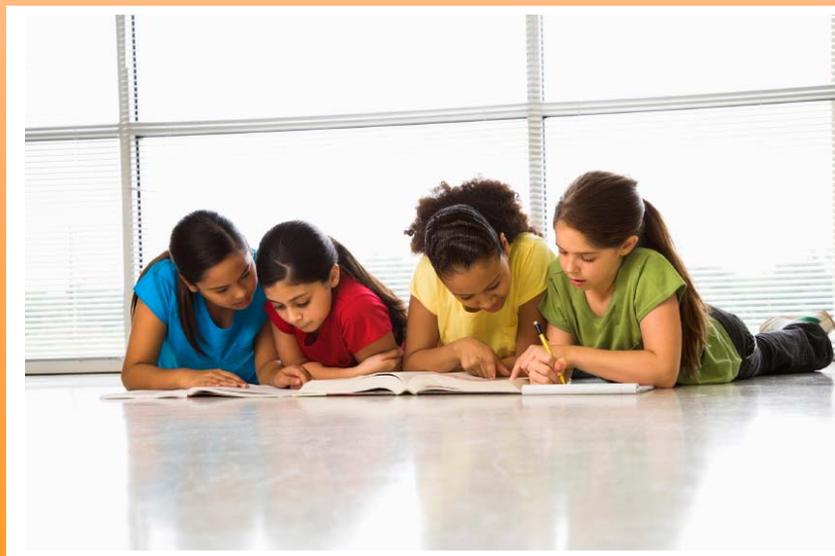


Loveland Schools Literacy Framework K-6



INTRODUCTION

The Loveland Literacy Framework has been designed to improve the reading, writing, and language skills of elementary students in Loveland Schools. The cornerstone of this fluid document is to establish a common and consistent approach to literacy learning that is aligned vertically and horizontally among grade levels. The goal of this comprehensive effort is to significantly raise the level of literacy achievement for all students.

The Loveland Literacy Framework was a collaborative effort of the Loveland Literacy Council which includes administrator, teacher, and parent representatives from all buildings and grade levels K-6. The National Reading Panel identified five areas critical to literacy learning in their report published in 2000. The Literacy Framework document includes the definitions and instructional practices that are related to each of the five areas (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension) with writing as an additional consideration.

The following are important characteristics of all elementary classrooms in the Loveland School District:

- Teachers in classrooms implement a range of research-based approaches that are detailed in the Loveland Literacy Framework. The framework includes details regarding core (Tier 1) instruction in reading, writing, language, and word study.
- A high priority is placed on time for teaching and learning with a minimum of 90 minutes daily designated for the K-4 literacy block and 70 minutes daily for the 5-6 literacy block. This accounts for uninterrupted time for reading and writing instruction.
- Sufficient materials and supplies are provided to support literacy instruction which includes an extensive collection of leveled books for teacher-facilitated reading groups as well as rich classroom collections of children's literature.

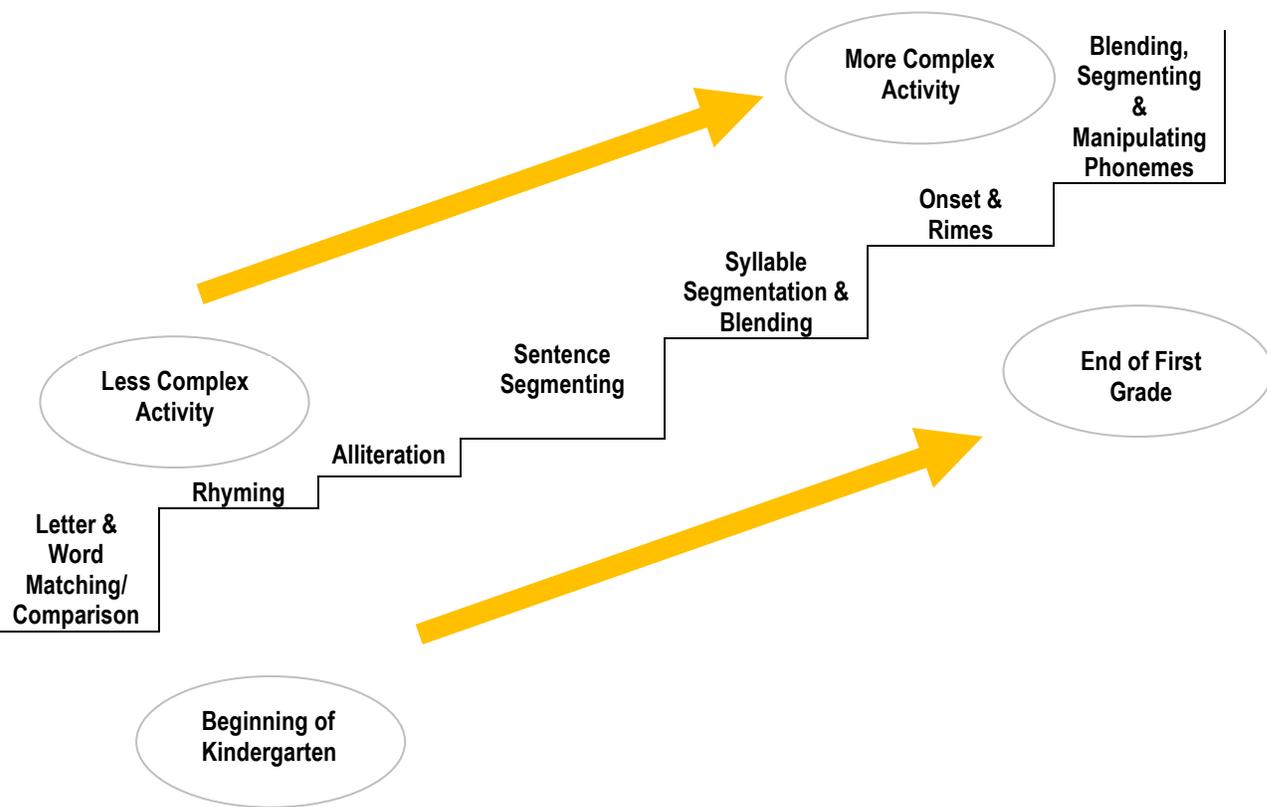
In the pages that follow, guidelines for research-based literacy instruction in Loveland Schools are outlined. Additional district expectations are included in the Appendix of the Literacy Framework document.

