

# Introduction: Writerly Life

## Grades 3-8

This Writerly Life Unit is designed to help students create a vision for the writing work they will be doing throughout the school year, so it is launched at the beginning of the school year. In our version of this unit, students will be introduced to the writing process by participating in a condensed study of personal story. We chose to use personal stories for this unit because we know that students will have been exposed to lots of stories already in their lives, and that each student will be able to think of a story he or she can write. Teachers who have many years of workshop teaching experience, and students who are already familiar with writing workshop from previous grades, may feel comfortable allowing students to write in any genre of their choice during the Writerly Life unit. This will mean students are working in a wide variety of genres, some crafting poems, some personal stories, some realistic fiction, some feature articles, etc.

It is most important for teachers to remember that a writerly life unit of study is a starting point for the school year. A publication at the end of a writerly life unit will not look as polished as a piece of writing that is published later in the school year. It is also important that the teacher participate in the writing process with the students. There will be many times throughout this unit of study, and the school year, when the teacher will refer to his or her own writing efforts in mini-lessons. Because you are doing exactly what you are asking your students to do, you will become a part of the learning community and not separate from it. *And* you will be modeling for students exactly what they will be asked to do.

Included in this module you will find video resources, sample lesson plans, sample mini-lessons, and other handouts that will support you in teaching a Writerly Life unit. These resources can support you in thinking about your own teaching in a Writerly Life unit but they aren't a one size fits all plan for the classroom. As mentioned before, you may opt to invite students to choose their own genre in this unit. You may choose different mini-lessons that teach the routines of writer's workshop, and introduce students to the common habits of professional authors. As stated before, this unit suggests that a Writerly Life unit includes students making a personal story. The lesson grid you see below also does that, but it could be adapted to allow students to have more choice over what their finished piece of writing is.

## Indiana Partnership for Young Writers: Writerly Life (01: Introduction)

Attached below is an outline of one possible Writerly Life unit. You are encourage to read it, perhaps even noting your immediate questions, before continuing to the next page in this module.

# Writerly Life Unit

## First 10 Days of Writing Workshop Teaching in Upper Grade Classrooms



### Goals and Teaching Points for Writerly Life Unit

1. Students will learn the rituals and routines of writing workshop.
2. Students will engage in lots of talk about the stories of their lives.
3. Students will think about what they have read that is like what they trying to make.
4. Students will begin to read like writers and see craft in the texts around them.
5. Students will see themselves as writers who are capable of using writing to communicate meaningful messages with real audiences.
6. Students will learn about authors' habits and "what writers do" as a basis for developing their own habits as writers.
7. Students will become active members in a writing community who share their writing and give/receive feedback.
8. Students will become familiar with genres as "containers" for writing.
9. Students will develop a repertoire of strategies that will lift the quality of their writing.

Mini-lesson Focus	Key Concept	Resources Needed
<p><i>Day 1</i> (During Interactive READ ALOUD read: Story selection)</p> <p>Assessment: Students demonstrate writing abilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can learn about writers in our community by reading their writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desks in clusters</li> <li>• Loose-leaf paper</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give instructions for collecting a writing sample: We will do a lot of writing this year. I don't know anything about you as writers, but I can learn a lot about you as a writer by looking at a sample of your writing. Today, I want you to do some writing. You can write about anything you want. When you think you are done, re-read what you have written and try to make it even better. I will collect your pieces at the end of workshop time and read them over tonight. I am looking forward to learning something about the kind of writers you are.</li> <li>• Teacher HW: Make a tally sheet with two columns: What my kids can do/What my kids are trying to do. Note with tally marks what you notice about each student's piece. Some things you might pay attention to: Use of end-mark punctuation, comma use, understanding of 5 story elements, sentence variation and complexity, use of literary devices (metaphor/simile, intentional repetition, alliteration, etc.), dialogue that moves story along or develops character, and any other qualities of writing you notice. Use results to inform your teaching.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Day 2</i> (During Interactive READ ALOUD read: Story selection)</p> <p>Tools of the Trade: Notebooks/pens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many writers use notebooks to hold onto their thinking</li> <li>• Writers keep notebooks that are a reflection of who they are as writers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First day in meeting area</li> <li>• Your Writer's Notebook and new marble journals for students</li> <li>• R. Fletcher's, <i>A Writer's Notebook</i></li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach ML: Read out loud first chapter in Fletcher. Show students decorated cover on your writer's NB and explain the ways in which it is a reflection of who you are as a writer. Distribute NBs</li> <li>• (For homework: Decorate NB covers)</li> </ul>

<p>Day 3 (During Interactive READ ALOUD read: Story selection)</p> <p>Community Building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writers learn from other writers (students/you) in their writing community</li> <li>Writers learn from other published writers about living in the world like a writer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructions on board telling students to bring NBs with pens tucked inside to sit in meeting area</li> <li>Quote sheet from published writers</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach ML: Yesterday, we learned something about a writer's tools from Ralph Fletcher, who also helped us understand how to put 'stuff' in our NBs. Today we're going to look at what some other published writers have to say about their own writing lives. As we do, think about which writer says something that sounds like <u>you</u> as a writer –like that person could be your writing partner. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce quotes: Give each student a copy of quotes. Read aloud what these published writers have said about themselves. Have students choose one quote that sounds the like kind of writer they are.</li> <li>Tell students that one way to begin to find words to talk about themselves as writers is to borrow words from more experienced writers.</li> <li>After making choices, have students write in their NBs why they made the choice they did. In what way(s) are they like the writer they chose?</li> <li>Share: Why did you choose the writer you did. Notice who else in your writing community chose the same writer. These writers might be 'like' you as a writer. Also notice which writers are not like you as a writer. Knowing this will help you understand more about who might be a good writing partner for you.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Day 4 (During Interactive READ ALOUD read: Story selection)</p> <p>Importance of NBs &amp; how to fill them up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writers pay attention to the world differently</li> <li>Writers think of themselves as people who have something important to say</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructions on board telling students to bring NBs with pens tucked inside to sit in meeting area</li> <li>Chart paper &amp; markers</li> <li>Video clip: Gantos NB video (<a href="http://www.indianayoungwriters.org">www.indianayoungwriters.org</a>)</li> <li>Strategies for Collecting &amp; Cultivating Ideas (hand-out to be taped into NB)</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach ML: For some of us keeping a NB is hard. Often what makes it hard is that we don't yet think of ourselves as writers or as people who are going to make something in writing. Many of us would rather just talk. But writing is permanent. It can reach many more people, it can't be misquoted, and it is not just talk written down. Writing is crafted—speech is not. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What might be some reasons for keeping a NB? Chart responses on chart paper. Be sure that among these reasons you include that a NB is one way to collect things that you pay attention to in the world, with the intention of making it into something (for example: story, poem, article, essay, commentary, memoir, etc.)</li> <li>Show video clip of Gantos or other writer sharing NB</li> <li>Show how you have made entries in your own NB. Teach 3</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



		<p>strategies with time following each for try-it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Distribute hand-out.</li> <li>○ Student HW: Put (5) more entries into your NB</li> </ul>
<p><i>Day 5</i> (During Interactive READ ALOUD read: Story selection)</p> <p>Choosing a seed idea &amp; writing discovery drafts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writers reread their notebooks, selecting and committing themselves to an idea they'll develop into a finished writing piece (for this unit, students will be asked to write a <u>story</u>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions on board telling students to bring NBs with pens tucked inside to sit in meeting area</li> <li>• Transparency of Living the Cyclical Writing Life diagram</li> <li>• Transparency of entry from your own NB identified as 'seed idea.'</li> <li>• Overhead projector</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach ML: When writers make something like a story, poem, feature article, or commentary, they usually go through many stages. The first stage of this writing process is to look at the writing that you have already created and think about which one has potential to be developed. This piece of writing is called the seed idea. The end product (the poem, story, essay, or article, etc.) that the writer envisions does not look like the seed idea. Like a cultivated seed from any plant, the emerging fruit is full of potential itself. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Show overhead of an entry from your NB where you found something that is significant to you and you have figured out why it is important for you to develop it. (This becomes your seed idea).</li> <li>○ Have students read through their own entries and choose a seed idea. Write in NBs the significance of this entry to them.</li> <li>○ Mid-workshop TP: Begin developing seed idea (Refer to Strategies for Collecting &amp; Cultivating in NBs) to make discovery drafts</li> <li>○ Share: Choose 4-5 students to tell how they chose their seed ideas.</li> <li>○ Student HW: Discovery drafts (1-2)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><i>Day 6</i> (During Interactive READ ALOUD read: Story selection)</p> <p>Writers learn about writing well from published writers they love</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writers reflect on the writing they have done, making choices about which texts to develop and how to make them better</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions on board telling students to bring folders holding NBs with pens tucked inside</li> <li>• Copies of short Mentor text of choice</li> <li>• Transparency with entry from your NB where you have used this mentor author to influence the writing you did on your own topic.</li> <li>• Overhead projector</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach ML: There is so much to understand about writing well, and this is a challenge not just for writers like us, but even for published writers. One way writers make their writing better is to look closely at the writing of other authors they love. That's what we're going to do too and then we're going to try something that they have done in our own writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Distribute copies mentor text</li> <li>○ Read it aloud, then show how you used this text to make an entry in your NB about your seed idea that is influenced by the craft</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Goals and Teaching Points for Writerly Life Unit

