Building Writers

Structured Practice to Build Core Writing Skills

TEACHER RESOURCE: BOOK D
3rd Grade

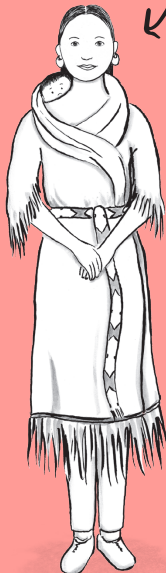LEARNING **Without Tears**

D

Name:

Building Writers
Structured Practice to Build Core Writing Skills

"When I was a general, I led an army."

Sacajawea helped the Lewis and Clark Expedition.
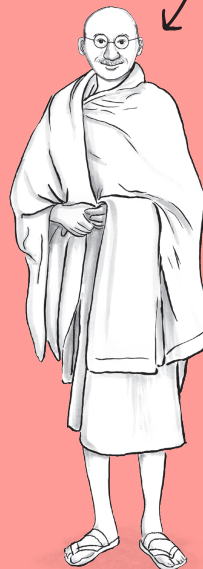
Gandhi was an inspirational leader.

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Get to Know BUILDING WRITERS

By Learning Without Tears

Workbook Design

Building Writers is designed with both teachers and young writers in mind. Activities in student books provide age-appropriate and engaging writing practice. Each activity can be easily incorporated into a writing block as independent writing or as whole group practice to meet your students' varying needs.

*Building Writers* provides carefully scaffolded opportunities for students to grow as independent writers. Our activities have easily accessible and child-friendly resources to ensure writers at all stages are supported as they learn the building blocks of successful writing. The activities are intuitive and engaging, with exercises specifically designed to provide students a framework to develop core writing skills.
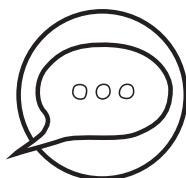
Our books were created with classroom teachers, who understand the need for easily accessible, effective classroom resources. Our workbooks provide an abundance of high quality writing activities all in one place, saving teachers time and energy searching for materials.
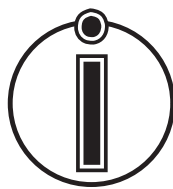
narrative   information   opinion

Curriculum Design

With many years of experience developing successful and effective curricula, we understand how children learn. Without proper practice and training, we wouldn't expect our students to run a marathon. The same is true for achieving the rigorous, long-term writing standards expected of students. Children require repeated practice with small chunks of essential writing skills and strategies as they learn to compose strong sentences, paragraphs, and eventually more. *Building Writers'* activities are purposefully designed to equip students with these crucial building blocks for effective writing. Our activities focus on refining and mastering core skills vital for quality writing in the three most common writing types for elementary age students.

Each workbook's developmentally designed content gradually prepares students for independent writing with focus on narrative, information, and opinion writing types. In each section, students are introduced to the key elements of each writing type in a purposefully organized sequence. At the end of each section, specifically chosen templates, familiar from previous activities, are available for further practice. These templates can be adapted in order to apply the learned writing skills in each section to curriculum-specific content, student-chosen topics, or other individualized subjects.

                                      *Building Writers D: **Teacher Resource***

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Successful writing begins with a solid foundation of handwriting and writing mechanics. *Building Writers* is a companion to your writing curriculum and is not intended as a replacement for handwriting. Students must learn letter, word, and sentence skills from handwriting instruction in order to effectively apply those skills to their writing with automaticity.

Writing is the most frequently used mode through which students are expected to communicate and demonstrate their understanding of learned concepts[1]. In order to become effective writers, students need opportunities to practice writing skills and strategies daily. *Building Writers* is an easily accessible resource for practicing and refining core writing skills to support students as they become effective communicators.

An early writing foundation begins with forming good habits. We teach strong writing habits through modeling, repetition, and exposure to robust examples. *Building Writers* provides the framework for learning essential writing habits through repeated practice and mastery of core skills employed by strong writers.

Drawing is an integral part of planning and preparing to write, especially in the early stages of literacy. The black and white pages in our workbooks are clean and clear, with simple illustrations that invite children to color and draw. Students are encouraged to communicate through both illustrations and writing as they develop their ability to plan, express, and clarify their ideas.

Building Writers' structured practice centers around grade-level specific, commonly used words and phrases, key vocabulary, and core strategies and skills. Children practice these skills through a variety of cross-curricular content within each main writing genre: narrative, information, and opinion. Our step-by-step models and carefully structured pages gradually release independence to students while boosting their confidence as writers.

Building Writers reinforces practice of previously taught writing skills, and is not intended as a replacement for writing instruction, but rather as a tool to support your writing block. Familiar writing templates are provided in every *Building Writers'* book and as reproducibles for continued practice. By supporting students with additional practice of essential writing skills, we are building the next generation of confident and competent communicators.

[1] "Drawing to support writing development in English language learners." *Language and Education* 27, no. 3 (2012): 261-77. doi:10.1080/09500782.2012.704047.

