



POPEY

Provincial Outreach Program
for the Early Years

www.popey.ca

Supporting Nonfiction Writing in Your K–3 Classroom

Presenters:
Lisa Thomas & Jen Kelly

Wednesday, November 9th

3:15 – 4:15pm

* Workshop handout & resources available at padlet.com/POPEY

Outcomes for Today



- ★ mini-lessons, activities, and routines to explore a variety of scaffolded supports for writing to, with, and by our students in the nonfiction genre
- ★ help develop students' identities as writers by immersing them in the steps of the writing process and teaching them specific writing behaviours and strategies to create a variety of texts

The Developmental Stages of Writing

Emergent

- hold simple sentences in memory when composing
- use a combination of drawing, dictating, & writing letters
- say words slowly to identify sound-to-letter match
- write a few high frequency words with accuracy



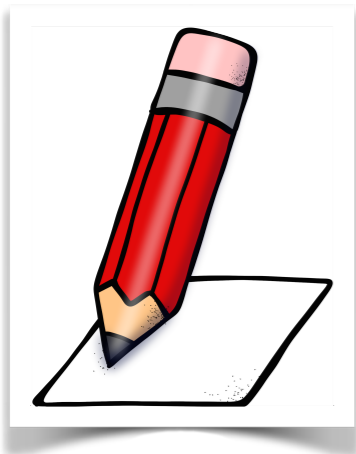
Early

- maintain a sequence of ideas when writing a message
- construct words using larger units of sound-to-letter
- spell high frequency words correctly
- return to reread when meaning breaks down
- include more details in writing
- segment and blend sounds in words



Transitional

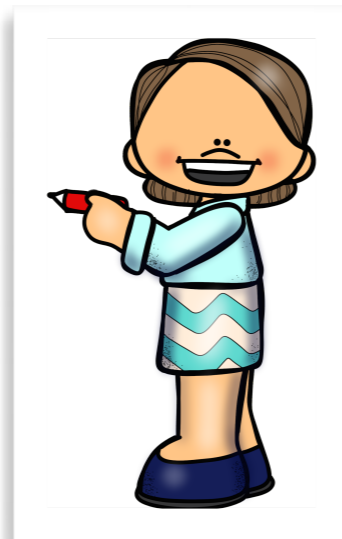
- use knowledge of text to plan & organize writing
- include details in logical sequence
- expand vocabulary; include new and unusual words
- attend to syllables when writing unknown words
- write longer texts with greater accuracy and speed



What We Know About Writing Development

Kids need:

- explicit and sequenced instruction that helps them progress along a learning continuum
- critical feedback that helps them know next steps
- extensive opportunities to write on topics they care about



What is Nonfiction Writing?

Grade 1 – Writing from experience

- any writing in which students record information they've acquired, or their experiences, feelings, opinions, and observations *e.g., writing about friends*

Grade 2 – Personal writing

- writing that expresses connections to personal experiences, ideas, likes, and dislikes *e.g., writing about family*

Grade 2 – Writing to communicate ideas and information

- informational writing and representations about non-complex topics and procedures *e.g., writing about Canadian animals*

Grade 3 – Personal writing

- a variety of clear personal writing and representations that express connections to personal experiences, ideas, and opinions
e.g., journal writing about a field trip

Grade 3 – Writing to communicate ideas and information

- a variety of clear, easy-to-follow informational writing and representations
e.g., books, reports, articles, letters that explain to/share with an audience

What Topics Do You Care About?

Kids need **extensive opportunities** to write on topics they care about

Think of some of **your favourite topics** and the people, activities, places, things you do in your regular day-to-day life:

- * Hobbies & activities (*yoga, birdwatching, baking, hiking, photography...*)
- * Sports
- * Places you like to go
- * People you spend time with – family and friends
- * Music, movies, books...

Can you come up with a list of **3–5 things** from your life that you would be **KEEN** to write about?

Please share in the Chat box...

