



# Research Paper

# WRITE!

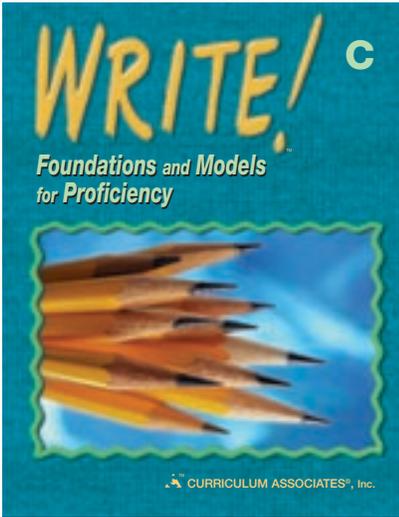
## *Foundations and Models for Proficiency*

A Research-based Writing Program

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# WRITE! Foundations and Models for Proficiency

## An Introduction to the Series



*“If students are to make knowledge their own, they must struggle with the details, wrestle with the facts, and rework raw information and dimly understood concepts into language they can communicate to someone else. In short, if students are to learn, they must write” (National Commission on Writing in America’s Schools and Colleges, p. 9).*

“Writing is a powerful instrument of thought. In the act of composing, writers learn about themselves and their world and communicate their insights to others. Writing confers the power to grow personally and to effect change in the world” (National Council of Teachers of English, 2003).

**WRITE!** is a writing program with a foundation in grammar, usage, and mechanics (GUM). The GUM component of **WRITE!** is both skills-based and grounded in the context of writing. This two-pronged approach meets the needs of today’s diverse classroom populations. The writing component of **WRITE!** is process-oriented, with students applying higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and synthesis as they progress through each on-demand writing lesson.

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2003) maintains that “students learn to write by writing. Guidance in the writing process and discussion of the students’ own work should be the central means of writing instruction.” **WRITE!** meets this recommendation by providing multiple writing opportunities. Books A and B each offer a minimum of 34 writing opportunities. Books C–H individually offer a minimum of 37 writing opportunities.

“Teaching writing well involves multiple teaching strategies that address both process *and* product, both form *and* content” (National Writing Project, p. 16). **WRITE!** supports this recommendation and, in turn, is supported by research regarding the instruction of composition and GUM skills in everyday classroom settings and in on-demand writing environments.

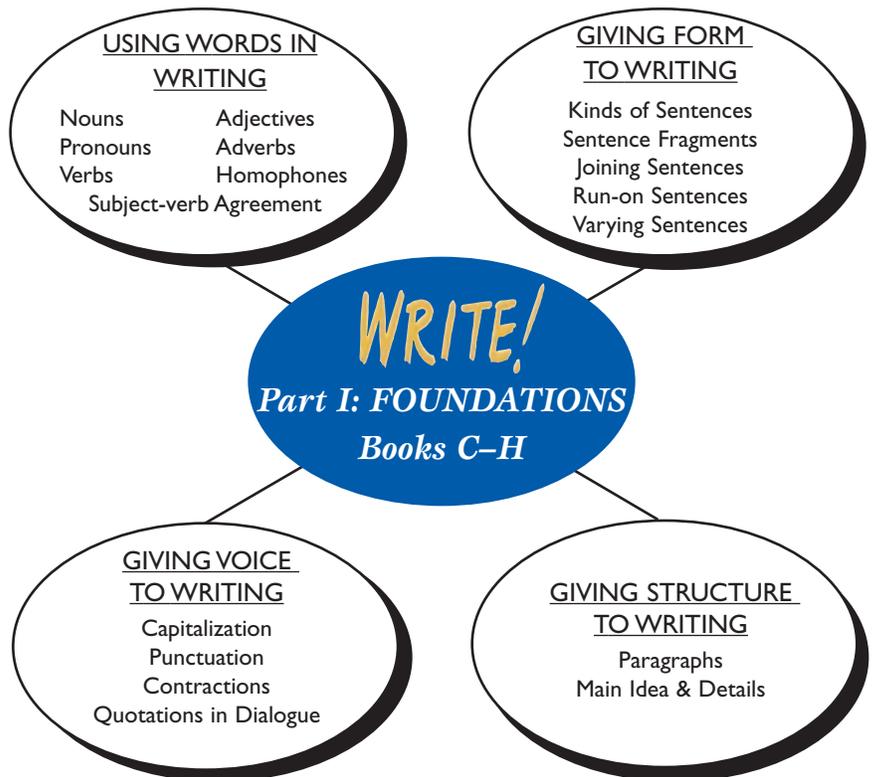
# What Are the Instructional Features of Part I: FOUNDATIONS?

## Is there a need for GUM instruction?

1. In 2005, the SAT test will add a new 800-point section in which students spend 25 minutes writing an essay and 25 minutes answering multiple-choice, GUM-skill questions.
2. According to the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Writing Assessment results, only 28% of grade 4 students and 31% of grade 8 students were at or above the “proficient” achievement standard.
3. An optional writing assessment is being added to the ACT college entrance and placement exam in 2004–2005. This assessment will be used to develop a new writing exam. Currently, 46% of graduating seniors are struggling with basic English skills, such as using punctuation correctly and using correct subject-verb agreement.
4. According to the National Commission on Writing in America’s Schools and Colleges, the employment rate of full-time writers is expected to increase faster than the employment rate of all other occupations over the next decade.

The Part I GUM lessons provide a foundation for the Part II writing lessons. The skills-based GUM lessons are presented within the context of writing: Using Words in Writing, Giving Form to Writing, Giving Voice to Writing, and Giving Structure to Writing. Within each section, students are introduced to GUM skills that will improve their writing. “. . . usage, punctuation, and other aspects of mechanics and sentence structure in the context of writing is considerably more effective than teaching usage and mechanics in isolation” (Weaver, 1996, p. 179). This is not a solitary finding. Eighty-five years of research point to the lack of transfer from isolated grammar instruction to language development (Simmons & Carroll, p. 371).

