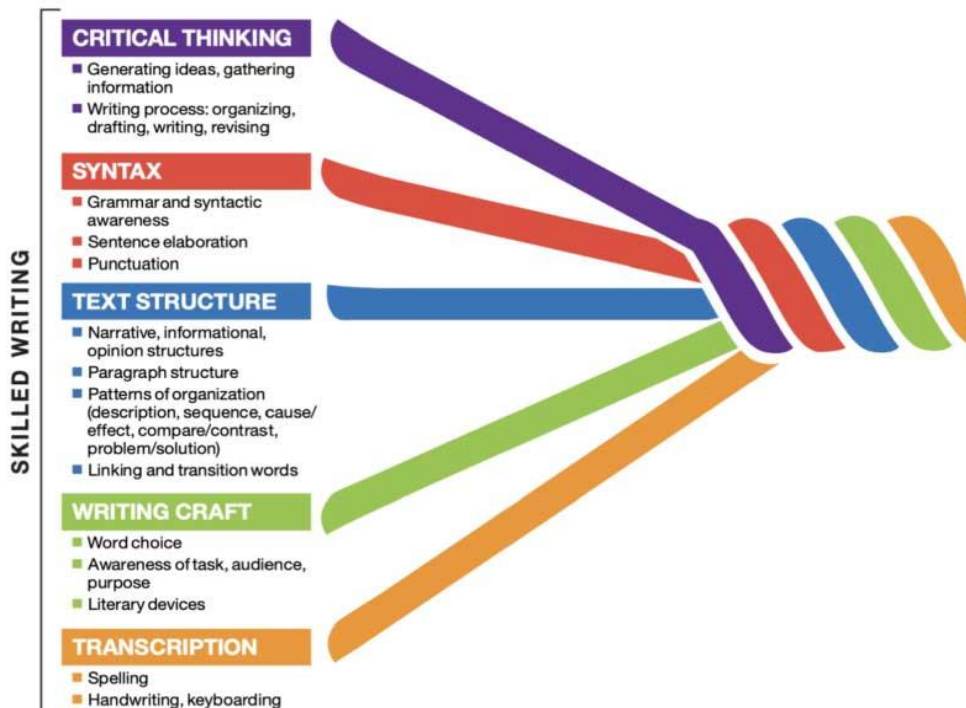


The Writing Rope



The Writing Rope is a framework developed by educator Joan Sedita that helps parents and teachers understand and support the multiple components of skilled writing. Like a braided rope, the model shows how different skills and strategies are woven together to create a strong, proficient writer. The rope breaks down the complex task of writing into five manageable strands.

General tips for supporting your child's writing

- **Model writing yourself:** Show your child that writing is a useful part of your daily life by writing grocery lists, emails, or to-do lists.
- **Be a scribe:** For a child who struggles, offer to write down their words while they dictate a story. This separates the generation of ideas from the physical act of writing.
- **Keep it fun:** Don't stress over mistakes, especially in early drafts. Instead, praise their effort and creativity.
- **Connect reading and writing:** Reading helps your child see examples of all the components of the Writing Rope in action. Discuss how their favorite authors write.

The five strands of The Writing Rope

1. Critical thinking

This strand is about generating and organizing ideas before writing.

- **What you can do:**
 - **Encourage brainstorming:** For any writing task, from a story to a school report, help your child brainstorm and organize their thoughts. Use a graphic organizer, sticky notes, or mind maps.
 - **Gather information:** If they are writing an informational piece, help them find and take notes on relevant sources.
 - **Focus on the process:** Remind them that writing is a process of thinking, planning, drafting, and revising.

2. Syntax

This focuses on the construction of sentences, including grammar, punctuation, and sentence elaboration.

- **What you can do:**
 - **Expand sentences:** Help your child build more complex and interesting sentences by adding descriptive words, phrases, or clauses.
 - **Practice punctuation:** When reviewing their writing, focus on one or two punctuation skills at a time. For instance, you might work on using commas in a series.
 - **Play with sentences:** Create silly or unique sentences together. Discuss how changing the word order can change the meaning of the sentence.

3. Text structure

This is the organization of a text, such as how to structure a narrative, an essay, or an informational report. It includes paragraphs and transition words.

- **What you can do:**
 - **Analyze text:** As you read books together, point out how the author organized the text. For a story, identify the beginning, middle, and end. For an informational book, point out headings and how the paragraphs are structured.

- **Use templates:** Help your child use graphic organizers or sentence frames to plan the structure of their writing. For example, a compare/contrast essay would have a different structure than a story.
- **Create outlines:** Before writing, have your child use an outline to arrange their main points logically.

4. Writing craft

This involves making intentional choices to craft more engaging and effective writing. It includes word choice, using literary devices, and understanding the task, audience, and purpose.

- **What you can do:**
 - **Explore word choice:** Suggest stronger, more specific verbs and adjectives. Use a thesaurus together to find alternatives to common words.
 - **Discuss the audience:** Ask your child, "Who are you writing this for?" This helps them tailor their language and tone. A letter to a friend is different than a report for a teacher.
 - **Borrow from other writers:** When reading, point out powerful descriptions or sentences that your child might want to try in their own writing. This is sometimes called "magpieing ideas".

5. Transcription

This strand focuses on the physical process of getting words onto paper, specifically spelling and handwriting or keyboarding.

- **What you can do:**
 - **Practice with different tools:** Use a variety of materials for writing, such as chalk on a sidewalk, a whiteboard, or a keyboard. For younger kids, playing with playdough can help build hand strength.
 - **Focus on fluency:** Encourage regular practice to help your child automate these skills. Once spelling and handwriting are easier, they can focus more on the creative aspects of writing.
 - **Set up a writing space:** Create a comfortable and well-lit area with easy access to a variety of writing materials.