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This document contains the TOC and examples of sections of the book.

Table of contents Accessibility

Part 1: New Expectations: Today's Language Arts Classroom

1. Learning and the Language Arts
2. Teaching and Assessing Language Arts
3. Emergent Literacy

Part 2: The Big Six: Listening, Talking, Reading, Writing, Viewing, And Visually Representing

4. Oral Language: Listening and Talking
5. Written Language: Reading and Writing
6. Visual Language: Viewing and Visually Representing

Part 3: Instructional Practices: Implementing the Standards

7. Building Vocabulary
8. Comprehending and Composing Stories
9. Investigating Nonfiction
10. Exploring Poetry
11. Language Tools: Grammar, Spelling, and Handwriting
12. Putting It All Together

Examples of Chapter 3 Content (Emergent Literacy)

Table of contents

Contents | Bookmarks | Recent

Chapter 2: Teaching and Assessing Language Arts 26

Chapter 3: Emergent Literacy 57

- Introduction: Emergent Literacy 57
- Fostering Children's Interest in Written Language 61
- Young Children Become Readers 74
- Young Children Learn to Write 79
- Summing Up 83
- Evaluate & Reflect: Assess Your Learning 84
- References 85

Part 2 The Big Six: Listening, Talking, Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Visually Representing 85

Chapter 4: Oral Language: Listening and Talking 86

Chapter 5: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116

Chapter 6: Visual Language: Viewing and Visually Representing 149

Part 3 Instructional Practices: Implementing the Standards 183

Chapter 7: Building Vocabulary 184

Chapter 8: Comprehending and Composing Stories 216

Chapter 9: Investigating Nonfiction 250

Young Children Learn to Write

Many young children become writers before they're 5 years old; others are introduced to writing during kindergarten (Schulze, 2006). Young children's writing development follows a pattern similar to their reading development: emergent writing, beginning writing, and fluent writing. In emergent writing, children make scribbles to represent writing. At first, the scribbles appear randomly on a page, but with experience, children line up the letters or scribbles from left to right and from top to bottom. Children also begin to "read," or tell what their writing says. The second stage is beginning writing, and it signals children's growing awareness of the alphabetic principle. Children use **invented spelling** to represent words, and as they learn more about phoneme–grapheme correspondences, their writing approximates conventional spelling. They move from writing single words to writing sentences and experiment with capital letters and punctuation marks. The third stage is fluent writing, when children write in paragraphs and vary their writing according to genre. They use mainly correct spelling and other conventions of written language, including capital letters and punctuation marks.

Opportunities for writing begin on the first day of school and continue daily throughout the primary grades, regardless of whether children have already learned to read or write letters and words. Children often begin using a combination of art and scribbles or letterlike forms to express themselves (Ditzel, 2000). Their writing moves toward conventional forms as they apply concepts that they're learning about written language.

Figure 3–6 presents two samples of young children's writing. The first is an excerpt from a first grader's reading log; it's an example of beginning-stage writing. The child used invented spelling to list the animal characters that appear in *The Mitten* (Brett, 2009); the fifth animal from the top is a badger. The second sample is a page from a first grader's dinosaur book. The text reads, "No one ever saw a real dinosaur," and this child used a capital letter to begin the sentence and a period to mark the end. This sample shows the start of the transition from beginning to fluent writing.

