



State of Israel
Ministry of Education
The Pedagogical Secretariat
Languages Department
Inspectorate for English
Language Education



ROOTS

National Writing Project Elementary English 2025/26

Dr. Nicole Broder
National Elementary Counselor



National
Elementary
Writing Project

2021	The Corona Times
2022	Dream It!
2023	The Gift of Giving
2024	Hope
2025	Roots
2026	???

Rationale

This project is designed for EFL elementary pupils to enhance their **written production skills** through the exploration and celebration of their **family's heritage**. Crucially, the core focus is on **writing as a developmental process** – prioritizing drafting, reflection as well as the implementation of peer and teacher feedback, rather than solely on the final product.



Inspirational Quotes



- ① "Know from whence you came. If you know whence you came, there are absolutely no limitations to where you can go." - James Baldwin
- ② "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." - Marcus Garvey
- ③ "Generations pass like leaves fall from our family tree. Each season new life blossoms and grows benefiting from the strength and experience of those who went before."
-Heidi Swapp
- ④ "The future belongs to those who give the next generation reason for hope."
- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin
- ⑤ "Your past is a part of who you are, but it does not have to be your whole story."
- Matshona Dhliwayo



Written Production A1 Can-Do Descriptors in the English Curriculum

Overall written production:

Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences using level-appropriate language (vocabulary and grammar) and spelling that approximates accurate conventions based on a developmental continuum

