

What are the foundations for writing for grades 1-3?

Printing/Writing (Penmanship)

Focus on letter formation, spacing and encourage good penmanship.

Stroke order

- c starters: c, o, a, d, g, q
- short starters: i, u, r, p, m, n, y, j,
- tall starters: l, k, b, t, h
- slide starters: v, w, x
- weirdos: e, s, f, z

Help The Remember with Alphabet Stories

a is the angry letter

b is the bomb letter

c is the happy letter

d is the dog letter

e is the toothy letter

f is the slow leak letter

g is the draggy-leg letter

h is the tired letter

i is the crying letter

j is the jumping letter

k is the kicking letter

l is the tongue letter

m is the lip letter

n is the nose letter

o is the sad letter

p is the bubble letter

qu is the queen

r is the noisy letter

s is the snake letter

t is the telephone pole

u is the princess

v is the vase

w is water waves

x marks the spot

y the yanking letter

z is the zig-zag letter

Teach lower case first, then capital letters.

Do not introduce lines until partway into teaching capital letters.

With lines, teach main floor, upper floor, basement.

- Begin with main floor only letters (a, c, s since they all start the same way).
- Continue with other main floor letters.
- Introduce the tall letters that start at the top of the upstairs.
- Work on the ones that start on the main floor but go down into the basement. Finally, work on the rest (d, f).

Class Journal

On day one begin a class journal where everyone helps compose a daily journal.

Do first thing to review events of the day before.

Emphasize:

- Spelling and phonics on some of the words; use diacritic marks.
- Use the four-point check

4-Point Check



1. Capitals
2. Spacing
3. Punctuation
4. Does it make sense?

Sentences

Continue to work on printing with model sentences using words from their readers.

Additionally, compose pattern sentences orally to brainstorm parts of speech. Use any and every opportunity. Use words they know so they can spell or write it out and let them copy. Stress capitals, spacing, and end marks.

- Adjectives: A girl held up a tall kitchen garbage bag with flaps and exclaimed, “Hey, this looks like a dress!” This led to the sentences, “My dress is _____ (pretty, fabulous, weird, funny, shiny, white, etc.)”
- Verbs: Expand the sentence using an -ing or prepositional opener and put a verb on the end. “Wearing my dress, I can _____ (dance, sing, paint, spill stuff on it, hold my cat, etc.)” Have them act out the verb when they say their sentence.
 - Strong verbs: Work on strong verbs by banning boring ones. Choose a sentence that goes with what you are studying, such as “Worms eat dirt.” *Eat* is boring. Can you think of alternatives? Write “eat” on the board and go around the room asking for substitutes. “Worms _____ dirt (devour, gobble, etc.). Write down the results (just a few to start) and encourage students to find more to add to the list. Ban other boring verbs (said, want, like, run, walk, etc.)
 - Quality adjectives: ban boring ones such as pretty, bad, good, nice, etc.
- Pattern Sentences Using Literature, Poetry and Songs
 - One mouse singing, two mice dancing, three mice marching, etc. Use other animals, write and illustrate.
 - Sarah was a nice girl. Sarah was a goofy girl. Sarah was a happy girl, etc.
 - *Tough Boris*. Boris was a pirate. Boris was tough; all pirates are tough. Boris was proud; all pirates are proud, etc.
 - Copy parts of a song or a poem and illustrate (Baby Belluga, Home on the Range, etc.)
- As students read books, have them copy the titles into their Library Journal notebook. Emphasize capitals for each letter.

Daily Practice

Provide time for daily practice of writing sentences. These can also be patterns which repeat for ease of spelling. Again, emphasize the four-point check.

- This is a _____ (nouns).
- Bobby likes to _____ (verbs).
- Can be seasonal (colors of Halloween objects, numbers of objects, etc.).

Introduce Dress-ups Informally

Help students to become aware of dress-ups.

- Point them out in literature (Smithsonian Backyard, e.g.)
- Substitute words for said.
- Take note of how sentences begin.

Poetry

In addition to memorizing poetry, students can copy and illustrate poems or, if advanced, write out poems from memory.

Narrate Stories Daily

Using the Story Sequence Chart, tell a story in three parts every day. Use readers, chapters, pictures as sources.

- Get the Story Sequence poster up early. The goal is to get them to memorize it.
- Do this orally 25-30 times before students write a story.
- Do choral reading of easy readers to establish good elocution.

Formal Outlining

Unit 1 and 2 writing can begin in the sprint of first grade and early in the second and third grades. Use content areas as soon as possible. Can also outline events.

- Sequence
 - Discuss and demonstrate key words (chores, garbage cans, vacuum, KP).
 - Outline from a core subject paragraph (see sample below) or from the brain.
 - Use non-fiction, content paragraphs instead of reader stories (prevents confusion with story sequence)
 - At first, only copy outline.
 - Orally summarize; teacher can write and students can copy.
 - Ease into student writing from outlines.
 - Advanced students (2nd, 3rd grades) can continue to Unit 4.
- Tips
 - Don't panic if they can't do this perfectly. It can take weeks.
 - Do it daily, help, encourage.



Australian Mammals

This pretty animal is a koala bear.
 She is climbing a eucalyptus tree.
 Her baby is riding on her back.
 See how the koala holds the trunk
 with her claws.
 Koalas eat only eucalyptus leaves.
 The koala isn't a real bear,
 though it looks a little like one.

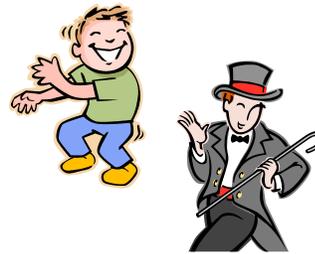


Macdonald Educational. *The Life of Strange Mammals*. Easy Reading Edition, 1975.

Add Style

Introduce dress-ups one at a time; use a chart. Teach dress-ups by comparing plain and fancy clothes.

- First grade don't need to sort them—just model.
- Keep a chart on the wall.
- Develop word lists.



<p><i>Create banned word lists. Put verbs and adjectives on different colored paper (yellow for verbs, red for adjectives?)</i></p>	pretty	eat

- Offer many examples from the outline and write them on the board!
 - who/which
 - because clause
 - quality adjective
 - strong verb
 - -ly adverb
- Once all dress-ups have been taught, introduce sentence openers.
- Encourage style in ALL writing.