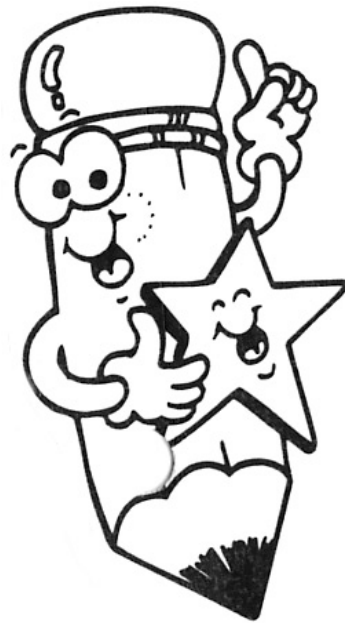


Fifty Nifty Picture Books

and

How to Use them to Teach the Traits of Good Writing

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☞ Kloske, G. (2005). *Once Upon a Time, the End (asleep in 60 seconds)*. Antheneum.
A tired father tries to shorten the classic tales in order to get his child to fall asleep.

The Keys to Effective Writing Workshop Mini-Lessons

Compiled by: Maria Walther

What are mini-lessons?

Mini-lessons are focused, intentional and explicit teaching opportunities.

When do mini-lessons occur?

Mini-lessons typically occur at the beginning of the workshop but should also take place when you are working with a small group, during a conference, or anytime children are writing.

What are the keys to effective mini-lessons?

Effective writing mini-lessons should:

- Be authentic and driven by the needs of your young writers. Ask yourself, "What do my students need at this time to continue writing well?"
- Be focused with a clear objective. Ask yourself, "What is the point of this lesson? What do I want my students to get out of it?"
- Be brief allowing ample time for students to write.
- Show students examples of what you are talking about. Those examples can come from carefully selected books, student writing samples, or teacher modeling.
- Be an invitation to try something new in their writing. Mini-lessons are not usually followed by some kind of work or "guided practice." We must trust that our writers will try things out when they are ready.

We have to remember that the actual act of writing, the thing we are trying to teach students to do, to *write*, is a continuous process of decision making about how a person will get the writing done. The decisions writers make during this process come from their repertoires of things they know how to do as writers. Our teaching is meant to broaden students' repertoires as writers . . . The point of the teaching is to see if students know when they need to do these things and then to *decide* to do them on their own in order to get their writing done.
~Katie Wood Ray

References:

- Ray, K. W. with Laminack, L. (2001). *The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts)*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Routman, R. (2005). *Writing Essentials*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

READ LIKE A WRITER

Reading aloud IS teaching writing, even if no writing activity follows the reading.

Vicki Spandel, *Creating Young Writers* (2008)

What to look for in the books you enjoy reading aloud:

- interesting uses of language
- interesting punctuation usage
- text structure
- repeated lines
- word play
- onomatopoeia
- print and illustrations



What to say. . .

Source: *Choice Words* by Peter H. Johnston (Stenhouse, 2004)

"Oh, I love that line!"

"Did anyone notice

*any interesting words?

*any new punctuation?

*any new ways of arranging the words on the page?

"Are there any favorite words or phrases, or ones you wish you had written?"

"Why would an author do something like that?" "How else could the author have done that?"

"Why did the author choose that word?"

BOOKS TO SPARK IDEAS

Where Do Writers Get IDEAS?

Writers Get IDEAS from Life Experiences!

☞ Brown, M. (2007). *My Name is Gabito: The Life of Gabriel García Márquez*. (R. Colón, Illus.). Rising Moon.

An inspiring biography about the Nobel Prize winning novelist.

☞ Carlson, N. (2002). *There's a Big, Beautiful World Out There!* Viking. A young girl discovers all the beauty in our frequently scary world.

☞ Kirk, D. (2007). *Library Mouse*. Abrams. Sam, who sleeps by day and reads by night, decides to write his own books to add to the library's collection.

☞ Spinelli, E. (2008). *The Best Story*. (A. Wilsdorf, Illus.). Dial. A young writer learns that the best story comes from your heart.

☞ Wong, J. S. (2002). *You Have to Write*. (T. Flavin, Illus.). Margaret K. McElderry.

This clever book shows children that their lives are filled with experiences about which to write.

Writers get IDEAS from the Books They Read!

☞ Allan, S., & Lindaman, J. (2003). *Read Anything Good Lately?* (V. Enright, Illus.). Millbrook.

An alphabetical look at different places and things to read.

☞ Barroux, S. (2004). *Mr. Katapat's Incredible Adventures*. Viking. Mr. Katapat becomes an adventurer when he visits the library each day.

📖 Gerstein, M. (2009). *A Book*. New York: Henry Holt.
Join a little girl who lives with her family inside a book as she searches for her own story.

📖 Pinkney, S. L. (2006). *Read and Rise*. Scholastic Cartwheel Books.
Shows that children can be anything they choose through the power of reading.