Written Production

A1 Can-Do Descriptors in the English Curriculum

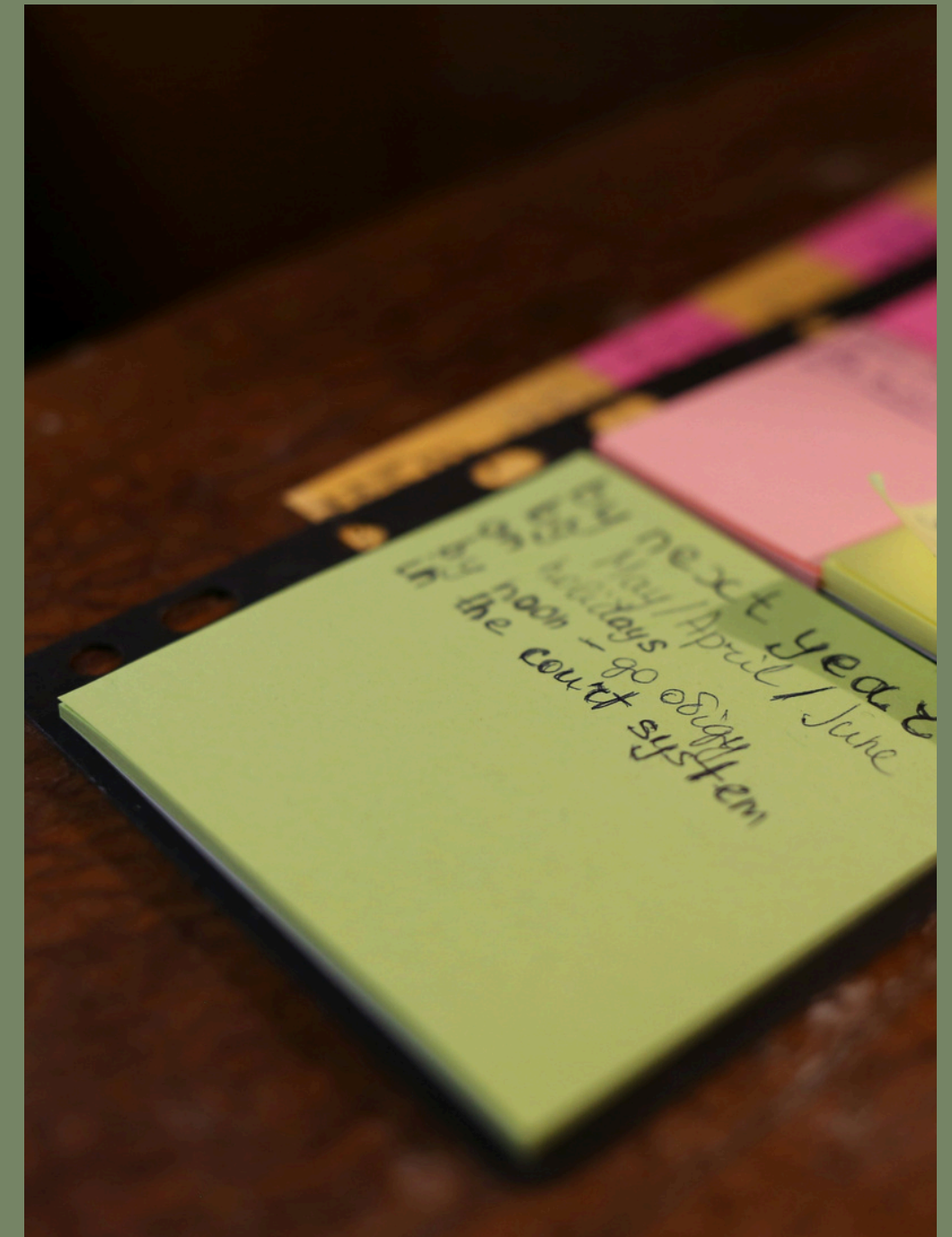
Written Interaction

Overall written interaction:

Can ask for or pass on personal details in written form

Correspondence

- Can write messages and online postings as a series of very short sentences about hobbies and likes/dislikes, using level-appropriate language (vocabulary and grammar) Notes, messages and forms
- Can leave a simple informative message giving, for example, where he/she has gone, what time he/she will be back
- Can write his/her name, address, age, date of birth, nationality, numbers etc. where required (e.g., on a registration form)



Written Production

A1 Can-Do Descriptors in the English Curriculum



Online Interaction

- Can post short reactions to simple online postings using formulaic expressions and combinations of simple words
Goal-oriented online transactions and collaboration
- Can fill out sections of a very simple online purchase or application, providing basic personal information (e.g., name, e-mail address or telephone number)

Written Production

A1 Can-Do Descriptors in the English Curriculum

Creative Writing

- Can write about themselves and fictitious people, where they live and what they do
- Can describe certain everyday objects (e.g., the colour of a car, whether it is big or small)



Written Production

A1 Can-Do Descriptors in the English Curriculum

Mediating a Text

Overall mediation

- Can convey simple, predictable information of immediate interest given in short, simple signs and notices, posters and programs

Relaying specific information in writing

- Can list (in English) names, numbers, prices and very simple information of immediate interest (in Hebrew / Arabic), especially if the speaker's articulation is slow and clear, with some repetition

Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)

- Can use simple words, phrases and sentences to say how a work made him/her feel



Why Teach Writing?

Writing can help pupils express the ways a text makes them feel.

To write coherently, pupils need to be able to organize their thoughts. This improves organizational and study skills in all subjects.

Writing expands pupils' vocabulary which is essential for all linguistic abilities.

Writing provides opportunities for language production, interaction and mediation (see can-do's on previous slide)

Writing leads to pupils' awareness and appreciation of their cultural identities.





Controlled Writing Activities

Please come to my party
at:
on: time:
R.S.V.P. 
Tel/mob:
e-mail:



Twinkle twinkle little _____.
How I wonder what _____ are.

[illegible]

Guided Writing Activities

How can writing boost social and emotional competencies?



Self-Awareness

Emotional
Regulation

Empathy

Friendship &
Communication
Skills

Resilience

**Self-Esteem &
Confidence**

Responsible
Decision-Making

Problem Solving

**Respect for
Diversity**

What makes writing in English so challenging?



Technical Challenges

- When should I use which tense?
- Should I look up the correct spelling and meaning of every word in a dictionary?
- When should I use a comma / explanation mark / speech marks?
- When should I use capital letters?
- What should I do when I know what I want to say in Hebrew / Arabic, but not in English?

Content-Related Challenges

- What do I want to write about?
- What content would interest my readers?
- How should I organise my thoughts?
- Do I know enough about the topic to be able to write about it?

“Writing is thinking. When we write, we ... organize, clarify, solidify understanding, build relationships, extend our thinking, and engage.”

Joan Sedita, Keys to Literacy

Notes to Teacher

Acquaint yourself with the English curriculum's can-do's relating to written production. These are the project's aims.

Remember that writing is not only about words and phrases. Teach the correct uses of capital letters and punctuation.

Pre-teach and have the pupils practice vocabulary items from the Pre A1 and A1 bands that are helpful for the topic of ROOTS.