Nurturing and Supporting Young Writers

- * Writing must be a predictable, daily ROUTINE
- * Children need to see themselves as writers, each with a unique IDENTITY
- * Writing is a process of DECISION-MAKING and ACTION
- * Writers need a disposition for RISK-TAKING
- * Writers need a sense of MOMENTUM to know they are growing
- * Writers work with a sense of CRAFT guiding them, and they learn craft from MENTORS
- * Teachers must ACT AS IF children are capable, competent writers

Holding these beliefs about writing will help shape our plans, actions, and responses as we support and guide young writers.

Book Making

Learning Through Language, Learning About Language

Making Books...

- ▶ Is developmentally appropriate. *Brings a sense of PLAY to making.*
- ▶ Encourages children to do bigger work and develop stamina for writing.
- ▶ Causes children to live like writers
- ▶ Makes the 'reading like writers' connection so clear.
- ▶ Helps children begin to understand the process of composition and decision-making.
- ▶ Helps children begin to understand genre, purpose & audience.

beliefs guide actions

Book Making: What Children Need to Get Started

1. **TIME** – conversations, demonstrations, students writing, sharing their process
2. **SPACE** – deciding **where** they can do their best work as a writer is a decision the children can **own**
3. **BLANK BOOKS** – **lines** set an **expectation** for print that makes some children think “I don’t know how to do that, so I **can’t**.”
4. **WRITING TOOLS** – Students **choose** from separate tubs for crayons, coloured pencils, and markers; bins for blank, pre-stapled books; ABC charts
5. **AN IMAGE OF BOOKMAKING** – students know what books look like; that **PEOPLE** make books; a finished book is the result of someone’s work to make that book – taking **action** from **ideas**

Bottom Line: If children aren't TRYING to write,
they aren't LEARNING to write.

Book Making: What children need to get started

1. TIME

- * 10–20 minutes – WRITERS' MEETING (whole class)

The teacher leads conversations, demonstrations, and inquiries connected to a unit of study.

- * 30–40 minutes – INDEPENDENT WORK

The children make books.

- * 5–10 minutes – SHARE & REFLECTION (whole class)

Writers tell stories of process.

Extend the time for independent work a little each day

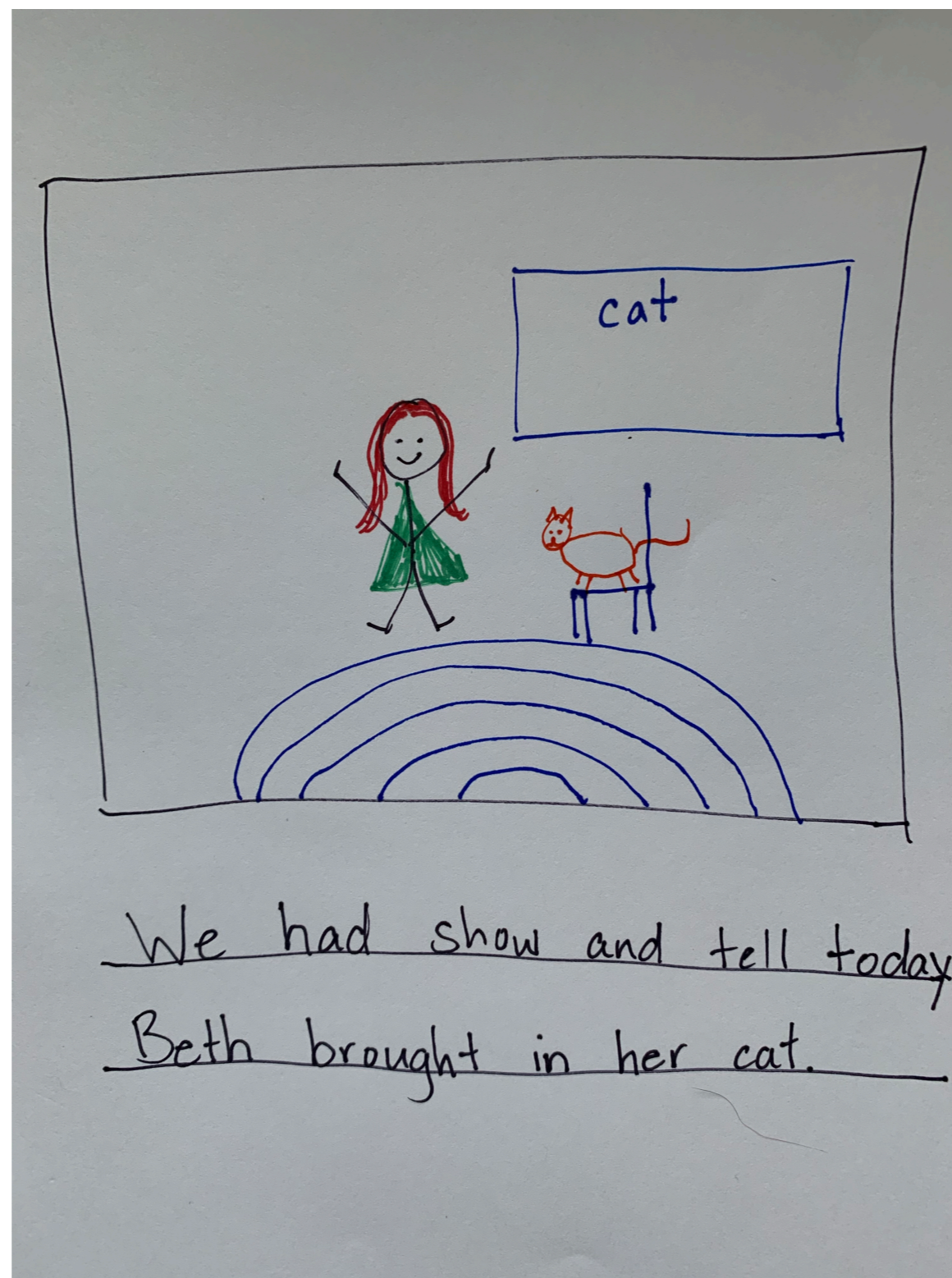
Writing TO Children: Modelled Personal Writing