Table of contents

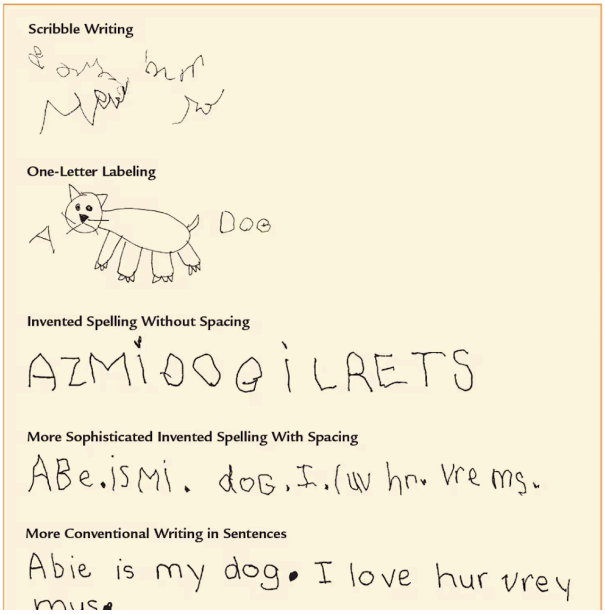
Contents | Bookmarks | Recent

- Chapter 2: Teaching and Assessing Language Arts 26
- Chapter 3: Emergent Literacy 57
  - Introduction: Emergent Literacy 57
  - Fostering Children's Interest in Written Language 61
  - Young Children Become Readers 74
  - Young Children Learn to Write 79
  - Summing Up 83
  - Evaluate & Reflect: Assess Your Learning 84
  - References 85
- Part 2 The Big Six: Listening, Talking, Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Visually Representing 85
- Chapter 4: Oral Language: Listening and Talking 86
- Chapter 5: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
- Chapter 6: Visual Language: Viewing and Visually Representing 149
- Part 3 Instructional Practices: Implementing the Standards 183
- Chapter 7: Building Vocabulary 184
- Chapter 8: Comprehending and Composing Stories 216
- Chapter 9: Investigating Nonfiction 250
- Chapter 10: Exploring Poetry 285
- Chapter 11: Language Tools: Grammar, Spelling, and Handwriting 316
- Chapter 12: Putting It All Together 353

Interactive Writing

Teachers use interactive writing to model conventional writing (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000; Tompkins & Collom, 2004). Children and the teacher collaborate on constructing the text to be written and then write it together. Teachers reinforce concepts about written language as they focus children's attention on individual words and on sounds within words. This procedure grew out of the Language Experience Approach, and conventional writing is used so that everyone can read the completed text.

Figure 3–7 One Child's "Kid Writing"



