

Unit 1 Writing: First Grade Writing Fundamentals

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 1**
Length: **4-5 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

This unit is designed to build prerequisite skills for first-grade writers workshop. Students will improve their handwriting by focusing on letter formation and spacing, study illustrations to learn techniques for their own writing pieces, and practicing writer's workshop routines that will help them be successful throughout the year. Grammar and conventions are also included in this unit. These skills can be studied through mentor sentences and other activities.

This unit is designed to be part of a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including physical and social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship. During this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers.

Revised: June 2021

Pacing Guide

Please refer to [this Language Arts Reading and Writing Workshop Pacing Guide for grade 1](#). Sentence Study is paced and aligned within the Syntax, Style, Grammar and Conventions section. Please refer to [this folder](#) for the scope and sequence as well as specific lessons and materials.

A sample K-5 Literacy Schedule Across a Week is accessible in instructional materials section of the [Grades K-5 folder](#).

Standards

The identified standards reflect a developmental progression across grades/ levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness and global citizenship. The standards that follow are relevant to this course in addition to the associated content-based standards listed below.

LA.L.1.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.1.1.A	Print all upper- and lowercase letters.
LA.L.1.1.B	Use common, proper, and possessive nouns.

LA.L.1.1.C	Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences (e.g., He hops; We hop).
LA.L.1.1.D	Use personal, possessive, and indefinite pronouns (e.g., I, me, my; they, them, their, anyone, everything).
LA.L.1.1.E	Use verbs to convey a sense of past, present, and future (e.g., Yesterday I walked home; Today I walk home; Tomorrow I will walk home).
LA.L.1.1.F	Use frequently occurring adjectives.
LA.L.1.1.G	Use frequently occurring conjunctions (e.g., and, but, or, so, because).
LA.L.1.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.1.2.A	Capitalize dates and names of people.
LA.L.1.2.B	Use end punctuation for sentences.
LA.L.1.2.C	Use commas in dates and to separate single words in a series.
LA.L.1.2.D	Use conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and for frequently occurring irregular words.
LA.L.1.2.E	Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions.
LA.L.1.6	Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships (e.g., because).
LA.W.1.5	With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and self-reflection, and add details to strengthen writing and ideas as needed.
LA.W.1.6	With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.
LA.W.1.8	With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
LA.RF.1.1	Demonstrate mastery of the organization and basic features of print including those listed under Kindergarten foundation skills.
LA.SL.1.1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
LA.SL.1.1.A	Follow agreed-upon norms for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
LA.SL.1.1.B	Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.
LA.SL.1.1.C	Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.
LA.SL.1.3	Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.
LA.SL.1.4	Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.
LA.SL.1.5	Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
LA.SL.1.6	Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP1	Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
CRP.K-12.CRP2	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP.K-12.CRP4	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.

CRP.K-12.CRP6	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP.K-12.CRP8	Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
CRP.K-12.CRP9	Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
CRP.K-12.CRP10	Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.
CRP.K-12.CRP11	Use technology to enhance productivity.
TECH.8.1.2.B.1	Illustrate and communicate original ideas and stories using multiple digital tools and resources.
TECH.8.1.2.D.1	Develop an understanding of ownership of print and nonprint information.

Essential Questions

- How can we make our handwriting clear for readers so that they can understand our writing?
- Why are illustrations important in a story?
- How can I improve my illustrations to help my reader understand the story?
- What does Writers Workshop look, sound, and feel like in first grade?
- What is a sentence?

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- forming letters correctly and clearly
- writing sentences with capitalization, organization, punctuation, and spacing
- using basic drawing techniques to improve their drawings
- looking at illustrations in mentor texts and trying to incorporate these artistic elements in their own work
- following a writer's workshop routine
- understanding the basics of grammar at an age-appropriate level
- understanding the concept of a sentence

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Students demonstrate differentiated proficiency through both formative and summative assessments in the classroom. Based on individual student readiness and performance, assessments can be implemented as formative and/or summative.

Developmental progression across years in both reading and writing is evidenced by multiple benchmark assessment screeners, administered three times per year. Follow-up diagnostic assessments are used to target skill remediation. Student proficiency allows for additional or alternative assessment based on demonstration or absence of skill.

The performance tasks listed below are examples of the types of assessments teachers may use in the classroom and the data collected by the district to track student progress.

