

## How to Help Your Child at Home

- Be a good model of writing. Let your child see you write and talk with him about how you use writing in your life.
- Provide writing materials for your child—paper with lines and no lines, pencils and pens. Gifts such as shaped tablets, journals, spirals, colored pencils, markers, and erasers are motivating.
- Encourage your child to write books.
- Help your child write letters and e-mails to relatives and friends.
- Provide a journal or diary for your child to record his or her day.
- Help your child brainstorm ideas and organize them.
- Stress the importance of the writing process and not just the final product.
- Do not write for your child.
- Respond to WHAT your child writes rather than HOW they write it.
- Praise your child's writing. Ignore minor errors.
- Help with spelling as needed, but do not expect your child to spell every word correctly.



## How will my child be assessed?

Writing workshop assessment is ongoing. The teacher will closely monitor your child's writing progress through notes taken during conferencing and small group work. Rubrics will be used to assess your student's writing process, as well as end products for each genre. Participation and the writer's notebook may be assessed as well. 2-3 published pieces will be assessed each trimester.

## References

*Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide* by Ralph Fletcher

*A Guide to the Writing Workshop Grades 3-5* by Lucy Calkins

*The Art of Teaching Writing* by Lucy Calkins

*Notebook Know-How* by Aimee Buckner

**UNIT 5**  
**LITERACY**  
**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

# A Parent's Guide to Writing Workshop



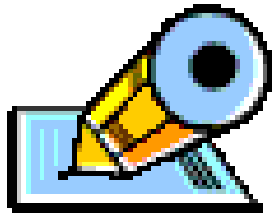
McLean County Unit  
District 5

*Good writing is like a windowpane.*

*- George Orwell*

## What is writing workshop?

Writing workshop is an instruction model that focuses on the strengths and needs of each individual writer. Teachers provide direct instruction on the writing process, craft, genre and mechanics. Students are given time and choice of what to write, and opportunities to share with audiences.



### Writing Workshop

#### Schedule

Mini lesson	10-15 minutes
Work time	20-40 minutes
Sharing	5-10 minutes

## Components of Writing Workshop

**Mini lesson:** The teacher teaches a whole class lesson on writer's craft or conventions based on the needs of the students. Children's literature is read and studied to learn what writer's do.

### Independent work time:

Students :

- write a variety of genres.
- practice in a writer's notebook what they were just taught in the mini lesson.
- brainstorm, draft, revise, edit and publish pieces.

The teacher:

- conferences with students about what they are writing.
- provides instruction to small groups of students.

**Sharing time:** Students share what they wrote and how they applied the day's mini lesson. This may be done as a whole class or in small groups.

## Writing Workshop Vocabulary

- **Genre**-kinds of writing the author is working on i.e. how to, ABC book, biography, etc...
- **Narrative**-to tell a story
- **Expository**-to explain something
- **Persuasive**-to convince another about an idea or opinion
- **Voice**-author's point of view, mood and tone coming out through writing
- **Brainstorm**-to think of or write down every idea around a topic
- **Draft**-the first copies of a piece of writing
- **Revise**-"fancy up" writing by adding details or something new, changing parts that do not make sense, and to try something new
- **Edit**-"fix up" writing by rereading to find errors, checking for correct use of capitals and punctuation, and checking for correct spelling of developmentally appropriate words
- **Publish**-the final copy of a written piece

