

First Grade Writing

Guidance for Scope and Sequence Development



Writing in First Grade

While the bar is high for first grade writing under the New Illinois Learning Standards, remember that this year's work is a progression, starting with mastery of the alphabet. Under the new standards, first graders should be encouraged to keep using what they know about letter sounds (aka phonemes) and newly learned spelling patterns to spell irregular, unfamiliar, and new vocabulary words, for example "preshis" for *precious* and "inportint" for *important*.

The 3 Types of Writing

First graders should practice and learn three kinds of writing: opinion, informative, and narrative. Opinion and informative writing will begin by having students read one or more books and responding to what they've learned. In an opinion piece, a student introduces the book or topic he/she is writing about, states his/her opinion or preference about it, gives a reason or two to support his/her opinion (e.g. *Ramona was wrong because she hurt Susan when she pulled her curls.*), and then offers some sort of conclusion to complete the writing.

In an informative piece, a student names what they are writing about and gives some information, facts, or details about it (e.g. *Dinosaurs lived on Earth a long time ago. Some dinosaurs were bigger than people are today...*), and, as in an opinion piece, offers some sense of conclusion.

Writing a narrative is like writing a story, and a first grade story may be inspired by books, experiences, or pure imagination. A first grader's story should describe two or more events; include some details about what happened, and use sentence order, verb tense, and words to put the events in order (e.g. *Then Goldilocks tries the second bowl of porridge. Next she eats the third bowl of porridge.*), and give some sense of the story coming to an end — not only by writing "The End," although that's a good start.

The Writing Process

A big part of teaching kids to write well is helping them understand that writing is a multistep process. Before first graders pick up a pencil, prewriting begins with reading, thinking, rereading, taking notes, and discussing. Students will then create their first draft by drawing, dictation or writing. This important first step is about building knowledge and processing new thoughts. When a student's first draft is done, questions should be asked to elicit details or facts that could be added, to make word choices convey what is meant, to make sure there are an introduction and a conclusion, or to help organize the order of events in a story.

Then students revise their work until they are ready for the editing process. The editing process focuses on spelling, capitalizing proper nouns and the first word of a sentence, and adding a period at the end. These steps — prewriting, doing a first draft, revising their work, and editing the final piece — helps first graders learn all the important parts of writing: gathering and recalling information, organizing their thoughts, strengthening and clarifying their ideas, and improving grammar and presentation.

In their writing, this means that kids will pull information from various books, websites, class presentations, and other experiences to form their opinions, arguments, and even stories. When they use this information, they should be able to recall where they learned the facts they're including and organize them into their own writing.

The standards emphasize students working together and with the teacher to "use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers." While this may mean posting handwritten work on the wall for others to see, or typing and printing a report — it may also include digital opportunities such as posting on a blog. This work is only to be done "with guidance and support from adults."

Adapted from www.greatschools.org

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First grade classrooms can meet the writing standards by implementing the three types of writing listed 1-3 below. In addition to those 3 types, students should be practicing writing to learn activities in the classroom based on what they have listened to or learned. These tasks “show listening and reading comprehension”. Writing to what you listen to (or read) in future grades is the type of writing students will be doing on the PARCC Assessment in third grade. The last three types of writing are reflective of the types of writing that students perform to help comprehend what they listen to or read. They are also the types of writing students will perform on the PARCC Assessment in third grade. As many opportunities as first grade teachers can give students to experience all of the following writing tasks, the more proficient students will become as writers.

	Writing Task	Description
#1	Opinion Writing (Standard #1)	Students will draw and/or write opinions on topics or texts.
#2	Informative Explanatory Writing (Standard #2)	Students will draw and/or write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic.
#3	Narrative Writing (Standard #3)	Students will draw and/or write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences.
#4	Writing to Learn Literacy Task	Students will hear/read one or more literature selections and draw and/or write to a prompt.
#5	Writing to Learn Research Task	Students will hear/read one or more informational text(s) and draw or write to a prompt.
#6	Writing to Learn Narrative Task	Students will hear/read a narrative text and draw or write to a prompt that has students retell the story.