Formative:

- Answer essential questions
- Teacher observations/conferring notes
- Turn and talks
- Partnerships rehearsing their writing
- Peer Conferences
- Writer's Notebook (quick writes/drafts/prewrites)
- Writing Conferences: Individual and small group
- Writing Partnership work and discussions
- Writing folders with student work
- Writing pieces to note the growth need of the writer
- Observations
- Listening in on partnership discussion of a writing piece
- Drafts online (Google Docs)
- Writing Club work and discussions

Summative including Alternative Assessments:

- Students should have 2-3 final pieces to score not including the post-assessment.
- Published pieces
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Learning Progressions
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Rubrics and Student Samples
- Rubrics: created for the standards-based report card as well as teacher-created.
- Standards should be addressed as reported on the Standards-Based Report Card

Benchmark:

- Benchmark writing assessments: opinion, narrative, and informational, scored using rubrics, district-created and provided.
- Located in the shared [K-5 Google folder](#) Language Arts folder on Google Drive, reported three times per year

Learning Plan

Our primary writing instruction follows a balanced literacy approach including a number of strategies and techniques in Writing Workshop. These include mini-lessons, shared writing, independent writing, small group strategy instruction, one-to-one conferencing, and partnerships. Writing Workshop emphasizes immersion, independence, and choice. Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of

the writer. Each unit ends with a celebration of learning where children share their writing with others in the school community.

Lessons should follow the mini-lesson format:

- Teaching point(s) for each lesson
- Connection: Connects new learning to previous learning/lessons
- Teach/Modeling: Uses "think aloud" when modeling what you expect students to do
- Guided Practice/Active Engagement: Guides students through practice of the teaching point
- Link to Independent Practice: Helps writers understand the purpose for the writing they are about to do and the skills/craft they will be practicing/applying independently as good writers
- Independent Writing/Student Conferences: Provides time for students to do independent writing while the teacher confers with individual students, works with small groups, or writing partnerships.
- Closure/Sharing: Pull students back together and recognize the work they have done relating to the teaching point.

For teaching purposes, see attached template for structure of a Writing Workshop lesson.

Here is a sample of a Writing Workshop template. Click [here](#).

The architecture of a writing conference includes:

- Research
- Decide
- Teach and Coach with guided practice
- Link

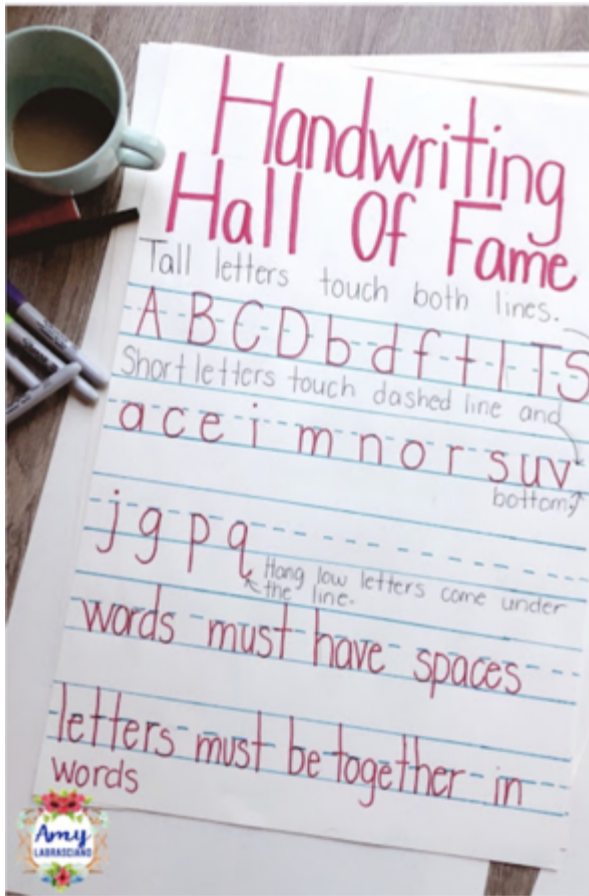
Please refer to the Grades [K-5 Google folder](#) for specific lessons and materials.

Teachers may personalize instruction during this unit and address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students.

Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Handwriting

We need to write our letters, words, and sentences clearly so our readers can understand us.

- Create a Handwriting Hall of Fame Chart"



- (Original image from [Amy Labrasciano](#))
- Model correct letter formation
- Model correct spacing between words
- Students can practice their writing through worksheets, copying the teacher, journals, notebook writing, or other activities that allow students to take the time to mindfully write.
- (This lesson will be repeated multiple times to ensure that students have adequate practice with this skill)

Proper spacing in our writing helps our readers understand our writing.