Phonemic Awareness

What is PHONEMIC AWARENESS?

Phonemic awareness is the ability to identify, think about, and manipulate the individual sounds in spoken words. Phonemic awareness is a subset of phonological awareness. There are several critical skills associated with phonemic awareness. They are: rhymes and alliteration, comparing sounds, blending and splitting syllables, segmentation and manipulation tasks. It is an important predictor of reading success. Phonemic awareness instruction improves students' ability to read words and learn to spell.

Phonological Awareness Development Continuum



What does PHONEMIC AWARENESS instruction look like?

Kindergarten/First Grade

- *Phonological Awareness Developmental Continuum* should serve as a guide to all phonemic awareness instruction.
- Instruction needs to focus on only one or two phonemic awareness skills at one time.
- Phonemic awareness needs to be taught systematically and explicitly (direct and focused).

Phonemic Awareness

Kindergarten/First Grade continued:

- Phonemic awareness is best taught through songs, chants, and word games.
- Different types of phonemic awareness activities should be modeled and practiced (e.g., alliteration, rhyming).
- Phonemic awareness should be taught in conjunction with the alphabetic principle.
- Phonemic awareness is best reinforced in small groups. To address the needs of children most at risk of reading failure, the same instructional components are relevant but they need to be made more explicit and comprehensive, more intensive, and more supportive in small group or one-on-one formats.

Second Grade and beyond

- Phonemic awareness instruction typically spans for two years: kindergarten and first grade.
- Students still struggling with phonemic awareness after first grade will need targeted intervention to continue to progress with reading and writing.

What are teachers doing during PHONEMIC AWARENESS instruction?

Teachers are using poems, songs, work station games, small group lessons, and whole group activities in the classroom to help teach and support phonemic awareness. It should be evident that, in addition to direct and explicit instruction, teachers are exposing children to literature that plays with sounds through language, writing experiences, and a variety of sound and language games.

Teachers should:

- Teach students to listen and determine if two or more words begin and end with the same sound (**Phoneme Matching/Comparison**).
- Teach students to clap and count the number of words in a sentence, syllables in a word (cowboy, carrot) and sounds in a word (me, jump) (**Phoneme Matching/Comparison**).
- Teach students to create word families with rhyming words (all, call, fall, ball) (**Rhyming**).
- Teach students to create tongue twisters (Sally's silly shoe slowly sank into the slime) (**Alliteration**).
- Teach students to segment sentences into spoken words (**Sentence Segmenting**).
- Teach students to combine syllables to say words or segment spoken words into syllables (**Syllables**).

Phonemic Awareness

- Teach students to blend or segment the initial consonant or consonant cluster (onset) and the vowel and consonant sounds at the end of the word (rime) **(Onset and Rimes)**.
- Teach students to blend phonemes into words, segment words into individual phonemes and manipulate phonemes in spoken words **(Manipulating)**.

What are students doing during PHONEMIC AWARENESS instruction?

Students are playing games at centers that include matching rhyming word pictures, matching letters to onset sound pictures, counting syllables and phonemes, and using letter cubes to blend sounds together to make words.

- Hearing and saying beginning phonemes (sounds) in words (run/race) and ending phonemes in words (win/fun)
- Hearing, saying and generating rhyming words (fly, high, buy)
- Segmenting sentences into spoken words
- Hearing and saying syllables (to-ma-to) in words
- Segmenting words into phonemes (b-a-t)
- Blending 2 or 3 phonemes in words (d-o-g, dog)
- Manipulating phonemes (mat-at, and- hand)

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Time:

Phonemic awareness instruction should occur daily for 15-20 minutes for a total of 20 hours over the course of a school year. Teaching in small groups produces better results than whole group. Students should not be introduced to more than 1-2 phonemic awareness skills per week.

Other Considerations:

Teachers increase effectiveness when the manipulation of letters is added to phonemic awareness tasks. Phonemic awareness is an *auditory skill* but once children start to become familiar with the concept, teachers can introduce letter tiles or squares and manipulate them to form sounds and words in the phonics portion of the reading block.

Phonics

What is PHONICS?

