

Top 10 Tips for Creating Successful Writers

- 1. Schedule Writer's Workshop Daily.** Scheduling Writer's Workshop daily grants valuable, necessary time for students to practice and grow as writers.
- 2. Establish and Commit to Routines.** Life is good when everyone knows what to do and when to do it. Take the time to establish foundational routines that will impact your Writer's Workshop throughout the year. Revisit Managing Writer's Workshop lessons as the need arises.
- 3. Model, Model, Model!** Modeling gives direct instruction while scaffolding for young writers. Use these steps to model specific skills and behaviors with students (*I* is the teacher and *you* is the student) (Pearson and Gallagher 1983):
 - I do, you watch.
 - I do, you help.
 - You do, I help.
 - You do, I watch.
- 4. Read, Read, Read!** Reading a variety of texts through the eyes of a writer exposes students to the craft of the author and encourages students to explore new avenues of writing.
- 5. Display and Celebrate!** Walking down the hallway in a school setting, you can usually get a good idea of the writing that is going on in each classroom. The more students write, the more comfortable they become, and they will want to show off their work. Celebrate student writing and recognize students as writers.
- 6. Confer Weekly.** This is your opportunity to learn about each student's writing development. Encourage, guide, and listen.
- 7. Share, Share, Share!** Young children love to share everything. Sharing during Writer's Workshop enhances their sense of importance as a writer.
- 8. Involve and Inform Parents.** Writing work is an automatic means of connecting with parents. Wall displays of writing samples show parents how you value their child's writing effort. Hold an Author's Tea and invite parents so they can see first-hand the important writing work of their child.
- 9. Be Flexible and Reflect.** A well-planned lesson may fall flat. So, go back to the drawing board and ask yourself, "Why?" "What happened?" How can you reteach to make the right connections for students? Take time to reflect on your teaching and student learning.
- 10. Set High Expectations.** Be specific with your expectations and articulate clearly what you would like the students to accomplish. Believe in your students' abilities and challenge them to succeed. Every child can be an author.

Ideas

Thinking, Thinking, Thinking!

Ideas are the heart of writing. The purpose of this section is to help students generate ideas for writing. The lessons help students explore the ideas of authors using mentor texts and to discover unique writing ideas in their own lives. Through class-created anchor charts and individually-created lists, students will collect plenty of ideas, so that when they begin to write, they are not at a loss for topics. Students are encouraged to keep their ideas in their writing folders so the ideas are readily at hand. This section includes the following:

- Lesson 1: Ideas Thinking Chart (page 73)
- Lesson 2: My Think Page (page 75)
- Lesson 3: My Idea Bank (page 77)
- Lesson 5: Important People (page 80)
- Lesson 6: Things All Around Us (page 85)
- Lesson 7: Helping Hands (page 88)
- Lesson 8: Getting Ideas from Literature (page 91)

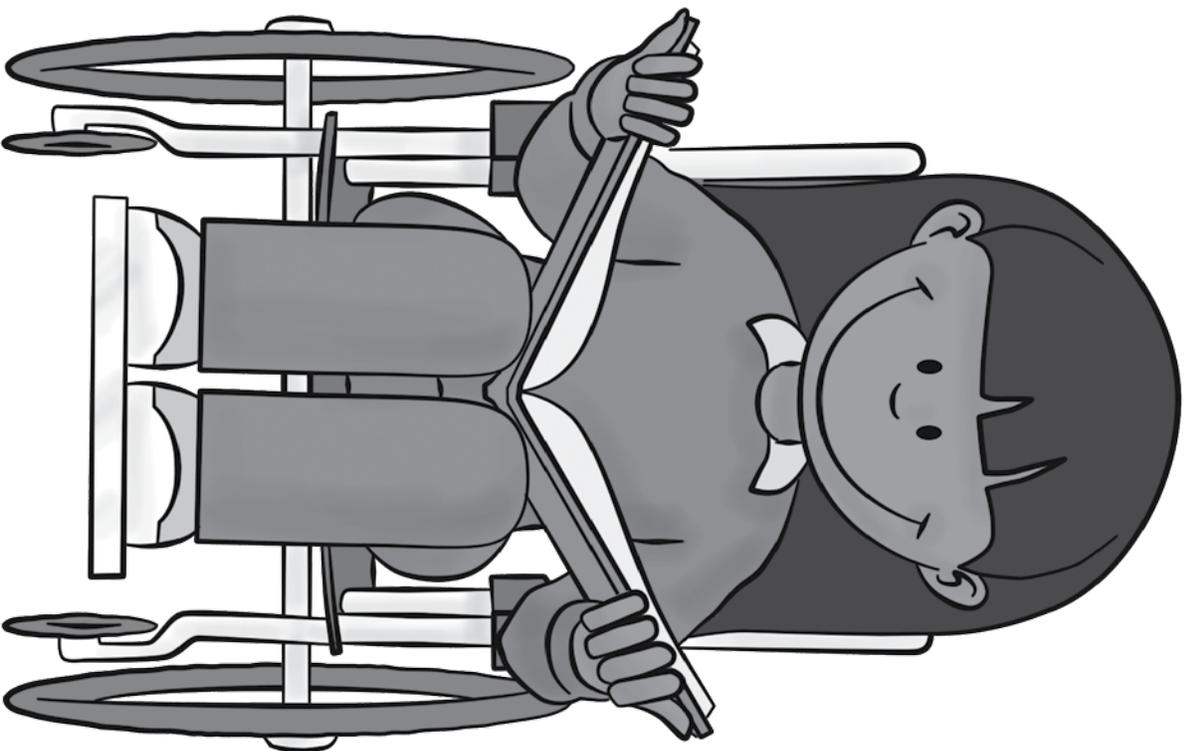
The *Ida, Idea Creator* poster (page 72) can be displayed in the room to provide a visual reminder for students that Ideas is one of the traits of writing. You may wish to introduce this poster during the first lesson on ideas. Then, refer to the poster when teaching other lessons on ideas to refresh students' memories and provide them questions to help hone their writing topics.