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		<p>moves of this mentor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tape/paste mentor text into NB</li> <li>○ Have students 'try-it' in their NBs with their own seed ideas</li> <li>○ Student HW: Study some of your favorite writers. Put 2-3 text examples that you like and might try into your NB to share in class tomorrow.)</li> </ul>
<p>Day 7 Writing a DRAFT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writers DRAFT <u>outside</u> their notebooks where making revisions is much easier</li> <li>• To make a DRAFT, writers must have a vision of what it is they are going to make (genre: poem, story, essay, feature article, etc.?)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions on board telling students to <u>leave NBs</u> at desk and come to meeting area</li> <li>• Transparencies of your own discovery drafts and story draft</li> <li>• Overhead projector</li> <li>• Writing folders &amp; paper for drafting</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach ML: Up to this point, we have been <u>thinking</u> something about our seed ideas by writing NB entries and discovery drafts. Now we are going to begin <u>making</u> something (a story) by writing a draft. Writers not only make decisions about what to write about, they also make decisions about what their ideas will become. This is what we will do today.</li> <li>• Demonstrate how you thought about your discovery drafts in order to make a story draft. Develop some connections about your knowledge of the story genre that comes from reading stories. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Distribute drafting paper &amp; Writing Folders</li> <li>○ Show students how to set up draft paper –box at the top that includes: name/date/seed idea/what they are making (genre: in this case 'story')/working title</li> <li>○ Directions for drafting: Return to seats and without looking at NB, begin making draft</li> <li>○ Student HW: Finish draft</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Day 8 Revision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision is one of the most important parts of a writer's process.</li> <li>• Writers revise to make their writing better</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructions on board telling students to bring writing Folders w/ pens tucked inside to sit in meeting area</li> <li>• Chart paper and markers</li> <li>• Transparency of your DRAFT w/ 2-3 revisions from strategy list</li> <li>• Overhead projector</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach ML: Revision is an important opportunity in a writer's process to go back and rethink what's written; to add more details to a particular part, to move things around, or develop characters by making them talk. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Show places in your own DRAFT where you have used revision strategies to make your own writing better</li> <li>○ Use chart paper to name and record these strategies, and perhaps a few more strategies you haven't tried but students could use</li> <li>○ Student HW: Make 2-3 revisions to your DRAFT</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><i>Day 9</i> Getting writing ready for readers: Editing &amp; Publishing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writers use writing conventions like spelling and punctuation to make their writing easy to read</li> <li>When writers finish a piece of writing they make it 'beautiful' for the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructions on board telling students to bring Folders w/ pens tucked inside to sit in meeting area</li> <li>Transparency of student DRAFT to edit (w/ permission from student)</li> <li>Overhead projector</li> <li>Editing checklist for distribution</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach ML: Most times when writers publish they send their work to a publishing company where editors make it ready for readers. We are going to publish our own work, so we need to do for ourselves what a publishing company does for writers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose specific skills for students to focus on such as end-mark punctuation, comma use, spelling (circling words that don't look right), capitalization, etc.) Demonstrate using student work how you would read through the piece out loud and mark places that need to be (or might need to be) changed. Prepare an editing checklist and demonstrate use of it with student piece.</li> <li>Distribute editing checklists</li> <li>Student HW: Edit and fancy-up writing to make it public (add picture, re-write or type). These pieces will be put together into a class anthology.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><i>Day 10</i> Celebration/Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writers have publishing parties to celebrate the completion of such a significant writing project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructions on board telling students to bring Folders w/ pens tucked inside to sit in meeting area</li> <li>Small snack</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach ML: After investing so much time and energy in such a significant project, writers celebrate their accomplishments. That's what we will do today. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign partners with whom students will share writing work and small snack</li> <li>As a whole class, talk together about this first piece process. How did it feel to go through this process? to have a NB? Are their writers in the room you identify with? Why?</li> <li>Keep track of who participates and record their comments</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Resources for writerly life study:**

[www.indianayoungwriters.org/resources.html](http://www.indianayoungwriters.org/resources.html)

<http://www.readingrockets.org/podcasts/authors>

<http://www.adlit.org/media/author>

<http://www.ralphfletcher.com/tips.html>

<http://www.rcowen.com/AuthorAtWork.htm>

<http://www.justonemorebook.com/index.php?s=Janet+S.+Wong>.

The websites of authors you and your students love.

# Goals and Teaching Points for Writerly Life Unit

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6. Students will learn about authors' habits and what writers "do" as a basis for developing their own habits as writers.
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8. Students will develop a repertoire of strategies that will lift the quality of their writing.

# Conferences

Writing conferences are an integral component of an effective writer's workshop, and should begin early on in the Writerly Life unit of study. One aspect of this unit is to prepare students for the structure of writer's workshop. By conducting conferences from the start of the year, students will be able to understand that they are responsible for their own writing and that the teacher will be talking to them regularly about how their writing is going.

Keep in mind that writing conferences should have a predictable structure. Carl Anderson suggests that the conference structure follow these guidelines:

## **In the first part of the conference...**

- invite the child to set the agenda for the conference.
- ask research questions.
- look at the child's writing.
- make a teaching decision.

## **In the second part of the conference...**

- give the student feedback.
- teach the student.
- guide the student as he 'has-a-go' with what you've taught him.
- link the conference to the student's ongoing work.

It is also important for you to think about how you will take notes about the conferences you have with students. Conferences are a great assessment tool, and by taking notes you will have documentation of students' writing development over time that can be used to reflect on their growth and abilities as writers.

# Gathering Notebook Entries

The writer's notebook is at the core of any writer's workshop in the upper grades. We use writer's notebooks because it emulates the way many professional writers gather, store and nurture ideas for their published text. In writing workshop, notebooks are used as a tool to store ideas. Notebooks are "living" in that they can constantly be written in and referred back to as writers develop a piece or think about something new to write. They are an integral component of writing instruction in the upper primary and middle grades. Teachers should keep in mind that a writer's notebook is a container for the writer's thinking. Ralph Fletcher helps us understand what a writer's notebook is in the following quote. "What is a writer's notebook, anyway? Let's start by talking about what it's *not*. A writer's notebook is not a diary: 'Today it is raining. We have a substitute teacher named Miss Pampanella. She seems very nice. We are going to have gym right before lunch.' It's not a reading journal in which your teacher tells you to summarize the main idea of a book, or write a letter to a character. A writer's notebook is different from any journal you've ever kept before.....*A writer's notebook gives you a place to live like a writer, not just in school during writing time, but wherever you are, at any time of day.*"

In the video below author Mary Amato demonstrates how she uses her writer's notebook. This video could be shown to your class to help them understand how writers use notebooks to store their thinking.

Keeping a Writer's Notebook Video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcPcHYjTG9k>

Try It:

If you don't already have a writer's notebook of your own, you should start one now, and practice using it as you continue to read about the Writerly Life unit. Get a composition notebook and decorate it. Then choose a strategy from the

## Indiana Partnership for Young Writers: Writerly Life (04: Notebooks)

possibilities for notebook entries handout below and make an entry into your notebook.





Unit of Study: Writerly Life Day/Date: Early in the study

Focus: (What one thing will you teach and why?):

Writers collect ideas for their writing projects on the pages inside their notebooks.

Connection (What will you say to the students about why you are teaching this?):

Yesterday we got notebooks and made them special to us by decorating the covers to fit our personalities. Today we are going to learn more about what writers put inside their notebooks.

Give Info: (How will you teach this? What exactly do you want to say?)

We can learn a lot about writing from our favorite authors, so let's look at what one author says about his notebook. (Show Mary Amato video.)

When I showed you my notebook yesterday, we noticed that some of the entries were long and some were short. Let's look at a few of these more closely. (Show excerpts on overhead/document camera that include several types of notebook strategies.) These are all ideas that I put in my notebook knowing that I could think and write more about each one. I've already turned many of these into stories and poems and essays and articles, and some I am not finished with yet. I know I can always come back to these when I need something to write about.

Active Involvement: (How will students "try-it" before they go off to work independently?)

Let's look at a list of strategies we can use to make notebook entries. Some of these strategies I showed you in my notebook today. Some we haven't seen yet. As you look at this list of strategies, I want you to pick one that you can do in your notebook during writing time today. When you decide, hold your idea silently to yourself. (Pause. Select 2-3 students to share what strategy they will use.)

Link: (What is the relationship between what you taught and what you expect them to do during workshop time?) Those are great notebook entries. I know the rest of you have great ideas too. Go back to your seat and put your ideas into your notebook, just like Mary Amato and I did.

MWTP: (Optional) When you have finished the first entry, you can try something else on our list of strategies. Today and every day, you can look at this list when you aren't sure what to put in your notebook.

Share: (How will students share the work they did w/ each other to further develop TP?)

Invite a student to share one idea he/she put in her notebook.

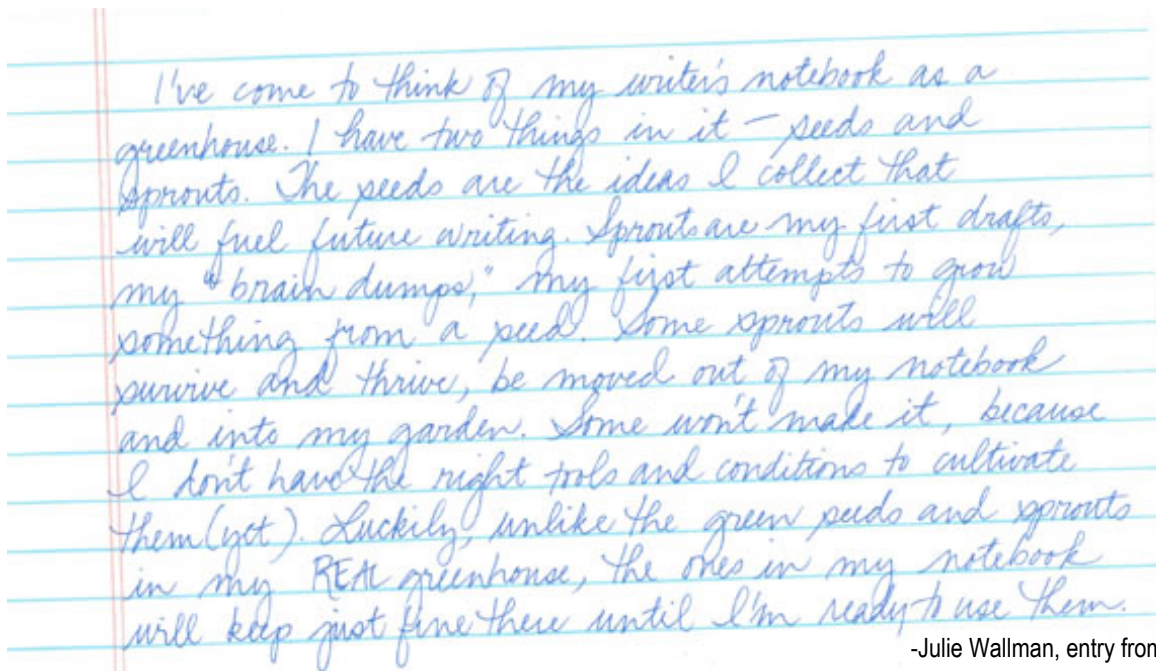
## Introduction to Writing Notebooks

*A writer's notebook is like that ditch—an empty space you dig in your busy life, a space that will fill up with all sorts of fascinating little creatures... You'll be amazed by what you catch there...*

*What is a writer's notebook anyway? Let's start by talking about what it is not. A writer's notebook is not a diary: "Today it is raining. We have a substitute teacher named Miss Pamapnella. She seems very nice. We are going to have gym right before lunch." It's not a reading journal in which your teacher tells you to summarize the main idea of a book, or write a letter to a character. A writer's notebook is different from any journal you've ever kept before...*

*A writer's notebook gives you a place to live like a writer, not just in school during writing time, but wherever you are, at any time of day.*

- Ralph Fletcher, *A Writer's Notebook: Unlocking the Writer Within You*



*I've come to think of my writer's notebook as a greenhouse. I have two things in it—seeds and sprouts. The seeds are the ideas I collect that will fuel future writing. Sprouts are my first drafts, my "brain dumps," my first attempts to grow something from a seed. Some sprouts will survive and thrive, be moved out of my notebook and into my garden. Some won't make it, because I don't have the right tools and conditions to cultivate them (yet). Luckily, unlike the green seeds and sprouts in my REAL greenhouse, the ones in my notebook will keep just fine there until I'm ready to use them.*

-Julie Wallman, entry from her writer's notebook

### Collecting Seeds

A seed is any small snippet or memento that inspires you, something you think you can write a lot about when you have more time. Seeds are quick snapshots of things you want to remember (or *can't* forget, no matter how hard you try).