The final lesson in Part I focuses on proofreading, which fortifies the connection between GUM and writing.



*GUM skills are presented within the context of writing. Students learn how each GUM skill affects the meaning and clarity of writing.*

**LESSON 7**

## PRESENT, PAST, AND FUTURE VERBS

A **tense** is the form an action verb takes to show time. The most commonly used tenses are the **present tense, past tense, and future tense.**

**Present tense** shows that the action is **happening now** or **happens all the time.**

➔ Every day Beth **practices** on the piano.

**Past tense** shows that the action **has already happened.** To form the past tense of most verbs, add **ed**. If the verb ends in **e**, just add **d**.

➔ Last night Beth **practiced** for two hours.

**Future tense** shows that the action **will happen.** To form the future tense, add the word **will** before the main verb.

➔ Beth **will practice** again tomorrow.

A **linking verb** can also be in the present, past, or future tense.

▲

*In the **Think About** section, students learn language about language in order to discuss their writing with peers and teachers.*

Action and linking verbs can be in the **present, past, or future tense**. Add **d** or **ed** to most verbs to form the past tense. To form the future tense, add the word **will** before the verb.

Rule Box, Books C–H

**GLOSSARY OF WRITING AND TESTING TERMS**

On pages 59–60 are definitions of some terms found in **WRITE!**

**article:** nonfiction writing that appears in a newspaper, magazine, encyclopedia, or the Internet

**brainstorm:** to collect ideas by thinking of and listing all the possibilities; often used with groups

**characters:** the people or animals in a story

**closing paragraph:** the last paragraph in a longer piece of writing; sums up the most important ideas

**composition:** any writing in which ideas are presented in an organized way; word often used to describe a school writing assignment

**descriptive writing:** writing that uses sensory words to paint pictures for readers; may exist on its own as a paragraph or an essay or may be part of another type of writing

**dialogue:** the exact words spoken by the characters in a story

**draft:** one version of a piece of writing

**edit:** to improve a piece of writing

**essay:** a piece of writing in which ideas on a single topic are presented in an organized way

**expository writing:** writing that explains a topic or gives directions

**fact:** something that can be shown to be true

**fiction:** writing that comes from a person's imagination

**fictional narrative:** a story that the writer makes up

**grammar:** the way in which words are put together to give meaning to writing

**graphic organizer:** a chart or diagram that can help writers gather and sort information

**main idea:** the most important idea in a paragraph or a longer piece of writing

**metaphor:** a comparison between two things that does not use the word *like* or *as* but suggests instead that one thing is the other  
example: The wind made **chirras** of her checks.

**narrative:** writing that tells a true or an imaginary story

**nonfiction:** writing about real people, places, and things

**notes:** brief reminders, written in one's own words, of important information from another piece of writing

**opening paragraph:** a paragraph at the beginning of a longer piece of writing; it introduces the topic and gets readers' attention

**opinion:** what a person thinks or feels about a topic

**outline:** a type of graphic organizer that helps writers arrange the main ideas and supporting details of a topic

**paragraph:** a group of sentences about the same idea; the first line of a paragraph is always indented

**passage:** a written work

©Curriculum Associates, Inc. WRITE! Book E

▲

*Students become familiar with writing and assessment terminology with the aid of the glossary.*

To meet the needs of diverse classroom populations, **WRITE!** presents GUM skills in two ways: through reading and writing experiences and through skills-based practice activities.

**Think About:** This section of each Part I GUM lesson serves as a stimulus for students' prior knowledge of the GUM skill. It also provides an explanation of the skill and assistance in applying the skill. Interspersed throughout the section are definitions of GUM content-area vocabulary terms (GUM language). According to the National Reading Panel, content-area vocabulary instruction should be both direct and indirect in order to be effective (NICHD, p. 4-24). In Books B–H, direct vocabulary instruction occurs through the

definitional instruction given in the **Think About** section and in the **Rule** box. Indirect vocabulary

instruction occurs throughout the section. Teaching content-area vocabulary for writing (language about language) instruction is important (ATEG, 2002) because it gives teachers and students a common vocabulary for discussing GUM and writing.

The **Glossary of Writing and Testing Terms** is another vocabulary-building feature in the teacher guide for Books A–H. The glossary contains terms that often appear on writing assessments and are used in classroom discussions. “Testing vocabulary should be taught the way we would teach any specialized content language: by demonstrating its use in a meaningful context and modeling how we transfer that language to a new context” (Allen, p. 57). According to Johnson (2000), vocabulary words are learned from oral and written contexts—through listening and reading. Students working in **Part I: FOUNDATIONS** read and discuss writing vocabulary as part of their instruction. The glossary aids comprehension by providing clear definitional information.

Once students gain knowledge of the GUM vocabulary taught in the **Think About** section of each lesson, students continue their GUM learning through context learning and skills-based practice.

**STUDY A MODEL**

Read the jokes that Kyle and Amanda are telling. Notice the capital letters and punctuation marks.

Kyle asked, "Why did the puppy go to jail?"  
 "I have no idea," said Mandy.  
 Kyle exclaimed, "It was barking in a No Barking zone!"  
 "I have a joke for you," said Mandy. She smiled and asked, "What kind of stories do puppies like best?"  
 Kyle replied, "That's a tough one. What kind?"  
 "They like funny tales," Mandy answered.

In the first sentence, a comma separates the quotation from the words that tell who the speaker is. (Quotation marks do not go around these words.) The word *Why* is capitalized because it is the first word of the quotation.

