



THE SCIENCE OF READING AND WRITING

How to Integrate Writing Throughout Your Elementary Reading Program



FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Young students need to learn how to encode words: Hear a spoken word, break that down into sounds, and then spell that word in writing.

- Focus on building student automaticity at forming letters and words. That way they free up their brainpower for higher-order writing tasks.
- Create fun activities to practice the fine motor skills involved in letter formation, like having students write on a plate of shaving cream or trace letters in colored sand.
- Rethink the spelling list. Try using words with phonics patterns students are learning, not disconnected words.

The Egyptian pyramids have triangular sides, because 

LANGUAGE AND TEXT STRUCTURE

Teaching students how to structure their writing—from complex sentences to lengthy essays—can make them stronger, more confident writers.

- Forget random sentence diagramming. Have kids learn how to apply structures to what they're reading and writing.
- Work on the skills in tandem. Students don't have to master the perfect sentence before they can move on to longer pieces.
- Don't be rigid. Students can tweak the formulas when they're comfortable to better serve their writing's purpose or voice.



CONTENT

Research shows that writing about the content that students are studying can help them make sense of new topics.

- Don't just ask students to summarize. They can analyze one aspect of a piece, make an argument about it, or explain a specific point.
- "Writing to learn" can be done at any grade level, even with young students.
- Make time for creative writing, too.