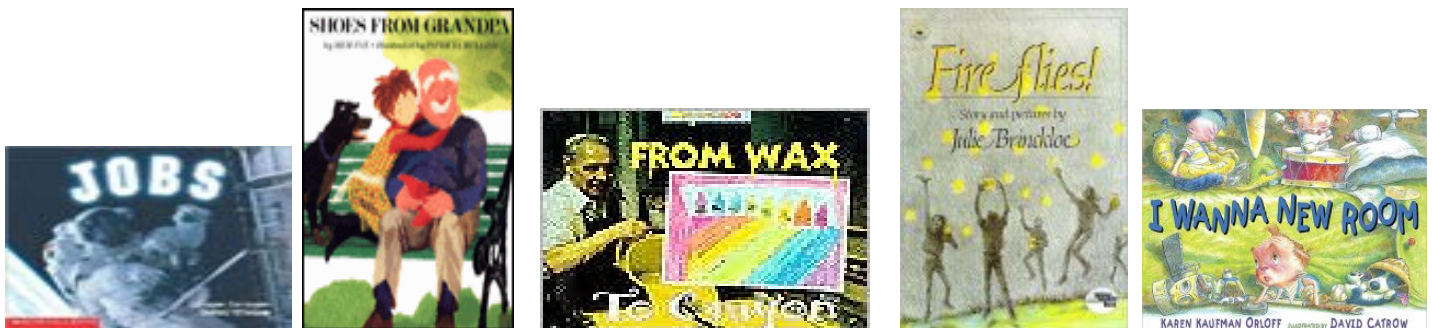




Sample Mentor Texts to Teach Writing Grades K-2



Ralph Fletcher explains that mentor texts are, "...any texts that you can learn from, and every writer, no matter how skilled you are or how beginning you are, encounters and reads something that can lift and inform and infuse their own writing."

"By using mentor texts, the reader can virtually position him-or herself to sit beside the author and study how the text is constructed and how it communicates. It is a powerful teaching and learning strategy....."

The Writing Thief, Ruth Culhum

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Sample K-2nd Writing Opinion Mentor Texts

Writing Standard #1

The mentor texts listed below are samples of picture books that could be used in the classroom when teaching students how to write an opinion.

Using a specific set of questions to analyze the craft within a mentor text can open students to new ideas to consider in their own writing. The questions/prompts listed on the following page assists students with comprehension, analyzing and evaluating opinion pieces as well as developing opinion writing skills.