A quotation can come before or after the words that name the speaker. In both cases, the speaker's exact words are followed by a punctuation mark and surrounded by quotation marks.

Students study a concrete example that shows how the specific GUM skill enables, clarifies, or enhances a writer's meaning.

**PRACTICE**

The verb in each sentence shows what is happening now. Circle the verb.

- The rabbit runs fast.
- The turtle walks down the street.
- The rabbit sleeps under a tree.
- The turtle wins the race.

LESSON 7

Level A

**PRACTICE**

**A Match each common noun with a proper noun.**

1. river	a. Boston Red Sox
2. state	b. Governor Lombardo
3. politician	c. Hudson River
4. country	d. Mt. Hood
5. team	e. Kansas
6. mountain	f. Ecuador

**B Read each sentence. Write the common and proper nouns that are in the sentence.**

- How did the Baltimore Ravens get their name?
- Several years ago, *The Baltimore Sun* held a contest.
- Fans in Maryland voted for their favorite name.
- People wanted the team to be called the Baltimore Ravens.
- The name comes from a famous poem called "The Ravens."
- A man from Baltimore named Edgar Allan Poe wrote the poem.

**C Read the paragraph. Write the 10 common nouns. Also write the 11 proper nouns that should be capitalized. Don't include a noun more than once.**

Last June, my class visited the plimoth plantation in plymouth, massachusetts. It's a reconstruction of the village settled by the pilgrims from england. Guides in costumes led us through the village. A man dressed as a native american showed us hobbitmooch's homesite, where a family of wampanoags once lived. Finally, we went aboard the mayflower II. The crew of the ship acted as though they were just about to land on the shores of america.

LESSON 7

Level E

Students begin their awareness of GUM usage through Practice Activities.

**Study a Model:** In this context-learning instructional piece, students read a short writing model that exemplifies the lesson's GUM skill. This type of critical reading clarifies for students and teachers how GUM affects a writer's meaning. "Meaning and conventions are connected. Help yourself and the children in your classroom to begin to question how the meaning of a text is enhanced by the use of conventions" (Graves, p. 197). Students analyze and discuss the writing model in terms of how the lesson's GUM skill enables, clarifies, or enhances the meaning of the writing. Once students have realized the impact that GUM makes on writing and communicating, they put into practice the GUM skill.

**Practice:** In Book A, students practice the GUM skill in a single practice activity. In Books B–H, students apply the GUM skill in three skills-based practice activities. Students progress from applying the GUM skill to single words, to individual sentences, and finally to paragraphs. According to Graves (1994), instruction and practice of GUM is important because "conventions help the writer understand his own thinking just as they help the reader to understand what the writer is trying to say" (p. 161). Graves goes on to say that students need to be aware of their progression in GUM usage. In *WRITE!*, the **Practice** activities foster students' awareness of their own incorrect or correct usage before they begin an independent writing activity.

**PRACTICE**

**A** Read each sentence. Write the sentence correctly using quotation marks.

1. Jessica asked, What kind of sandwich do you have?
2. Sara replied, I have a cheese sandwich.
3. I have a tuna sandwich, said Jessica.
4. Jessica added, I have an apple too.
5. I'll trade my orange for your apple, suggested Sara.
6. Yes, I'll trade, Jessica agreed.

**B** Read each sentence. Each one is missing a capital letter, a comma, or end punctuation. Write the sentence correctly.

1. Miles asked, "what are you looking for?"
2. Juanita asked, "What time is it"
3. "Let's eat" Deirdre suggested.
4. Kaitlin said, "It's hot outside"
5. "let's go swimming," Gabe suggested.
6. Amar shouted, "That's a great idea"

**C** Read the dialogue. Find the sentences in which capitalization or punctuation is missing. Write those sentences correctly.

Haley and Nate were waiting at the bus stop. It's cold today complained Haley.  
Nate rubbed his hands together to warm them up. I can see my breath, he said.  
Haley asked, where's the bus? She stomped her feet angrily.  
Nate looked up the street for the bus. He was so cold. He grumbled What a day to be late!

Always surround a speaker's exact words with quotation marks (" "). Capitalize the first word of a quotation. Use a comma (,) to separate a quotation from the words that name the speaker. Use a punctuation mark after the last word of a quotation but before the quotation mark.

**WRITE**

Write a dialogue between two people telling each other jokes. Look over your dialogue when you are done. Be sure you have capitalized and punctuated the quotations correctly.

Writing Tip  
Remember to use quotation marks only for words that are actually spoken.

- Mrs. Gale asked Luis, "Why are you late for school?"
- Mrs. Gale asked Luis why he was late for school. (no quotation marks needed)

LESSON 26

Students experience the effect that the GUM skill has on their writing by independently writing short pieces.

**Write:** Students conclude the lesson by creating their own piece of writing, which is in the same genre as the model presented earlier in the lesson. A **Writing Tip** in Books C–H strengthens the incorporation of the GUM skill into students' writing. "Traditional drill and practice will be the most meaningful to students when they are anchored in the context of writing assignments or the study of literary models" (ATEG, 2002).

Students may also refer back to the **Study a Model** and the **Practice** activity to review the use of the GUM skill in their writing. According to Schallert and Martin, modeling through class discussion allows students to "incorporate or borrow" particular words or phrases to make them their own. From the learning gained from discussion, students may then use the knowledge internally. Students demonstrate their understanding of GUM skills through the short writing piece.

In **Part I: FOUNDATIONS**, students experience instructional exposure to GUM in the context of writing. In **Part II: MODELS**, students experience a reinforcing exposure to GUM instruction in the context of writing models. In Books C–H, students analyze several rubric-scored writing models before they create their own piece of writing. Page references encourage students to turn back to Part I GUM lessons for skills reinforcement or strengthening. Throughout **WRITE!**, GUM instruction is interwoven in the context of writing.