Model good writing.

Introduce the writing process to your pupils, with a focus on the process rather than the end product.

Allocate time in every lesson for pupils to work on writing.

Encourage collaborative brainstorming and writing. Later on, peer editing is important too.

Constructive feedback from you at every step along the way, is essential. Without it, pupils can get lost and lose their motivation.

Your pupils' success begins and ends with you! Celebrate their every tiny success! Your excitement is contagious!



Teach Relevant and Useful Lexical Items

Vocabulary Bands Pre A1 and A1

to ask for	It doesn't matter	to tell a story	to be called something	friendly
at home	Let's go	Thank you!	to come from	grandparents
best	lost	This is a ...	a different country	her husband
to come back	Once upon a time ...	Who / What is this?	difficult	a lesson
Do you have...?	the past	Yes, please	Don't forget ...	people
Do you know ...?	a plan	You're welcome	Excuse me!	the present
Do you like ...?	Say it again, please	again	favourite	to remember
To help	show me	as well	first name	to travel
I like / I don't like ...	to take a picture	before	to forget	a village

Create the Right Environment



Introduction

Teacher introduces the creative writing project to the class.

- What's the purpose of this writing project?
- Is this a mandatory or voluntary writing task?
- Can we work alone or in pairs or small groups?
- Is there a competitive element?
- What would an example look like?
- What's the timeline?