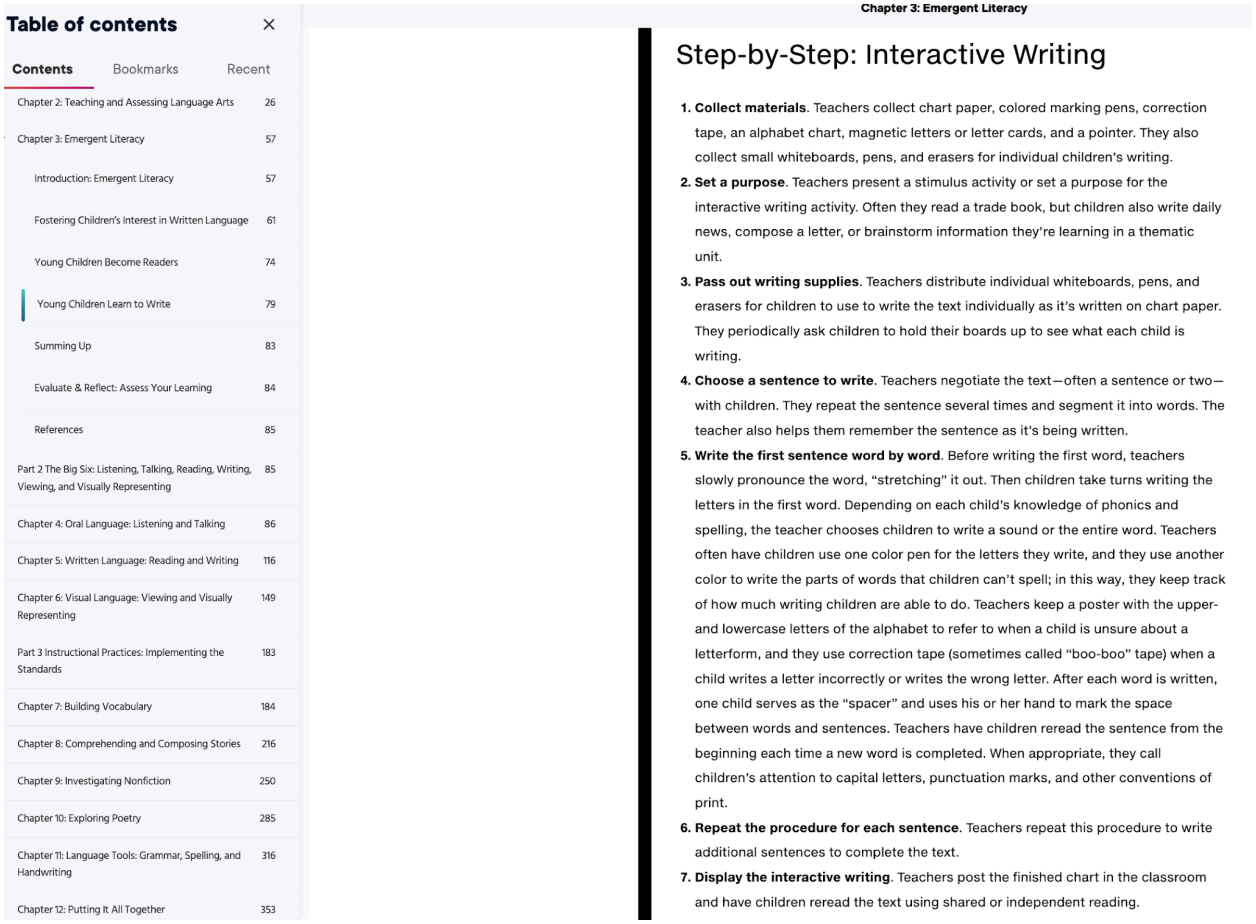


Table of contents

Contents | Bookmarks | Recent

Chapter 2: Teaching and Assessing Language Arts 26
Chapter 3: Emergent Literacy 57
Introduction: Emergent Literacy 57
Fostering Children's Interest in Written Language 61
Young Children Become Readers 74
Young Children Learn to Write 79
Summing Up 83
Evaluate & Reflect: Assess Your Learning 84
References 85
Part 2 The Big Six: Listening, Talking, Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Visually Representing 85
Chapter 4: Oral Language: Listening and Talking 86
Chapter 5: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
Chapter 6: Visual Language: Viewing and Visually Representing 149
Part 3 Instructional Practices: Implementing the Standards 183
Chapter 7: Building Vocabulary 184
Chapter 8: Comprehending and Composing Stories 216
Chapter 9: Investigating Nonfiction 250
Chapter 10: Exploring Poetry 285
Chapter 11: Language Tools: Grammar, Spelling, and Handwriting 316
Chapter 12: Putting It All Together 353

Step-by-Step: Interactive Writing

1. **Collect materials**. Teachers collect chart paper, colored marking pens, correction tape, an alphabet chart, magnetic letters or letter cards, and a pointer. They also collect small whiteboards, pens, and erasers for individual children's writing.
2. **Set a purpose**. Teachers present a stimulus activity or set a purpose for the interactive writing activity. Often they read a trade book, but children also write daily news, compose a letter, or brainstorm information they're learning in a thematic unit.
3. **Pass out writing supplies**. Teachers distribute individual whiteboards, pens, and erasers for children to use to write the text individually as it's written on chart paper. They periodically ask children to hold their boards up to see what each child is writing.
4. **Choose a sentence to write**. Teachers negotiate the text—often a sentence or two—with children. They repeat the sentence several times and segment it into words. The teacher also helps them remember the sentence as it's being written.
5. **Write the first sentence word by word**. Before writing the first word, teachers slowly pronounce the word, "stretching" it out. Then children take turns writing the letters in the first word. Depending on each child's knowledge of phonics and spelling, the teacher chooses children to write a sound or the entire word. Teachers often have children use one color pen for the letters they write, and they use another color to write the parts of words that children can't spell; in this way, they keep track of how much writing children are able to do. Teachers keep a poster with the upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet to refer to when a child is unsure about a letterform, and they use correction tape (sometimes called "boo-boo" tape) when a child writes a letter incorrectly or writes the wrong letter. After each word is written, one child serves as the "spacer" and uses his or her hand to mark the space between words and sentences. Teachers have children reread the sentence from the beginning each time a new word is completed. When appropriate, they call children's attention to capital letters, punctuation marks, and other conventions of print.
6. **Repeat the procedure for each sentence**. Teachers repeat this procedure to write additional sentences to complete the text.
7. **Display the interactive writing**. Teachers post the finished chart in the classroom and have children reread the text using shared or independent reading.

