



## Tips for Conferencing with Students

Teacher and student are having a conversation about writing where each of the two parties equal.

Lead with a question and purpose. Begin by asking the student what they are working on. This will set the agenda for the rest of the conference.

“How’s it going?”

“What work are you doing as a writer today?”

“What can I help you with today?”

Conferences have a point to them and a predictable structure. They are focused on helping students become better writers.

Part 1: Conversation about the work the child is doing as a writer.

Part 2: Conversation about how the child can become a better writer.

By carefully listening to their words and reading their writing, we gather information about who the students are at this moment in their writing and decide what we will teach them.

In conferences, we pursue lines of thinking with students.

Share mentor texts that are good examples of what the child is working on or struggling with in their writing. In conferences we show students we care about them. By listening, we show we are interested in their topic. By asking questions about their work, we show that we are genuinely curious to learn more about their work.

**Important:** Take notes after the conference to keep track of what the student was working on and the teaching point to guide future conferences and show growth.



## Questions for Conferencing

**The following are questions that may be used in a writing conference :**

- How is your writing going?
- How can I help you with your writing?
- What are you working on in your next piece?
- What did you decide to write about?
- How did you choose this topic?
- I noticed that you.... How/why did you do that?
- What have you learned about your topic that you want to say?
- Tell me more about.....
- Read the part you like best.
- What will you do with this piece when it is finished?
- What do you want to do next in your writing?

**Organization:**

- Read your lead/ending aloud
- What is the best part of your writing so far?
- What is the main idea in this story? How did you develop this story around this idea?

**Ideas:**

- If you wanted to add to your writing, how would you do that?
- Is there a part where more information is needed?
- Is there any part that is confusing?

**Word Choice:**

- What word(s) do you find interesting? Why?
- I noticed you used this word... How did you choose it?

**Sentence Fluency:**

- Have you varied the beginning of your sentences? How?
- When you read your writing out loud, where there are any parts where you stumbled? Why?

**Voice:**

- Where did you show feeling in your writing?
- What is your favorite part of the writing? Why?

**Conventions:**

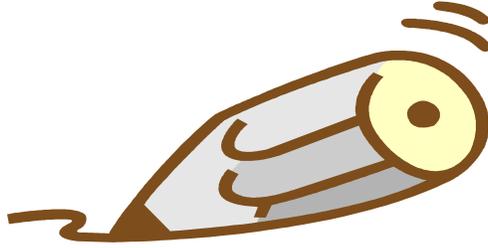
- How did you use ending marks to guide the reader?
- How did you decide to begin a new paragraph?



## The Writing Conference “Cheat Sheet”

- Conference starts with “Tell me how your writing is going.”
- The purpose of the writing conference is to TEACH! (Not help)
- Teacher tries to teach the student something based on their needs
- Conferences last 2-7 minutes
- The goal is to get to approximately 2-3 students during a 40 minute period
- Teacher confers during independent writing time
- Conferencing helps the teacher get a feel for what is happening in the students and their writing
- Students need to know that as we confer... they need to problem solve on their own

**TEACHER** may say *“Is this something you can take care of on your own because I really need you to do that?”*



**Conference Architecture**  
**5 minutes per student**

<b>Research</b>	<b>Compliment</b>
<p>Observe or interview the writer to learn more about their intentions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Qualities of good writing</li><li>• Habits</li><li>• Conventions</li></ul> <p>What's going on? What are you doing as a writer?</p> <p>On a weekly basis, make sure you conduct research in different ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Look at student portfolios</li><li>• Observe</li></ul>	<p>Find something positive that the writer has done.</p>
<b>Teach</b>	<b>Link</b>
<p>Find what the child is trying to do and teach toward that goal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Guided practice</li><li>• Demonstration</li><li>• Explaining and showing an example</li></ul>	<p>Name what the writer has done and remind them to do this in the future.</p> <p>This helps the child transfer what she/he learned into his/her independent writing.</p>