### Cultivating Sprouts (aka Nurturing a Seed Idea)

Sprouts are typically longer entries, more detailed. Sprouts are "thinking on paper," perhaps more deliberate and intense thinking about an earlier seed entry.

There's a fine line between seeds and sprouts, ideas and beginnings, and most professional writers would group them all together as "notebook entries."

## **What to put in your writer's notebook: Strategies for Collecting and Cultivating Ideas**

- Record snippets of conversations you overhear between strangers.
- Gather family photographs and photographs of places important to you.
- Save take-out menus, napkins with logos, matchbooks from restaurants, hotels, etc.
- Make very close observations of everyday things.
- Gather family recipes (and list the occasions and other foods you eat/ate with them)
- Write down quotations that intrigue you from music, movies, books, etc.
- Look through a telephone book and mix and match first and last names to create potential character names. List them in your notebook.
- Gather paint swatches with names you like and/or colors that remind you of something specific you've seen. Tape them in your notebook.
- Jot down the rules and procedures of a game you played when you were a kid.
- Gather old letters, postcards, birthday cards, Christmas cards...ones actually sent to you or ones belonging to strangers that you scavenge at antique stores and flea markets.
- Make timelines (real or fictional).
- Record plot ideas inspired by news stories.
- Sketch people, places, things.
- Write down family stories (yours or anyone else's) that you never want to forget.
- Describe anything you wish you had taken a photograph of but didn't/couldn't.
- List interesting facts or statistics that you stumble upon (or know by heart).
- List potential titles, even (especially) if you have no idea what story goes with them.
- Jot down notes about a dream that scared or puzzled you.
- Gather maps (published) or draw your own.
- Go someplace that your character would go and behave like him/her. What would he notice? How would she react? What would he/she order off the menu?
- Do a "fast write," dumping all of your thoughts, reflections, reactions to your seed idea in your notebook as an egg timer ticks away.
- Go on an observation walk or sit quietly someplace. Write what you hear, see, smell, taste and feel. Write whatever happens.
- People watch. Draw conclusions about someone based on what they do, say, wear, carry with them, etc. Imagine the smallest details of their lives.
- Eavesdrop. What is each person thinking that he/she is not saying to the other?
- Make a big list of things you remember or things you don't remember. Things you're good at. Things you're not good at. Things you know. Things you don't know.
- Interview someone who plays a key role in your story or a relevant expert.
- Do "character research" like an actor would...learn a skill that your character already knows, shadow someone with same career as your character.
- Think like a detective as you live your everyday life. What happened just before you entered? Who was there before you?

Sources: Calkins, L. (1994). *The Art of Teaching Writing*. Heinemann; Fletcher, R. (1996) *A Writer's Notebook*. HarperTrophy; Grant, S. (2007) *Notebook Know-How*. Indiana Partnership for Young Writers Summer Institute; Ray & Laminack (2001) *The Writing Workshop*. NCTE

"Everybody walks past a thousand story ideas every day. The good writers are the ones who see five or six of them. Most people don't see any." – Orson Scott Card

**Possible Writer's Notebook/Sketch Journal entries might include:**

- things you notice that pique your curiosity
- close observations: sights, sounds, textures, moods
- snippets of interesting dialogue you overhear
- questions
- lists of things to think about later
- quotes
- generating writing from photographs
- memories
- plot ideas (from news, life, etc.)
- character ideas from interesting people
- setting ideas
- research data (observations, explorations)
- reflections on and off things you see, hear, think about
- word play: play with words you like
- family stories you know
- top ten lists (people, place names, music, etc.)
- conversations you've had
- ideas you care about
- passions (things that make you angry, puzzled, joyful, etc.)
- things kids say
- anything unusual that "disrupts the commonplace"

Never consider your notebook/sketch journal a finished project, but rather a place to collect your thoughts over a range of endless possibilities. Give yourself the freedom and flexibility to take risks and try things out.

And yet —these are places of record, and you will be turning them in to me. Don't use your sketch journal as a diary of your daily life, or confide anything you wouldn't feel comfortable sharing with me.

Last note: PERFECTION IS THE ENEMY. Be sloppy. Be creative. Spelling and handwriting don't matter in the slightest. Only you need to know what anything means. And don't forget to put your name on it somewhere.

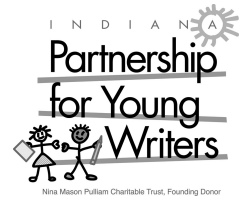
# Possibilities for Notebook Entries

Memories  
Family stories  
Special Occasion  
Observations  
Conversations  
Research  
Opinions  
Real word/current events  
Photographs  
Hopes  
Newspaper clippings  
Writing off book  
Reflections

Noticings  
Wonderings  
Meaning of events  
Snippets of language  
Images  
Lists  
Experiments with words  
Dreams  
Plans  
Poetry  
Letters/pictures meaningful to you  
Split page (things I know/reflection)



## Qualities to work towards in your Writer's Notebooks/Sketch Journals



<b>Volume</b>	Writing in a sustained rhythm over a period of time (i.e: “at least four entries per week”)
<b>Variety</b>	Writing many kinds of entries about many different topics  Trying a variety of types of writing, as well as graphical/visual entries  Capturing different tones and moods (serious, playful, observant, happy, thoughtful, etc.)  Playing around with genre  Discovering a couple of topics that matter to you enough to explore them repeatedly (“life topics”)
<b>Thoughtfulness</b>	A reader should hear your voice when reading your notebook  Entries should reflect what is important to you in some way  Entries should not feel like you rushed through them just “to get it done”  Allow yourself to think your way through ideas (explore, discover, wonder)  Occasionally reread your notebook and add to or question previous ideas and entries

# Choosing and Nurturing a Seed Idea

After gathering many notebook entries, writers will begin to find "writing territories," or subjects that they are drawn to writing about. As your notebook grows you will be more likely to uncover recurring themes or ideas. For this unit, it might be more helpful for you to think about some areas where there might be opportunities for students to decide on a writing idea/topic and think more deeply about what they have to say about it. We often call this "nurturing a seed," because much like planting a garden, there are still many things we need to tend to in order to grow our writing. Workshop writers re-read their notebooks or folders to inform this choice—the idea they wish to make into something—a memoir, a poem, an All-About book, a commentary, a feature article, or a story. In choosing this seed, writers decide to stay with one idea for a long time until it becomes their own best work.

The following video shows an example of the mini-lesson provided in the resources section of this page. It shows one strategy for uncovering what more there is to say/write about a particular seed idea. Double-click on the black box below to watch the video.

Choosing a Seed: Writerly Life Partnerships  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNbz57vvNiU>

Try It:

Share one of your notebook entries with a colleague or family member to uncover what more you have to say about that piece of writing.



Unit of Study Writerly Life Day/Date After gathering notebook entries

Focus: (What one thing will you teach and why?):

Writers choose to write about topics that are important to them. To do this writers reread their notebooks to select an idea that they will develop into a finished piece. It often helps to talk with someone about the topics you choose to develop.

Connection (What will you say to the students about why you are teaching this?):

We have been thinking about how writers hold onto potential ideas for writing projects by making entries in their notebooks and we started to do this ourselves in our own notebooks. We are just about ready to make a draft, but before we do this we want to think about how we might make a decision about what we wish to write. Writers write about topics that are important to themselves, and as writers we want to do that to.

Give Info: (How will you teach this? What exactly do you want to say?)

One way to discover where you have chosen a topic of significance to you is to talk to someone about it.

Model selecting a seed idea with another adult or student who is prepared to ask you questions about your writing. Students will watch as I am asked questions about a seed idea. "Why does it seem like this might be a seed idea you would like to develop? Why does this seed idea feel important to you?" My writing partner should ask more questions that get me thinking about how I might develop my seed idea further.

Active Involvement: (How will students "try-it" before they go off to work independently?)

Read through your notebook entries to find one that you would like to develop into a finished piece of writing.

Link: (What is the relationship between what you taught and what you expect them to do during workshop time?) When you go back to your seats, you will do with your partner what I did with my partner. Make sure that both of you get a chance to talk and think more about your topic. The talking you do with your partner today will support you in developing your seed ideas. Remember to use the thinking out loud that you do in your writing.

MWTP: (Optional) Begin developing the seed idea into a discovery draft.

Share: (How will students share the work they did w/ each other to further develop TP?)

Students will be sharing seed ideas during workshop today. Look for an effective conversation that could be shared with the entire class.



# Nurturing a Seed Idea Through Craft Noticing

Another strategy we can use to uncover more to say about our seed ideas is by studying published texts that are like what we are trying to write. These texts not only help us see what other writers write *about* but also help us begin to notice craft strategies (punctuation, sentence structures, ways to use words well, paragraphing, etc...) that can help us assemble our ideas. Included in the resources below you will find several examples of personal stories that can be used to support students in nurturing their seed ideas. Students should already be familiar with these stories so that when you ask them to notice some things the writer has done well, they will have already appreciated the story as a reader. This will allow students to focus more on the writer's craft. They can begin to notice ways in which the writer is conveying meaning, and make theories about why a writer may have made certain decisions in their writing.