*Students study and practice grammar, usage, and mechanics in the context of writing. Students gain valuable realizations of how GUM can affect the meaning of their writing.*

# What Are the Instructional Features of Part II: MODELS?

*“Writing on demand is a real-life skill. Throughout their life, in and out of school, students will be required to write under a restricted time frame: a test, a writing sample during a job interview, a memo at work” (Routman, p. 217).*

The screenshot shows a lesson page for 'FICTIONAL NARRATIVES'. It includes a definition of a fictional narrative, a sample writing prompt: 'Write a story about a mysterious incident.', and instructions to read the narrative in response to the prompt and then read the Writing Tips.

Fictional Narrative Prompt

The screenshot shows a lesson page for 'EXPOSITORY ESSAYS'. It includes a definition of an expository essay, a sample writing prompt: 'Write an essay explaining how to help wildlife in your area.', and instructions to read the expository essay written in response to the prompt and then read the Writing Tips.

Expository Essay Prompt

*Practice with responding to writing prompts prepares students for on-demand writing.*

Throughout Part II, students read and analyze rubric-scored genre-specific models and then go on to create their own writing in the genre. Part II employs rubric-based instruction because rubric assessment is commonly used in classroom settings and in standards-based testing situations.

Through the **WRITE!** lessons, students become familiar and comfortable with rubric terminology and applications, and they develop strong self-evaluation skills. Students can bring their knowledge and skills to any classroom or testing situation.

To aid students in meeting today’s writing requirements, the Part II lessons incorporate the following instructional features:

- on-demand writing prompts
- collaborative learning and peer modeling
- self-evaluation practice (Books A and B)
- rubric-based instruction (Books C–H)

## ON-DEMAND WRITING PROMPTS

In the **WRITE!** program, students must write about topics or prompts that are chosen for them. According to Chandler-Olcott and Mahar, providing students with practice of on-demand topics is necessary for several reasons.

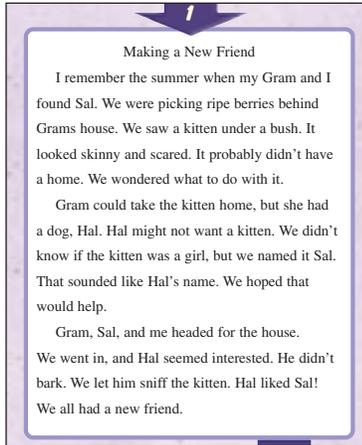
1. Students must respond to on-demand writing prompts on state and national standardized tests.
2. Students cannot explore a genre as a means of self-expression if they are not aware of the genre. Teachers need to introduce and guide students to genres that are not self-selected.
3. Students will be challenged by the task of attaching their voice, tone, and ideas to topics that are not self-selected in order to make them their own.
4. Students will encounter on-demand writing topics in the workplace and other social contexts outside of school.

## WRITING INSTRUCTIONS

Now it is your turn to write instructions.  
Use the prompt.

Write instructions that tell how to make  
a healthy snack.

Writing Prompt, Book A



Peer Writing Model, Book C

**WRITE!** empowers students with self-confidence by providing anonymous, peer writing models to analyze before participating in collaborative work with peers.

*“Given psychological safety and the sense of being supported as a learner, the student is more likely to feel confident that he or she is capable of engaging successfully in the learning experiences offered. And this in turn promotes motivation, empowerment, and other associated characteristics that are critical for learning” (Weaver, p. 161).*

Students in grades 1 and 2 will be facing on-demand writing situations in their near future. In **WRITE!** Books A and B, primary-grade students are given writing prompts that are tailored to their interests. The topics reflect what these students value in their worlds (Indrisano & Squire, p. 237). In Books A–H, students practice on-demand writing with time restrictions in Part II **Prepare for a Test**.

## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND PEER MODELING

“Other students’ writing is the most powerful model of all. Kids think, *A kid just like me wrote this. I can do this too*” (Routman, p. 221). **WRITE!** provides rubric-scored writing models with sample peer comments for students to read and analyze in Books C–H.

Collaboration between peers is an extrinsic motivation to write well. Students who work collaboratively are active and engaged learners. While analyzing peers’ writing is a valuable learning experience, students often resist having to work with one another. Collaboration amongst peers is a complicated event because students may be “influenced by the social concerns, relationships, and energy among students themselves” (Dyson & Freedman, p. 971). **WRITE!** helps to reduce this possible resistance to collaborative learning. Students work first with anonymously written models and comments before they go on to actual peer assessments. The anonymously written pieces have no social risks attached to them. As students’ confidence increases, their apprehension about working collaboratively should decrease.

Another benefit from collaborative learning is active learning. “Peer response can be another effective means for participation and engagement, as long as students are given the necessary skills and knowledge to respond critically to one another’s work. Peer response helps students take responsibility for the quality of the work and can support a climate for high standards and expectations in writing” (National Writing Project, p. 82). Students are actively engaged in the lesson as they apply their critiquing skills.

## SELF-EVALUATION PRACTICE

In Books A and B, students practice using self-evaluation skills. Self-evaluation skills provide students with the first response to their writing. According to Graves in *A Fresh Look at Writing*, students must be able to evaluate their own writing before they can pass it on to an audience. “Having a topic but not the skill to reread your own work produces an enormous vacuum” (p. 223).