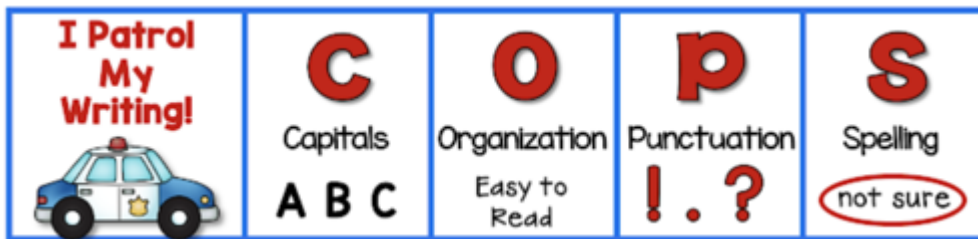
- Create proper spacing chart. (Original creator is unknown.)



- Model writing sentences with proper spacing.
- Students can practice their writing through worksheets, copying the teacher, journals, notebook writing, or other activities that allow students to take the time to mindfully write.

Writers make sure they write carefully. They call the COPS!

- Learn what COPS stands for.
- Create a writing piece (journal entry or handwriting practice) with COPS in mind.



(image from [Peggy Means](#))

Writers make sure they have 5 Star writing.

- Discuss the components 5-star writing
- SW create an example of 5-star writing in their journal or another notebook.



(Image from [Good Enough Teacher](#))

Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Illustrations

Drawings/illustrations in a book are just as important as words.

- Pictures can give us new or more information about what we are reading.
- During a read-aloud, pay close attention to the illustrations and the details that can be found in pictures (characters, expressions, setting, etc).
- Children can also explore wordless picture books and note how the images still tell a story.

We can all be authors and illustrators.

- Everyone can draw and be an illustrator. It just takes practice!
- Drawings are made up of simple shapes, lines, and colors.
- If we go step by step, we can draw too.
- First, we draw lightly in pencil, then add color.
- Complete guided drawing activities like the videos on Art for Kids Hub. This lesson can be repeated to provide extra practice.

Illustrators fill the page with color.

- When illustrators draw images in a book, they fill all of the space.
- Characters don't float around in white space all of the time! There is a setting.
- We know how important a setting is when we are writing and reading a book, so we have to make sure to draw it too.
- Things in the background will be smaller than things that are close up.

Illustrators can include multiple illustrations on one page.

- Sometimes a writer moves through parts of a story quickly.
- An illustrator can draw two smaller pictures on one page.

Illustrators can make their work interesting by using a birds-eye view.

- We don't always have to draw our pictures the same way.
- Sometimes we can use our imaginations to see what the scene will look like from above. This will catch our reader's eye.
- We can still use simple shapes and lines to create images from different views.

Illustrators can add motion to their work by adding details or repeating parts of an image.

- Sometimes we want to show movement in our pictures, but we can't actually make them move!
- Instead, we can add extra details to show movement.
- We can add small wavy or swirly lines to show how objects move (i.e. leaves in the wind or vibrations from a cell phone)
- We can also repeat part of a drawing to show movement. (i.e. drawing many legs on a person to show they are running really fast).

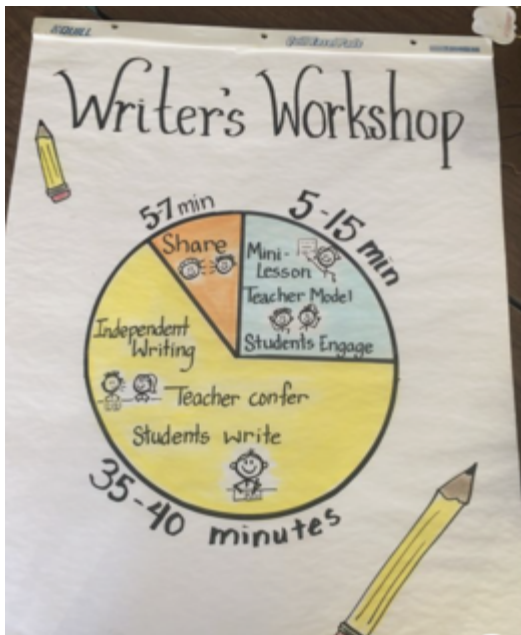
Illustrators can include labels or zoom in on an important part of an image.

- Sometimes illustrators need to point out the most important part of an image for our readers.
- We can draw a close-up or add labels to make sure our images are clear.

Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Writer's Workshop Routines

Writer's Workshop involves different types of learning that help us all become better writers.

- Make a pie chart showing each part of Writer's Workshop: Mini-lesson, independent writing, working with the teacher, closing/share.
- Brainstorm a list of jobs that students do during WW and a list of jobs that teachers do during WW.
- Create a chart similar to the one below. (Original creator unknown).