The story *Slower Than the Rest* by Cynthia Rylant has comments included that can be used as a resource when you are teaching students to look at how writers have crafted text. In the notebook entry below I have tried one of same craft moves Cynthia Rylant has done in her writing. I attempted to add action along with dialogue to create meaning in my entry.

know you can't really say for  
- e what will happen, and we  
- predict the future," I say as  
- I look at the poster behind Kristie's  
- and my eyes begin to well with  
- "but do you know if there is  
- a connection between this and  
- academic ability in school later  
- I turn my eyes toward Kristie  
- a hopeful gaze waiting for  
- her response. I'm at the  
- of my seat willing her to soothe  
- us by that gaze. I know  
- we see what I need her to  
- cause of the way she looks  
- at me. Her eyes are telling  
- me she understands my fears, and  
- there's also a look of sympathy there.  
- I can't tell you what will  
- happen when Jack gets to school, but it  
- from the paper work that, Sharon  
- that he is learning, and he's motivated  
- making connections. So, no, I don't  
- think I'll have trouble in school."  
- I nod. It's my sigh of  
- That's what I needed to hear.


## Indiana Partnership for Young Writers: Writerly Life (06: Craft Moves)

Try it:

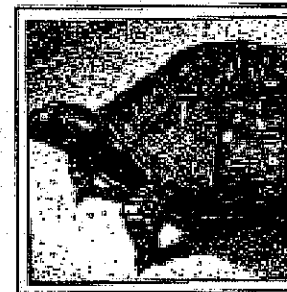
Read through Cynthia Rylant's story *Slower Than the Rest*. Notice the craft moves that have been highlighted, then try to find one or two more craft moves in the story.

Think of a notebook entry you could make that uses one of these craft moves.

Read through another story provided below. Try to notice some craft moves and make a hypothesis about why the author chose to do that.

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Craft Move: The title, *Slower Than the Rest* has a double meaning. It suggests that a turtle is a slow moving creature, but we find out in the story that Leo is also slower than the rest of the kids in school at learning new things. The picture of a turtle makes us think about a slow moving animal, it is not until later in the story that we realize Leo is also slow in other ways.



## Slower Than the Rest

Leo was the first one to spot the turtle, so he was the one who got to keep it. They had all been in the car, driving up Tyler Mountain to church, when Leo shouted, "There's a turtle!" and everyone's head jerked with the stop.

Leo's father grumbled something about turtle soup, but Leo's mother was sympathetic toward turtles, so Leo was allowed to pick it up off the highway and bring it home. Both his little sisters squealed when the animal stuck its ugly head out to look at them, and they

nature films, imitating Smokey the Bear. Each member of Leo's class was assigned to give a report on Friday dealing with forests. So Leo brought Charlie.

Leo was quiet about it on the bus to school. He held the covered box tightly on his lap, secretly relieved that turtles are quiet except for an occasional hiss. Charlie rarely hissed in the morning; he was a turtle who liked to sleep in.

Leo carried the box to his classroom and placed it on the wide windowsill near the radiator and beside the geraniums. His teacher called attendance and the day began.

In the middle of the morning, the forest reports began. One girl held up a poster board pasted with pictures of raccoons and squirrels, rabbits and deer, and she explained that animals died in forest fires. The pictures were too small for anyone to see from his desk. Leo was bored.

One boy stood up and mumbled something about burnt-up trees. Then another got up and said if there were no forests, then his dad couldn't go hunting, and Leo couldn't see the connection in that at all.

Finally it was his turn. He quietly walked over to the windowsill and picked up the box. He set it on the teacher's desk.

"When somebody throws a match into a forest," Leo began, "he is a murderer. He kills trees and birds and animals. Some animals, like deer, are fast runners and they might escape. But other animals"— he lifted the cover off the box—"have no hope. They are too slow. They will die." He lifted Charlie out of the box. "It isn't fair," he said, as the class gasped and giggled at what they saw. "It isn't fair for the slow ones."

Leo said much more. Mostly he talked about Charlie, explained what turtles were like, the things they enjoyed, what talents they possessed. He talked about Charlie the turtle and Charlie the friend, and what he said and how he said it made everyone in the class love turtles and hate forest fires. Leo's teacher had tears in her eyes.

That afternoon, the whole school assembled in the gymnasium to bring the special week to a close. A ranger in uniform made a speech, then someone dressed up like Smokey the Bear danced with two others dressed up like squir-

Craft Move: This is the first time in the story that Leo is actually talking. This could indicate that what he has to say here is important. One reason why Cynthia Rylant hasn't made Leo talk until now might be because she wanted the reader to pay attention when Leo did talk, in much the same way that the class paid attention this time too.

Craft Move: Cynthia Rylant added a few actions into this dialogue. This is an important craft move that can help the reader visualize the event. The actions add drama to this section of the story and slows it down, which also makes us see the significance of this part of the story.

Craft Move: Describing the teacher in this way helps the reader to see that she had a meaningful reaction to Leo's presentation. It might indicate that it is at this particular part of the story that something changes. We don't often see teachers crying in school, so this is something to pay attention to and think about in the piece.

thought its claws horrifying, but Leo loved it from the start. He named it Charlie.

The dogs at Leo's house had always belonged more to Leo's father than to anyone else, and the cat thought she belonged to no one but herself, so Leo was grateful for a pet of his own. He settled Charlie in a cardboard box, threw in some lettuce and radishes, and declared himself a happy boy.

Leo adored Charlie, and the turtle was hugged and kissed as if he were a baby. Leo liked to fit Charlie's shell on his shoulder under his left ear, just as one might carry a cat, and Charlie would poke his head into Leo's neck now and then to keep them both entertained.

Leo was ten years old the year he found Charlie. He hadn't many friends because he was slower than the rest. That was the way his father said it: "Slower than the rest." Leo was slow in reading, slow in numbers, slow in understanding nearly everything that passed before him in a classroom. As a result, in fourth grade Leo had been separated from the rest of his classmates and placed in a room with other children who were as slow as he. Leo thought he would never get over it. He saw no way to be happy after that.

But Charlie took care of Leo's happiness, and he did it by being congenial. Charlie was the friendliest turtle anyone had ever seen. The turtle's head was always stretched out, moving left to right, trying to see what was in the world. His front and back legs moved as though he were swimming frantically in a deep sea to save himself, when all that was happening was that someone was holding him in midair. Put Charlie down and he would sniff at the air a moment, then take off as if no one had ever told him how slow he was supposed to be.

Every day, Leo came home from school, took Charlie to the backyard to let him explore and told him about the things that had happened in fifth grade. Leo wasn't sure how old Charlie was, and, though he guessed Charlie was probably a young turtle, the lines around Charlie's forehead and eyes and the clamp of his mouth made Leo think Charlie was wise the way old people are wise. So Leo talked to him privately every day.

Then one day Leo decided to take Charlie to school.

It was Prevent Forest Fires week and the whole school was making posters, watching

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Craft Move: Cynthia Rylant gave Charlie the human characteristic of being wise. This helps the reader to see Charlie as Leo sees him, as a friend or confidant.



rels. Leo sat with his box and wondered if he should laugh at the dancers with everyone else. He didn't feel like it.

Finally, the school principal stood up and began a long talk. Leo's thoughts drifted off. He thought about being home, lying in his bed and drawing pictures, while Charlie hobbled all about the room.

He did not hear when someone whispered his name. Then he jumped when he heard, "Leo! It's you!" in his ear. The boy next to him was pushing him, making him get up.

"What?" Leo asked, looking around in confusion.

"You won!" they were all saying. "Go on!"

Leo was pushed onto the floor. He saw the principal smiling at him, beckoning to him across the room. Leo's legs moved like Charlie's—quickly and forward.

Leo carried the box tightly against his chest. He shook the principal's hand. He put down the box to accept the award plaque being handed to him. It was for his presentation with Charlie. Leo had won an award for the first time in his life, and as he shook the principal's hand and blushed and said his thank-you's,

he thought his heart would explode with happiness.

That night, alone in his room, holding Charlie on his shoulder, Leo felt proud. And for the first time in a long time, Leo felt fast.



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Craft Move: The word fast is the last word of the story. This is a meaningful word choice. Maybe Cynthia Rylant wanted to leave the reader with this word because it keeps us thinking about the story a little longer. Or maybe she wants to disrupt our thinking about who Leo is.



## Eleven

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What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are—underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five. And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one

inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

Only today I wish I didn't have only eleven years rattling inside me like pennies in a tin Band-Aid box. Today I wish I was one hundred and two instead of eleven because if I was one hundred and two I'd have known what to say when Mrs. Price put the red sweater on my desk. I would've known how to tell her it wasn't mine instead of just sitting there with that look on my face and nothing coming out of my mouth.

"Whose is this?" Mrs. Price says, and she holds the red sweater up in the air for all the class to see. "Whose? It's been sitting in the coatroom for a month."

"Not mine," says everybody. "Not me."

"It has to belong to somebody," Mrs. Price keeps saying, but nobody can remember. It's an ugly sweater with red plastic buttons and a collar and sleeves all stretched out like you could use it for a jump rope. It's maybe a thousand years old and even if it belonged to me I wouldn't say so.

Maybe because I'm skinny, maybe because she doesn't like me, that stupid Sylvia Saldívar says, "I think it belongs to Rachel." An ugly sweater like that, all raggedy and old, but Mrs. Price believes her. Mrs. Price takes the sweater and puts it right on my desk, but when I open my mouth nothing comes out.

"That's not, I don't, you're not . . . Not mine," I finally say in a little voice that was maybe me when I was four.

"Of course it's yours," Mrs. Price says. "I remember you wearing it once." Because she's older and the teacher, she's right and I'm not.



Not mine, not mine, not mine, but Mrs. Price is already turning to page thirty-two, and math problem number four. I don't know why but all of a sudden I'm feeling sick inside, like the part of me that's three wants to come out of my eyes, only I squeeze them shut tight and bite down on my teeth real hard and try to remember today I am eleven, eleven. Mama is making a cake for me for tonight, and when Papa comes home everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you.

But when the sick feeling goes away and I open my eyes, the red sweater's still sitting there like a big red mountain. I move the red sweater to the corner of my desk with my ruler. I move my pencil and books and eraser as far from it as possible. I even move my chair a little to the right. Not mine, not mine, not mine.

In my head I'm thinking how long till lunchtime, how long till I can take the red sweater and throw it over the schoolyard fence, or leave it hanging on a parking meter, or bunch it up into a little ball and toss it in the alley. Except when math period ends Mrs. Price says loud and in front of everybody, "Now, Rachel, that's enough," because she sees I've shoved the red sweater to the tippy-tip corner of my desk and it's hanging all over the edge like a waterfall, but I don't care.

"Rachel," Mrs. Price says. She says it like she's getting mad. "You put that sweater on right now and no more nonsense."

"But it's not—"

"Now!" Mrs. Price says.

This is when I wish I wasn't eleven, because all the years inside of me—ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one—are pushing at the back of my eyes when I put one arm through one sleeve of the sweater that smells like cottage cheese, and then the other arm through the other and stand there with my arms apart like if the sweater hurts me and it does, all itchy and full of germs that aren't even mine.

