students to personalize the outside of their folders.

2. Determine where students will store their folders.

- Where will your students keep their writing folders? At their desks for easy access during any writing activity? In a writing bin with the rest of the class and used only during writing time? In containers labeled by rows? How will your students retrieve them and put them away in a timely manner?
- Establish management procedures that are specific and become routine in your classroom. These may be changed from year to year based on the students you have in your classroom. The procedure might be tweaked a bit throughout the year to create smoother transitions.

3. Use daily mini-lessons to build the writing folder.

- As you model and teach students to use writing tools, students add the anchor chart support pages to the middle section of the folder. Plastic sleeves are great to protect these pages, as we expect students to reference them often in their writing.
- The middle of the folder also includes tools that guide student writing such as word lists, alphabet and vowel charts, editing checklists, graphic organizers, or personal word walls.
- Have students in grades 3–8 store these support tools in their writer's notebook rather than in the writing folder.



Strategy 2: Create the Writer's Notebook

Designing and Organizing a Writer's Notebook

In grades 3–8, students use a writing folder to store writing pieces and a writer's notebook to practice writing and to hold ideas and resources that guide and support them throughout the writing process. Joanne Hindley sums up the contents of a writer's notebook beautifully in this quote from her book *In the Company of Children*.

A writer's notebook can be many things: a place to make mistakes, to experiment, to record overheard conversations or family stories, to remember an inspiring quotation, to free associate, to ask questions, to record beautiful or unusual language, to jot down the seeds of unborn stories or story beginnings, to tell the truth or to lie, to record memories, to embellish memories, to remember what you've been reading, to record stories you've heard about other people, to remember one word that conjures up an image, to remember things you're surprised by, to observe, to record impressions, or to describe a picture or a person or an image you can't get out of your head. A writer's notebook is a receptacle, a tool to hold on to things. (p. 13)

The writer's notebook “gives you a place to live like a writer” (Fletcher 1996). Fletcher says his writer's notebook is the most important tool he uses as a writer and shares that, “Keeping a writer's notebook is one of the best ways I know of living a writing kind of life” (1996, 4).

We suggest your students' writer's notebooks be:

- **Personalized:** The notebook is a personal reflection of the student and his or her journey through learning the writing process. It should hold photographs, words, and phrases that personify the student.
- **Organized:** We recommend organizing the notebook for easy access to specific writing topics and strategies. This helps students quickly revisit resources taught throughout the year when needed.
- **Cumulative:** The notebook is created over time and gradually builds by continually adding mini-lesson resources, writing examples, and student writing.

1. Select the type of notebooks you prefer for each student.

- Decide what works best for you and your students. Consider durability, cost, and purpose. Some teachers use binders and not folders. Others use composition notebooks or spiral notebooks and use a folder for storing ongoing writing pieces.

2. Celebrate and decorate the writer's notebook.

- Discuss the value and meaning of this important writing tool and how each one will be similar, but different. Emphasize that it holds the ideas, memories, pictures, words, and phrases that are their very own. They are writers!
- Take time to share notebooks as a class. Lay out all the notebooks with a pen and paper for each and do a gallery walk. Students leave a compliment/comment for students about their notebooks, such as *I like the way you...*, *Can't wait to learn more about...*!

Chapter 1

3. Determine where students will store their notebooks.

- Similar to the writing folder, it is important to establish management procedures that are specific and become routine in your classroom for storing and using the writer's notebooks.
- Keep in mind that the notebooks are a place to gather ideas, thoughts, and inspirations for writing. If they are tucked on a shelf and not accessible to students, it may be a missed opportunity to record genuine writing observations.

4. Organize the notebook.

- Decide what will work best for you, your students, and your writing curriculum. We typically have students divide their composition notebooks into sections with 10–15 blank pages with chapter tabs labeled:

Chapter 1: Table of Contents

Chapter 2: Management

Chapter 3: Ideas

Chapter 4: Organization

Chapter 5: Voice

Chapter 6: Sentence Fluency

Chapter 7: Word Choice

Chapter 8: Conventions

Chapter 9: Miscellaneous

5. Begin adding resources to the writer's notebook.

- As you teach mini-lessons, students add resources from the lesson to the left side of an open page and practice the writing skill on the right side of the notebook.

Examples of Writer's Notebooks

Using the right organizational plan builds the right environment for writing success. A kindergarten teacher uses the OWL (Organized While Learning) notebook in Figure 1.5 to organize students for writing. The third-grade crates are organized by groups and distributed at the beginning of writing class (Figure 1.6). Three crates represent three Writer's Workshop sessions as this group is departmentalized. Notebooks are slipped into folders so that both writing tools are available at the beginning of class. A middle school teacher embraces the idea of a tabbed notebook as displayed in Figure 1.7.