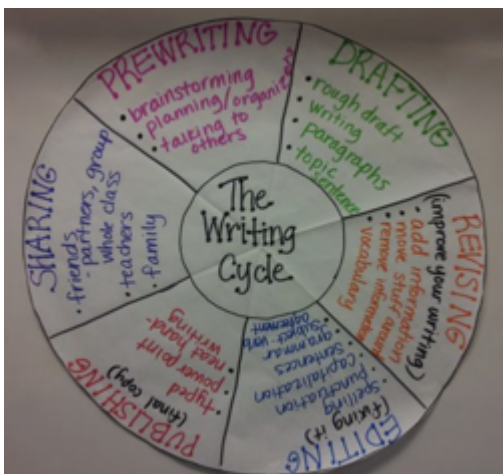


Writers know where their supplies are.

- It is important to know where all your writing tools are.
- Writers come to WW prepared. Brainstorm a list of tools you'll need and make sure you know where to find them.

When you're done, you've just begun!

- There is always more to do in Writer's Workshop!
- Create a chart showing the steps of the writing process and discuss their meanings.
- Create a chart similar to the one below. (Original creator unknown).



Syntax, Style, Grammar, and Conventions

Sentence study will be taught across the week to teach syntax, diction, grammar, and punctuation. Students will learn how to write like an author by mimicking specific sentence patterns and applying it to their own

writing. Please refer to [this folder](#) for the scope and sequence as well as specific lessons and materials.

Sentence study introduce students to a CORRECTLY written sentence. It shows students what GOOD writing is all about. Rather than students identifying what is wrong with a sentence, they have to find what is RIGHT about a sentence's grammar, structure, and style. Students will be able to apply their learning to develop and strengthen their independent writing skills.

Materials

The materials used in this course allow for integration of a variety of instructional, enrichment, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available.

Core materials include:

- *Units of Study for Teaching Writing*, Lucy Calkins with Colleagues from the Reading and Writing Project, Grade 1 Heinemann, 2013.
- Resources for Teaching Writing CD, Grade 1, Heinemann, 2013.

Materials used for grammar and convention study include the following: *Patterns of Power: Inviting Young Writers into the Conventions of Language* by Jeff Anderson.

For Fountas & Pinnell classroom shared reading and interactive read aloud books that link to each unit, please see [the FPC and Units of Study Crosswalk](#).

Supplemental Instructional Materials

Possible Mentor Texts:

- Arthur Writes a Story by Marc Brown
- Ralph Tells a Story by Abby Hanlon
- One Day, The End: Short, Very-Short, Shorter Than Ever Stories by Rebecca Kai Dotlich

Possible Teaching Charts:

- “How to Write a Story”
- “Ways to Spell Words”

- “Storytelling with a Partner”
- “Ways to Bring Stories to Life”
- “Writers Use Marks to Help Readers!”
- “Learning Craft Moves from a Mentor Author”
- Use resource CD for rubrics, student samples, and charts.

Suggested Teacher Resources

- Art for Kids Hub- blog and youtube channel.
- *The Writing Strategies Book*, Jennifer Serravallo
- *In Pictures and In Words*, Katie Wood Ray
- Cranford Public School [K-5 folder](#) Google Folder for instructional materials
- [Heinemann](#) for anchor charts and other teacher resources & materials (Consult with building principal or literacy team for access).

Suggested Strategies for Accommodations and Modifications

[Content specific accommodations and modifications as well as Career Ready Practices are listed here](#) for all students, including: Special Education, English Language Learners, At Risk of School Failure, Gifted and Talented, Students with 504.

The structure of writing workshop is designed to differentiate and address specific goals and learning for each reader:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- The teacher will assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- Students have individualized choice of topics within each unit.
- Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the writer.

Possible accommodations during writing workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts, word walls.
- Work in partnerships
- Give responses in a form (verbal or written) that is easier for the student
- Take additional time to complete a task or project
- Take frequent breaks
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- Mark text with a highlighter or other manipulative such as a post-it

- Receive help coordinating assignments
- Answering fewer questions or completing shorter tasks
- Create alternate assignments or homework
- Provide distinct steps in a process; eliminate unnecessary steps, as needed.
- Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines
- Access speech to text function on computer

For possible modifications to content during writing workshop, please . . .

- Consult with Cranford Problem Solving Team (CPST) at your school, as needed.
- Adhere to all modifications and accommodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plans.
- Refer to the [Strategies for Striving Students](#) and [Pathways to Intervention](#) documents in the Grades K-5 folder for specific appropriate interventions.