In **WRITE!** Books A and B, students gain valuable practice by rereading their writing and by completing the Checklist and the Edit and Proofread Checklist in each lesson. **WRITE!** follows Graves’s recommendation that the elements of writing should be broken down into manageable units. **WRITE!** does this by exploring only one writing genre in each lesson and by including self-evaluation checklists in each lesson. Students read, think, and evaluate their writing element by element. This self-evaluation process provides the feedback students need to read their writing objectively.

Teachers also have the option of presenting the more sophisticated self-evaluation checklist in the teacher guide for Books A and B. All writing elements are listed; however, they are presented in one checklist instead of two, as in the student book.

Self-evaluation is a skill that carries over into more advanced skills. The writer’s checklists in Books A and B are an introduction to rubrics, the type of evaluation tool used in Books C–H.

## RUBRIC-BASED INSTRUCTION

Books C–H use rubrics as assessment tools. A rubric is also provided in Books A and B for more advanced students. A rubric is a guide, usually presented as a chart, that identifies and describes various levels of performance on any given assignment. The evaluated components aid in determining average, above average, or below average performance in a specific or general manner. The components that are used to evaluate a piece of writing include grammar, usage, and mechanics; organization; voice; and form (Glencoe, 2003).

Checklist	
I wrote about my favorite food.	_____
I used describing words to paint a colorful picture.	_____
Details make my picture clear.	_____

Checklist, Books A and B

EDIT AND PROOFREAD	
Now it's time to check your writing for errors. Use this checklist to help you.	
Edit and Proofread Checklist	
I used adjectives correctly.	_____
I used exact adjectives.	_____
I used verbs correctly.	_____
I began each sentence with a capital letter.	_____
I indented the first word of the paragraph.	_____

Edit and Proofread Checklist, Books A and B

▲  
*Students gain self-evaluation skills in Books A and B through editing and proofreading checklists.*

### USING A RUBRIC TO SCORE EXPOSITORY ESSAYS

This rubric is based on a point scale of 1 to 4. It was used to score the expository essays on pages 108–111. Use this rubric to remember what is important in expository essays.

<p><b>A score of 4 means that the writer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>connects the writing directly to the prompt.</li><li>almost always uses the correct forms of words.</li><li>almost always uses capitalization and punctuation correctly.</li><li>almost always uses clear and complete sentences and includes variety in sentences.</li><li>includes effective words.</li><li>creates a title that relates directly to the topic.</li><li>introduces the topic clearly at the beginning.</li><li>creates a clear beginning, middle, and ending.</li><li>explains the topic with at least three main ideas, along with supporting details.</li><li>puts the ideas in an order that creates a strong and clear essay.</li><li>begins a new paragraph for each change of idea.</li></ul>	<p><b>A score of 2 means that the writer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>connects the writing to the prompt in a general way.</li><li>uses some incorrect forms of words and some incorrect capitalization or punctuation.</li><li>includes little variety in sentences and uses some run-on sentences or sentence fragments.</li><li>includes mostly simple words.</li><li>creates a title that relates somewhat to the topic.</li><li>presents the topic within the essay but uses too few main ideas or details to explain the topic fully.</li><li>creates a weak beginning, middle, or ending.</li><li>puts the ideas in a weak or choppy order.</li><li>makes some paragraphing errors.</li></ul>
<p><b>A score of 3 means that the writer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>connects the writing to the prompt.</li><li>usually uses the correct forms of words.</li><li>usually uses capitalization and punctuation correctly.</li><li>usually uses clear and complete sentences and includes some variety in sentences.</li><li>includes some effective words.</li><li>creates a title that relates to the topic.</li><li>introduces the topic toward the beginning.</li><li>creates a beginning, middle, and ending.</li><li>explains the topic with some main ideas, along with some supporting details.</li><li>puts the ideas in an order that makes sense.</li><li>usually begins a new paragraph for each change of idea.</li></ul>	<p><b>A score of 1 means that the writer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>does not successfully connect the writing to the prompt.</li><li>uses many incorrect forms of words and often uses incorrect capitalization or punctuation.</li><li>includes almost no variety in sentences and uses several run-on sentences or sentence fragments.</li><li>includes only simple words.</li><li>creates a poor title or has no title at all.</li><li>includes the topic in the essay but uses too few main ideas or details to explain the topic.</li><li>creates an unclear beginning, middle, or ending.</li><li>puts the ideas in an unclear order.</li><li>makes paragraphing errors.</li></ul>

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*In Books C–H, students are introduced to writing rubrics, a tool commonly used to assess writing in classroom and testing situations.*

*“Rubrics are a useful tool for focusing on specific dimensions of student writing samples. Holistic scoring techniques allow teachers to consider students’ writing in-depth because ratings are given to a number of different dimensions” (Hiebert and Frey, p. 612).*

Rubrics for writing help students interpret the quality of their work. As students analyze and score writing models they see how the different components of the writing rubric work together to create an effective piece of writing. “Many writing teachers have found that engaging students as active participants in the assessment process is an effective classroom practice; it enables them to assume more responsibility for their learning and brings clarity to what often appears to students as arbitrary or inconsistent standards about good writing” (National Writing Project, p. 82).

**WRITE!** fully embodies this belief. Students analyze writing models using rubric-based guidelines. Students also use rubrics to guide and assess their own writing and that of their peers. The **WRITE!** checklists and rubrics allow students to gauge their writing to specific standards. Teachers’ sharing of rubrics with students tends to “empower students, they urge students to become active participants in the writing process, and they substantiate the connections among teaching, learning, and assessment” (Soles, 2001).