Phonics is the relationship between written letters and spoken sounds. Research shows there are systematic and predictable patterns which can be learned. Instructional practices should include sound blending, segmenting, and manipulating letter-sound correspondences in words. Although phonics is the term most commonly used, the term alphabetic principle is also sometimes applied to the acquisition of letter-sound correspondences.

Phonics instruction is most effective when introduced early. Effective phonics programs follow a defined sequence and provide ample opportunities for students to apply what they are learning about letters and sounds to the reading of words, sentences, and stories. Students also apply these skills in writing and spelling words. Since children possess varying phonics skills, instruction must be differentiated to meet the needs of each and every learner.

What does PHONICS instruction look like?

Phonics instruction needs to be taught and reinforced in grades K-6 but will look different at the varying levels. Teachers in grades K-2 will provide systematic phonics instruction through the direct teaching of letter-sound relationships in a clearly defined sequence. This sequence is defined in the Appendix of this document.

In grades 3-6 phonics becomes based in *word work* within the core literacy block and instruction begins to focus more on vocabulary/spelling patterns. Phonics instruction should be continued in grades 3-6 through the teaching of word parts, compound words, prefixes, suffixes, multi-syllable words, and words with Greek/Latin/foreign roots. However, a small percentage of students will require additional explicit intervention/remediation even in the upper grades. Struggling readers and writers identified to have difficulty with phonics should be provided additional support.

Spelling is addressed in the word study block. According to the International Reading Association, word study is an appropriate alternative to traditional spelling instruction (2009).

What are teachers doing during PHONICS instruction?

- Guiding children in strategically applying phonemic awareness/phonics skills to authentic reading and writing experiences will help them develop good decoding skills. This is most effective in small teacher-facilitated reading groups with leveled readers.
- Using a multi-sensory approach including kinesthetic activities.
- Explicitly noting phonics patterns while modeling reading in the context of quality literature. This includes: nursery rhymes, songs, non-fiction texts and poems with repetitive language.

Phonics

What are teachers doing? continued:

- Gradually releasing responsibility to students. Gradual release is most noticeable in the writing portion of the literacy block. Students apply their knowledge of letters and sounds during writing.
- Giving students opportunities to use technology to practice phonics.
- Modeling the use of phonics manipulatives or “making words.” Effective manipulatives include: letter tiles, word cubes, flash cards, word family cards.
- Explicitly and systematically teaching phonics generalizations and helping students apply the rules in context (see Appendix document for a list of generalizations).
- Administering appropriate assessments and individualizing instruction in phonics as appropriate.
- Teaching spelling by connecting the word to familiar sound patterns, rhyme, prefixes, suffixes, and root words.
- Implementing personal spelling lists for students who struggle with spelling.

What are students doing during PHONICS instruction?

- Students are participating in multi-sensory activities to learn letters and their sounds with songs and hand/body actions.
- Independent and teacher-monitored practice with phonics activities and manipulatives.
- Once children have been exposed to teacher modeling, they can apply phonics to their own reading and writing independently and with teacher guidance.
- Playing with and comparing letters/words/parts of words.
- In all grades, students should learn phonics at an individual pace. Some students might learn/work on several items each week, whereas others may only learn/work on one skill.
- Sorting words by spelling pattern and making connections to the discovered pattern in their reading and writing.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Time:

Instructional sessions should be brief (15-20 minutes of daily instruction/practice) and be delivered in small group, rather than whole group instruction.

Daily Activities and Schedule Considerations:

- Include phonics instruction in teacher-directed reading groups. This would include guided practice in applying phonics skills in the context of quality children’s literature.
- Writing - Invented spelling (primarily in kindergarten and first grade) fosters phonics and sequential decoding skills. Students should have opportunities to apply their knowledge of phonics in the writing portion of the literacy block.
- See Appendix for grade level pacing of phonics instruction.
- Spelling instruction should be embedded in reading, writing, and literacy stations rather than taught in isolation.

Fluency

What is FLUENCY?

Fluency is the accurate and rapid naming or reading of letters, sounds, words, sentences or passages. Fluency is the gap between word recognition and comprehension. "Students require explicit instruction, practice, and support from peers and teachers to improve their fluency and make reading a more valued activity" (Vaughn and Linan-Thompson 2004). Fluency frees students to understand what they read. Fluency includes reading rate (pace), automatic word recognition, and prosody, or the ability to read in expressive, rhythmic, and melodic patterns with phrasing.

What does FLUENCY instruction look like?

To build fluency, teachers will use the following strategies:

Repeated Readings – Students read passages aloud several times and receive guidance and feedback from the teacher.

Model or Echo Reading – Model reader reads the passage first using fluency and expression. Next the student reads it as quickly and accurately as they can without speed reading. Readers ask each other questions or summarize key points.

Choral Reading – Preview a passage and make predictions about the passage. Then the teacher reads the passage aloud – first by him/herself and then with the class. Next the teacher fades his/her voice and allows the students to take the lead.

Partner Reading – Students read and reread passages with classmates. Students continue taking turns until they complete the text.

Recorded Readings – Books on tape or CD or on computer – books are read aloud by a model. Students are following the text and reading along.

Reader's Theater – Students rehearse the script from a book, play, short story or poem on their **Instructional** level until they are highly fluent and read with prosody (expression). Then they perform for a small group, class or other audience.

Automaticity in Word Recognition – Teacher models activities to build automaticity in recognition of regular and irregular sight words.