That's when everything I've been holding in since this morning, since when Mrs. Price put the sweater on my desk, finally lets go, and all of a sudden I'm crying in front of everybody. I wish I was invisible but I'm not. I'm eleven and it's my birthday today and I'm crying like I'm three in front of everybody. I put my head down on the desk and bury my face in my stupid clown-sweater arms. My face all hot and spit coming out of my mouth because I can't stop the little animal noises from coming out of me, until there aren't any more tears left in my eyes, and it's just my body shaking like when you have the hiccups, and my whole head hurts like when you drink milk too fast.

But the worst part is right before the bell rings for lunch. That stupid Phyllis Lopez, who is even dumber than Sylvia Saldívar, says she remembers the red sweater is hers! I take it off right away and give it to her, only Mrs. Price pretends like everything's okay.

Today I'm eleven. There's a cake Mama's making for tonight, and when Papa comes home from work we'll eat it. There'll be candles and presents and everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you, Rachel, only it's too late.

I'm eleven today. I'm eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one, but I wish I was one hundred and two. I wish I was anything but eleven, because I want today to be far away already, far away like a runaway balloon, like a tiny *o* in the sky, so tiny-tiny you have to close your eyes to see it.

Mama Ridley had fallen and broken her hip, and she never got out of bed again. She couldn't turn herself over, Grandpa had to do it, and she was in pain much of the time. But Mama told me that Mama Ridley loved her great-grandchildren. Whenever we got dressed up to go out, she'd say, "Let the children come in here before you go, so I can see what they got on." But nothing of her voice comes back to me. I can only see her lying there.

I was eight years old when Mama Ridley died. I wish so much that I had known her better. Hearing Mama and Grandma talk about her makes me know how much I missed.

## *World War II*

In the beginning, I thought war was exciting. At twelve, I hadn't been paying much attention to all the news on the radio and in the movie newsreels about the fighting in

Europe, Africa, and Asia. Then, all of a sudden, the United States was at war with Japan. President Franklin D. Roosevelt came on the radio to say so. Mama and Daddy had known war before, and they were worried, but I wasn't.

The war changed our lives in a lot of ways. At school, they changed the way we saluted the flag so that it wouldn't look even slightly like the Nazi salute to Hitler, Germany's dictator. We sold savings stamps for ten cents apiece, or bought them and pasted them in little books, lending money to the government to help buy guns and ships and bullets. We learned new patriotic songs that we sang at all the assemblies. One song was written especially for black children to sing. We sang, "We Are Americans, Too."

At home, we watched the young men being drafted into the army. In a few weeks they'd come home on leave, looking older in their khaki uniforms than their friends who had been left behind and were still wearing pegged

pants, ankle-tight at the bottom and baggy at the knee. Mothers were getting the jobs that had been held by men who were now soldiers, and their children had their own door keys dangling on chains around their necks.

We had air-raid drills, practicing for the time when an enemy plane might fly across the city looking for a place to drop its bombs. The sirens would blow and the air-raid wardens would come outside and patrol the streets, wearing hard white hats and armbands, and making sure that everybody else went inside and closed their heavy blackout window curtains if they had them, or turned off every single light. People sat talking in the dark, waiting for the all-clear sirens to sound.

Some things were rationed, which meant we couldn't buy them unless we had a special ticket to go with the money. Meat, sugar, butter, shoes, gas. Every few months the government gave out ration tickets, and when they were used up, we had to do without things until we got the next supply of tickets. Some summers



we couldn't get enough gas to take our vacation, but I didn't mind. It was for the soldiers and sailors and marines, so that they could have what they needed to fight the war.

War was exciting. Uniforms and blackouts and singing and sacrifice. There was always something going on. Something to talk about, something to think about, something to do.

And then, some of our Langston neighbors had to go to jail. They had joined a new group that we called "The Muslims." The men wore suits and ties every day, and the women wore long dresses and matching turban-style head wraps. We heard that they had meetings where they talked about a ship that was coming to take black people to freedom. When some of the men received orders to report to the army, they refused to go. They wouldn't go to the army. They had to go to jail.

And then, one night a woman received a telegram and screamed, screamed into the night and into my fading

excitement. Her husband had been killed in the war.

War became real for me that night. I knew, then, what my parents had known all along.

### *High School*

A few weeks before graduation from Browne Junior High School, all the graduates were given a sheet of paper to fill out. Written on that sheet of paper was the question we had been waiting three years for—what high school will you attend?

For days afterward, that was all we talked about. It meant we were really growing up. Leaving ninth grade, going on to high school. We went around asking each other, "What school did you pick, what school did you pick?" Finding out which of our friends would be going with us, and which we had to say good-bye to, as if we



## **FIVE STEPS IN READING LIKE A WRITER**

1. Notice
2. Talk about it and make a theory
3. Give the craft/technique a name
4. Think of other authors you know who do this too
5. Try to envision using this craft/technique in your own writing

## THE MARBLE CHAMP

Lupe Medrano, a shy girl who spoke in whispers, was the school's spelling bee champion, winner of the reading contest at the public library three summers in a row, blue ribbon awardee in the science fair, the top student at her piano recital, and the playground grand champion in chess. She was a straight-A student and—not counting kindergarten, when she had been stung by a wasp—never missed one day of elementary school. She had received a small trophy for this honor and had been congratulated by the mayor.

But though Lupe had a razor-sharp mind, she could not make her body, no matter how much she tried, run as fast as the other girls'. She begged her body to move faster, but could never beat anyone in the fifty-yard dash.

The truth was that Lupe was no good in sports. She could not catch a pop-up or figure out in which direction to kick the soccer ball. One time she kicked the ball at her own goal and scored a point for the other team. She was no good at baseball or basketball either, and even had a hard time making a hula hoop stay on her hips.

It wasn't until last year, when she was eleven years old, that she learned how to ride a bike. And even then she had to use training wheels. She could walk in the swimming pool but couldn't swim, and chanced roller skating only when her father held her hand.

"I'll never be good at sports," she fumed one rainy day as she lay on her bed gazing at the shelf her father had made to hold her awards. "I wish I could win something, anything, even marbles."

At the word "marbles," she sat up. "That's it. Maybe I could be good at playing marbles." She hopped out of bed and rummaged through the closet until she found a can full of her brother's marbles. She poured the rich glass treasure on her bed and picked five of the most beautiful marbles.

She smoothed her bedspread and practiced shooting, softly at first so that her aim would be accurate. The marble rolled from her thumb and clicked against the targeted marble. But the target wouldn't budge. She tried again and again. Her aim became accurate, but the power from her thumb made the marble move only an inch or two. Then she realized that the bedspread was slowing the marbles. She also had to admit that her thumb was weaker than the neck of a newborn chick.

She looked out the window. The rain was letting up, but the ground was too muddy to play. She sat cross-legged



on the bed, rolling her five marbles between her palms. Yes, she thought, I could play marbles, and marbles is a sport. At that moment she realized that she had only two weeks to practice. The playground championship, the same one her brother had entered the previous year, was coming up. She had a lot to do.

To strengthen her wrists, she decided to do twenty push-ups on her fingertips, five at a time. "One, two, three . . ." she groaned. By the end of the first set she was breathing hard, and her muscles burned from exhaustion. She did one more set and decided that was enough push-ups for the first day.

She squeezed a rubber eraser one hundred times, hoping it would strengthen her thumb. This seemed to work because the next day her thumb was sore. She could hardly hold a marble in her hand, let alone send it flying with power. So Lupe rested that day and listened to her brother, who gave her tips on how to shoot: get low, aim with one eye, and place one knuckle on the ground.

"Think 'eye and thumb'—and let it rip!" he said.

After school the next day she left her homework in her backpack and practiced three hours straight, taking time only to eat a candy bar for energy. With a popsicle stick, she drew an odd-shaped circle and tossed in four marbles. She used her shooter, a milky agate with hypnotic swirls, to blast them. Her thumb *had* become stronger.

After practice, she squeezed the eraser for an hour. She ate dinner with her left hand to spare her shooting hand and said nothing to her parents about her dreams of athletic glory.

Practice, practice, practice. Squeeze, squeeze, squeeze.

Lupe got better and beat her brother and Alfonso, a neighbor kid who was supposed to be a champ.

"Man, she's bad!" Alfonso said. "She can beat the other girls for sure. I think."

The weeks passed quickly. Lupe worked so hard that one day, while she was drying dishes, her mother asked why her thumb was swollen.

"It's muscle," Lupe explained. "I've been practicing for the marbles championship."

"You, honey?" Her mother knew Lupe was no good at sports.

"Yeah. I beat Alfonso, and he's pretty good."

That night, over dinner, Mrs. Medrano said, "Honey, you should see Lupe's thumb."

"Huh?" Mr. Medrano said, wiping his mouth and looking at his daughter.

"Show your father."

"Do I have to?" an embarrassed Lupe asked.

"Go on, show your father."

Reluctantly, Lupe raised her hand and flexed her thumb. You could see the muscle.

The father put down his fork and asked, "What happened?"

"Dad, I've been working out. I've been squeezing an eraser."

"Why?"

"I'm going to enter the marbles championship."

Her father looked at her mother and then back at his daughter. "When is it, honey?"

"This Saturday. Can you come?"

The father had been planning to play racquetball with



a friend Saturday, but he said he would be there. He knew his daughter thought she was no good at sports and he wanted to encourage her. He even rigged some lights in the backyard so she could practice after dark. He squatted with one knee on the ground, entranced by the sight of his daughter easily beating her brother.

The day of the championship began with a cold blustery sky. The sun was a silvery light behind slate clouds.

"I hope it clears up," her father said, rubbing his hands together as he returned from getting the newspaper. They ate breakfast, paced nervously around the house waiting for 10:00 to arrive, and walked the two blocks to the playground (though Mr. Medrano wanted to drive so Lupe wouldn't get tired). She signed up and was assigned her first match on baseball diamond number three.

Lupe, walking between her brother and her father, shook from the cold, not nerves. She took off her mittens, and everyone stared at her thumb. Someone asked, "How can you play with a broken thumb?" Lupe smiled and said nothing.

She beat her first opponent easily, and felt sorry for the girl because she didn't have anyone to cheer for her. Except for her sack of marbles, she was all alone. Lupe invited the girl, whose name was Rachel, to stay with them. She smiled and said, "OK." The four of them walked to a card table in the middle of the outfield, where Lupe was assigned another opponent.