Opinion Texts	Additional Information
<p><i>Red is Best</i> by Kathy Stinson</p> 	<p>In this book, little Kelly plays her opinion against her mother's practical advice. Kelly loves red and her belongings that are red. She wants to wear the red mittens because they make better snowballs, and the red boots because they take bigger steps and in the red cup, she tells her mother, juice tastes better.</p>
<p><i>I Don't Want to Be a Pea!</i> by Ann Bonwill</p> 	<p>Hugo and Bella are best buds but they can't agree on what to dress up as for the fairy tale fancy dress party. They both explain why he or she should dress as a certain character disagreeing about what to dress up all along. It ends with a sweet compromise.</p>
<p><i>Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus</i> by Mo Willems</p> 	<p>When a bus driver takes a break from his route, a very unlikely volunteer springs up to take his place—a pigeon! But you've never met one like this before. As he pleads, wheedles, and begs his way through the book, children will love being able to answer back and decide his fate.</p>
<p><i>I Wanna New Room</i> by Karen Kaufman</p> 	<p>As in <i>I Wanna Iguana</i> (2004), this story about a child tired of sharing a room with his pesky little brother is told through letters and illustrated in energetic, cartoon-style illustrations. Alex pleads for his own room and complains about his little brother.</p>
<p><i>I Wanna Iguana</i> by Karen Kaufman, Orloff</p> 	<p>Alex just has to convince his mom to let him have an iguana, so he puts his arguments in writing. He promises that she won't have to feed it or clean its cage or even see it if she doesn't want to.</p>
<p><i>The Day the Crayons Quit</i> by Drew Daywalt</p> 	<p>Poor Duncan just wants to color. But when he opens his box of crayons, he finds only letters, all saying the same thing: His crayons have had enough! Each crayon has their own opinion why they shouldn't color anymore. What can Duncan possibly do to appease all of the crayons and get them back to doing what they do best?</p>
<p><i>Earrings!</i> by Judith Viorst</p> 	<p>A young girl uses various arguments to convince her parents to let her have her ears pierced.</p>
<p><i>Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type</i> by Doreen Cronin</p> 	<p>Farmer Brown is used to all the sounds he hears on his farm. The clucks of the chickens, the quacks of the ducks, and the loud moos of the cows. Then one morning, a sound rings through the fields: <i>Click, clack moo</i>. It seems that his cows have begun to type on the old typewriter. Not only that, they have also typed a request. The barn is chilly and they need electric blankets.</p>
<p><i>Hey Little Ant</i> by Phillip Hoose & Debbie Tilley</p> 	<p>What would you do if the ant you were about to step on looked up and started talking? Would you stop and listen? What if your friends saw you hesitate? That's what happens in this funny, thought-provoking book.</p>
<p><i>The Perfect Pet</i> by Margie Palatini</p> 	<p>When Elizabeth campaigns to find the right pet, her family imagines some hair-raising possibilities, until Doug comes along—who is, without a doubt, the most unusual, perfect pet of all.</p>
<p><i>All The Places to Love</i> by Patricia MacLachlan</p> 	<p>Within the sanctuary of a loving family, baby Eli is born and, as he grows, "learns to cherish the people and places around him, eventually passing on what he has discovered to his new baby sister, Sylvie: 'All the places to love are here . . . no matter where you may live.'</p>
<p><i>LaRue for Mayor: Letters from the Campaign</i> by Mark Teague</p> 	<p>Canine everyman Ike LaRue returns to take on the political machine in this gleeful tale, the third of Mark Teague's best-selling, award winning DEAR MRS. LARUE series. Ike finds his civil liberties at risk when Hugo Bugwort, the hard line mayoral candidate, promises to crack down on free-roaming, fun-loving dogs</p>
<p>Websites with Reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.kidsfirst.org • www.bestcatbreeds.com • http://www.toyportfolio.com/ 	<p>The links to the left provide teachers with other resources that can be mentors for opinion writing.</p>

Sample K-2nd Opinion Mentor Text Questions/Prompts

Check grade level reading/writing standards when choosing which questions/prompts to address. Create additional prompts/questions based on the standards for your grade level.

To answer the questions or address the prompts, students should use evidence from the text to support their answers. This can be done by drawing, writing, or orally responding.

Sample Questions:

- Can you tell how the author feels about the topic? How?
- How does the author introduce the piece? Does the introduction capture your attention? If so, how? If not, what other ideas could the author try?
- What reasons does the author use to help make their opinion?
- How did the author close the piece? If the closing doesn't convince you to feel the same way the author does, what other ideas could the author try?
- How is the opinion stated or shown?
- What reasons are given or shown for the opinion? Are there other reasons or details the author could include?
- What key words and phrases are used to express the opinion of the author or characters?

Sample Prompts:

- I didn't like (something about the character, solution, setting) because...
- I admire (name of character) for.....because...
- If I could talk to (name of character), I would say...
- A better title for this book would be because...
- I think the main thing the writer was trying to say was...
- I agree/disagree with the writer about...
- I would/wouldn't recommend this book to a friend because...
- The most important thing about this book is...

Resource questions were adapted from:

Boyles, N. (2004). *Constructing meaning: Through kid friendly comprehension strategy instruction*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House.

Owocki, G. (2013). *The Common Core writing book, K-5: Lessons for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Sample K-2nd Writing Informative/Explanatory Mentor Texts

Writing Standard #2

The mentor texts listed below are samples of picture books that could be used in the classroom when teaching students how to write an informative/explanatory piece.

Using a specific set of questions to analyze the craft within a mentor text can open students to new ideas to consider in their own writing. The questions/prompts listed on the following page assists students with comprehension, analyzing and evaluating informative/explanatory pieces as well as developing informative/explanatory writing skills.