Note: Automaticity refers only to accurate, speedy word recognition, not to reading with expression. Therefore, automaticity (or automatic word recognition) is necessary, but not sufficient, for fluency.

Note: Fluency instruction looks different at various grade levels based on the developmental and academic needs of individual students.

Fluency

What are teachers doing during **FLUENCY** instruction?

- Teachers use the following strategies: repeated readings, model or echo reading, choral reading, partner reading, recorded readings, reader’s theater, automaticity in word recognition (detailed in previous section).
- Providing students with opportunities for repeated oral reading that include support and feedback from teachers, peers, and parents.
- Determining students' reading levels and ensuring that texts are matched to reading levels.
- Having students re-read the same passage (several times, or until a mastery level of accuracy is obtained).
- Applying systematic practices in classrooms to instruct and monitor student progress.
- Modeling effortless, expressive reading (intonation, rate, prosody, accuracy, proper expression) daily across the curriculum.
- Modeling activities to build automaticity in word recognition with small groups.
- Monitoring progress should occur on a regular basis and more often (weekly) with struggling readers.

What are students doing during **FLUENCY** instruction?

- Students engage in activities/strategies as follows: repeated readings, model or echo reading, choral reading, partner reading, recorded readings, reader’s theater, automaticity in word recognition (detailed on previous page).

Kindergarten/First Grade

- Students practice fluency with pre-literacy skills such as letter naming, word lists, and irregular words.

Second – Sixth Grade

- Research shows that oral reading fluency instruction is appropriate for students in grades two through high school, particularly for struggling readers.
- Students read orally from grade-appropriate unpracticed texts to determine whether the material is independent, instructional or at the frustration level.
- Students should also be able to read orally with expression and with comprehension.

Fluency

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Time:

Fluency instruction should take place a minimum of 20 minutes per day.

Other Considerations:

- Multiple sources report that there is *no evidence available* to confirm that instructional time spent on silent, independent reading with minimal guidance and feedback improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement (Vaughn and Linan-Thompson 2004).
- Fluency practice is effective for readers of all ability levels (including students with disabilities) and all grade levels. The National Reading Panel reports that “fluency instruction was equally effective for good and poor readers.”
- It is important to match students to text. Ensure students have texts at appropriate levels:
 - Independent (five mistakes or fewer per 100 words - 95% or higher text accuracy)
 - Instructional (90-94%)
 - Frustration (89% and below)

Vocabulary

What is VOCABULARY?

The teaching of vocabulary involves instructing students to understand and use words that they must know to communicate effectively. There are four different kinds of vocabulary: Speaking and Listening (Oral Language) and Reading and Writing (Print Vocabulary). Vocabulary knowledge is the tool that unlocks the meaning of text.

Specific word instruction is most effective when explicitly taught prior to reading. Extended instruction to promote engagement with words and repeated exposure is also essential. Word learning strategies should include instruction in using context clues and reference materials.

What does VOCABULARY instruction look like?

- Beck, McKeown, and Kucan's *Bringing Words to Life* suggests grouping words into three tiers. Teachers should focus on Tier 2 words for explicit instruction.
 - **Tier 1:** The most basic words. These words do not typically need to be explicitly taught. (Examples: car, water, man, candy)
 - **Tier 2:** Words that are used often and help readers understand a passage or directions. These words may be unfamiliar or unknown. (Examples: considerate, altitude, schema, concentrate, industry) These words may be instructional words or verbs that are important for test success.
 - **Tier 3:** Words that are infrequently used and that may be associated with specific fields or content. These words **must** be explicitly taught. (Examples: isosceles, algorithm, bellicose, corpus, exacerbate, sedentary)
- Vocabulary instruction should use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words.
- Students should be developing automaticity of high frequency words and applying structural analysis to determine unknown word meaning.
- Students learn Tier 2 and Tier 3 words and use resources to determine the meaning of unknown words.

What are teachers doing during VOCABULARY instruction?

- Purposefully and collectively selecting a variety of essential vocabulary for direct instruction
- Using a variety of methods including the following:
 - Explicit instruction
 - Implicit instruction
 - Multimedia methods
 - Practicing to increase capacity (automaticity)

Vocabulary

- Association (connecting what one knows to the new word)
- Pre-teaching vocabulary and providing repeated exposure to grade-level vocabulary
- Monitoring current levels of understanding and progress
- Implementing research-based instructional strategies, for example, Marzano’s Six Step Process for learning new words
- Marzano’s Six Step Process for Learning New Words
 - Introduce the Term*
 - **Step 1:** Explain - Provide a student-friendly description, explanation, or example of the new term.
 - **Step 2:** Restate - Ask students to restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words.
 - **Step 3:** Show - Ask students to construct a picture, symbol, or graphic representing the term (non-linguistic representation).
 - Reinforce the Term*
 - **Step 4:** Discuss - Periodically ask students to discuss the terms with one another.
 - **Step 5:** Refine and Reflect - Engage students periodically in activities that help them add to their knowledge of the terms.
 - **Step 6:** Apply in learning games - Involve students periodically in games that allow them to play with terms.
- Determining which words need to be taught directly.
- Reading aloud to students and listening to students read out loud.
- Encouraging students to read in and out of school.
- Providing a wide range of print (e.g., multiple levels, genres, interest level, etc.)
- Engaging students in conversation about what they read.

