

Journal Writing

Grade: K-2nd

Time: 20 min daily

Objective: Students will use inventive spelling to write stories and/or journal entries to enhance their reading and writing skills.

Materials: Student journals, pencils, crayons

Preparation:

Create a journal for each student, customized to their writing ability. For pre-writers use blank paper. For emergent writers use paper that is half blank & half lined. For proficient writers use lined paper. Include enough paper for students to use the journal for about two months.

Introductory Lesson:

1. Gather students close, near an easel or dry erase board where you can introduce journal writing to your students.
2. Show students a sample journal and explain to them that they will each get their own journal to write in today. Explain to them that some days they will get to write about whatever they choose and some days you will tell them what to write about. Tell students that you believe they are all writers, no matter where they are in the writing process. Explain that all students can write, even when they don't know how to spell something perfectly!
3. Demonstrate this in front of them by saying that you want to write "I see a beautiful mountain" in your journal. This is how the dialog would go:

"Ok, I want to write 'I see a beautiful mountain' so I start with the first word, 'I'. Now what do I need to remember about the word 'I'? Oh yes, it's always a capital letter so I'll make my 'I' like this. (write 'I' in front of them). Now I need a space before I write the next word so I'll put two fingers here. So the next word is 'see'. That's one of our word wall words so let's check the word wall to see how it's spelled. 'sss-eee' What letter does it start with? Yes, 's'! Can someone find the word 'see' in the 's' square on our word wall? Ok, let's write that down. So far we have 'I see...' Now we need the word 'a'. That's an easy one! I need to remember to leave two finger spaces before I write it. Ok, now I have, 'I see a...' What comes next? Beautiful. Ok, that's a tricky word to spell so I'm going to show you what to do when you need to spell a tricky word. Let's start with the first sound. B-b-b-beautiful...what do you hear first? A 'b', that's right! So I'll write a b. Ok, b-u-u-u-u-tiful. What do you hear next? Yes, a 'u'. (write that down) Beaut-t-iful. What else do you hear? Ok, I'll write a 't'. Beauti-i-i-ful. What's that letter when my nose scrunches up? Yes, 'i'. Now, let's see what's next. Beautif-f-f ... yes, 'f'. Then beautiful-l-l-l. Yes, the last sound is 'l'. (Notice

that you are only stretching out the letters that they can easily recognize in the word. Remember the point of this lesson is to encourage them that they can write and not worry about spelling it perfectly at this point. You just want them to build confidence to try getting some letters on paper that they hear.)

4. Repeat the same procedures for “mountain”.
5. Explain to the class that even though there are more letters in “beautiful” and “mountain” than what you recorded (you can even show them the correct way so they can compare) you can read the letters recorded and know what it says. Explain that some students might write “mn” for mountain while others might hear more sounds and write “mntn” or “montan”. Encourage them to write whatever they hear and to not worry so much about spelling at this stage.
6. Hand out journals to kids and give them a simple topic to write on. (their favorite food) Encourage them to draw a picture and write about it using their inventive spelling. Walk around and monitor kids, encouraging them to write as best as they can & don’t spell anything for them at this point. Praise children for their effort and challenge those who you know can do more.
7. As students get more proficient at their writing throughout the year, adjust their writing paper accordingly and how much writing you expect out of them.

Evaluation:

Walk through the room as students are writing each day and aim to intentionally work with a few different students each day. Help them stretch out each word they are writing so they can hear more sounds. Reading through your student’s journals is a great way to assess where they are in their reading development. If a student is getting very few letters down in their journal for the words they are trying to write you will know that they are struggling readers as well. And as children become better readers you will see their writing abilities increase drastically.