Informative/Explanatory Text	Additional Information
<p><i>Red, White, and Blue: The Story of the American Flag</i> by John Herman</p> 	<p>This book helps students find out all about the history of the American flag. It describes how the American flag came into being, how it has changed over the years, and its importance as the symbol of our country.</p>
<p><i>Bats! Strange and Wonderful</i> by Laurence Pringle</p> 	<p>This Parents' Choice Award book gives readers an inside look at the earth's only flying mammals. Readers discover how bats can pluck insects from the air, fish from the water, and help giant trees and other tropical plants to reproduce, among other fascinating facts.</p>
<p><i>From Wax to Crayon</i> by Max H. Forman</p> 	<p>Clear and detailed photographs illustrate the changes at each step and fun, lively text further clarifies the processes. Colorful crayons start out as colorless wax</p>
<p><i>The Pumpkin Book</i> by Gail Gibbons</p> 	<p>Gibbons describes how pumpkins come in different shapes and sizes, how they grow, and their traditional uses and cultural significance.</p>
<p><i>All About Owls</i> by James Arnosky</p> 	<p>All About Owls is a thorough and colorful introduction to the world of owls.</p>
<p><i>A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr.</i> by David Adler</p> 	<p>A brief, illustrated, biography of the Baptist minister and civil rights leader whose philosophy and practice of nonviolent civil disobedience helped American blacks win many battles for equal rights.</p>
<p><i>Jobs</i> by Susan Canizares and Betsy Chessen</p> 	<p>Simple text and photographs explore the different things people do in their jobs, including making things, growing things, and helping, as well as the one thing they all have in common.</p>
<p><i>What Lincoln Said</i> by Sarah Thomson</p> 	<p>The story of one of America's most revered presidents—in his own words!</p>
<p><i>To Be a Kid</i> by Maya Ajmera and John Ivanko</p> 	<p>TO BE A KID celebrates kids as they play and learn, as they spend time with their friends and family, and as they discover their environment and the world.</p>
<p><i>Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions from Around the World</i> by Selby Beeler</p> 	<p>What do you do when you lose a tooth? Do you put it under your pillow and wait for the tooth fairy? Not if you live in Botswana! In Botswana, children throw their teeth onto the roof. In Afghanistan they drop their teeth down mouse holes, and in Egypt they fling their teeth at the sun! Travel around the world and discover the surprising things children do when they lose a tooth.</p>
<p><i>Eye to Eye: How Animals See The World</i> by Steve Jenkins</p> 	<p>Steve Jenkins explains how for most animals, eyes are the most important source of information about the world in a biological sense. The simplest eyes—clusters of light-sensitive cells—appeared more than one billion years ago, and provided a big survival advantage to the first creatures that had them. Since then, animals have evolved an amazing variety of eyes, along with often surprising ways to use them.</p>
<p><i>Born in the Wild: Baby Mammals and Their Parent</i> by Lita Judge</p> 	<p>What do grizzly bear cubs eat? Where do baby raccoons sleep? And how does a baby otter learn to swim? Every baby mammal, from a tiny harvest mouse "pinky" to a fierce lion cub, needs food, shelter, love, and a family. They're not so different from us!</p>
<p><i>Mr. Ferris and His Wheel</i> by Kathryn Gibbs Davis</p> 	<p>Capturing an engineer's creative vision and mind for detail, this fully illustrated picture book biography sheds light on how the American inventor George Ferris defied gravity and seemingly impossible odds to invent the world's most iconic amusement park attraction, the Ferris wheel.</p>

Sample K-2nd Informative/Explanatory Mentor Text Questions

Check grade level reading/writing standards when choosing which questions/prompts to address. Create additional prompts/questions based on the standards for your grade level.

To answer the questions or address the prompts, students should use evidence from the text to support their answers. This can be done by drawing, writing, or orally responding.

Illustrations

- Did the author include illustration with the book? Who is the illustrator?
- What kinds of illustrations were included? (diagrams, photos, maps, charts, graphs, tables)
- Did the illustrations help to understand the text better? Why or why not?
- Were labels and captions used? If so, did they help to understand the information better? Why or why not?