What are students doing during VOCABULARY instruction?

- Listening to adults and other students read.
- Engaging in vocabulary activities that are facilitated by the teacher.
- Making connections between words already known and new words.
- Using vocabulary instruction to learn new words independently.
- Using dictionaries, portable word walls, word banks, word journals, and/or word walls.
- Restating the explanation of the new vocabulary in their own words (orally or in print) and in non-linguistic representation.
- Reading extensively independently.
- Using Marzano’s Six Step Process to learn new words - Students will act as “word detectives” who recognize, use, and have fun learning new word meanings.
- Participating in vocabulary or word games.

Vocabulary

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Time:

A minimum of 15-20 minutes 3 days a week should be devoted to vocabulary instruction. This can include but is not limited to whole group direct instruction, literacy work stations, or small group.

Other Considerations:

- Vocabulary instruction should be integrated into all literacy instruction, but time should also be set aside a minimum of three days per week for explicit teaching of new vocabulary and review of already mastered vocabulary.
- All classrooms K-6 should incorporate some form of a word wall or word bank within the classroom in a location that is easily visible and accessible to students.
- Vocabulary instruction begins in kindergarten and should continue to be a priority during the literacy block in upper grades.
- Dolch Word and/or other sight word indicators are part of the Acquisition of Vocabulary standard in Ohio's Academic Content Standards *but are primarily taught through phonics and fluency instruction.*
- All students should learn the core grade level vocabulary listed in the Appendix and any other vocabulary deemed appropriate by the teacher(s) at each grade level.

Comprehension

What is COMPREHENSION?

“Comprehension is active and intentional thinking in which the meaning is constructed through interactions between the text and the reader” (Durkin, 1973).

“During comprehension, students not only interact with, but construct their own meaning from the text. Students bring their own experiences and knowledge, revise their thinking, and can apply new knowledge to new situations. Teachers use direct explanation, modeling, coaching, and scaffolding practices with an emphasis on collaborative discussion to help students understand and apply comprehension strategies” (National Reading Panel, 2000).

“True comprehension goes beyond literal understanding and involves the reader’s interaction with text. If students are to become thoughtful, insightful readers, they must extend their thinking beyond a superficial understanding of the text” (Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis).

The explicit teaching of comprehension skills teaches students to use specific cognitive strategies when they encounter barriers to understanding what they are reading.

What does COMPREHENSION instruction look like?

Below are comprehension strategies which are to be incorporated into each K-6 classroom:

Comprehension Strategies:

Metacognition: Thinking about your thinking, how do you know what you know? Monitoring your own thinking

Connecting Prior Knowledge: What do you already know or schema do you have? Text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world connections

Visualizing/Sensory Images: Making a “movie in your mind” of what you see when you’re reading; using all of your senses to comprehend the text

Asking Questions: What are you wondering? What do you want to know more about? Who, what, where, when, why, how questions

Making Inferences: Taking clues the author left behind but doesn’t come right out and tell you plus what you already know to create a new thought; reading between the lines

Determining Importance: What is the big idea? Main idea and supporting details

Synthesis: Putting it all together; determining how thinking has changed from beginning to end; what new knowledge do you have?

Comprehension

Specific Grade Level Major Comprehension Focus:

Although a focus has been selected for each grade level, all grade levels are responsible for teaching all comprehension strategies throughout the year.

K ~ Connections

1 ~ Visualizing

2 ~ Asking Questions

3 ~ Making Inferences

4 ~ Determining Importance

5 ~ Synthesis

6 ~ Integration of the strategies

For a detailed scope and sequence of the focus on comprehension strategies at each grade level, see the Appendix of this document.

What are teachers doing during **COMPREHENSION** instruction?

- Pre-teaching vocabulary and concepts
- Explicitly teaching the reading comprehension strategies to the whole class
- Teaching students to set purposes for reading
- Pre-teaching vocabulary and concepts
- Relating background knowledge to new learning
- Relating text features to student lives
- Teaching students text features and how to use them to understand what they read
- Helping students choose books that are appropriate for them to read (level, interest, etc.)
- Conferencing with individual or small groups of students and/or holding teacher-directed reading groups focusing on: comprehension framework chart, grade level indicators and benchmarks based on curriculum maps and pacing guides, student needs
- Administering assessments and making observations of students' work which may include recording anecdotal records
- Reviewing student work/assessment data to drive instruction in conferences

Comprehension

What are students doing during COMPREHENSION instruction?

- Previewing and setting a purpose (enjoyment or for knowledge)
- Activating background knowledge (schema)
- Creating mental images
- Making connections (text-text, text-self, text-world)
- Predicting
- Making inferences
- Asking and answering literal and inferential questions
- Synthesizing
- Determining importance
- Responding to texts orally and in writing
- Participating in individual and/or small groups
- Reading independently

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Time:

30-45 minutes should be dedicated to comprehension instruction daily. If literacy block time is limited, content area reading comprehension instruction may count towards the allocation of time if the focus is evident.