MORE BOOKS TO INSPIRE IDEAS

📖 Barrett, J. (2001). *Things that are Most in the World*. Aladdin.
Readers discover the quietest, silliest, hottest things in the world.
Includes a ready-to-use class book page!

📖 Hershenhorn, E. (2002). *Chicken Soup by Heart*. Simon & Schuster.
Rudie cooks a batch of chicken soup using Mrs. Gittel's secret ingredient: stories!

📖 Nielsen, L. F. (2008). *Mrs. Muddle's Holidays*. (T. F. Yezerski, Illus.).
Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.
Mrs. Muddle moves into Katie's neighborhood and shows the people of Maple Street how to celebrate holidays like "Earthworm Appreciation Day" and "First Robin of Spring Day."

📖 Paul, A. W. (2009). *Word Builder*. (K. Cyrus, Illus.). New York: Simon & Schuster.
Readers learn that writers build their stories just like construction workers build a city.

📖 Reynolds, P. H. (2004). *Ish*. Candlewick.
Ramon's sister helps him understand that his "ish" (tree-ish) drawings are perfect!

📖 Root, P. (2003). *The Name Quilt*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Sadie loves to listen to her grandma tell family stories about the people named on a quilt.

ORGANIZING IDEAS MANY DIFFERENT WAYS

What Do Writers Write?

MINI-LESSON

- Read *Written Anything Good Lately?* Discuss the different kinds of material people write.
- Begin an anchor chart entitled "What Do Writers Write?"

📖 Allan, S., & Lindaman, J. (2006). *Written Anything Good Lately?* Millbrook.

An alphabetical look at the various types of writing.

📖 Fisher, C. (2008). *The Snow Show*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt.
"Welcome to The Snow Show!" where Chef Kelvin and Jack Frost cook up a fresh batch of snow. This clever book, written like a recipe, describes the steps in making snow. Funny anecdotes in the illustrations are sure to keep readers interested.

📖 Miller, H. L. (2008). *This Is Your Lifecycle*. (M. Chesworth, Illus.).
New York: Clarion/Houghton Mifflin.

If you are old enough to remember the TV show "This Is Your Life" you will enjoy this clever spoof. Readers learn about the stages in Dahlia the dragonfly's life as the host of the show, Bob Beetle, and mystery guests help her relive key moments.

📖 Ulmer, W. (2008). *A Isn't for Fox: An Isn't Alphabet* (L. Knorr, Illus.). Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear.

Ulmer's inventive alphabet book is enjoyable to read aloud. Each letter features a playful verse such as,

A isn't for box;

it isn't for fox.

A is for ants that

crawl over your socks.

☞ Watt, M. (2008). *Scaredy Squirrel at the Beach*. Kids Can. Scaredy Squirrel books offer so many possibilities for reading like a writer. Every page is packed with clever ideas to spark your students' creativity.

Going on a Lead Hunt

MINI-LESSON

1. Collect a number of picture books with strong leads.
2. Read the first few lines from the first book.
3. After reading ask, "Did this lead make you want to read the book? Why?"
4. Record the lead on chart paper with the title "Good Leads."
5. Continue with 2-3 picture books, adding to the chart after each reading.
6. Encourage students to look for good leads in books they are reading and share them with the class.

A Few Of My Favorite Picture Book Leads

Onomatopoeia Lead:

Bedhead (Palatini, 2000) *Shuffle-shlump. Shuffle-shlump. Shuffle-shlump.* .
The Great Fuzz Frenzy (Stevens & Stevens, 2005) *Down it went. Boink! Boink!*

Character Lead:

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type (Cronin, 2000) *Farmer Brown has a problem.*
The Boy Who Was Raised By Librarians (Morris, 2007) *Melvin lived in the Livingston Public Library.*

Quotation Lead:

Grandpa's Teeth (Clement, 1997) *"Help, I've been robbed!" We heard Grandpa shouting.*
Those Shoes (Boelts, 2007) *"I have dreams about those shoes. Black high-tops. Two white stripes."*

BOOKS TO MODEL ORGANIZATION

☞ Auch, M. J., & Auch, H. (2009). *The Plot Chickens*. Holiday House. When Henrietta decides to write a book, she finds a helpful guide to composing a story that lists eight rules including:

1. You need a main character
2. You need to hatch a plot
3. Give your main character a problem
4. Develop your plot by asking, "What if?"

☞ Bullard, L. (2007). *You Can Write a Story: A Story Writing Recipe for Kids*. (D. H. Melmon, Illus.). Two-Can.

Details the ingredients and steps to writing a fictional story. Bullard has filled this "how-to" book with a wealth of ideas and examples.

☞ King, P. & Thomson, R. (2005). *Start Writing Adventure Stories*. Chrysalis Education.

This book guides children through each stage of writing a story. Also available: *Start Writing About Things I Do*, *Start Writing About People and Places*, *Start Writing Amazing Stories*.

☞ Kroll, S. (2001). *Patches Lost and Found*. Marshall Cavendish. Jenny draws then adds words to a story about losing and finding her pet guinea pig.