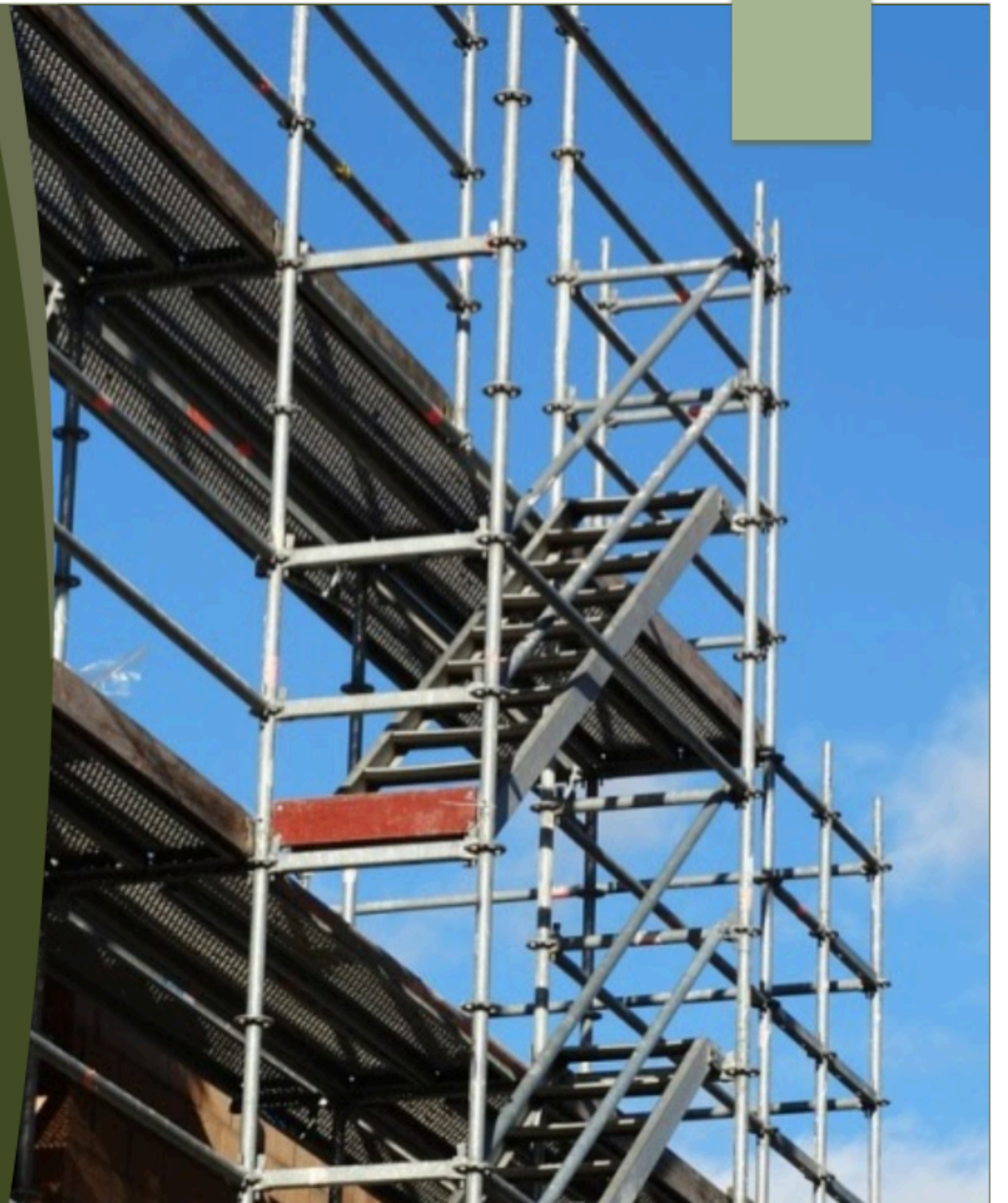
Scaffolding

*"**Scaffolding** refers to providing contextual supports for meaning through the use of simplified **language**, teacher modeling, visuals and graphics, cooperative **learning** and hands-on **learning**."*
(Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003, p. 345).

The teacher of **second language learners** has to facilitate that support.

Many teachers are unaware of the importance of scaffolding. They teach the new vocabulary and then ask pupils to use the words in sentences of their own.

Thanks to Elinor Karasagi for her permission to show this slide.



graph

Name: _____

Date: _____

arger — they
e this graphic
cy paragraph.

1. For the top layer, write the topic sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph.

2. Fill the middle layers with supporting details.

3. The bottom layer holds it all together with a conclusion.

Topic sentence:

Supporting detail:

Supporting detail:

Supporting detail:

Conclusion:

Check It Out!

Brainstorming (W.2.1–3; W.3.1–3)

Write masterpieces
them into a story.
Visit studentresources.com

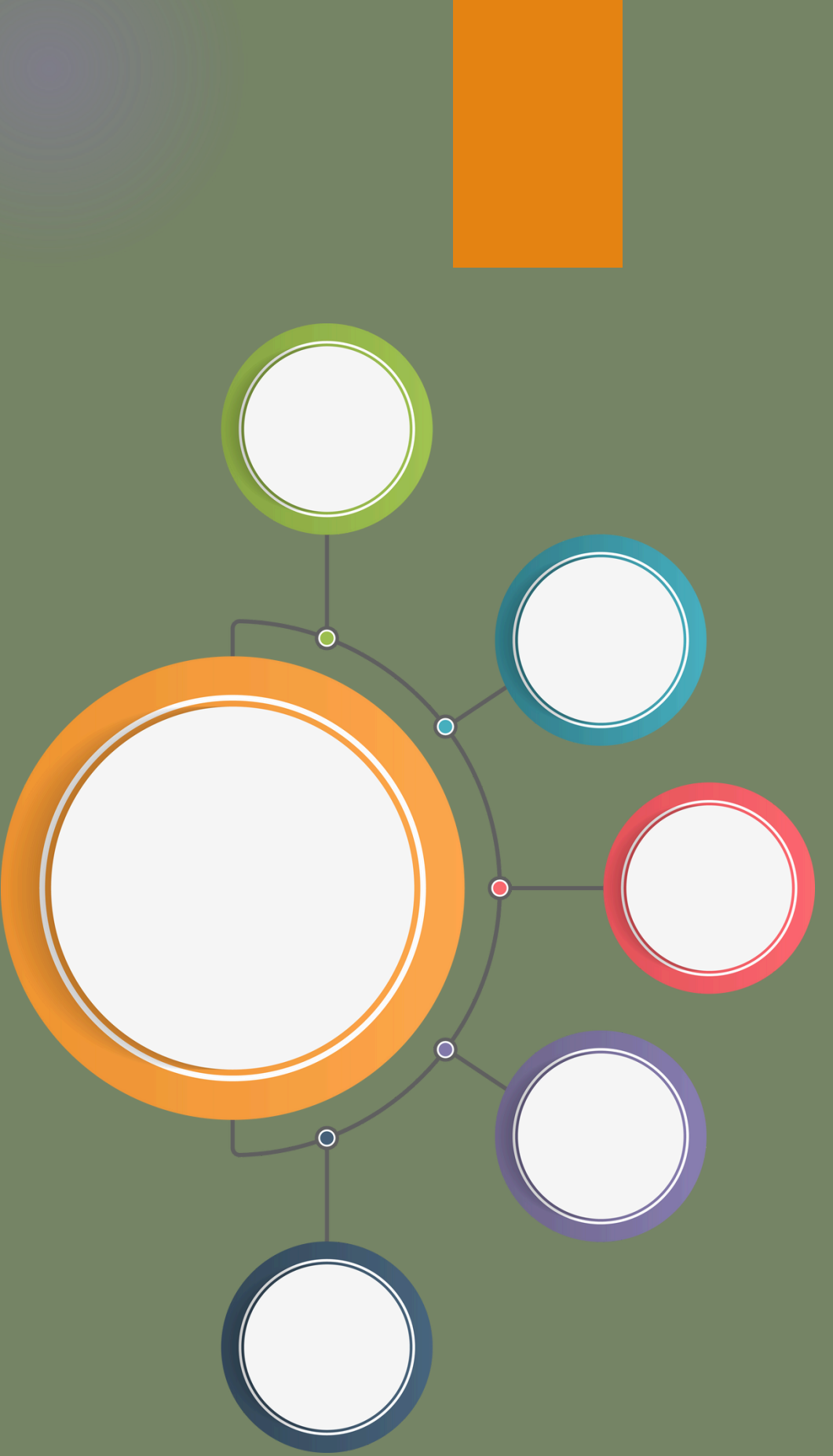
People	Places	Things
Mom	school	gorilla
Dad	moon	bicycle