Examples of Chapter 5 Content (Written Language: Reading and Writing**)**

Contents Bookmarks Recent

Language Arts: Patterns of Practice, Ninth Edition
Gail Tompkins

Welcome i
Part 1 New Expectations: Today's Language Arts Classroom xvi
Chapter 1: Learning and the Language Arts 1
Chapter 2: Teaching and Assessing Language Arts 26
Chapter 3: Emergent Literacy 57
Part 2 The Big Six: Listening, Talking, Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Visually Representing 85
Chapter 4: Oral Language: Listening and Talking 86
Chapter 5: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
Introduction: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
The Reading Process 122
The Writing Process 131
Summing Up 146
Evaluate & Reflect: Assess Your Learning 147
References 148

Table of contents

Contents Bookmarks Recent

Language Arts: Patterns of Practice, Ninth Edition
Gail Tompkins

Welcome i
Part 1 New Expectations: Today's Language Arts Classroom xvi
Chapter 1: Learning and the Language Arts 1
Chapter 2: Teaching and Assessing Language Arts 26
Chapter 3: Emergent Literacy 57
Part 2 The Big Six: Listening, Talking, Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Visually Representing 85
Chapter 4: Oral Language: Listening and Talking 86
Chapter 5: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
Introduction: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
The Reading Process 122
The Writing Process 131
Summing Up 146
Evaluate & Reflect: Assess Your Learning 147
References 148

The Writing Process

The focus in the writing process is on what students think and do as they compose; it's writer centered. The five stages of the writing process are *prewriting, drafting, revising, editing*, and *publishing*; the components of each stage are shown in Figure 5–5. The labeling and numbering of the stages don't mean, however, that the writing process is a linear series of neatly packaged categories: Research has shown that the process involves recurring cycles, and labeling is only an aid to identifying and discussing writing activities (Barnes, Morgan, & Weinhold, 1997; Graves, 1994; Perl, 1994). In the classroom, the stages merge and recur as students write.

Figure 5–5 The Writing Process

Stage 1: Prewriting

Students engage in rehearsal activities.

Students identify the audience and the purpose of the writing activity.

Students choose an appropriate genre or form based on audience and purpose.

Stage 2: Drafting

Students write a rough draft.

Students mark their writing as a rough draft.

Students emphasize content rather than mechanics.

Stage 3: Revising

Students reread their own rough draft.

Students share their writing in revising groups.

Students participate constructively in discussions about classmates' writing.

Students make changes in their compositions to reflect comments from classmates and the teacher.

Students make substantive rather than minor changes.

Stage 4: Editing

Students proofread their own compositions.

Students help proofread classmates' compositions.

Students increasingly identify and correct their own mechanical errors.

Students meet with the teacher for a final edit.

Stage 5: Publishing

Students make the final copy of their writing, often using word processing.

Students publish their writing in an appropriate form.

Students sit in the author's chair to share their writing.

Table of contents

Contents | Bookmarks | Recent

Language Arts: Patterns of Practice, Ninth Edition
Gail Tompkins

- Welcome i
- Part 1 New Expectations: Today's Language Arts Classroom xvi
- Chapter 1: Learning and the Language Arts 1
- Chapter 2: Teaching and Assessing Language Arts 26
- Chapter 3: Emergent Literacy 57
- Part 2 The Big Six: Listening, Talking, Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Visually Representing 85
- Chapter 4: Oral Language: Listening and Talking 86
- Chapter 5: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
  - Introduction: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
  - The Reading Process 122
  - The Writing Process 131
  - Summing Up 146
  - Evaluate & Reflect: Assess Your Learning 147
  - References 148
- Chapter 6: Visual Language: Viewing and Visually Representing 149
- Part 3 Instructional Practices: Implementing the Standards 183
- Chapter 7: Building Vocabulary 184
- Chapter 8: Comprehending and Composing Stories 216
- Chapter 9: Investigating Nonfiction 250
- Chapter 10: Exploring Poetry 285
- Chapter 11: Language Tools: Grammar, Spelling, and Handwriting 316
- Chapter 12: Putting It All Together 353
- Glossary 383
- Index 387

Proofreading

Video Example: Introducing Writing Workshop



Watch this video that shows writing is an interactive process. What's the students' role in this process?

