

Teaching Writing

Reasons Why Teaching Writing Is Important

- Writing is a powerful way to record and share God's goodness, truth, and beauty. Writing gives students skills to articulate their faith in powerful ways.
- God values the written word and the telling of stories—this is shown all throughout Scripture.
- Writing helps students understand truth. When they can explain something through writing, they will truly understand it. Whether it's a deep theological concept or a retelling of something learned in history class, the act of writing forces students to develop a deeper understanding of a topic.
- Our world is broken, and it desperately needs skilled writers to speak into the brokenness with a message of hope. In order for this to happen, we need to build writing skills in our students to enable them to share life and light through their words.
- An age of technology and AI threatens originality, creativity, and imagination. Creative writing classes give students opportunities to exercise their imaginations at school.

General Advice and Teaching Tips

- Emphasize flow over perfection when students are writing rough drafts. The goal of a first draft is output, and stopping to fix grammar or spelling works against that goal. If students are unsure of how to spell words, emphasize that phonetic spelling is perfectly acceptable.
- Consider that intense editing of grammar and spelling should not be the norm. There are already entire class periods every day dedicated to those skills. In writing class, students should be allowed to focus on the skill of *writing*. Require students to read back over what they've written to make sure it says what they wanted it to say and catch the obvious errors. However, they should not need to feel the need to edit and rewrite most pieces, especially not at the expense of creative writing experiences.
- Suggestions for helping struggling writers:
 - Fold a paper in halves or thirds—this can eliminate the overwhelming feeling of a big blank page.
 - Guide your students in brainstorming activities before they write. This means they don't need to complete the demanding tasks of idea generation and writing simultaneously.
 - Showing students an example of the type of writing you'd like them to produce can provide a model for the less creative.
 - Play instrumental music while students are writing. Studies have shown that for many people, background music is effective in focusing their creative energy.
 - Ask students questions about what they are writing to help them better visualize what they are trying to describe. Some students may benefit from drawing a picture first, then describing what they have drawn.

- Read this article for more suggestions and more details about the above suggestions: [Do the Write Thing, Part 4: Engaging with Reluctant Writers - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Make writing time a priority. When writing is ordinary and routine, students learn to anticipate the class and mentally prepare themselves for it.
- Remember that writing is personal. Each person has their own style and unique ability. Encourage the best in each student but allow them their own expression.
- Don't overgrade writing assignments. Focus your feedback with a mixture of encouragement (noting places that are written well) and suggestions for improvement ("try this . . .") Be sure to give feedback on the actual writing, not just mechanics like grammar and spelling.
- When grading is necessary, a rubric is an invaluable tool for assessing writing assignments which are, by nature, subjective. For guidance in creating and using rubrics, check out these resources:
 - [How Do I Assess Subjective Projects? Rubrics for Creative Writing - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [Grading with Rubrics in the English Classroom - The Dock for Learning](#)

Recommended Resources: Lower grades

- Advice on how to structure a writing class: [Do the Write Thing, Part 3: How to Structure a Writing Lesson - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Writing prompts, activities, and assignment ideas:
 - [Ten Creative Ways to Promote Writing - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [Three Writing Games - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [A Dozen Writing Leads - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [Lower Elementary Creative Writing Lesson Plans - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [Ideas for Writing Lessons in the Middle Grades - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [Introduction to Poetry Writing - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [Creative Writing in the Middle School Classroom - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [Three Writing Games - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Examples of brainstorming activities and revision guides:
 - [Creating Confident Writers - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [Visualizing Writing: How Graphic Organizers and Prewriting Make a Hard Process Easier - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Integrating writing into all subjects:
 - [Do the Write Thing, Part 2: Integrating Writing into All Subjects - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [Writing Assignments Connected to the Curriculum - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Journaling:
 - [Journal Writing 101 - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [Short, Fun, and Often: Using Journals to Spark Creative Composition - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [First-Grade Journals - The Dock for Learning](#)
- A writing curriculum review: [A Review for Creative Writing Curriculum - The Dock for Learning](#)

Recommended Resources: Upper grades

- Advice on teaching how to write poetry: [Don't Make These Ten Mistakes in Your Poetry - The Dock for Learning](#)
- A guide for writing biography: [Writing Biography - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Personal engagement with writing process: [Who Are You-As a Writer? - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Writing assignments as a response to literature: [Developing Writing Assignments Based on Reading - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Integrating writing into all subjects:
 - [Do the Write Thing, Part 2: Integrating Writing into All Subjects - The Dock for Learning](#)
 - [Writing Assignments Connected to the Curriculum - The Dock for Learning](#)

Sources

- Why Teach Writing by Andrew Yoder [Why Teach Writing? - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Building Writing Skills by James Martin [Building Writing Skills - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Creative Writing by Ed Bontrager [Creative Writing - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Do the Write Thing Part 1: Why Writing Matters by Meghan Brubaker [Do the Write Thing, Part I: Why Writing Matters - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Creating Enthusiasm for Writing by Carolyn Martin [Creating Enthusiasm for Writing - The Dock for Learning](#)