Five Finger Retell

CHARACTERS Who? PROBLEM What? EVENTS Beginning/Middle/End SOLUTION How?

SETTING When & Where?

MAIN IDEA
OR
THEME
OR
LESSON



Scaffold the Experience with Graphic Organizers and Mind Maps

Recount Plan!

Name: _____

When Who Where What

Event 1 First... Event 2 Then... Event 3 Next... Event 4 Finally...

Possible Sentence Starters

Once upon a time ...

There was a /an ...

Last winter ...

I want to tell you a story about my ...

Take a look at ...

I have ...

My favourite family story is about ...

In this story, there is / are ...



Inspiration for Content



- Draw a family tree. How far back in your family's history can you go?
- Write a short story that shows how your family celebrates holidays.
- Write a poem about your roots.
- What will your great-grandchildren thank you for? Make a list.
- Write questions for an interview with your grandmother about her childhood. Interview her. Then summarize her answers.
- Write a thank you note to your parents, grandparents or great-grandparents for coming to live in this country.



How can we
prevent our pupils
from getting AI to
write for them?

Why Use Class Time for Writing?

- Collaborative brainstorming
- More fun!
- Teacher there to help
- Immediate feedback
- Children rush writing at home



Constructive Feedback

“The greater the challenge, the higher the probability that one seeks and needs feedback, but the more important it is that there is a teacher to provide feedback and to ensure that the learner is on the right path to successfully meet the challenges.” John A.C. Hattie

Teacher returns first drafts with positive, constructive feedback.

Pupils implement feedback and submit a second draft by a date decided by the teacher.

This process may be repeated as many times as necessary.

The teacher is the students' guide and should accompany them through each step of the writing and editing process.



Texts Worth Writing



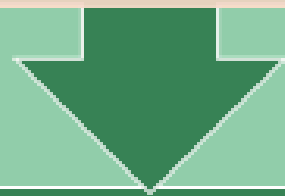
- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> a short story | <input type="radio"/> a restaurant menu | <input type="radio"/> a letter |
| <input type="radio"/> a recipe | <input type="radio"/> a diary entry | <input type="radio"/> a note |
| <input type="radio"/> an alternative ending | <input type="radio"/> a poem | <input type="radio"/> interview questions |
| <input type="radio"/> a poster | <input type="radio"/> a survey | <input type="radio"/> an email |
| <input type="radio"/> a comic strip | <input type="radio"/> a Whatsapp dialogue | <input type="radio"/> a book or movie review |

The Writing Process

STEP 1

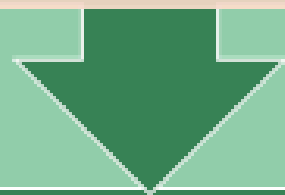
Prewrite

Brainstorm ideas and vocabulary. Plan your writing individually, in pairs, in groups or with teacher and whole class.



