

# Writer's Workshop



## How to Get Started: Setting Up Writer's Workshop

Writer's Workshop is an approach to writing in which students are in charge of their own writing. The teacher facilitates the learning through a mini-lesson at the beginning of writing time. The goal of Writer's Workshop is to get students to develop the same thought processes as real writers.

### **To set up Writer's Workshop consider the following questions:**

- Where will the central location be for students to access supplies?
- What kind of supplies will you provide for Writer's Workshop?
- How will you and students track their progress through the writing process?
- Where will you conference with individuals or small groups?
- Where will peer conferencing occur?
- What notebooks, folders, or resources will students use?
- Will you have a visual students can see while you are conferencing so they know not to interrupt you?
- Will you keep a portfolio of students' published pieces throughout the year?
- What will the expectations be during each step of the writing process?
- What does Writer's Workshop look like in your classroom?
- What does Writer's Workshop sound like in your classroom?

### **Writing Workshop Format**

- Mini-lesson (5-10 minutes) – focus is on procedures, process, or craft
- Independent writing (25-30 minutes)
- Individual/small group student conferences
- Peer conferences as needed
- Sharing (5-10 minutes)

### **We have found the following things useful:**

- Correction tape for Interactive Writing
- Chart Paper
- Chart Markers
- Date stamp with stamp pad
- Stapler

- File crate in which to put hanging files for student work
- Trays in which to put different types of assembled blank books (make books that are both portrait and landscape, lined and unlined)
- Writing Workshop pocket folder or notebook for each student
- Illustrating tubs filled with colored pencils and marker
- Unit of Study folders for the teacher to insert lesson plans and ideas for the particular unit

#### **What Matters Most**

- Time – make writing a priority in your schedule.
- All parts are important.
- Stamina – children should be able to write for a sustained period. This will increase over time (especially in the lower grades).
- Expectations – children need to know that they need to stick with it and finish a piece of writing.
- You have to know something about a subject to write about it.
- We are always teaching about something.
- Sharing student books from former students is a powerful way to illustrate craft.