Students proofread their rough drafts to locate and mark possible errors. **Proofreading** is a unique type of reading in which students read slowly, word by word, hunting for errors rather than reading quickly for meaning. Concentrating on mechanics is difficult because our natural inclination is to read for meaning. Even experienced proofreaders often find themselves reading for meaning and overlooking errors that don't inhibit meaning. It's important, therefore, to take time to explain proofreading and show how it differs from regular reading.

To demonstrate proofreading, the teacher projects a piece of student writing on a whiteboard. The teacher reads it several times, each time hunting for a particular type of error. During each reading, the teacher reads the composition slowly, softly pronouncing each word and touching the word with a pen to focus attention on it. The teacher circles possible errors as they're located.

Errors are marked or corrected with special proofreaders' marks. Students enjoy using these marks, the same ones that adult authors use. Proofreaders' marks that students can learn to use in editing their writing are presented in Figure 5–8. Editing checklists help students focus on particular types of errors. Teachers develop checklists with two to six items appropriate for the grade level. A first grade checklist, for example, might contain only two items—one about capital letters at the beginning of sentences and another about periods at the end. In contrast, a middle grade checklist might have items such as using commas in a series, indenting paragraphs, capitalizing proper nouns, and spelling homonyms correctly. Teachers often revise the checklist during the school year to focus students' attention on skills that have recently been taught.

Figure 5–8 Proofreaders' Marks



Table of contents

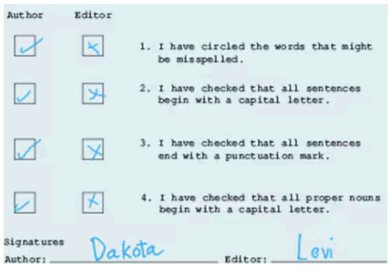
Contents | Bookmarks | Recent



Language Arts: Patterns of Practice, Ninth Edition
Gail Tompkins

Welcome i
Part 1 New Expectations: Today's Language Arts Classroom xvi
Chapter 1: Learning and the Language Arts 1
Chapter 2: Teaching and Assessing Language Arts 26
Chapter 3: Emergent Literacy 57
Part 2 The Big Six: Listening, Talking, Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Visually Representing 85
Chapter 4: Oral Language: Listening and Talking 86
Chapter 5: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
Introduction: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
The Reading Process 122
The Writing Process 131
Summing Up 146
Evaluate & Reflect: Assess Your Learning 147
References 148
Chapter 6: Visual Language: Viewing and Visually Representing 149
Part 3 Instructional Practices: Implementing the Standards 183
Chapter 7: Building Vocabulary 184

Figure 5–9 **A Third grade editing Checklist**



▸ Expand/collapse description

Correcting Errors

After students proofread their compositions, they correct the errors they've found individually or with an editor's assistance. Some errors are easy to correct, some require use of a dictionary, and others involve instruction from the teacher. It's unrealistic to expect students to locate and correct every mechanical error in their writing. Not even published books are error free! Once in a while, students change a correct spelling and make it incorrect, but they correct far more errors than they create.

Editing can end after students and their editors correct as many mechanical errors as possible, or after students conference with the teacher for a final edit. When mechanical correctness is crucial, this conference is important. Teachers proofread the composition with the student, and they make the remaining corrections together, or the teacher makes checkmarks in the margin to note errors for the student to correct independently.