Write First Draft

Get your thoughts onto paper. You don't need to check spelling or tenses yet. Put this first draft away until the next lesson.



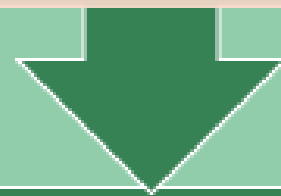
Revise

Now, reread your first draft. Start writing a second draft while making changes and improvements. You may want to use a checklist at this point.

STEP 2

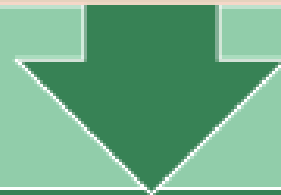
Edit Second Draft

Check the grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and to make sure your handwriting is clear.



Share

Switch your work with a friend and suggest corrections. You can use these suggestions to make changes to your work.



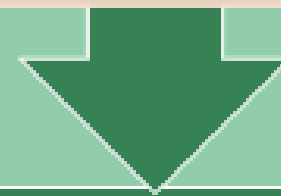
Submit Third Draft

Give your work to your teacher. When you get it back, read the comments and suggestions carefully.

STEP 3

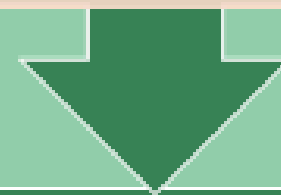
Rewrite

Improve your work by implementing your teacher's suggestions.



Submit Final Draft

Give your final draft to your teacher. You may get a grade or more comments.



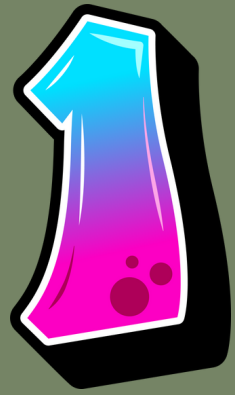
Include in Portfolio

Put BOTH your first and final drafts inside your portfolio. Write the date on the first divider.

Students' Writing Portfolios

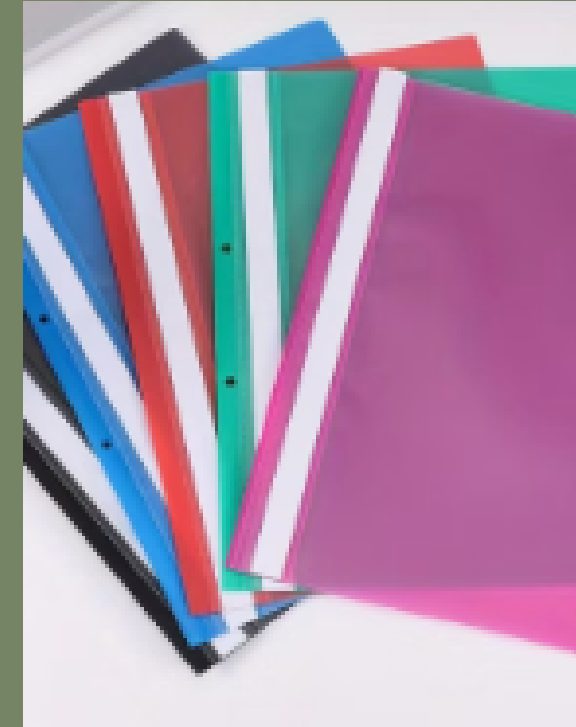


How to Start Writing Portfolios



Introduce the portfolio:

Require each student to purchase a folder, ten dividers and a lined A4 notepad, and bring it to class. They should write their names, class and a title e.g. My English Writing Portfolio on the cover. The portfolio should open from left to write. Your students can decorate the cover if they wish. Explain how they will use it throughout the year and show an example of one. Assure them that their effort and progress will be acknowledged in your comments on their report cards at the end of the school year.



How to Start Writing Portfolios



Set up folders:

Once all the students have brought the required materials to class and labeled them, you should explain the instructions for their first written assignment.