Figure 1.5 Sample OWL Notebook

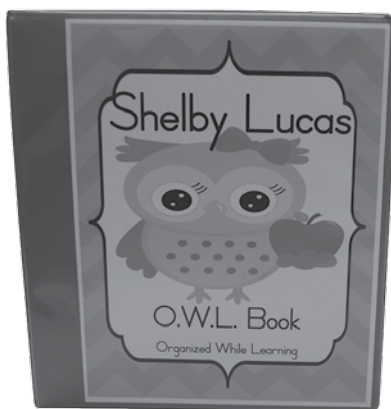


Figure 1.6 Sample Writing Notebook Crates



Figure 1.7 Sample Tabbed Writer's Notebook



Chapter 1

Develop Learning Walls, Anchor Charts, and Writing Centers

Classroom snapshots and sample classroom conversations help show how the following three strategies can be implemented across grade bands:

- Use word walls
- Use anchor charts
- Create a classroom writing center



Strategy 1: Use Word Walls

Word walls can be organized in all sorts of ways (alphabetically, by subject, for genre study), but they can also include different word categories (high-frequency words, content vocabulary, spelling vocabulary, etc.). If attractive, timely, and appropriately placed using cheers, chants, clapping, and moving, word learning can happen throughout the day and across curriculum.

Word walls can be placed on chart paper and hung across a clothesline if space is limited. High-frequency words for primary students can be alphabetized for ease of word location. Content-area words need to be placed where they are accessible for writing instruction for arguments, position papers, reaction papers, reports, and manuals for vocational education. Math vocabulary connected to instruction can hang from a coat hanger with small clothespins. Word walls need to be creative and provide the necessary support to build word knowledge. Using word walls supports student writers, allowing them to devote more attention to their message and build automaticity for word knowledge.

Word Walls for K–2 Writers

The goal of a word wall in grades K–2 is to target specific vocabulary and high-frequency words needed for easy recall in reading and writing. The area should be colorful and attractive and easily accessible by all students.



Classroom Snapshot: Word Walls Grades K–2

1. Locate an area in the room that will accommodate your targeted word list of high-utility and high-frequency words.
2. Introduce the lesson by explaining that knowing how to write words with ease is necessary for reading and writing projects.
3. Choose three to five words to introduce with scaffolding and support. Use visuals when possible and introduce in context.
4. Say the word. My turn, “I Say ____!” Have students repeat the word. “You Say ____!”
5. Touch to the left of the word and say the word. Tap under and say each letter. Have students clap, snap, or stomp their feet as they chant the letters of the word. Repeat this a few times, as necessary.
6. Use the word in a sentence.
7. In partner pairs, engage the students in a routine. Say the names of the letters and think of a sentence to use the word in context.
8. Display the word.
9. As an option, have students put the words in a vocabulary notebook and make a picture. Or, place students in pairs and have them create a word search.

Word Walls for Grades 3–5 Writers

Word Walls in grades 3–5 can use an alphabet chart with sticky notes that are organized by units of study, domain-specific tier 3 words, or targeted words for writing projects. These walls can be portable and moved from space to space when systems departmentalize. If students have difficulty, then differentiate words by creating a personalized alphabet chart for students to keep in writing folders.



Classroom Snapshot: Word Walls Grades 3–5

Introduce students to the idea of a portable word wall. The words displayed on the actual word wall will relate to what is being studied in class or a piece of literature/informational text that is being studied.

1. Choose five to seven words to focus on each week, adding a different activity each day.
2. Words for a research project about the study of the brain might include impulsive, creativity, intelligence, chemicals, neurons, microscopic, and spatial.
3. Place a word on a sticky note on the alphabet chart in the proper box.
4. Move to the board and break the word into syllables. Touch to the left of the word: “I say microscopic. You say, microscopic.” Slide your hand quickly under the word left to right.
5. Write the word in syllables on the board.
 - *mi* open syllable/long vowel
 - *cro* open syllable/long vowel
 - *scop* closed syllable/short vowel
 - *ic* closed syllable/short vowel
6. Give the meaning of the word.
7. Have students engage in a discussion saying the word in syllables, using fingers to tap out syllables, and using the word in a meaningful sentence
8. Keep the word wall posted in the room for use in reading and writing projects.
9. When finished with theme words, move them to an anchor chart and start a new list.

Aa	Bb	Cc	Dd	Ee
Ff	Gg	Hh	Ii	Jj
Kk	Ll	Mm	Nn	Oo
Pp	Qq	Rr	Ss	Tt
Uu	Vv	Ww	Xx	Yy
				Zz