



Just Write Family Resources by Grade Band

Simple ways to build confidence and writing stamina at home



Writing at home should feel useful, personal, and low pressure. Parents, caregivers, foster families, and other trusted adults do not need to teach a lesson or grade the writing. A few minutes of talking, noticing, and writing together can strengthen confidence and help ideas grow.

Campaign Connection

At school, students receive regular opportunities to write through Just Write: 10 minutes, every class, every day. Ten minutes is the shared goal, but not every writer begins there. At home, families can help students build stamina gradually by starting with a successful amount of time and increasing it as writing becomes more comfortable.

Helpful Reminders for Families

- Talk first, in any language. Conversation helps writers find and organize ideas.
- Focus on the message before spelling, handwriting, grammar, or punctuation.
- Let your student do the writing. You can listen, ask questions, and offer encouragement.
- Offer a topic from a book, observation, interest, or imagined situation. No one should be required to share private experiences.
- Praise something specific, such as a clear idea, useful detail, strong word, or thoughtful revision.
- Contact your student's educator when you have questions about an assignment or support your student may need.

A Simple Home Writing Routine

1. Help your student choose one small, familiar topic.
2. Invite your student to talk, sketch, or jot down ideas before writing.
3. Encourage your student to write for a few focused minutes.
4. Ask your student to reread the writing and add one detail, explanation, or stronger word.
5. Invite your student to share or celebrate the writing, but only if they would like to.

K-2

What Writing May Look Like

Writing may include drawing, dictating, labeling, forming letters, sounding out words, and writing simple sentences. The message matters more than perfect spelling or neatness.

Ways to Help at Home

- Read and enjoy alphabet books together. Notice letters, sounds, and words while keeping the focus on enjoying the book.
- Invite your student to draw and label something from the day, a book, or the world around them.
- Make useful lists together, such as groceries, items to pack, or things needed for an activity.
- Write a short note, card, sign, or message for a family member or trusted adult.
- Let your student say the idea first, in any language. Then help your student hold the idea while drawing, dictating, or writing.
- Praise the message before mentioning a letter, word, or ending mark. Ask, “Can you tell me more?”

A 10-Minute Home Writing Routine

1. Talk with your student for about 2 minutes about one familiar idea.
2. Invite your student to draw, label, dictate, or write for about 5 minutes.
3. Ask your student to reread or explain the writing and add one detail.
4. Celebrate one thing your student did well.

Build Writing Time Gradually

Begin with a writing time your student can manage successfully, even if that is 3 to 5 minutes. When the writing time begins to feel comfortable, add about 1 minute every few sessions. Drawing, labeling, dictating, and writing all count as writing practice while your student gradually works toward 10 focused minutes.

Conversation and Writing Starters

- What was one interesting part of your day?
- What did you notice outside today?
- Can you draw and tell me about your favorite part of the book?
- If you could be any animal for a day, which one would you choose? Why?
- What is something you made, built, or helped with?
- What would you like to remember about today?

Keep It Low Pressure

Avoid asking your student to erase and rewrite an entire page. One encouraging question or one small teaching point is enough.

Grades 3-5

What Writing May Look Like

Writers are developing connected sentences and short paragraphs. They are learning to organize ideas, explain their thinking, and add reasons, facts, examples, and details.

Ways to Help at Home

- Ask your student to explain how they solved a problem or what they learned, then invite your student to write the explanation in a few sentences.
- Keep a family notebook where anyone can add a sentence, question, drawing, or memory.
- Write directions for a familiar game, craft, recipe, or household task.
- Invite your student to write a short review of a book, show, game, meal, or activity.
- Write a real letter, card, email, or thank-you message together.
- After your student rereads, ask one helpful question: "What detail could you add so I understand this better?"

A 10-Minute Home Writing Routine

1. Help your student choose one clear topic and talk about it together for about 2 minutes.
2. Invite your student to jot down two or three ideas and write for about 6 minutes.
3. Encourage your student to reread the writing and add one reason, fact, example, or detail.
4. Invite your student to share, but only if they would like to.