How to Start Writing Portfolios



Guide the process:

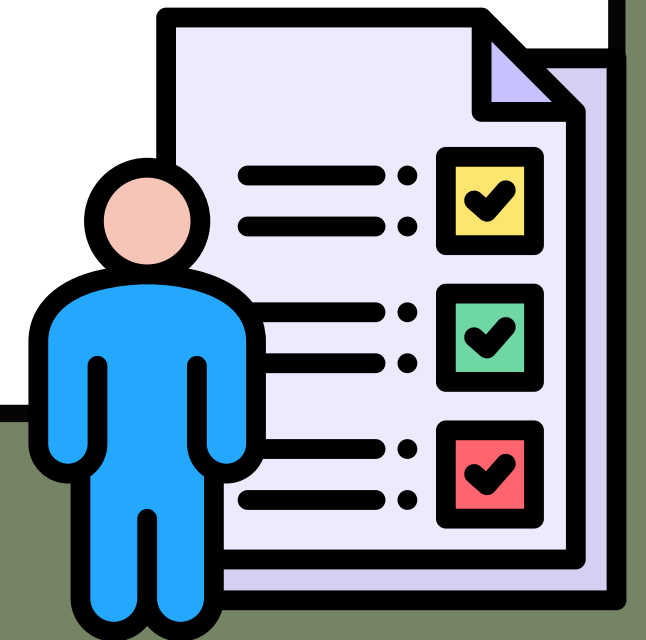
Pre-teach vocabulary, explain, model, brainstorm, outline, draft, revise, and reflect on steps in the writing process.

How to Start Writing Portfolios



Support evaluation:

Provide feedback, and teach pure self-assessments, use checklists and rubrics.



How to Start Writing Portfolios



Make it a routine:

Schedule regular times for portfolio writing and reflection.
Keep your students' folders in the classroom.



How to Start Writing Portfolios



Celebrate progress:

Let students select their best pieces and explain why they're proud of them.



Student's Checklist

You can find many kinds of writing checklists online. Choose those that are relevant for the level and assignment topic. Choose the language you want the checklist to be in for your students.

ENGLISH:

Have I remembered to:

• begin with an interesting opening?	
• write a beginning, middle and end?	
• write enough details so my ideas are clear?	
• choose the right words?	
• use capital letters at the beginning of sentences, names, places, months and days?	
• include full stops, commas, question marks and speech marks in the right places?	
• tidy up my work so it's easy to read?	

עברית:

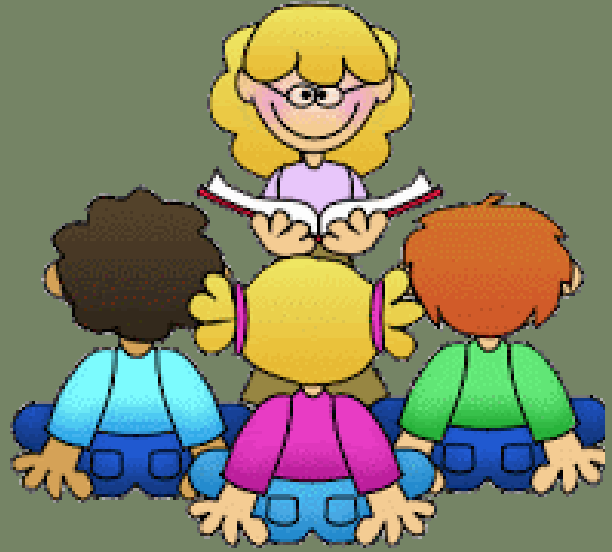
האם זכרתי:

• להתחיל עם פתיחה מעניינת?	
• לכתוב התחלה, אמצע וסוף?	
• לכתוב מספיק פרטים כדי שהרעיונות שלי יהיו ברורים?	
• לבחור את המילים הנכונות?	
• להשתמש באותיות גדולות בתחילת משפטים, שמות, מקומות, חודשים וימים?	
• לכלול נקודות, פסיקים, סימני שאלה ומרכאות במקומות הנכונים?	
• לסדר את העבודה שלי כך שיהיה קל לקרוא אותה?	