Modelled Writing is Explicit Teaching

- ★ show students again and again **what to do**
- ★ reveal **actions, thinking, decisions** and **mindsets**
- ★ not just telling **WHAT** you want to write
- ★ but showing **HOW** you're going to write it



Teacher Modelling - Personal Writing



Your Turn! Personal Writing

Think of something interesting, unusual, funny, strange, or exciting that happened in your life recently – something you'd be comfortable sharing about.

Examples and possibilities:



- * You saw a rainbow on your dog walk last night
- * An old friend called you out of the blue for a chat
- * You just discovered a new favourite...something!
- * The best laugh you've had in ages
- * The funniest thing a student said to you lately

Take a minute to reflect on something you can share, and enter 2–3 sentences into the Chatbox before the music ends.

Writing With Children: Interactive Informational Writing

Interactive writing is dynamic and collaborative

- ★ students and educators **compose writing together**
- ★ **transitional tool** to move students **forward**
- ★ **find reasons to write** across the curriculum
- ★ **notice details** of the written language



Interactive Instructional Writing: How to Throw a Party

Children are invited to compose the directions, as they think about each step needed to throw a party.

- ▶ Ask students to think about/share the steps
- ▶ Orally rehearse all the things you need to do – group chat
- ▶ **Decide which step is first, second, third, etc.**
- ▶ Enter your first 3–4 steps into the Chat Box

- Say the first sentence twice to make sure everyone agrees
- At an easel, begin constructing the first sentence by getting students to give sounds/letters at various parts
(*easy to hear consonants and high frequency words*)
- Re-read often and add in punctuation
- Summarize the learning that took place

Writing BY Children: Using Nonfiction Mentor Texts

You can use reading to teach writing...

- ★ students **read texts** like **writers**
- ★ students realize there is no **ONE** way to write
- ★ **books** can be **co-teachers** in your classroom
- ★ **notice details** of the written language



Informational writing - to communicate information

Teaching Others About What We've Read



Nonfiction Text Features & Nonfiction Thinking

- * what's the topic?
- * what information might we expect to read?
- * what categories might that info be sorted into?
- * what text features will be included in this book?
- * what vocabulary words do we already know?
- * what's a personal connection you have here?
- * what's our goal as readers?
- * what's the author's purpose as a writer?

