

Take a few minutes to fill out the Self Reflection Checklist below. Reflect on your answers. This will determine the skills and procedures that need to be taught before Core writing begins in Unit 2.

By pro-actively teaching the skills below, you begin to create a well-managed, successful writing class. These skills should be taught in Unit 1, and re-emphasized throughout the year.

| <p style="text-align: center;">Statements to consider before starting Unit 1 lessons</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">I've covered this already</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">I need to cover this in Unit 1</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing teaching, or work is needed</p> |
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| <p>Instruction</p> | | | |
| <p>I have established how often, and for how long I should teach writing.</p> | | | |
| <p>It is suggested that students write daily, and in all content areas. In 2nd-5th grade, WriteSteps should be taught at least 4 times a week, 50–60 minutes a day. In K-1st grade, WriteSteps should be taught 3 times a week, 50-60 minutes a day.</p> | | | |
| <p>I have scheduled a regular writing block.</p> | | | |
| <p>It is clear to the students that writing is a valued subject when it is scheduled, and not skipped when the day gets too busy. Also, students learn a subject better when it's taught on a regular basis.</p> | | | |
| <p>During writing, my students know to proceed when they don't know how to spell a word.</p> | | | |
| <p>WriteSteps students are taught to stretch out a word, write the sounds they hear, and use the word wall and/or privacy folder instead of stopping to use a dictionary.</p> | | | |
| <p>I have taught my students which spelling resources are appropriate to use during writing time.</p> | | | |
| <p>Use of the classroom word wall and/or the privacy folder are useful tools that don't interrupt a student's train of thought. When and how to use reference materials, will be taught in editing lessons.</p> | | | |
| <p>I have talked to my students about the creative opportunity that free choice writing offers.</p> | | | |
| <p>The free choice of topic is valuable to incorporate into a writing program. It encourages creativity and gives students the confidence to communicate their own thoughts and feelings.</p> | | | |

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| <p>I have explained to my students that I will not see everyone’s writing every day.</p> | | | |
| <p>Students might be accustomed to having all of their writing checked by the teacher. Roving conferences, looking over a student’s shoulder and giving praise and/or guidance, is a common WriteSteps procedure. Students’ will write and turn in assessment pieces for grading, but there will be far more times when work is un-graded.</p> | | | |
| <p>I have taught my 3rd, 4th, or 5th graders to always skip lines when writing. (1st& 2nd graders will be taught skip-a-line as part of a unit of instruction.)</p> | | | |
| <p>Skipping lines is an example of an important instructional element in the Writer’s Workshop. It is an example of an excellent writing habit to reinforce. Skipping lines leaves room for edits and revisions – something that good writers of all ages do. Without this space, additions and revisions become difficult and messy. Our recommendation is to have students do all of their writing on a skip-a-line basis.</p> | | | |
| <p>Classroom Management</p> | | | |
| <p>I have established an appropriate noise level for writing time.</p> | | | |
| <p>It is critical to establish and practice a productive noise level in Unit 1. The reminder “Writing time is quiet time” is heard throughout WriteSteps classrooms.</p> | | | |
| <p>I have taught my students what to do when they are done.</p> | | | |
| <p>Grades K-2 have a poster “What to Do When I’m Done Writing”. If laminated, it can be wiped clean and changed when necessary. Some suggestions for the poster are: complete unfinished work, read a book, and/or write in a personal journal. Many 3rd 5th grade teachers want their students to continue writing. Usually these teachers have students go back and add onto an old piece or start a new piece.</p> | | | |
| <p>My students know what to do when they need help.</p> | | | |
| <p>Students should not line up at the teacher’s desk when they need help. This is an ineffective practice, and not a good use of time. Because the teacher’s role is to help students whose names are on the conferencing list, it is important for students to become self-reliant by problem solving through their issues.</p> | | | |
| <p>I have talked to my students about doing their personal best.</p> | | | |
| <p>WriteSteps lessons encourage personal best by: showing student samples that are high quality, celebrating student’s achievement, and students sharing their work in author’s chair.</p> | | | |

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| <h2>Materials Management</h2> | | | |
| <p>I have "Writer's Notebooks" for my students.</p> | | | |
| <p>It is very helpful to have your students use spiral bound notebooks, composition books, or binders. Whichever you choose, the lined paper should be regular or wide ruled. Because students often revise, edit, or add to pieces they have written in the past, their writings need to be kept at school. For 3rd-5th grade students who have reference materials, such as: word lists, check lists, genre pages, etc. a binder or a folder gives students a place to put these extra pages.</p> | | | |
| <p>I have a place for my students to house their writing.</p> | | | |
| <p>In order to make access automatic, each student's writing pieces need to be kept together and stored neatly in an organized manner.</p> | | | |
| <p>I have instructed my students on the correct way to use the 4-colored pens.</p> | | | |
| <p>Because of the novelty, students will be tempted to use the pens for non-writing purposes. To conserve on ink, students should be instructed to use these pens only for revising, editing, and when directed for writing lesson purposes.</p> | | | |