اللغة العربية:

تذكر أن:

• <u>تبدأ</u> بمقدمة شيقة؟	
• أكتب مقدمة، صلب الموضوع وخاتمة؟	
• أكتب تفاصيل كافية لتكون أفكارك واضحة؟	
• أختار الكلمات المناسبة؟	
• <u>أستخدم</u> الحروف الكبيرة في بداية الجمل، الأسماء، الأماكن، الأشهر والأيام؟	
• <u>ضع</u> النقاط، الفواصل، علامات الاستفهام وعلامات الاقتباس في الأماكن الصحيحة؟	
• <u>رتب</u> ونظم عملك ليصبح سهل القراءة؟	



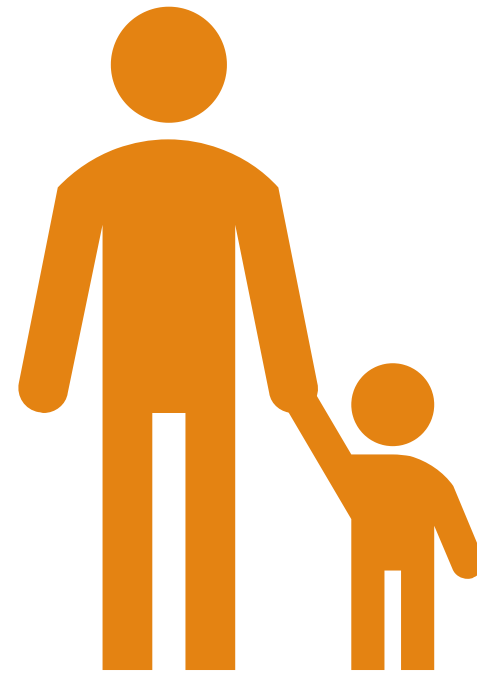
Sample Teacher's Assessment Sheet

Assessment Sheet: Criteria	Performance Scale: 1-3
1. organization	1 2 3
2. content	1 2 3
3. quality of language	1 2 3
4. mechanics	1 2 3
5. presentation	1 2 3

Summative Writing Grading Rubric

Criteria	1	2	3
Organization	The beginning, middle and end are unclear.	Organization is fair but a little unclear.	There is a clear beginning, middle and end.
Content	The writing does not make sense and has few details.	The writing mostly makes sense and has some details.	The writing makes sense. There are many details that help the reader understand what is being described.
Quality of Language (grammar, vocabulary and syntax)	Writing provides little new information; errors in choice of vocabulary, grammar and syntax making language difficult to understand.	Piece is written in a fairly interesting style and voice; choice of vocabulary, grammar use and syntax are fair.	Writing is very informative; good choice of vocabulary; pupils shows own personality in a variety of ways.
Mechanics	The writing is missing many capital letters and punctuation marks.	Virtually no spelling or punctuation errors.	All sentences have capital letters and punctuation marks in the right places.
Presentation	The work is difficult to read.	The work is fairly neat and can be read.	Work is neat and easy to read.

Acknowledge & Display



The work of each and every child - no matter on what level - should be acknowledged and celebrated by the teacher.



Highlights of your pupils' work should be displayed in a digital or physical format e.g. on a classroom wall or in the school corridor / on the school website / in the school newsletter.

Dear Students ...

WRITING IS A WORK IN PROGRESS! THE MORE REVISIONS, THE BETTER!

BRAINSTORM WITH YOUR CLASSMATES AND USE GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS TO PLAN YOUR WORK.

MISTAKES ARE FINE AS LONG AS YOU LEARN FROM THEM.

NO GRADES UNTIL YOUR FINAL DRAFT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED.

GIVE EXAMPLES. USE SYNONYMS. INCLUDE DETAILS.

PEER EDITING IS A GREAT WAY TO HELP A FRIEND AND FIND YOUR OWN MISTAKES TOO!

I'M HERE TO HELP YOU THINK ABOUT HOW TO MAKE YOUR WORK EVEN BETTER!

READ YOUR FINAL DRAFT BEFORE YOU SUBMIT IT! USE THE CHECKLIST!..



“The future is not pre-written. Our past does not determine our destiny. What matters is how we respond to what happens to us.”
– Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z”l

Recommended Reading for Teachers



- Reading Rockets on Writing Instruction
- Setting up a Writing Environment
- A Simple Way to get Elementary Students Writing Every Day
- Authentic Writing in the Age of AI
- Six Creative Writing Activities for the ESL Classroom

Contact Me

Dr. Nicole Broder

National Elementary Counselor

nicolebroder@gmail.com