Ida

Idea Creator

What is my writing about?

- ✓ Did I choose an interesting topic?
- ✓ Did I focus on my idea?
- ✓ Did I include supporting details?
- ✓ Did I stick to my topic?



Things All Around Us

Standard

Uses prewriting strategies to plan written work

Materials

- Chart paper
- Markers
- *Senses Idea Chart* (page 87; [sensesideachart.pdf](#))

Mentor Texts

- *My Five Senses* by Aliko
- *My Five Senses* by Margaret Miller
- *Hello Ocean* by Pam Muñoz Ryan
- *Magic School Bus Explores the Senses* by Joanna Cole
- See *Mentor Text List* in Appendix C for other suggestions.

Procedures

Note: This lesson can take place over several days. You may wish to focus on one sense at a time to fully develop students' understanding of each sense and how to use it to generate ideas for writing.

Think About Writing

1. Remind students that they have been building thinking charts of ideas for stories, and making their own personal lists of writing ideas. Listing is one of the best ways to collect thoughts for a writing topic.
2. Review a mentor text if desired, and emphasize the author's use of observing his or her surroundings. For example, "Authors like Pam Muñoz Ryan notice and remember what they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. Then, they add those details to their marvelous stories."

Teach

3. Tell students, "Today I will show you how to use your senses to gather special writing ideas for your stories." Draw a table with five rows on a sheet of chart paper. Review the five senses with students. Write one sense in each section of the table and draw a quick picture to go with each sense. For example, a pair of eyes can be drawn for the sense of sight.
4. Discuss one sense at a time. Model filling in the chart by drawing a quick picture and labeling the picture. Ideas for each sense do not have to be associated with each other. They just have to be something associated with that sense. For example, "As I was driving to school this morning, I saw a tree covered with ice." Draw and label a tree covered with ice. "As I look around, I see boys and girls." Draw and label boys and girls. Continue modeling for all the senses or work on one each day to develop a deeper understanding.

Things All Around Us *(cont.)*

5. Tell students that real authors shape their stories from things that are around them. Remind students that they will continue to collect ideas for stories from what they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch all around them.

Engage

6. Remind students to use their senses to explore things or places that will help them live the life of a writer. Encourage them by asking questions such as: What do you see? What do you hear? Have students *Heads-up*, *Stand-up*, *Partner-up* and tell partners ideas they have for sensory experiences all around that might work for a story.

Apply

7. Remind students that their senses can help them find excellent story ideas. Explain that today, they will make their own list of writing ideas using their senses. Distribute the *Senses Idea Chart* (page 87) to students to create an idea list.

Write/Conference

8. Provide time for students to work on their idea lists. You may wish to allow them to talk quietly to partners seated nearby. Remind students that when you are conferencing, they can get help from classmates, being sure to use their two-inch voices. Remember to be an astute observer of student writing behaviors and record in your conferring notebook. It will help guide your writing instruction.

Spotlight Strategy

9. Spotlight student work. For example, “Today was a total success! Just look at the clever ideas Audric developed from thinking about his senses.” Spotlight one or two additional students if they are on the right track with their lists.

Share

10. Have students share their lists with their partners. Provide approximately three minutes. Compliment students on their listening skills.

Homework

Ask students to be aware of possible story ideas that their senses can bring to them. Tell students to be ready to add to their list on the next writing day.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Senses Idea Chart

Directions: Make a list of things you can use your senses to write about.

I see...



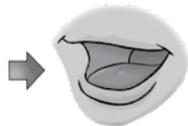
I hear ...



I smell ...



I taste ...



I touch ...