Instructional Delivery Method:

1. Modeling - Teacher explains the strategy, models strategy during read alouds, and thinks aloud when reading to show thinking and strategy use.
2. Guided Practice - After explicit modeling, teacher and students practice the strategy together in shared reading contexts, reading through the text and co-constructing meaning through discussion. Students hear from each other about one another's thinking process. Students work in small groups and pairs to reason through the text together.
3. Independent Practice - After working with teacher and other students, student tries practicing the strategy on own with regular feedback from the teacher through conferencing.
4. Application - The student uses the strategy in authentic reading situations and in a variety of different genres, settings, contexts, and disciplines.

Comprehension

Before Reading Activity: *The book is introduced to the group.* Possible activities include the following:

- Setting the purpose
- Activating schema/background knowledge
- Anticipation guide
- Introduce vocabulary
- Picture or book walk
- Graphic organizer – preview and predict
- Purposeful, guided discussion based on comprehension standards
- Story mapping
- Asking and answering questions

During Reading Activities: *The teacher explicitly teaches comprehension strategies in the context of quality literature.* Possible activities include the following:

- Teacher is listening to students read at their own pace (not round robin reading)
- Choral reading
- Partner reading
- Teacher modeling oral reading
- Repeated readings
- Verbal and written responses to literature (notebooks, post-its, etc.)
- Literal and inferential questioning by both teacher and student
- Teacher-facilitated groups
- Student-facilitated groups

After Reading: *Teacher facilitates an activity in which students summarize and consolidate what has been read.* Possible activities include the following:

- Reinforcing the concept that reading is for understanding the meaning of the text and making connections
- Modeling ways of thinking through and organizing the information taken in from reading a text
- Thinking critically about the text
- Responding on a personal level
- Confirming predictions
- Building awareness of common themes and structures in literature
- Administering assessments and making observations of students' work which may include recording anecdotal records
- Reviewing student work/assessment data to drive instruction in conferences
- Administering assessments and making observations of students' work which may include recording anecdotal records

Writing

What is WRITING?

Writing is a process that develops gradually. With exploration and experimentation, **and explicit teacher instruction**, children will acquire diverse skills for writing. As students write they begin to determine their purpose for writing as well as what type of audience will read the writing. The stages of the writing process for all grade levels are as follows:

Prewriting

- Generate related ideas with assistance or independently
- Brainstorming
- Generate ideas for a story or shared writing with assistance
- Choose a topic for writing related to shared or personal experience or teacher-selected prompt
- Begin to determine purpose for writing

Drafting

- Dictate or produce writing to express thoughts. Generate ideas for a story or shared writing with assistance
- Repeat message conveyed through dictation or writing. Begin to determine purpose for writing
- Begin to use resources (e.g., labels, books, word walls or word banks, computer, etc.) to convey meaning

Revising

- The stage of the writing process in which one considers and improves the meaning and underlying structure of a written draft
- Making decisions about where writing could be clearer, more interesting, or more informative

Editing

- A step in preparing a written work for publication or review that focuses on clarity and correctness

Publishing

- Display or share writing samples, illustrations and dictated stories with others
- Not all writing products will be published. It is important for students to have multiple opportunities to publish throughout the year.

Writing

As teachers facilitate writing development and students participate in the writing process, there are six specific traits or qualities, identified by research in the 1980s, that define strong writing. All K-6 teachers in Loveland Schools will implement the 6+1 Trait Writing framework/program. The official website for research base and references is <http://educationnorthwest.org/traits>. It is critical that teaching and assessing these features be evidenced in all classrooms. The traits are:

- **Ideas**, the main message;
- **Organization**, the internal structure of the piece;
- **Voice**, the personal tone and flavor of the author's message;
- **Word Choice**, the vocabulary a writer chooses to convey meaning;
- **Sentence Fluency**, the rhythm and flow of the language;
- **Conventions**, the mechanical correctness

A final trait important to students in all grades is **presentation**. Although not all writing is formally presented, there should always be consideration of how, when, and to what audience a piece of writing will or will not be presented.

Definitions of the traits are as follows:

Ideas

The Ideas are the main message, the content of the piece, the main theme, together with all the supporting details that enrich and develop that theme. The ideas are strong when the message is clear, not garbled. The writer chooses details that are interesting, important, and informative—often the kinds of details the reader would not normally anticipate or predict. Successful writers do not "tell" readers things they already know; e.g., "It was a sunny day, and the sky was blue, the clouds were fluffy white ..." Successful writers "show" readers that which is normally overlooked; writers seek out the extraordinary, the unusual, the unique, the bits and pieces of life that might otherwise be overlooked.

Organization

Organization is the internal structure of a piece of writing, the thread of central meaning, the pattern and sequence, so long as it fits the central idea. Organizational structure can be based on comparison-contrast, deductive logic, point-by-point analysis, development of a central theme, chronological history of an event, or any of a dozen other identifiable patterns. When the organization is strong, the piece begins meaningfully and creates in the writer a sense of anticipation that is, ultimately, systematically fulfilled. Events proceed logically; information is given to the reader in the right doses at the right times so that the reader never loses interest. Connections are strong, which is another way of saying that bridges from one idea to the next hold up. The piece closes with a sense of resolution, tying up loose ends, bringing things to a satisfying closure, answering important questions while still leaving the reader something to think about.

Voice

Voice is the writer coming through the words, the sense that a real person is speaking to us and cares about the message. It is the heart and soul of the writing, the magic, the wit, the feeling, the life and breath. When the writer is engaged personally with the topic, he/she imparts a personal tone and flavor to the piece that is unmistakably his/hers alone. And it is that individual something – different from the mark of all other writers – that we call Voice.