She also beat this girl, a fifth-grader named Yolanda, and asked her to join their group. They proceeded to more matches and more wins, and soon there was a crowd of people following Lupe to the finals to play a girl in a base-

ball cap. This girl seemed dead serious. She never even looked at Lupe.

"I don't know, Dad, she looks tough."

Rachel hugged Lupe and said, "Go get her."

"You can do it," her father encouraged. "Just think of the marbles, not the girl, and let your thumb do the work."

The other girl broke first and earned one marble. She missed her next shot, and Lupe, one eye closed, her thumb quivering with energy, blasted two marbles out of the circle but missed her next shot. Her opponent earned two more before missing. She stamped her foot and said "Shoot!" The score was three to two in favor of Miss Baseball Cap.

The referee stopped the game. "Back up, please, give them room," he shouted. Onlookers had gathered too tightly around the players.

Lupe then earned three marbles and was set to get her fourth when a gust of wind blew dust in her eyes and she missed badly. Her opponent quickly scored two marbles, tying the game, and moved ahead six to five on a lucky shot. Then she missed, and Lupe, whose eyes felt scratchy when she blinked, relied on instinct and thumb muscle to score the tying point. It was now six to six, with only three marbles left. Lupe blew her nose and studied the angles. She dropped to one knee, steadied her hand, and shot so hard she cracked two marbles from the circle. She was the winner!

"I did it!" Lupe said under her breath. She rose from her knees, which hurt from bending all day, and hugged her father. He hugged her back and smiled.

Everyone clapped, except Miss Baseball Cap, who made a face and stared at the ground. Lupe told her she was

a great player, and they shook hands. A newspaper photographer took pictures of the two girls standing shoulder-to-shoulder, with Lupe holding the bigger trophy.

Lupe then played the winner of the boys' division, and after a poor start beat him eleven to four. She blasted the marbles, shattering one into sparkling slivers of glass. Her opponent looked on glumly as Lupe did what she did best—win!

The head referee and the President of the Fresno Marble Association stood with Lupe as she displayed her trophies for the newspaper photographer. Lupe shook hands with everyone, including a dog who had come over to see what the commotion was all about.

That night, the family went out for pizza and set the two trophies on the table for everyone in the restaurant to see. People came up to congratulate Lupe, and she felt a little embarrassed, but her father said the trophies belonged there.

Back home, in the privacy of her bedroom, she placed the trophies on her shelf and was happy. She had always earned honors because of her brains, but winning in sports was a new experience. She thanked her tired thumb. "You did it, thumb. You made me champion." As its reward, Lupe went to the bathroom, filled the bathroom sink with warm water, and let her thumb swim and splash as it pleased. Then she climbed into bed and drifted into a hard-won sleep.

## GROWING UP

Now that Maria was a tenth-grader, she felt she was too grown-up to have to go on family vacations. Last year, the family had driven three hundred miles to see their uncle in West Covina. There was nothing to do. The days were hot, with a yellow sky thick with smog they could feel on their fingertips. They played cards and watched game shows on television. After the first four days of doing nothing while the grown-ups sat around talking, the kids finally got to go to Disneyland.

Disneyland stood tall with castles and bright flags. The Matterhorn had wild dips and curves that took your breath away if you closed your eyes and screamed. The Pirates of the Caribbean didn't scare anyone but was fun anyway, and



# Drafting

Up to this point in the unit of study students have been doing all of their writing inside their writer's notebooks. Drafting is the first step of the writing process when your student writers will be writing outside of their notebooks. All of the work you have been doing in your notebooks to this point was intended to support writers in thinking about what they will make outside of their notebooks. It has been more of an unconscious type of writing where writers are fast writing and just getting their thoughts onto the page. Drafting is a much more intentional writing where the writer has some plan about what they want to say in their writing. Students must know that the draft is really a starting point for what they make as a published piece of writing. When drafting, writers should remember that they will have a lot of opportunities to go back and revise their work after the draft is written. Writers should not be expecting this to be the last of the writing work they will do.

It is a difficult concept for teachers to convey and beginning writers to understand that the draft is something different from what they have been doing in their notebooks. One way to do this is to help students focus on how to begin the draft, setting the stage for the idea that we are transitioning to *deciding* how to assemble our texts, rather than allowing them to emerge organically or "accidentally." Another option might be to have your students think about a plan for their story by creating a story board. This helps them to think about how the story might go. Included in the resources on this page are two lesson plan ideas that show how the drafting day might go.

The example below shows two copies of a student's piece of writing about Florida. The top portion of the page is her first draft. Notice how this writer takes one interesting line from her first draft and creates a second piece of writing around that line. She begins by writing facts about Florida, by the end of her first revision she has transformed her piece into a sensorial experience of a Florida beach through her writing.

Florida

8-28-12

Florida is a very hot, humid place and is a great place to get a tan. In Florida they invest their money on tourist attractions, because most people come there for their beaches. I personally like it ~~because~~ because of my experience I had. This is what I wrote: "I loved visiting Florida. When I first got there I could hear screaming with joyful delight, the warm breeze flowing through the air and the palm trees flowing side to side like the wind, I smelled my sun tan lotion filling up my nose while

Ataly Jimenez Memior 8-29-12

~~When~~ When my toes touched the warm, tan-<sup>crystallized</sup> sand, I felt it sinking under my toes, I felt the warm, cool breeze flowing through my silk brown hair while the palm trees move side to side like ~~the waves~~ the waves. I smelled my sun tan lotion filling up my nose, while I sensed the burning hot sun, hit my cool skin. The smell isn't enough to to the way the feeling I had. The Celeste type water reach my toes, feeling it's warm silk water. I slowly stepped in the water so I could feel the sensation when I steps into it, when it finally reached my hips, I slowly sunk down untill my hair was up to the surface, At that moment, I was in my world, no one could disturb me, only I could concentrate, I felt the wave hits th crystal sand. I will never forget the feeling I ~~had~~ had in Florida

## Indiana Partnership for Young Writers: Writerly Life (07: Drafting)

Try it:

Look back through your notebook entries and begin to think about your first draft. Decide what it is you will be writing: a poem, a memoir, a personal essay before you begin to write your first draft. After deciding what you will be making you are ready to make a draft!

# Draft Paper

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

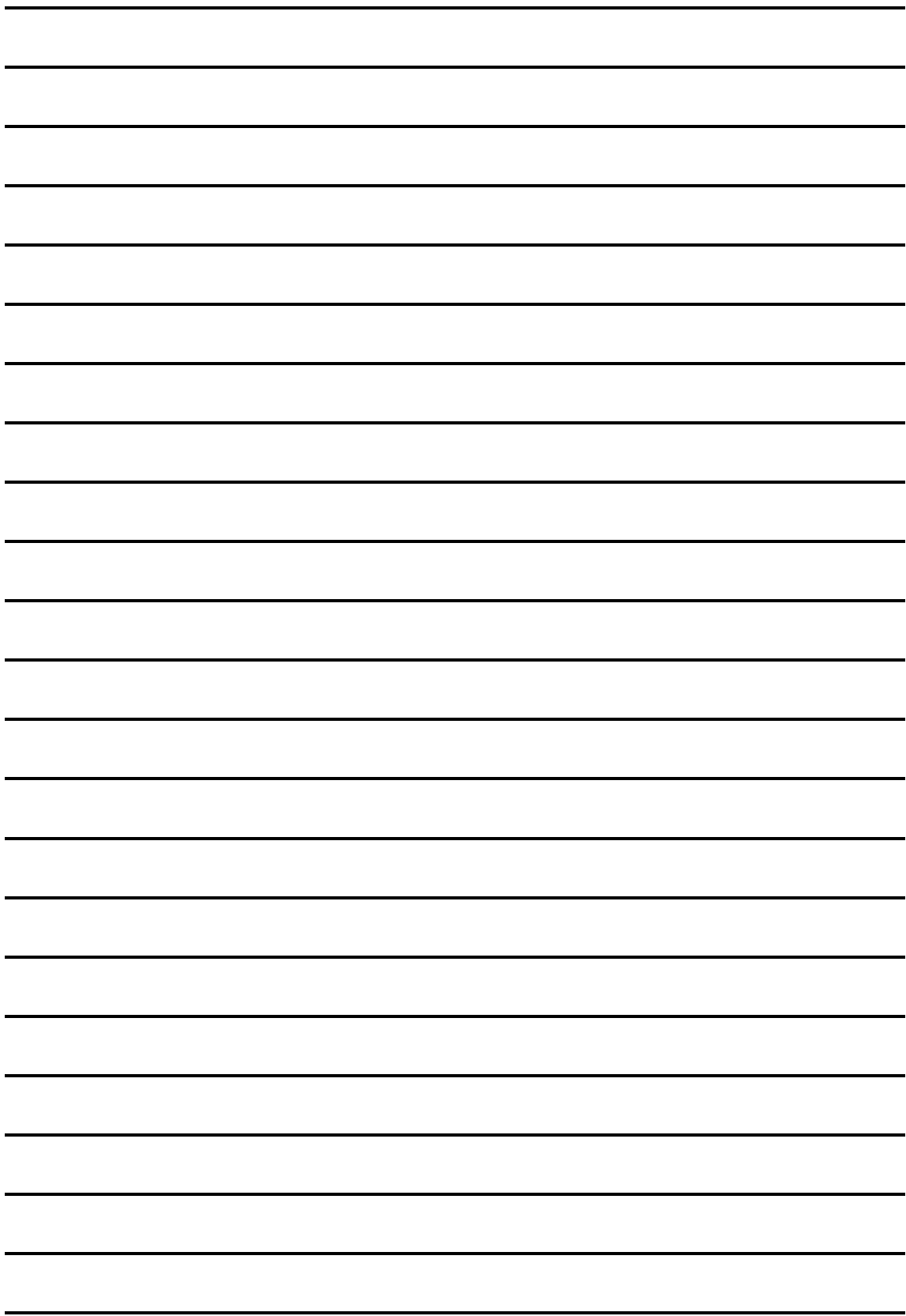
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Seed Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Genre: \_\_\_\_\_

Working Title: \_\_\_\_\_

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.







Unit of Study Writerly Life Day/Date Drafting Day

Focus: (What one thing will you teach and why?):

Authors pay special attention to how they start their stories because they want to hook us and make us keep reading.

Connection (What will you say to the students about why you are teaching this?):

We've been doing a lot of thinking in our notebooks, because many writers think about their ideas for a long time before they actually write a story. But I think we're ready now to try creating a draft. One thing we can do as we move from notebook entries to a draft on clean paper is to pay special attention to the beginning of our story, because we want to hook our readers at the beginning and make them want more!

Give Info: (How will you teach this? What exactly do you want to say?)