***WRITE! uses instructional features that have been proven to be effective in engaging, supporting, and preparing students for on-demand and classroom writing.***

## What Instructional Strategies Are Used in PART II: MODELS?

*“Writers move fluently from whole to part and back again, shaping and defining their overall purpose as they develop specific examples and refine passages. They are problem-solvers, deciding as they go along how to tackle the many different challenges that arise” (NCTE, p. 36).*

*“The process of writing develops higher-order thinking skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, and interpreting” (National Writing Project, p. 22).*

Learning to write clearly and effectively is a challenging task for students of all abilities. “. . . writing is best understood as a complex intellectual activity that requires students to stretch their minds, sharpen their analytical capabilities, and make valid and accurate distinctions” (National Commission on Writing in America’s Schools and Colleges, p. 13). Because writing is a complex process to learn, **WRITE!** incorporates several strategies to involve students in a comprehensive learning experience.

- Students use higher-order thinking skills to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the writing models. GUM instruction is reinforced.
- Students strengthen their writing skills through extended instruction of writing genres. Application of genre features to students’ writing is strengthened.
- Students use process-oriented writing to create their own written piece that synthesizes the combined instruction of GUM skills and writing genres. Higher-order thinking skills are practiced.

### **HIGHER-ORDER THINKING SKILLS**

NCTE notes that writers move fluently between whole to part and back again, acting as problem solvers to create clear, effective writing. **WRITE!** helps students to become fluent, effective writers by involving them in a problem-solving process that uses higher-order thinking skills.

Once they have analyzed anonymous, peer writing models, students enter a new stage in which they build a writing piece, intrinsically applying their problem-solving and analytical skills.

**USING GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS**

Before you write, use graphic organizers. These charts and diagrams can help you think about, gather, and arrange information for your description. The person who wrote the description of a desert hike on page 76 might have used a Senses Chart, such as the one below.

<b>Sight</b>	green cactus, gray shrubs, wren, hummingbird, lizard, blue sky, purple mountains, pink and white rock
<b>Sound</b>	footsteps crunching, wren chirping
<b>Taste</b>	sweet orange slices
<b>Touch</b>	sandy soil, warm and grainy rock
<b>Smell</b>	wet concrete

*A Senses Chart helps writers gather sensory details about their subject. These details can then be used to write the description.*

A Sensory Words Web is another way writers can gather sensory words. Read the description of the desert hike on page 76 again. If you had written this description, how would you have filled in this web? Two sensory words have already been entered in the Sound oval. Fill in the other ovals with sensory words used to describe the desert hike.

*A Sensory Words Web helps writers think of the best words to create clear, vivid images in readers' minds.*

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Students use higher-order thinking skills when developing graphic organizers.

**THINK ABOUT YOUR WRITING**

You have written a description! Think about what you have learned. Then complete these sentences.

The best part of my description is \_\_\_\_\_

The hardest part of writing the description was \_\_\_\_\_

The detail in my description that I like most is \_\_\_\_\_

The next time I write a description, I want to describe \_\_\_\_\_

Think About Your Writing Form, Book B

**Score:** 1

Read the description and the comments that follow. Think about why this description scored a 1.

I like to come here. The beach look so good. Water and sand and lots of colors. Surfing is a cool sport, the air smells salty. Out their I see sails. Big waves go in and out. Sea gulls dive into the cold water. I knowed it would feel good. I like this place. I dont want to leave

**PARTNER COMMENTS**

It was hard to tell at first just what you were describing. You should have started the paragraph by naming the place. Your details had no order, and most sentences were too short. One sentence made no sense at all because it was about your opinion of surfing.

3

Partner Comments, Book E

Self-assessment and reflective activities are steps that lead students to become better writers.

“Writing is how we teach students complex skills of synthesis, analysis, and problem-solving. These skills will serve them well throughout life” (Ackerman, 2003). “Writing that requires students to manipulate ideas leads to less memorization and to more in-depth understanding. This is critical for learning, as memory for ideas is long term, as are understandings about relationships among ideas and concepts” (Farnan & Dahl, p. 1001).

In order to complete the specific sections of each **WRITE!** lesson, students must apply higher-order thinking skills. Thus, students practice these analytical skills before they begin to write independently.

**Graphic Organizers:** “When students create and discuss a graphic representation of information, they reread, talk, reason, and see relationships that were not obvious before. Graphic organizers aid writing by supporting planning and revising” (Harrington, 1998). According to Indrisano & Squire, by grades 1 and 2 students are transitioning from oral and symbolic planning of their stories to written plans. Graphic organizers ease primary-grade students into the practice of planning their writing. In upper grades, students continue to use graphic organizers to arrange information for writing.

**Partner Comments and Think About Your Writing Form:** In Part II of **WRITE!**, students learn to interpret and evaluate the writing of others. Modeled commentaries guide students to make objective and respectful evaluations of others’ writings. This scaffolded reflection leads students toward independent reflection of their own writing, a critical step in students’ writing development (Dyson, p. 973). Students self-evaluate their writing by completing the **Think About Your Writing** form. “To develop as writers, students also need the opportunity to articulate their own awareness and understanding of their processes in learning to write. Self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses, strategies used to improve writing, and their progress and goals for writing can be used by students to demonstrate their learning” (National Writing Project, p. 82).

**SUMMARIES**

**LESSON 36**

One way to know whether you have understood something you have read is to write a **summary**. A summary is a short piece of writing that tells the most important points of a longer piece of writing.

In a summary of nonfiction, you write the most important ideas. In a summary of fiction, you write about the most important characters and events. Here is a sample prompt for writing a summary of a nonfiction passage.

Read the passage "Lion Prides" on page 127. Then write a one-paragraph summary of the passage.

Read the passage on page 127. Next, read the summary of the passage below. It was written in response to the prompt. Then read the Writing Tips to learn more about summaries.