Build Writing Time Gradually

Begin with about 5 to 6 focused writing minutes. As writing becomes easier, add 1 or 2 minutes at a time until your student can stay with an idea for about 10 minutes.

Conversation and Writing Starters

- What is something you learned this week that surprised you?
- How would you explain your favorite game to someone new?
- What is a place you know well? What makes it memorable?
- What is one helpful habit for school, home, or a team?
- Which character, person, or animal would you like to learn more about?
- What is a goal you have, and what is one step you could take?

Keep It Low Pressure

Do not let spelling corrections take over the conversation about ideas. Keep it low pressure.

Grades 6-8

What Writing May Look Like

Writers are explaining, comparing, analyzing, and supporting claims across subjects. They are also developing a stronger voice and learning to use evidence clearly.

Ways to Help at Home

- Ask your student to explain an idea aloud before writing. Talking can help organize the first draft.
- Invite your student to write a brief review of a book, show, game, product, performance, or activity.
- Ask your student to compare two strategies, characters, inventions, places, or ideas and explain an important difference.
- Encourage your student to write about a topic of interest, such as sports, music, art, technology, nature, cooking, or building things.
- Use real purposes for writing, such as directions, a request, a thank-you message, a plan, or an explanation.
- Respond as a reader. Ask, “What makes you think that?” or “What evidence helped you reach that conclusion?”

A 10-Minute Home Writing Routine

1. Help your student choose a topic or question and identify the main point.
2. Invite your student to talk through ideas or jot notes for about 2 minutes, then write for about 6 minutes.
3. Encourage your student to reread the writing and add evidence, an explanation, or a connection.
4. Ask your student to identify one idea that became clearer through writing.

Build Writing Time Gradually

If 10 minutes feels difficult, begin with 6 to 8 focused minutes. Increase the time by 1 or 2 minutes after several successful sessions until 10 minutes feels manageable.

Conversation and Writing Starters

- What is something you understand better now than you did last week?
- What topic or hobby could you teach someone else about?
- Which two things would be interesting to compare? Why?
- What is one claim you could make about a book, game, or activity?
- What would you improve about a project you completed?
- What is a realistic goal you are working toward, and what is your plan?

Keep It Low Pressure

Offer support without taking over. Your student should make the final decisions about the ideas, wording, and revisions.

Grades 9-12

What Writing May Look Like

Writers are developing independent, subject-specific writing for school, college, careers, and community life. They are learning to synthesize sources, explain reasoning, and communicate with different audiences.

Ways to Help at Home

- Ask about a topic being studied and invite your student to explain the main idea aloud before writing.
- Encourage a running list of useful ideas, quotations, questions, evidence, or topics worth exploring.
- Invite real-world writing, such as a professional email, request for information, application response, resume bullet, or thank-you note. You may also encourage your student to select a topic of interest.
- Ask a genuine reader question about something your student wrote rather than focusing only on errors.
- Discuss how evidence supports a conclusion: "Which source or example is strongest, and why?"
- Connect writing to future goals, including college, training programs, employment, entrepreneurship, and civic or community participation.

A 10-Minute Home Writing Routine

1. Help your student clarify the purpose, audience, and main point.
2. Invite your student to plan or talk through ideas for about 2 minutes, then write for about 6 minutes.
3. Encourage your student to reread the writing and strengthen one part, such as the reasoning, evidence, organization, or word choice.
4. Help your student identify one useful next step without trying to make everything perfect.

Build Writing Time Gradually

Aim for 10 focused minutes. If that is not yet comfortable, begin with a shorter successful interval and add 1 or 2 minutes over time. The goal is sustained thinking and writing, not rushing to fill the time.

Conversation and Writing Starters

- What idea from something you read, viewed, or heard stayed with you? Why?
- What evidence has helped you understand a topic more clearly?
- How would you explain a complex idea to someone unfamiliar with it?
- What decision are you weighing, and what information would help?
- What skill would be useful for one of your future goals?
- What professional email or message could you practice writing?

Keep It Low Pressure

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