We've now read three stories together-*Eleven*, *The Marble Champ* and *Slower Than the Rest*- and I noticed that they started in three very different ways. *Slower Than the Rest* started right in the middle of the action (Leo spotting a turtle in the road). *The Marble Champ* started with sort of a close-up on one character (Lupe) and *Eleven* starts with a reflection on what it's like to be 11 years old.

I'm going to think about my story-getting asked about my brother in the hair salon. I could start it in the middle of the action, my sister and me in the salon, having fun, talking to our stylists. Or I could start with a close-up on one character, maybe the hair stylist since she's the one that asked me the tough question. Or I could start with a reflection on the fact that I hadn't thought about how I'd answer that sort of everyday question until someone asked me. Hmm...I feel like the action or reflection is the way to go for my story. I'm going to try action. [Demo first few lines of draft].

Active Involvement: (How will students "try-it" before they go off to work independently?)

Think about your story. Does it feel like it should start in the action, with a close up of one character or with some reflection? Turn to a writer near you and help each other work that out. Talk about how you'll start your stories.

Link: (What is the relationship between what you taught and what you expect them to do during workshop time?) Now that you've decided how to start your story, I want you to go back to your seats and write the whole story on draft paper. You need to look back at your notebook entries to remind yourself of some of the smart thinking you've already done (like the things you could hear/see/smell/taste/touch at the climax). But you aren't going to copy exactly what's in your notebook, because when you wrote it in there you were just making notes, not writing a real story yet.

Share: (How will students share the work they did w/ each other to further develop TP?)

Make 3 people famous. Invite a student who used each type of opening to tell why he/she

# Revision

Published authors, names students will recognize like Louis Sachar and Eloise Greenfield, have said they revise their drafts five, six or even 15, 16 times! Author Michale Crichton (Jurassic Park) once said, "Books aren't written, They're rewritten. It is one of the hardest things to accept, especially after the seventh rewrite hasn't quite done it." So, working like professional authors, we devote much of a unit of study to revision. When we talk about revision in a writer's workshop, we are really talking about how a writer can "re-see" his piece of writing. During the revision phase of the writing process writers would be thinking about what they want their piece of writing to say. They would be considering how they might move, add and delete sentences to get at the heart of their writing. This is the messy part of the writing process where students might actually cut their writing apart to create space for additional lines or tape paper over a part of their writing that doesn't work for them anymore. Writers will actually spend time on revision over days, thinking about how to get their piece of writing to say exactly what they intended for it to say.

In the picture below you can see how one writer deleted many pages of her memoir when revising. This picture can help demonstrate to students just how much a revised draft might change.

## Memoir-in-progress



How many pages I wrote for the first draft.



How many pages I kept for next draft.



Unit of Study: Writerly Life Day/Date: Revision

Focus (What one thing will you teach and why?):

Writers can “crack open” their sentences to change the tone of their writing and make it come alive for readers.

Connection (What will you say to the students about why you are teaching this?):

We have been working on drafting a piece of writing. Today I am going to show you how you can go back into your draft and look for places where your writing has been vague and “crack them open” to make them more descriptive and engaging to read.

Give Info: (How will you teach this? What exactly do you want to say?)

Think about some words and sentences that are overused, tired or worn out. Think about words that have no images, are vague or abstract, used too much that they have lost their meaning, obvious, clichés or words that we use too frequently as writers. (Some examples you might use include; It was a nice day. I had a lot of fun. The flowers were colorful. Snow is nice. She is a wonderful person.)

Model for students how I might crack open one of these sentences by imagining it and describing what I have imagined in words.

Active Involvement: (How will students “try-it” before they go off to work independently?)

(After making a list of worn out words and sentences...) Now chose one of these sentences to “crack open”.

Close your eyes and resee, for example, what is nice about snow. Imagine the nice things about snow that you may have experienced and include all of your senses as you imagine. Now describe what you see in you mind using words and write it down.

Link: (What is the relationship between what you taught and what you expect them to do during workshop time?) Now go back to your seats and look through your draft and reread it. See if there are places in your draft where you can “crack open” your writing just as we did in this mini-lesson.

Share: (How will students share the work they did w/ each other to further develop TP?)

Have a couple students share places where they cracked open their writing. Share both versions of the exerpt, before and after revising.

## RE-VISIONING

There are at least two important things to consider when making decisions about your revisions:

- keep in mind the intentions of your piece (What do you want a reader to know by reading it) and,
- read your piece with all your senses “on” (listening, seeing, smelling, hearing, feeling, remembering).

Ask and answer questions, such as: *how can I make this piece better? Is this piece really clear?*

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## STRATEGIES FOR REVISION

- Add to your piece. Look closely at the beginning, middle, and end. Did you leave anything out? Find the heart of your piece and zoom in on it. Make a sketch and then add what's important in your sketch to your writing
- Try starting your piece in a different place, Move parts around.
- Look closely at the **beginning**. Try a different beginning (begin with dialogue, a quote, in the middle of the action, with the setting, by describing setting, etc.)
- Think about the **ending**. Ask yourself, “What is it I want the reader to remember about this piece?” *and* “how can I craft my words to make that happen?”
- Re-read your draft and think about who is telling the story. Is it a character? Is it you? Where are you? How much do you know? Where are you standing?
- Be very careful about the control of time. Stretch out some moments that are important and shrink others.
- Add dialogue and/or dialect to let reader know more about you or the characters.
- Add the inside (internal) stuff. Make sure there are places where readers can see what you are thinking, feeling.
- Look at the genre “examples” and use one to mentor your own writing.
- Turn your piece into a new genre
- Turn a single sentence into an entire page
- Break open some verbs by *showing* not just *telling*
- Zoom-in on the “hot-spots.” Stretch this moment out by adding lots of details (dialogue, action, inner feelings/thoughts, description of place/setting, etc.)
- Find places in your writing where you've used adjectives. Replace these with an action or image that does the work of this adjective to ‘show’ instead of ‘tell’
- Do a detail audit. Check to see that the details you have included ‘matter’ to your piece. Take out all the details that have no significance to your piece
- Ask yourself, “What do I want the reader to feel? What emotions do I want them to have?” Then, look for places where you can craft words that help to make that happen
- Think about the effect of first-, second- or third-person writing. Try writing in different ‘person’ to change the reader’s experience.

## Repositioning Revision

- something that is done throughout the process of writing, not just when you're done
- not punishment but rather an integral, natural part of the process writers experience
- may focus on meaning, content, structure, or style
- it does not include the surface changes (editing) that occur at the end of the process just before a piece is published

## Making Revision a Regular Part of the Writing Workshop

1. Highlight "process shares"
2. Share quotes from professional writers about their experiences revising
3. Encourage students to develop and articulate a writing identity and sense of how they work best as a writer
4. Teach strategic mini-lessons that offer revision strategies for writers

The Red Wheelbarrow By William Carlos Williams	Love that Dog By Jack (Sharon Creech)	WNB entry	<i>Try it</i>
<i>So much depends upon</i>  <i>a red wheel barrow</i>  <i>glazed with rain water</i>  <i>beside the white chickens.</i>	<i>So much depends upon</i> <i>a blue car splattered with mud speeding down the road</i>	A baby.  A vanilla diet coke, two lemonades, and a baby.  What is it with drive thrus?	<i>So much depends upon that little babe blessed with life anticipating life</i>

5. Expose students to a variety of good literature
6. Teach craft lessons
7. Invite kids to revise self-selected pieces
8. Teach students to self-evaluate their own writing
9. Encourage confidence and independence as writers
10. Teach mini-lessons on the acts of decision making

## WORDS

### Lessons you might imagine teaching:

- Worn-out words—What do they really mean?

It was a nice day =

The sun came up behind the cabin and peered into my bedroom window. Waking with the sunlight, I walked down to the shore with coffee in hand. Dangling my feet alongside the edge of the dock, that cold water lapping against my feet moved me farther away from the deep cold cabin slumber and closer to the beauty of the coming day.

- Collecting Words
  - Words you like the sound of
  - Words you don't know the meaning of but want to find out
  - Words that look interesting
  - Strong image
  - Evoke a memory
  - Personal meaning
- Personal Thesaurus
- Extra Words
- Specificity of Words
  - VERBS (engines)
    - The boat \_\_\_\_\_ in the water.  
Glides, skims, sails, floats, slides, runs, treads, sinks
  - NOUNS (wheels)
    - The \_\_\_\_\_  
flower, sunflower, black-eyed Susan, weed-like plant
- Two-column writing
- Asking questions, adding details

every poetic

## STRUCTURE

### Lessons you might imagine teaching:

- ✧ Leads
  - question/statement



- action
- surprise
- statement
- image
- dialogue

“Pittsburgh was darkness. The taste of smoke in one’s throat and heavy smog and dark soot. That was Pittsburgh.” C. Rylant *I Had Seen Castles*

“Look at that strange boy!” C. Myers *Wings*

I don’t want to  
because boys  
don’t write poetry. S. Creech *Love that Dog*

“We are going home, Carlos,” Mama says, hugging me. E. Bunting *Going Home*

✧ Flashback

- Present day-past-present day

✧ Play with time

- BIG SWEEPS

“As time went on, and the months and years came and went, he was never without friends.” P. 183 of Charlotte’s Web

- SLOW MOTION

He pushed his chair back. It made a hollow scraping sound on the hearthstones and the dogs stirred. Lottie, small and black, wagged her tail and lifted her head. Nick slept on.

I turned the bread dough over and over on the marble slab on the kitchen table.

“Well, Papa doesn’t sing anymore.” Said Caleb very softly.

P. MacLaughlin *Sarah Plain and Tall*

✧ Zooming In

✧ Creating Scenes

My Mimi love her radio shows. =

At 85, she moved into a room at the nursing home, just down the hall from her apartment. She took her toothbrush, her Kleenex, and robe. My mom later brought pictures. But when I came she asked for her Radio. Her Bose radio that she had picked out herself just a few years before. I sat quietly in her room for no more than five minutes, and then the sounds of WCAL filled the room with the afternoon concert—Bach. She sat back in her chair as we left, older, more frail, but her intent listening to the music carried by the radio waves was a familiar image.