Stage 5: Publishing

Students bring their compositions to life by publishing them. When they share their writing with classmates, other students, parents, and community members, students come to think of themselves as authors. Students are involved in these activities during this stage:

Table of contents

Contents | Bookmarks | Recent



Language Arts: Patterns of Practice, Ninth Edition
Gail Tompkins

- Welcome i
- Part 1 New Expectations: Today's Language Arts Classroom xvi
- Chapter 1: Learning and the Language Arts 1
- Chapter 2: Teaching and Assessing Language Arts 26
- Chapter 3: Emergent Literacy 57
- Part 2 The Big Six: Listening, Talking, Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Visually Representing 85
- Chapter 4: Oral Language: Listening and Talking 86
- Chapter 5: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
  - Introduction: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
  - The Reading Process 122
  - The Writing Process 131
  - Summing Up 146
  - Evaluate & Reflect: Assess Your Learning 147
  - References 148
- Chapter 6: Visual Language: Viewing and Visually Representing 149
- Part 3 Instructional Practices: Implementing the Standards 183
- Chapter 7: Building Vocabulary 184

The Writer's Craft

Vicki Spandel (2012, 2013) and her colleagues at Education Northwest examined student writing to identify the traits of effective writing. Through their research, they identified these traits: *ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency*, and *conventions*. When students learn about these traits, they grow in their understanding of what effective writing looks like and develop a vocabulary for talking about writing. In a multiyear study, Culham (2003) found that teaching students about these traits improves the quality of their writing.

Trait 1: Ideas. Ideas are the essence of the message (Culham, 2003). When ideas are well developed, the writing is clear and focused. Effective details elaborate the big ideas and create images in readers' minds. As students examine this trait, they develop these abilities:

- Choosing original and interesting ideas
- Narrowing and focusing ideas
- Choosing details to develop an idea
- Using the senses to add imagery

Esperanza Rising (Ryan, 2000), the story of a girl and her mother who flee from Mexico and find work in California as migrant workers, demonstrates how effective authors develop ideas. The title emphasizes the theme: The main character's name is Esperanza, the Spanish word for *hope*, and she rises above her difficult circumstances. At the beginning, Pam Muñoz Ryan paints a vivid picture of Esperanza's comfortable life on her family's ranch in Mexico, and later in the story, she creates a powerful contrast as she describes Esperanza's harsh existence in a migrant labor camp. As the story ends, Esperanza remains hopeful, telling her good friend Isabel never to be afraid of starting over.

Trait 2: Organization. Organization is the internal structure of a composition; its function is to enhance the central idea. Spandel (2001) explains that organization is putting "information together in an order than informs, persuades, or entertains" (p. 39). The logical pattern of the ideas varies according to genre; stories, for example, are organized differently than nonfiction or poetry. As students learn about organization, they develop these abilities:

- Using structural patterns in their writing
- Crafting leads to grab the reader's attention
- Using transition words to link ideas together
- Writing satisfying endings

Louis Sachar's award-winning novel *Holes* (2008) is a well-organized story about a hapless boy

Table of contents

Contents | Bookmarks | Recent



Language Arts: Patterns of Practice, Ninth Edition
Gail Tompkins

- Welcome i
- Part 1 New Expectations: Today's Language Arts Classroom xvi
- Chapter 1: Learning and the Language Arts 1
- Chapter 2: Teaching and Assessing Language Arts 26
- Chapter 3: Emergent Literacy 57
- Part 2 The Big Six: Listening, Talking, Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Visually Representing 85
- Chapter 4: Oral Language: Listening and Talking 86
- Chapter 5: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
  - Introduction: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
  - The Reading Process 122
  - The Writing Process 131
  - Summing Up 146
  - Evaluate & Reflect: Assess Your Learning 147
  - References 148
- Chapter 6: Visual Language: Viewing and Visually Representing 149
- Part 3 Instructional Practices: Implementing the Standards 183
- Chapter 7: Building Vocabulary 184

Linking the Six Traits to the Writing Process

The writing process is a cyclical series of activities that students use as they draft and refine their writing, but it doesn't specify how to make writing better. That's where the six traits come in: Students apply what they've learned about the traits to improve the quality of their writing, particularly during the revising and editing stages (Culham, 2003).