Writing

Word Choice

Word Choice is the use of rich, colorful, precise language that communicates not just in a functional way, but in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. In descriptive writing, strong word choice resulting in imagery, especially sensory, show-me writing, clarifies and expands ideas. In persuasive writing, purposeful word choice moves the reader to a new vision of ideas. In all modes of writing figurative language such as metaphors, similes and analogies articulate, enhance, and enrich the content. Strong word choice is characterized not so much by an exceptional vocabulary chosen to impress the reader, but more by the skill to use everyday words well.

Sentence Fluency

Sentence Fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just to the eye. How does it sound when read aloud? That's the test. Fluent writing has cadence, power, rhythm, and movement. It is free of awkward word patterns that slow the reader's progress. Sentences vary in length, beginnings, structure, and style, and are so well crafted that the writer moves through the piece with ease.

Conventions

The Conventions Trait is the mechanical correctness of the piece and includes five elements: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar/usage, and paragraphing. Writing that is strong in Conventions has been proofread and edited with care. Since this trait has so many pieces to it, it's almost an analytical trait within an analytic system. As you assess a piece for convention, ask yourself: "How much work would a copy editor need to do to prepare the piece for publication?" This will keep all of the elements in conventions equally in play. Conventions is the only trait where we make specific grade level accommodations, and expectations should be based on grade level to include only those skills that have been taught. (Handwriting and neatness are not part of this trait; they belong with Presentation.)

Presentation

Presentation combines both visual and textual elements. It is the way we exhibit or present our message on paper. Even if our ideas, words, and sentences are vivid, precise, and well constructed, the writing will not be inviting to read unless the guidelines of presentation are present. Some of those guidelines include: balance of white space with visuals and text, graphics, neatness, handwriting, font selection, borders, overall appearance. Think about examples of text and visual presentation in your environment. Which signs and billboards attract your attention? Why do you reach for one CD over another? All great writers are aware of the necessity of presentation, particularly technical writers who must include graphs, maps, and visual instructions along with their text. Presentation is key to a polished piece ready for publication.

Writing

What does WRITING instruction look like?

In grades K-6, the instructional focus is on teaching the writing process while supporting students through explicit instruction in the 6 +1 traits of strong writers. In addition, grade level specific instructional characteristics are as follows:

Kindergarten:

- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book.
- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory text in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.
- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.
- Respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
- Explore digital tools to produce and publish writing including in collaboration with peers.
- Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).
- Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

First Grade:

- Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name of the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion and provide some sense of closure.
- Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic and provide some sense of closure.
- Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.
- Focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
- Use digital tools to produce and publish writing including in collaboration with peers.
- Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of “how-to” books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).
- Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

Writing

Second Grade:

- Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect the opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
- Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.
- Write narratives in which they recount a well elaborated event or short sequence of events. Include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings. Use temporal words to signal event order and provide a sense of closure.
- Focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
- Use digital tools to produce and publish writing including in collaboration with peers.
- Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).
- Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

Third Grade:

- Write opinion pieces on topics or texts supporting a point of view with reasons.
 - Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
 - Provide reasons that support the opinion.
 - Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.
 - Provide a concluding statement or section.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
 - Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
 - Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information.
 - Provide concluding statement or section.
- Write narratives to develop a real or imagined experience or event using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear even sequences.
 - Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
 - Use dialogue and descriptions of action, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
 - Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
 - Provide a sense of closure.
- Produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose (opinion, informative, narrative).
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of language skills (standards).
- Use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

Writing

Third Grade continued:

- Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
- Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Fourth Grade:

- Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
 - Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose.
 - Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.
 - Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition).
 - Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.
- Write informative/exploratory text to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
 - Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
 - Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., another, for example, also, because).
 - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive detail, and clear event sequences.
 - Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters: organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
 - Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
 - Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
 - Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
 - Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (opinion, informative, and narrative pieces).
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of language skills (standards).

Writing

4th Grade continued:

- Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.
- Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
 - Apply grade 4 Reading Standards to literature (e.g., “Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text”).
 - Apply grade 4 Reading Standards to informational texts (e.g., “Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text”).
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes and audiences.

Fifth Grade:

- Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
 - Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer’s purpose.
 - Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.
 - Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., consequently, specifically).
 - Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.
- Write informative/exploratory text to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
 - Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
 - Link ideas across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., in contrast, especially).
 - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

Writing

Fifth Grade continued:

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive detail, and clear event sequences.
 - Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
 - Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
 - Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
 - Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
 - Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (opinion, informative, and narrative pieces).
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting, or trying a new approach. Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of language skills (standards).
- Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single sitting.
- Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
 - Apply grade 5 Reading Standards to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text”).
 - Apply grade 5 Reading Standards to informational texts (e.g., “Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point[s]”).
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes and audiences.

Writing

Sixth Grade:

- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
 - Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.
 - Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
 - Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.
 - Establish and maintain a formal style.
 - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the arguments presented.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
 - Introduce a topic, organize ideas, concepts, and information using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
 - Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
 - Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - Establish and maintain a formal style.
 - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
 - Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
 - Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
 - Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
 - Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
 - Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experience or events.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (argument, informative, narrative).
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of language (standards).
- Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting.
- Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

Writing

Sixth Grade continued:

- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
 - Apply grade 6 Reading Standards to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics”).
 - Apply grade 6 Reading Standards in literary nonfiction (e.g., “Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not”).
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

What are teachers doing during WRITING instruction?