Text Structure

- Did you use the table of contents or the index? For what? Was the information located quickly?
- Are there headings and subheadings in this text? Did they help you “see” how information is presented?
- What is the topic of this piece/section/page? Is it easy to locate?
- Are there other ways information is presented in the book, chapter, or passage? Examples include:
 - Information is chronologically ordered
 - Information is listed
 - Information is shown in comparison or contrasted
 - Information is written in cause and effect relationship
 - Information is narrated as a problem and solution
 - Information is presented as a main idea or topic and then has ideas have supporting details
- How does the author introduce the topic? What techniques does the author use to hook the reader?
- How does the author develop the topic? (With facts, definitions, details, questions or other information and examples?)
- How did the author close the piece, section, or book.

Content

- What does the author teach about the topic? Do we have questions?
- What topic(s) does this book or chapter describe?
- Is the information easy to understand? Why or why not?
- What facts were easiest to learn about? Why?
- What else would you like to know about this topic? How can you find it?
- Give some examples of specific clue words the author uses that let you know he/she is stating an opinion/fact.
- Does this book provide recent information? Is there a better source of information?
- What qualifies the author to write this information? What kind of research did that author have to do to write the text?

Style

- Do you understand what the author is saying? What information is the easiest/hardest to understand? Why?
- What could the author have done to make the information easier to understand?
- Would this book or information be different if it were written 10 years ago? Why?
- By reading, did you discover anything that could help you outside of school?
- Was the information well organized? Give an example of why or why not.
- Is the information told straight to you or is it in story form?

Resource questions were adapted from:

Boyles, N. (2004). Constructing meaning: Through kid friendly comprehension strategy instruction. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House.

Owocki, G. (2013). The Common Core writing book, K-5: Lessons for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Sample K-2nd Writing Narrative Mentor Texts

Writing Standard #3

The mentor texts listed below are samples of picture books that could be used in the classroom when teaching students how to write a narrative piece.

Using a specific set of questions to analyze the craft within a mentor text can open students to new ideas to consider in their own writing. The questions/prompts listed on the following page assists students with comprehension, analyzing and evaluating narrative pieces as well as developing narrative writing skills.