- ✧ Genre Groups
- ✧ Prose to Poetry
- ✧ Rearranging
- ✧ Endings
  - Circular
  - Emotional
  - Surprise

## VOICE

- ✧ 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Person
- ✧ Writing with you as object.
- ✧ Put yourself in it
- ✧ Internal Monologue
- ✧ Dialogue
- ✧ Non-Fiction
- ✧ Characters

## REREADING

“One mechanical aid to achieving a critical eye is to read out loud and I do. Hearing what I’ve written gives me a fresh way of seeing what I’ve written” *E. L. Konigsburg*

- Reread with different lenses
  - Clarity
  - Truth
  - Best Writing
  - Sound of language
  - Focus



## **CONFERENCES--Revision**

- Identify a part to revise
- Adding details or images
- Revising lead/ending
- Cracking open a word, a sentence
- Play with time
- Expand a sentence to a page
- Change a point of view
- Give a revision challenge

## **REVISION CENTERS**

“Now I see *revision* as beautiful word of hope. It’s a vision of something. It means you don’t have to be perfect the first time. What a relief!”

Naomi Shihab Nye

# Editing

Editing and revising are not the same activity, nor do we do them at the same time. As you've seen, revision is big work. It often entails making our texts messier, in a sense. On the contrary, editing is about cleaning things up, putting on the finishing touches to make work ready for readers. This might include, then, proofreading to be sure that our punctuation, spelling, verb tenses or other grammatical conventions help readers understand what we want them to know. Note this doesn't necessarily mean the work is "perfect." In fact, it is important for the teacher to keep in mind that he or she should only hold students accountable for what has been taught. It would be unfair and unrealistic for the teacher to expect students to have correct noun/verb agreement in their writing, for example, if teachers haven't talked to the students about this previously.



## Story Editing Checklist

Name \_\_\_\_\_

The title of my piece is: \_\_\_\_\_

	Personal check	Partner check	Teacher check
<b>Capitalization</b>			
<b>Punctuation</b> (periods, commas, exclamation points, question marks, etc.)			
<b>Spelling</b> (I have tried to use a dictionary, a book, a computer, asked myself "what looks right?")			
<b>Sentences are complete</b>			
<b>Correct paragraphing</b> (indented, only one topic sentence, supporting details)			
<b>Story tense is consistent</b> (doesn't switch between present and past tense)			
<b>Story has only ONE focus</b>			

I have edited this story to the best of my ability.

Author's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Partner's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that the editing checklist your students use will only include items that you have taught them. Students should not be held accountable for all aspects of mechanics and grammar, and this checklist should be used only as an example of something you might use.

# Publication/Celebration

As Katherine Bomer states, "For most writers, the reason to write is to have an image of someone at the other end reading your words and ideas." Publication is the part of the writing process that gives the writer a purpose. It's about making student writing public, as a way to motivate them and build excitement to write again. Often students can learn as much or more from publishing their writing than they do in any other part of the writing process. The idea should be that students are sharing their writing work with others, beyond the teacher. There are many ways to celebrate student writing and make it public. Look at the resources below to consider some possibilities for making your students writing public at the end of this, and any, unit of study.

The clip below is an example of one student publishing her poem by reading it publicly at an event.

Publication: Moi by Mary Nell Kirchner  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sp37xKUQ8aQ>

# Assessment

Assessing writers in the Writerly Life unit of study should focus on the process of writing rather than the final product. Teachers will be assessing students on an ongoing basis through writing conferences, and should be paying attention to how they are navigating the writing process. Is the student able to work on one idea over many days? Is there evidence of the student nurturing a seed idea with several notebook entries about one topic? Does the student's writing show evidence of attempts at revision? One very important thing to pay attention to in the early days of launching writer's workshop is the students' use of their writing notebooks. Included below are several resources to support teachers in assessing student writing notebooks. These resources should be used as examples of how teachers might assess students, but must be adapted for each classroom and teachers' expectations.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Writerly Life Rubric

Key Elements	4	3	2	1
<b>Editing</b>	Consistently edits writing for punctuation and spelling errors.	Usually edits writing for punctuation and spelling errors.	Sometimes edits writing for punctuation and spelling errors.	Rarely or never edits writing for punctuation and spelling errors.
<b>Audience</b>	Consistently maintains clarity throughout writing.  Consistently keeps the Reader in mind.	Usually maintains clarity throughout writing.  Usually keeps the Reader in mind.	Sometimes maintains clarity throughout writing.  Sometimes keeps the Reader in mind.	Rarely or never maintains clarity throughout writing.  Rarely or never keeps the Reader in mind.
<b>Sense of Story</b>	Consistently demonstrates a story. Writing contains all components of a story (characters, setting, plot, and movement through time).	Usually demonstrates a story. Writing contains most components of a story (characters, setting, plot, and movement through time).	Sometimes demonstrates a story. Writing contains some components of a story (characters, setting, plot, and movement through time).	Rarely or never demonstrates a story. Writing does not contain components of a story (characters, setting, plot, and movement through time).
<b>Revision</b>	Consistently shows proof of revision.	Usually shows proof of revision.	Sometimes shows proof of revision.	Rarely or never shows proof of revision.
<b>Stamina</b>	Consistently demonstrates stamina in his or her writing. He or she is consistently able to generate a lot of writing while maintaining a focus and staying on topic.	Usually demonstrates stamina in his or her writing. He or she is usually able to generate a lot of writing while maintaining a focus and staying on topic.	Sometimes demonstrates stamina in his or her writing. He or she is sometimes able to generate a lot of writing while maintaining a focus and staying on topic.	Rarely or never demonstrates stamina in his or her writing. He or she is not able to generate a lot of writing while maintaining a focus and staying on topic.

Total Points \_\_\_\_\_/20Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Notebook Expectations**

### ***Guidelines for Assessing the Notebook***

**Volume:** Some entries are more than one page long. One week of writing, during a writing unit of study, takes up *8 or more* notebook pages. During reading unit of study one week of notebook writing takes up 3 or more notebook pages. A notebook will be a mixture of lengths. This part of the notebook rubric looks at the lengths of the entries in relation to their completeness. Are most entries finished, or are most entries a few sentences long, leaving thoughts unwritten? That is, does the writer stop abruptly at the end of the page or is she or he willing to continue the entry to another page and a good stopping place?

**Variety:** Writers write many kinds of entries about different topics and they write in different ways. A notebook should be a mixture of ideas and styles. Does the writer practice strategies from class? Does the writer write about a variety of topics or are the entries only about one thing the same way (rote pattern)? Writers have a variety of types of writing in their notebook. Entries reflect the writer's life. Some are serious, some are playful, some are observant, some are happy, some are sad, etc. Writers have a few topics that they write about often, "life topics" and writers write many kinds of entries about these topics.

**Thoughtfulness:** Students are told that any entry that reads like a grocery list is not thoughtful "bed-to-bed entry." The reader hears the writer's voice when reading student notebooks. Entries do not feel like the writer when she or he writes them just "to get them over with." Many entries feel like the writer was thinking his or her way through an idea, like he or she realized something new that he or she never realized before. Writers discovered something, or wondered about something. Each new entry, about the few topics that writers write about often shows new thinking. There is evidence of the writer having read and re-read his or her notebook and gone back to add or to say more or to question entries.

**Frequency:** The teacher will track how many days between assessments and expect one entry for each day of writer's workshop-even though students may write more than one entry-and a minimum of three home entries a week. The entries must be dated and the ones written at home must be identified with an asterisk or an "H" written by the date.

**Maintenance:** Your notebook is *neat* enough to be able to re-read entries easily. Though spelling and punctuation aren't perfect, neither prevents you from making sense of the text. There is evidence of repair when needed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Writer's Notebook Rubric**

	<b>4=98% Exceeding Expectations</b>	<b>3=85% Meeting Expectations</b>	<b>2=75% Approaching Expectations</b>	<b>1=65% Below Expectations</b>
<b>Volume/Variety</b>	Most entries are a page long. Writers use a variety of topics and strategies	Many entries are ½ to 1 page long. Writer used many strategies from class and some topic variety.	Entries are about ½ a page long. Topics are sometimes similar.	Entries are very brief. Little or no variety in topics.
<b>Thoughtfulness</b>	Most entries are thoughtful and a reflective, revealing new insight to writer's thinking. Extensive evidence of mini-lessons. Writer extensively uses descriptive, specific & sophisticated words. Most entries show the writer practicing proper use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	Many entries tend to be thoughtful. They reveal new insights to writer's thinking. Often evidence of mini-lessons. Writer uses some descriptive & specific words. Many entries reflect the writer practicing proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	Entries resemble a list or a diary. Little or no deeper thinking is evident. Some evidence of mini-lessons. Writer uses basic vocabulary with few descriptive words. Little or no evidence that the writer practices proper grammar, spelling, punctuation.	Entries resemble a list or a diary. Writer does not demonstrate deeper thinking. Almost no evidence of mini-lessons. Writer uses basic vocabulary. There is no evidence the writer practices proper grammar, spelling, punctuation.
<b>Frequency</b>	98% of required entries (H or * for home)	85% of required entries (H or * for home)	75% of required entries (H or * for home)	65% of required entries (H or * for home)
<b>Maintenance</b>	Entries are dated (H or * for home) & no skipped pages. Most entries are neat making them easy to re-read. Notebook looks like the writer treasures writing.	Entries are dated (H or * for home) & no skipped pages. Many entries are neat making them easy to re-read. Notebook is well cared for.	Some entries dated (H or * for home) and/or many skipped pages. Some of the entries are neat with many entries often difficult to re-read. Notebook in unkempt.	Few or no dated entries (H or * for home) and /or most/all skipped pages. Entries are not neat or nonexistent making them very difficult to re-read.



## *The Writer's Notebook*

Dear Writers:

The writer's notebook will be an essential tool for you as a writer. Use your notebook as a place to gather writing that inspires you. Use your notebook as a container to hold all the beautiful writing you collect. It gives you a place to write every day...to practice living like a writer. It gives you a place to record *bits of life* that may inspire a piece of writing.

Think of your writer's notebook as a *life net*. It is a place to collect observations, thoughts, reactions, ideas, and experiences in your life. Your writer's notebook will help you take some of your ideas and craft them into polished pieces of writing.

You are expected to write in your writer's notebook **every day** in school *during a writing unit* and **three nights** a week at home. And *During a reading unit*, you are expected to keep writing in your notebook, at home, at least **three** times a week. Keep it with you at all times so that you have it when you want to write in it.

- All entries must be dated
- Entries written at home should have an *H* written next to the date or an asterisk
- Do NOT skip pages
- Notebooks will be grade according to the attached rubric

**Some Strategies for Notebook Writing:** memories, observations, reflections, lists, rambling thoughts, writing off a sketches, writing off artifacts, unforgettable stories, fierce wonderings, jot small details you notice or hear about, capture mind "photographs" using your five senses of the world around you, dreams, snatches of talk, writing about a name, writing from a "word," and writing from "lifting a line."

***INVENT YOUR OWN ENTRY***