As students reread their rough drafts, they can check that their writing exemplifies each of the traits. Teachers can develop rubrics focusing on one or more traits that students can use to self-assess their writing. Students also ask classmates in a revising group for feedback about how they might improve their sentence fluency, organization, or another trait. The six traits provide another reason for students to carefully proofread their rough drafts. They learn that they correct mechanical errors and check paragraphing to improve the readability of their compositions. Students also think about the design for their published compositions. They decide how to arrange the text on the page in order to make their writing more understandable, and with word processing, students can make their writing look very professional.

Engaging English Learners: How Do Teachers Adapt the Writing Process?

English learners use the same writing process that native English speakers use, but it can be more challenging because ELs are learning to speak and write English at the same time. Teachers support ELs during each stage of the writing process, but as students become more fluent in English, they pay special attention to assisting students with English vocabulary words and sentence structure.

Stage 1: Prewriting. ELs identify words to express their ideas, use the words in sentences, and organize their ideas. Students often use drawing as a rehearsal activity, and then teachers work with ELs to brainstorm ideas and vocabulary words. Teachers also assist ELs in organizing their ideas using a series of pictures or a diagram. Finally, students often "talk out" their compositions with a classmate before beginning to write.

Stage 2: Drafting. Teachers scaffold English learners by helping them turn their ideas into phrases and sentences, and they reassure students that spelling and other mechanical skills aren't important during drafting.

Table of contents

Contents | Bookmarks | Recent



Language Arts: Patterns of Practice, Ninth Edition
Gail Tompkins

- Welcome i
- Part 1 New Expectations: Today's Language Arts Classroom xvi
- Chapter 1: Learning and the Language Arts 1
- Chapter 2: Teaching and Assessing Language Arts 26
- Chapter 3: Emergent Literacy 57
- Part 2 The Big Six: Listening, Talking, Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Visually Representing 85
- Chapter 4: Oral Language: Listening and Talking 86
- Chapter 5: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
  - Introduction: Written Language: Reading and Writing 116
  - The Reading Process 122
  - The Writing Process 131
  - Summing Up 146
  - Evaluate & Reflect: Assess Your Learning 147
  - References 148
- Chapter 6: Visual Language: Viewing and Visually Representing 149
- Part 3 Instructional Practices: Implementing the Standards 183
- Chapter 7: Building Vocabulary 184
- Chapter 8: Comprehending and Composing Stories 216
- Chapter 9: Investigating Nonfiction 250
- Chapter 10: Exploring Poetry 285
- Chapter 11: Language Tools: Grammar, Spelling, and Handwriting 316
- Chapter 12: Putting It All Together 353
- Glossary 383
- Index 387

Reading and Writing Are Reciprocal Processes

Reading and writing are reciprocal; they're both constructive, meaning-making processes. Researchers have found that more reading leads to better writing, and more writing has the same effect on reading (Spivey, 1997). Not surprisingly, they've also learned that integrating instruction improves both reading and writing (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991). It's likely that students use the same kind of thinking in both reading and writing.

The reading and writing processes have comparable activities at each stage (Butler & Turbill, 1984); Figure 5–10 shows this comparison. For example, notice the similarities between the activities in the third stage of reading and writing—responding and revising, respectively. Fitzgerald (1989) analyzed these activities and concluded that they draw on similar processes of author-reader-text interactions. The same kind of analyses can be made for activities in the other stages as well.

Figure 5–10 A Comparison of the reading and Writing Processes

Stage	What Readers Do	What Writers Do
Stage 1	**Prereading** Readers use knowledge about • the topic • reading • literature • language systems Readers' expectations are cued by • previous reading/writing experiences • genre • purpose for reading • audience for reading Readers preview the text and make predictions.	**Prewriting** Writers use knowledge about • the topic • writing • literature • language systems Writers' expectations are cued by • previous reading/writing experiences • genre • purpose for writing • audience for writing Writers gather and organize ideas.
Stage 2	**Reading** Readers • use word-identification strategies • use comprehension strategies • monitor reading	**Drafting** Writers • use spelling strategies • use writing strategies • monitor writing • create meaning