A LOOK INSIDE: INTRODUCING WRITING TYPES

Each writing section begins with an introduction. Section introductions should be used when they best align with your writing curriculum, and can be revisited when necessary for reteaching and review. Below is an example of an information writing introduction.
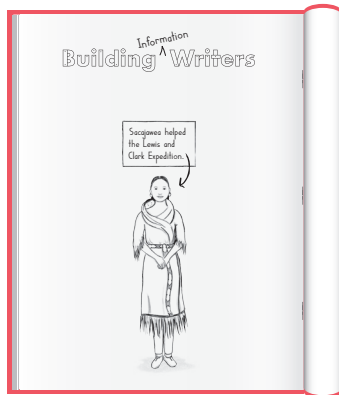
Introduction Page

An introduction page indicates which writing type will follow: narrative, information, or opinion. This is a great place to encourage students to color the large, line drawn illustrations, or jot down their own ideas for writing topics.
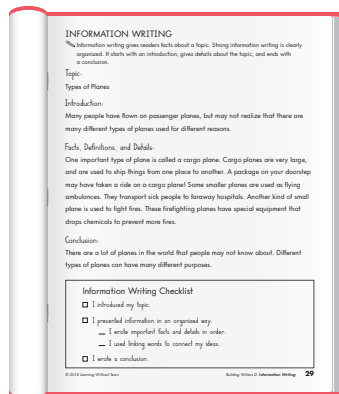
Writing Sample & Checklist

Next in the section introductions are a grade-level appropriate writing sample and a writing checklist.

We recommend teachers:

1. Ask students to follow along while you read the writing sample, or have them read it to themselves. After reading, encourage your class to identify any characteristics of information writing they notice within the text.

2. Read each item on the writing checklist, and explain that each item is an important part of strong information writing.

3. Familiarize students with the writing checklist, and how to determine whether each item has been met. As the checklists become more detailed, some items will have sub sections. In this example, the second item on the checklist has two requirements: writing important facts and details in order, and using linking words to connect ideas. In order to receive a checkmark next to "I presented information in an organized way," students must check off the two sub standards first.

4. Ask students to determine if the example should get a checkmark for each item on the list. Encourage students to support their answers with specific examples from the text, such as: "The sample gives important facts and details, such as how different types of planes are used."

5. Engage students by having them draw a check mark inside the boxes in their own books as the class identifies each item.

A LOOK INSIDE: WRITING ACTIVITIES

Each page within *Building Writers'* student books is carefully structured to provide students with the resources they need to be successful, regardless of a student's writing level. The format of our writing activities will quickly become familiar and predictable, making *Building Writers* a readily available, no prep writing resource. Below is an example from an information writing page of the key elements within our writing activities. We recommend explicitly teaching students how to recognize and use each of these resources in order to produce their best writing.

Pencil Icons

Point students to important information and directions on each page.

Labels

Serve as easily interpreted resources for students at a variety of reading and writing levels.

Black & White Illustrations
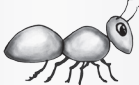
Invite students to color and draw and provide visual cues for activity-related content and vocabulary.

Wordbanks

Give young writers easily located vocabulary and spelling support.

Double Lines

Control children's letter size, spacing, and placement, and promote legible writing.

INSIDE & OUTSIDE

An exoskeleton is an outer skeleton. It can be a hard outside skin or shell. Write about animals that have an exoskeleton.

ant
- waterproof
- molts, or sheds exoskeleton as it grows

snail
- spiral shell on back
- grows with the snail, never sheds

horseshoe crab
- protects and supports organs
- molts, or sheds exoskeleton as it grows

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USING BUILDING WRITERS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

When To Use BUILDING WRITERS

As teacher, you know best when your students are ready for a new challenge. Whether you begin with a small group of students or introduce the workbook to the whole class, we recommend beginning *Building Writers* with the writing type most familiar to your students. Each book is organized with narrative writing first, followed by information writing, and finally opinion writing. The writing types do not have to be completed in order, and should be incorporated in your writing block when each best corresponds with your writing curriculum. Each writing type has a section introduction that can be used as review and practice before you begin.

Preparing Students for Writing

We recommend explicitly teaching students how to recognize and use the key features of *Building Writers'* activities. These features, such as the pencil icon and sentence models, are illustrated and explained on page 6 of this teacher resource. Students can use as many or as few of the resources, such as labels and word banks, on each page as needed. These resources are intended to make the activities accessible to all students, regardless of their differing writing levels.

Teach students how to include the resources on a page in their writing through explicit modeling. For example, have students follow along on the same page as you model looking at and thinking about the illustrations, their labels,

and other vocabulary on the page. Engage students to think aloud with you about how these resources could be used in their writing. Write any vocabulary, phrases, or other ideas the class generates in the margins of the page to reference when you write. Encourage students to do the same in their books. Model using the resources on the page and the ideas listed from the class as you write. Depending on your class's level of writing independence, you can ask students to copy and follow along as you write, or have them write their own.