Narrative Mentor Texts	Additional Information
<p><i>The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend</i> by Dan Santat</p> 	<p>This magical story begins on an island far away where an imaginary friend is born. He patiently waits his turn to be chosen by a real child, but when he is overlooked time and again, he sets off on an incredible journey to the bustling city, where he finally meets his perfect match and-at long last-is given his special name: Beekle.</p>
<p><i>The Snowy Day</i> by Ezra Jack Keats</p> 	<p>The adventures of a little boy in the city on a very snowy day.</p>
<p><i>Good Dog Fergus</i> by David Shannon</p> 	<p>Follow Fergus as he experiences the perfect doggy day--well, except for his bath, of course! From chasing cats and motorcycles to being scratched on his favorite "tickle spot,"</p>
<p><i>Fireflies</i> by Julie Brinckloe</p> 	<p>A young boy is proud of having caught a jar full of fireflies, which seems to him like owning a piece of moonlight, but as the light begins to dim he realizes he must set the insects free or they will die.</p>
<p><i>Ira Sleeps Over</i> by Bernard Waber</p> 	<p>Ira is thrilled to spend the night at Reggie's, until his sister raises the question of whether he should take his teddy bear. A little boy is excited at the prospect of spending the night at his friend's house but worries how he'll get along without his teddy bear.</p>
<p><i>The Kissing Hand</i> by Audrey Penn</p> 	<p>Chester is worried about starting school, Owl's school to be exact, and wants to stay home by Mom's side instead.</p>
<p><i>Bippity Bop Barbershop</i> by Natasha Tarpley</p> 	<p>A young boy, Miles, makes his first trip to the barbershop with his father. Like most little boys, he is afraid of the sharp scissors, the buzzing razor, and the prospect of picking a new hairstyle. But with the support of his dad, the barber, and the other men in the barbershop, Miles bravely sits through his first haircut.</p>
<p><i>Night Shift Daddy</i> by Eileen Spinelli</p> 	<p>This book is about a girl whose father works while she sleeps at night. Both art and text set a joyful opening scene, as the child's day winds down and her father gears up for work; a painting shows the man swinging his daughter up in the air in a yolk-colored kitchen, then settling in to read to her and her teddy bear.</p>
<p><i>When I Was Young in the Mountains</i> by Cynthia Rylant</p> 	<p>An evocative remembrance of the simple pleasures in country living; splashing in the swimming hole, taking baths in the kitchen, sharing family times, each is eloquently portrayed here in both the misty-hued scenes and in the poetic text.</p>
<p><i>Shoes from Grandpa</i> by Mem Fox</p> 	<p>Jessie, an active girl of nine or so, is growing out of her clothes, and all of the members of her large and loving family get carried away in their eagerness to provide her with a new wardrobe. .</p>
<p><i>The Story of Ferdinand</i> by Munro Leaf</p> 	<p>Ferdinand is the world's most peaceful--and--beloved little bull. While all of the other bulls snort, leap, and butt their heads, Ferdinand is content to just sit and smell the flowers under his favorite cork tree.</p>
<p><i>The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore</i> by William Joyce</p> 	<p>The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore is a modern masterpiece, showing that in today's world of traditional books, eBooks, and apps, it's story that we truly celebrate—and this story, no matter how you tell it, begs to be read again and again.</p>
<p><i>Green Eggs and Ham</i> by Dr. Seuss</p> 	<p>"Do you like green eggs and ham?" asks Sam-I-am in this Beginner Book by Dr. Seuss. In a house or with a mouse? In a boat or with a goat? On a train or in a tree? Sam keeps asking persistently. With unmistakable characters and signature rhymes, Dr. Seuss's beloved favorite is a children's classic.</p>
<p><i>Dragons Love Tacos</i> by Adam Rubin</p> 	<p>Dragons love tacos. They love chicken tacos, beef tacos, great big tacos, and teeny tiny tacos. So if you want to lure a bunch of dragons to your party, you should definitely serve tacos. Unfortunately, where there are tacos, there is also salsa. And if a dragon accidentally eats spicy salsa? Oh, boy! You're in red-hot trouble.</p>

Sample K-2nd Narrative Mentor Text Questions

Check grade level reading/writing standards when choosing which questions/prompts to address. Create additional prompts/questions based on the standards for your grade level.

To answer the questions or address the prompts, students should use evidence from the text to support their answers. This can be done by drawing, writing, or orally responding.

Author/Illustrator

- Who are the characters or people in the piece? How does the illustrator show this?
- How does the author help us get to know the characters?
- What might the author had to have known to write this book?

Setting/Tone

- Where does this story take place? Is there more than one place?
- What is the place like?
- When and where did this story take place? How do you know?
- Could there be a place like this? What evidence/proof/background knowledge do you have?
- Which part of the story best describes the setting?

Characters

- Who are the main characters in the story?
- Do you like or dislike them? Why? (Have they done something to make you feel this way?)
- Do any of the characters change in the story? How? Support with evidence from text.
- Does a character do things that are good/bad? What? Support with evidence from text.
- Choose a character. Why is the character important to the story? Use the text to support answer.

Plot/Problem/Solution

- What are the main things that have happened in the story? How does the illustrator show this? How does the author show this?
- How does the author feel about what happened? How can you tell?
- Is there a challenge/goal/problem? Is there more than one problem?
- What do the characters/people do to solve the challenge/goal/problem?
- How do you know that the problem was solved in this way?
- What would you have done differently if you had been one of the characters?
- Can you think of another way that something in the story might have happened?
- What might have happened if a certain action had not taken place?
- How did the author close the piece?

Theme/Tone

- Is there a message/lesson the author is trying to teach in this story? What is it? Use evidence from text to describe it.
- Why did the author write this book? Use evidence from the text.
- Does the book make you feel a certain way? Are there words that the author uses that make you feel that way?
- Is there a part of the story that describes the atmosphere? How does the writer do that? (words)

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Owocki, G. (2013). *The Common Core writing book, K-5: Lessons for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.