**Writing Tips**

- With a long passage that you are going to summarize, look for details that answer *who, what, when, where, why, and how* questions. These can guide you to the most important points in the reading passage.
- Sometimes nonfiction reading passages have words or headings printed in special type. You can use these as guides to the most important ideas.
- Most summaries should be one paragraph long.
- In a summary, use your own words whenever possible. It is all right to use some key terms from the main passage. However, don't copy large portions of text from the main passage.
- Keep the summary simple.
- Write the important ideas in the same order as they appear in the main passage.
- Don't add any new ideas to the summary.

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Knowing how to write a summary is a skill that can be applied to all curriculum areas.

**RESEARCH REPORTS**

**LESSON 37**

Writing to give information is called **expository** writing. When you see test prompts for expository writing, you must use facts and examples that you already know. In school, however, you often write **research reports** about real people, places, or things. These reports require you to search for information in books, in magazines, and on the Internet. Here are some tips for writing them.

**TOPIC**

Your teacher will sometimes assign a specific **topic** for a research report. At other times, the topic may be a general subject. You will then have to narrow it to a more specific topic. Doing this will enable you to write a detailed and focused report.

Suppose you are assigned the general subject *rodents*. Start narrowing that subject by making a list of any rodents that you think of. This is called *brainstorming*. Your list might include the following:

- tree squirrels
- beavers
- ground squirrels
- mouse-like rodents
- porcupines

Think about which type of rodent interests you the most. If you choose ground squirrels, which species will you write about? Chipmunks? Woodchucks? Prairie dogs? Consider how much information you will be able to find about your topic.

If you decide to write about prairie dogs, think of questions that you want the report to answer. This will be the topic.

- How did prairie dogs get their name?
- How many kinds of prairie dogs are there?
- What is their habitat and how do prairie dogs survive there?
- What are the social habits of prairie dogs?

**SOURCES**

Once you've narrowed your topic and have identified some questions to research, find **reliable sources** for information. You might use nonfiction books, encyclopedias, researched magazine articles, and the Internet. Be careful when researching information on the Internet. Anyone can put information on a website, whether it is accurate or not. To make sure your information is correct, only use websites that are maintained by well-known organizations.

**NOTES**

As you read your sources, take notes. Use your own words and don't worry about writing complete sentences. Here are a few ways to take notes.

- Use graphic organizers.
- Write the notes on index cards.
- Write the notes in a notebook, using a different page for each main idea.

Once you have all of your information, organize your notes for the body of your research report. An **outline** is one of the best ways to organize information for a report.

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**WRITE!** offers students the opportunity to expand their writing repertoire with a research paper.

**Summaries and Research Reports:** In Books C–H, two Part II writing lessons, Summaries and Research Reports, extend students' learning by involving higher-order thinking skills. These lessons go beyond what students need to know for responding to writing prompts commonly found on state and national assessments.

Knowing how to write a summary has relevance to every student in that the ability transfers to an effective study strategy for all content areas. “. . . the power of writing a summary lay in the fact that it requires readers to evaluate information and make decisions regarding what represents important ideas and what are supporting details or descriptive details in a way that reconstructs the main points clearly and logically” (Farnan & Dahl, p. 1001). Farnan and Dahl continue by stating that the ability to write summaries seems to improve retention and recall, as well as reading comprehension. In the Summaries lesson, students are instructed to look for main ideas, relevant details in an original source, and to write using their own words. Students who use these recommended techniques will be able to write strong summaries (Devine & Kania, p. 947).

**WRITE!** offers a lesson on writing research reports, a skill often not explored in classrooms today. “The Neglected ‘R’: The Need for a Writing Revolution” report by the National Commission on Writing in America’s Schools and Colleges states that nearly 66 % of high-school seniors do not write a three-page paper as often as once a month for their English teachers. The statistics for writing longer reports are even more discouraging for other curriculum areas.

**LESSON 37**

## RESEARCH REPORTS

Writing to give information is called **expository** writing. When you see test prompts for expository writing, you must use facts and examples that you already know. In school, however, you often write **research reports** about real people, places, or things. These reports require you to search for information in books, in magazines, and on the Internet. Here are some tips for writing them.

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Think about which type of rodent interests you the most. If you choose ground squirrels, which species will you write about? Chipmunks? Woodchucks? Prairie dogs? Consider how much information you will be able to find about your topic.

If you decide to write about prairie dogs, think of questions that you want the report to answer. This will be the topic.

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- Use graphic organizers.
- Write the notes on index cards.
- Write the notes in a notebook, using a different page for each main idea.

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### Research Report Lesson

  
*Students have the opportunity to apply their higher-order thinking skills in more challenging writing venues.*

**PART II: MODELS**

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Writing Genres, Books A and B

**PART II: MODELS**

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Writing Genres, Books C–E

**PART II: MODELS**

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Writing Genres, Books F–H

In Books C–H of *WRITE!*, students are guided through the process of writing a nonfiction research report. This process involves the higher-order thinking skills of analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and synthesis. “Nonfiction is an important genre for helping children and ourselves to know an area particularly well. In this sense, nonfiction is probably the most usable kind of writing for school and a lifetime of work” (Graves, p. 313).

Students read suggestions about how to narrow a topic, how to choose a topic, and how to choose reliable resources for valid and current information. *WRITE!* approaches a topic in a question format rather than as a thesis statement. For elementary and middle school students this “is a healthy alternative to the thesis statement, since we actually live in an exploratory world rather than a world of definitive answers . . .” (Nelson & Kinneavy, p. 794). Students actively use these higher-order thinking skills with the following instructional strategies.

### GENRE INSTRUCTION IN THE CONTEXT OF WRITING

“Writers incorporate what they have learned about language, structure, and style from the texts they have encountered as readers” (Langer, p. 122). Langer goes on to state that students share and transfer their knowledge of genres to their own writing by incorporating literary techniques. In grades 1 and 2, students are most familiar with stories and the basic elements of stories.