- Modeling/Presentation - teacher explanation
- Using mentor text to explicitly teach features of text and author’s purpose for multiple genres
- Whole group mini lessons (see “Important Considerations” for explanation)
- Small group instruction
- Individual conferences
- Assessing through a variety of formative and summative assessments (quarterly writing prompts, other teacher-developed writing assignments, student self-evaluation, ongoing feedback through conferencing)
- Emphasizing spelling within the context of meaningful writing
- Facilitating lessons on the 6 +1 writing traits

Steps for facilitating a 6 traits writing lesson:

1. Provide a big picture; pull out the concept of the trait.
2. Share the definition; stress specific words and phrases.
3. Explain the elements (sub-components) of the trait; relate these to visuals, similes, or metaphors.
4. Read several examples from literature; purposefully include a variety of grade levels, genres, and interests.
5. Include visuals; use environmental print; incorporate auditory stimuli.
6. Employ activities that provide hands-on experiences.
7. Choose other specific lessons from Literacy by Design materials or 6 Traits resources.
8. Use student work.
9. Assess and provide effective feedback.
10. Summarize; include connections to other traits, developmental progressions, and variances across genre.

Writing

Lesson Ideas for Teaching Writing through 6 Traits

Trait: Ideas

- Read two stories about the same topic and one with more details. Have a balloon as a prop and blow into it each time a detail is revealed in the story. Do the same for second story. Compare the size of the balloons at the end.
- Make up a story and blow each time you add a detail to illustrate that the more details are provided, the more full the balloon becomes.
- Use an ABC chart and have students generate ideas for each letter of the alphabet. Keep ideas (ABC chart) in writing folder for use throughout the year.
- Keep a variety of organizers with ideas listed or gathered on them in each student's writing folder.
- Create a memory chart – Students look through magazines and create a collage. This is kept in folder for a place to keep ideas.
- Field trip for ideas – Walk through the school or outside as a group and note ideas for writing that are passed.
- Star of the week – All students write about the star of the week.
- As a homework assignment, ask parents to “help your child brainstorm.”
- Have magazine pictures in a basket that would evoke emotion or spark writing ideas.
- Have a chart with prompts about students themselves for personal narrative.
- Have a bucket or basket in the room with pieces of paper (drawings and writing) that include topics related to specific topics or a variety of topics.

Trait: Organization

- Model for students how to write leads, closures, etc.
- Make a chart of different ways to start a story, ways to end the story.
- Look at sentences from a mentor text and organize them correctly.
- Model and teach transition words. Keep posters with these words in the room.
- Read, study and write how-to books.
- Use physical props/items to illustrate organization (a toy train).
- Use graphic organizers.

Trait: Voice

- Read aloud books with dialogue (e.g., Pigeon books).
- Read *The Monster at the End of the Book* (Grover).
- Read Junie B. Jones books and challenge students to write with voice and use dialogue.
- Create anchor charts with students (e.g., noisy words).
- Have students read their own writing/examples of stories with “voice.”
- Read *The Grouchy Ladybug*.

Writing

Trait: Sentence Fluency

- Use a slinky to visually show sentence length and illustrate the flow created when sentences are fluent.
- Use connecting blocks to illustrate what happens with run-on sentences (too many will make the tower fall over).
- Keep asking “Where?” to increase the use of prepositional phrases.
- Give students short sentence and have them illustrate. Add more details and illustrate again.

Trait: Conventions

- Read *Punctuation Takes a Vacation*.
- Rewrite sentences with different punctuation marks and then re-read.
- Read Pigeon books or other books with dialogue to point out how the punctuation changes.
- Model appropriate conventions.
- Give students one sentence and go over all punctuation options (change voice as punctuation changes).
- Teach and reinforce editing marks.

Trait: Word Choice

- Read aloud books that include great word choices.
- Use highlighter tape or highlighters to identify words that are not common.
- Provide students with a purple marker or sparkling highlighter to highlight powerful words in their own writing or the writing of peers.
- Create word charts/anchor charts.
- Use a 64 box of crayons as a prop and prompt students to find “better” words for various colors.
- Play “If you were a synonym.”
- Read aloud *Fancy Nancy* and challenge students to write with more interesting or “fancy” words.
- Create a sparkle word chart (different words for “tired” words).

What are students doing during WRITING instruction?

- Writing/illustrating (balance of student choice and teacher-facilitated prompts)
- Listening and/or participating in a mini-lesson and/or sharing of student writing products
- Participating in specific 6 +1 Traits lessons and writing
- Prewriting
- Editing
- Revising
- Sharing
- Publishing

Writing

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Time: suggested *daily* plan

Mini-Lesson (5-10 minutes) A short lesson focused on a single topic that students need help with. Give students a focus for writing.

Status of the Class (2-5 minutes) A quick way of finding out what each student is working on.

Writing Time (20-30 minutes) Students write and keep a folder. Teacher can model writing among students and should conference with individual students or small groups at all grade levels.

Sharing (5-15 minutes) Writers read what they have written and seek feedback from their audience. Teacher also shares his/her personal writing.