Plan a scope and sequence to include all writing necessary in the first grade school year. For example:

Sample

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 0 auto; width: 80%;"> <p><i>Place the number of the above tasks that will be performed by students in each quarter.</i></p> </div>			

Suggested Writing Strategies for First Grade Students

Strategy	Description	Resource Link
Shared Writing 	<p>Shared writing lessons allow teachers to both model and actively engage students in the writing processes that are needed in order to improve their writing. Shared writing lessons allow for modeling and actively engaging students in the writing processes that are needed in order to improve their writing.</p>	http://www.readwritetink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/shared-writing-30686.html
Guided Writing 	<p>Guided writing is taught to small groups in briskly paced lessons. These groupings should be flexible, based on observation of students' current needs, and might be implemented following a whole-class writing lesson. Guided writing lessons are temporary, small-group lessons teaching those strategies that a group of students most need to practice with immediate guidance from the teacher. Guided writing lessons can be taught after a whole-class lesson once other students are actively engaged in independent writing.</p>	http://www.readwritetink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/guided-writing-30685.html

Implementing the above strategies in the first grade classroom provides writing support for students. Read-alouds and discussion based on text dependent questions is not only meeting the standards, but preparing students for PARCC assessments in 3rd grade.



3rd Grade Writing Tasks on PARCC

1. Literacy Analysis Task: Students will read 2 literary segments from books, answer questions about each text and then write to a question prompt (all questions and prompt tie back to the reading standards)
2. Research Simulation Task: Students will read 2 informational text pieces, answer questions about each text and then write to a question prompt (all questions and prompt tie back to the reading standards)
3. Narrative Task: Students will read 1 narrative piece, answer questions about it and then write to the question prompt (all questions and prompt tie back to the reading standards)

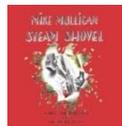
Steps for Designing Classroom Writing to Learn Tasks

1. Determine anchor text for students to read that introduces the topic. Use the content you are currently teaching.

2. Find coordinating texts/multimedia to accompany the anchor text. *For example*

Literary Analysis Task (LAT)	Anchor Text	+	Coordinating Text
#4 Type of Writing		+	
	Chapter Book		Poem

OR

Literary Analysis Task (LAT)	Anchor Text	+	Coordinating Text
#4 Type of Writing		+	
	Story		Story

Research Simulation Task (RST)	Anchor Text	+	Coordinating Text	+	Coordinating Text
#5 Type of Writing		+		+	
	Book		Book		Special Speaker

OR

Research Simulation Task (RST)	Anchor Text	+	Coordinating Text	+	Coordinating Text
#5 Type of Writing		+		+	
	Book		Book		Video

Narrative Task (NT)	Anchor Text
#5 Type of Writing	
	Novel Segment

3. Develop questions for each text using the reading standards.

Question Guidance: <http://achievethecore.org/page/46/complete-guide-to-creating-text-dependent-questions>

4. Create a culminating writing prompt. The reading standards should be used to develop the prompt.

Resources for Developing Practice PARCC Writing Tasks

- Current Reading Series
- To develop writing tasks, teachers need to have access to grade level texts. This can come in the form of any of number resources found in the classroom. See the following resources for possible texts.

Internet Resources for Text

- Readworks – www.readworks.org
ReadWorks provides research-based units, lessons, and authentic, leveled non-fiction and literary passages directly to educators online, **for free**, to be shared broadly.
- American Folklore
This site offers the text for a number of different folktales for use in the classroom. American Folklore features retold folktales from all 50 states.
www.americanfolklore.net
- TextProject – www.textproject.org
This website has high-quality student texts and teacher guides that are all available for free download. There are texts for students, vocabulary lessons and lists, professional development modules and videos - a world of open-access resources for teachers.
- Clarkness: Ebooks and Stories
A special education teacher from Spokane Valley, Washington has created free stories, ebooks and other materials for use in the classroom and at home.
<http://www.clarkness.com/index.htm>
- The StoryPlace Elementary Library
This elementary library has a number of online stories and activities with suggested additional books for the theme.
<http://www.storyplace.org/eel/other.asp>
- Favorite Books for Kindergartners
<http://www.greatschools.org/cgi-bin/showarticle/622/>
- Giggle Poetry
This website explains how to write **poems**, offers contests for young writers, features interviews with **poets**, and includes an assortment of **poems** for kids to read and rate.
www.gigglepoetry.com