*WRITE!* Books A and B build on students’ awareness of story structure by providing two narrative writing lessons. Strickland and Feeley (2003) state that elementary-school children may lack in awareness of other types of genre because of their gravitation toward the story genre. This unawareness also has a negative effect on students’ abilities to revise their writing. “When children are not used to writing reports, poetry, or fiction, they do not know how to reread their work, and revision is difficult for them” (Graves, p. 237). Thus, *WRITE!* Books A and B also present two expository genres to expand students’ writing experiences.

Now you get to write your own description. Use the prompt below.

**Write a description of a place that you dislike.**

**When You Write Your Description**

- Think about** what you want to write. Close your eyes and picture the place you want to describe. Ask yourself some questions.
  - Why do I dislike this place?
  - What do I see there?
  - What do I hear?
  - What can I touch, and what does it feel like?
  - Can I smell or taste anything?

Use graphic organizers to gather and sort your information.

- Write** your first draft. Name the place you are describing at the beginning of the description. Then describe the place with sensory words and details that make the place seem real. Use comparisons if they help your description.
- Read** your draft. Use the checklist that your teacher will give you to review your writing.
- Edit** your description until it paints a clear picture of the place you're describing.
- Proofread** your description one last time.
- Write** a neat copy of your description and give it to your partner.

**Work with a Partner**

- Read** your partner's description.
- Score** your partner's description from 1 to 4, using the rubric on page 82. Then complete the Partner Comments sheet that your teacher will give you. Tell what you liked about the description and what you think would make it better.
- Switch** papers.
- Think about** your partner's comments and make changes that will improve your description.
- Write** a neat final copy of your description.

### Writing Activity

Students use the process approach to writing.

Students:

- complete a graphic organizer to plan their writing.
- write a first draft and then self-evaluate using a writer's checklist.
- edit the first draft.
- proofread.
- rewrite a clean copy to exchange with a peer.
- work with a peer.
- use a checklist or rubric to score the peer's writing in Books C–H.
- reflect upon suggested changes.
- write the final draft.
- have the option to publish their work.

## PROCESS-ORIENTED WRITING

“The process approach to writing places the learner and the learner’s needs at the center of interactive learning among teachers and students. Learning is seen as a socially situated activity enhanced in functional and meaningful literacy contexts” (Harris, p. 3). Harris goes on to explain that “writing conferences, peer collaboration, mini-lessons, modeling, sharing, and classroom dialogue are all essential components of process-oriented writing.” **WRITE!** uses many of these techniques to explicitly instruct students on the strategies and tools they should use while writing, whether they are in a classroom setting or in a testing situation. Once students have completed their analysis of the rubric-scored writing models in Books C–H, they create a piece of writing based on the lesson’s genre. Process-oriented writing is also applied in Books A and B. In grades 1 and 2, students use a variety of subprocesses to create a piece of writing: paying attention to conventions, reading, organizing, editing, and revising. According to Farnan and Dahl (2003), in the intermediate grades, students use the following strategies to write: generating and organizing ideas, formulating meaning, evaluating, and revising. Students apply these cognitive processes in each book level of **WRITE!**

In **WRITE!**, students use the graphic organizers to plan their ideas. Graphic organizers help students visualize their thinking. Once they see their ideas on paper, they develop a sense of ownership for their work. This sense of ownership acts as intrinsic motivation for students to complete the writing activity.

Then students write a draft, self-evaluate through checklists, revise, proofread, and rewrite. The process of writing is further enhanced when students work with partners. By this point in the lesson, students have developed peer-editing skills by studying models of teacher and peer comments presented earlier. Using the constructive feedback of peers, students reflect upon suggested changes to their draft. Students then write their final draft.



### Making Connections

- ◆ Draw a picture to go with your fictional narrative.
- ◆ Think about characters you have read about in other stories. Why is it easy to remember some characters?
- ◆ A song can tell a story too. What songs can you think of that tell stories?

Book B



### Making Connections

- ◆ Play a Writing Directions game with a friend. Each of you should write a set of directions explaining how to get from your home to the local library (or another building in your community). Then switch papers and make suggestions on how the directions could be clearer. You also can play this game by challenging each other to write directions explaining how to play a favorite sport.
- ◆ Watch a TV news report. Then record in your journal the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* details that explain the topic of the news report.
- ◆ In your journal, write a short essay explaining why certain holidays and celebrations are important to your family.

Book E



*Students complete each writing lesson by making text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections.*

**Making Connections:** The final section of each lesson is Making Connections. “. . . many educators have begun to emphasize the value of authentic conversations in the classroom, discussions that allow wonder (Townsend, 1991), that encourage student-to-student as much as student-teacher exchanges (Hammer, 1995), and that invite students to connect their personal knowledge and experiences with that of others through discovering and articulating links between and across texts (text-to-text); links between texts and themselves (text-to-self), and connections from texts to life in a larger sense (text-to-world) (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997)” (Schallert & Martin, p. 40). In **WRITE!**, students reflect upon and discuss topics and ideas developed in each lesson. Making these connections demonstrates to students that their writing has application and value beyond the classroom setting.

## Summary

Learning to write is a complex process. Many instructional strategies play significant roles in developing student writers. Active participation and student engagement are driving forces of effective instruction. **WRITE!** engages students through activities that require higher-order thinking skills. GUM instruction in the context of writing helps students transfer GUM skills to their own writing. Students gain self-evaluation and self-reflection skills through teacher and peer modeling. Instruction of genres and their features add to students’ knowledge base for classroom and testing applications. These instructional threads weave together to create a program that prepares students to become independent and proficient writers.

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