We recommend scaffolding students to use each page's resources flexibly. Some students may need and benefit from every resource on a page, while others may use little to none of the vocabulary provided and write entirely independently. We suggest making it clear to students that they are not at all limited to the specific vocabulary on a page, but can and should use it as a springboard for their own ideas. This flexibility allows each writing activity to be as structured or unstructured as your individual students require.

USING BUILDING WRITERS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

BUILDING WRITERS in Your Writing Block

Building Writers can be incorporated into your writing block in a number of ways. Whether you choose to introduce the book to the whole class at once, or to small groups of students as they are ready, will determine how it best fits into your class's writing time. We recommend incorporating our writing practice in the way it best meets the needs of your class.

Depending on your students' varying levels of readiness, you may decide to work on *Building Writers'* activities as a whole group, as teacher-led small groups, or as independent small groups. Using *Building Writers* in small, ability-based groups allows for more flexibility in choosing which activities to complete at what times, and how much you support students as they complete them. Many of the writing activities serve as excellent practice and review of the skills you teach, so we suggest aligning the planning of *Building Writers'* activities with your pacing guide.

Differentiating with BUILDING WRITERS

Building Writers can be adapted to meet the needs of all learners, including English language learners. Below are some teaching strategies to help prepare diverse learners for writing.

- Preview the illustrations and topic in a class discussion before writing to activate prior knowledge

- Brainstorm, predict, and list relevant vocabulary
- Read a book related to the writing topic
- Think aloud as you plan to write or while completing a writing activity

Activities within *Building Writers* are easily adapted to increase challenge and rigor. Below are some suggestions for extending writing activities.

- Challenge students to research information writing topics and include new vocabulary and key information in their writing
- Continue preparatory writing activities (such as writing strong story hooks) in writing journals
- Review and revise writing with peers
- Transform writing into a different media, such as a digital presentation

This teacher resource includes a variety of the same writing templates found at the end of each section in you grade level's student workbooks. These templates provide extended practice and the opportunity for teachers to differentiate by personalizing topics, instructions, and expectations. For more practice writing on double lines, we recommend using our writing journals, which can be found at: shopping.lwtears.com/category/journals.

ASSESSING WITH BUILDING WRITERS

Our checklists were created using common characteristics of high writing expectations for each grade level, and are intended as a tool for both teachers and students. Checklists for narrative, opinion, and information writing are referenced in the section introductions of student workbooks. Each checklist is also included in this teacher resource, so they can be reproduced for use alongside *Building Writers* or other writing activities.

The writing checklists are purposefully placed at the beginning of each section introduction in student books in order to give students early exposure to clear writing expectations. We recommend explicitly modeling using checklists with writing samples and providing repeated opportunities for students to practice using them with teacher guidance. Only when students fully understand the items on a checklist and can recognize them in a writing sample are they prepared to use the checklists to self assess their own writing.

Our writing checklists provide teachers and students alike with a tool for assessing and improving writing, but no one tool can capture all aspects of writing development and achievement. Writing fluency and speed, revision skills and efficiency, and more cannot be assessed by a checklist alone. We recommend using this tool alongside others to continuously monitor your students' writing growth.

We suggest using *Building Writers'* checklists:
- As rubrics to assess student work
- For peer editing
- For student self-assessment
- As a tool for teaching characteristics of strong writing
- To provide direction and structure during prewriting activities
- To aid teachers and students while setting writing goals

Building Writers' activities allow for flexibility in student responses. We understand that different students may respond to the same prompt in diverse ways. For this reason, teachers can expect a variety of responses in students work. We suggest ensuring students that there are not "right" or "wrong" responses, and to encourage students to use their creativity, background knowledge, and learned writing skills as they are able.

     *Building Writers D: **Teacher Resource***

Name: _____

Narrative Writing Checklist

☑ I wrote the beginning of my story.
  — I introduced my characters and setting.

☑ I wrote the story in an organized way.
  — I wrote what happened in order.
  — I used words to show the order of events.

☑ I wrote an ending.

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Information Writing Checklist

☑ I introduced my topic.

☑ I presented information in an organized way.
— I wrote important facts and details in order.
— I used linking words to connect my ideas.

☑ I wrote a conclusion.

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Name: _____

Opinion Writing Checklist

- ☑ I stated my opinion in a clear introduction.
- ☑ I wrote reasons for my opinion.
  - — I supported my reasons with facts and details.
  - — I used linking words to put my reasons in order.
- ☑ I restated my opinion in a conclusion.

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TITLE/TOPIC: _____

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TITLE/TOPIC: _____

Event: _____

Who: _____

When: _____

Where: _____

Beginning: _____

_____

_____

Middle: _____

_____

_____

End: _____

_____

TITLE/TOPIC: _____

Only _____

_____

_____

_____

Only _____

_____

_____

_____

Both _____

_____

   *Building Writers D: **Teacher Resource***