Using a Mentor Text to Shape our Informational Writing

Lets walk through a pre-writing activity together...



- * what **facts** did we learn about wolves?
- * what **categories** of information were included?
- * what **text features** were included?
- * what **vocabulary words** did we read?
- * what **descriptions** and **comparisons** were included?
- * what's our **purpose**, now that **we are writers**?

Choose 2 – 3 of the above questions to reflect on & answer.

Varied Writing Formats = Differentiated Options

Possible options for students to demonstrate their learning:

📌 List

📌 Sign

📌 Poster

📌 Brochure

📌 Newspaper

📌 Magazine

📌 Graphic Organizer

📌 Report

📌 Letter

📌 Picture book

📌 Song or poem

📌 Storyboard

📌 Journal

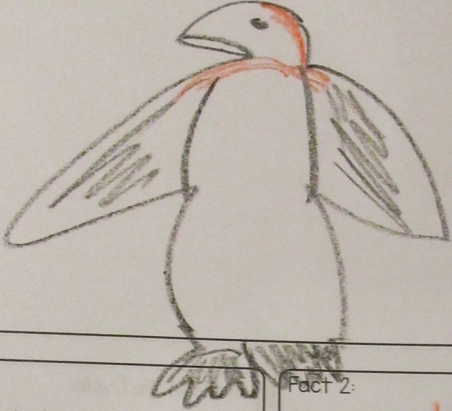
📌 A Review

📌 Comic Strip

📌 Play

📌 Story

Using varied writing formats to teach others



Fact 1: HOP

Fact 2: eat fish

Fact 3: Swim fast

Fact 4: waddle

By: _____

ATTACK OF THE GIANT PANDA!

* they eat meat!

* 10-16 hrs/day eating

* can sense and smell people coming

* 200 pounds of teeth, claws and fur

* Da xiong mao
Big Bear Cat

Produced By: _____

Eagles

Everything You Need to Know!



Appearance: They're not really bald!
Habitat: Forests of beautiful BC

Prey: They love fish!
Babies: Eaglets hatch from eggs

Wing span: Can be more than 2 metres!
Watch out for those talons!

Hunters from the sky!

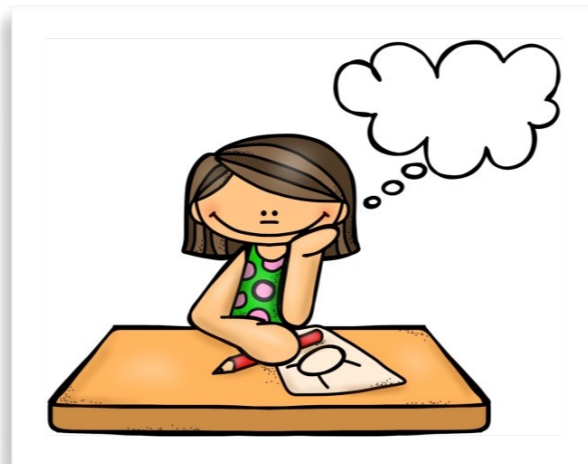
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Nurturing and Supporting Young Writers

“Primary classrooms should be places where there are writing **demonstrations** and **discussions every day** about what comes next and why.

They should be places where there’s a **strong connection between reading and writing**, as students look to **mentor texts** as models.”



Sources

Resource Books

Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing – Calkins, The Reading and Writing Project

The Writing Thief – Culham

Apprenticeship in Literacy: Transitions Across Reading and Writing, K-4 – Dorn & Jones

Write from the Start: Writing Workshop in K-3 – POPEY Presentation by Lori Jamison

Interactive Writing – McCarrier, Pinnell & Fountas

A Teacher's Guide to Getting Started with Beginning Writers – Wood Ray & Cleaveland

Online Resources

[BC Ministry of Education's Writing Performance Standards](#)

[Big Huge Labs Online](#)

[Epic Digital Reading Platform](#)

[POPEY's Word Work Resources](#)

Videos

[Heinemann Online Resources for *A Teacher's Guide to Getting Started with Beginning Writers*](#)

[Miles Music Kid on TikTok](#)



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