☞ Leedy, L. (2004). *Look At My Book*. Holiday House.

The author shows children how to plan, write, design and illustrate their own book.

☞ McDonald, M. (2005). *Stink, The Incredible Shrinking Kid*. Candlewick.

The adventures of Judy Moody's kid brother, Stink, where each chapter ends with a comic strip.

☞ Pallotta, J. (1991). *The Furry Animal Alphabet Book*. Charlesbridge. An alphabet book of mammals written in Pallotta's humorous style.

CAREFULLY CHOOSING WORDS

☞ Steinberg, L. (2003). *Thesaurus Rex*. Cambridge, MA: Barefoot Books.

A playful dinosaur introduces readers to the world of synonyms.

Adding a SPLASH! to your piece

MINI-LESSON

- Discuss the definition of onomatopoeia - a word that sounds just like the noise it is describing such as pop, chomp, slam, crunch, and so on.
- Enjoy the book *Slop Goes the Soup* by Pamela D. Edwards with your class. Remind children to listen for onomatopoeias.
- Make a list of onomatopoeias that students can use as they revise their pieces.
- Students revise by adding an appropriate onomatopoeia to their piece.

☞ Edwards, P. D. (2001). *Slop Goes the Soup*. Hyperion.

A clumsy warthog's sneeze begins an onomatopoeic chain of events.

☞ MacDonald, R. (2003). *Achoo! Bang! Crash!: The Noisy Alphabet*. Roaring Book Press.

An alphabet book of onomatopoeic words.

Play with Words

☞ Jenkins, S., & Page, R. (2006). *Move!* Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Jenkins and Page team up once again to describe all the different ways animals move. Consider using this simple book for introducing action verbs.

☞ Loewen, N. (2007). *If You Were An Interjection*. (S. Gray, Illus.). Minneapolis, MN: Picture Window.

That's My . . .

MINI-LESSON

- Read *That's My Dog* to your class.
- Using a thesaurus, work with your students to create an adjective chart:

SHAPE	round	thin	long
SIZE	colossal	miniscule	gigantic
COLOR	violet	fuchsia	crimson
TEXTURE	slimy	furry	scaly
WEIGHT	heavy	light	
PERSONALITY	friendly	fierce	sly
WAY OF MOVING	wriggly	jumpy	bouncy

- Choose a person or animal to describe and work with your students to write about that character using words from the adjective chart. (I chose my student teacher, typed it up, had students sign it, and gave it to her as a gift. She loved it!!!)
- Students may choose to write about their own person/animal.

☞ Walton, R. (2001). *That's My Dog!* Putnam.

Children meet a big red happy muddy smart bouncy slobbery sneaky stinky dog.

MORE BOOKS TO IGNITE WORD CHOICE

- 📖 Banks, K. (2006). *Max's Words*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Max collects, sorts, and organizes his word collection to create thoughts and stories.
- 📖 Cottin, M. (2006/2008). *The Black Book of Color*. (R. Faría, Illus.). Publishers Group West.
Imagine for a moment how you would describe the color red to a person who is blind. In this groundbreaking book, Thomas describes colors using his senses of touch, taste, smell, or hearing.
- 📖 Joosse, B. M. (1996). *I Love You the Purplest*. Chronicle.
A mother uses colorful description to tell each of her sons how much she loves them.
- 📖 Newman, L. (2004). *The Boy Who Cried Fabulous*. Tricycle Press.
A rhyming book filled with a lot of interesting words!
- 📖 Piven, H. (2007). *My Dog is As Smelly As Dirty Socks and Other Funny Family Portraits*. Schwartz & Wade.
Piven has provided young readers with an artistic and linguistic adventure. The clever book contains family portraits created out of everyday objects coupled with descriptions written in similes.
- 📖 Ryan, P. M. (2001). *Hello Ocean*. Scholastic.
The author uses the five senses to describe the ocean.

BOOKS TO FUEL FLUENCY

- 📖 Beaumont, K. (2005). *I Ain't Gonna Paint No More!* Harcourt.
In the rhythm of a familiar folk song, a child paints his body from head to ___!!
- 📖 DeGroat, D. (1996). *Roses Are Pink, Your Feet Really Stink*. Morrow.
Gilbert writes some nice and some nasty poems for Valentine's Day.
- 📖 Fox, M. (1997). *Whoever You Are*. Harcourt.
People around the world experience similar emotions such as joy and love.
- 📖 Grossman, B. (1996). *My Little Sister Ate One Hare*. Crown.
A rhythmic counting book about a girl who will eat anything except a pea!
- 📖 Harter, D. (2000). *The Animal Boogie*. Barefoot Books.
Jungle animals and a jazzy tune help teach the kids how to do the animal boogie.
- 📖 Locker, T. (2000). *Cloud Dance*. Harcourt.
This lyrical text introduces children to the world of clouds.
- 📖 Perkins, L. R. (2003). *Snow Music*. Greenwillow.
The music of a snowy day is cleverly captured in this interactive tale.
- 📖 Prelutsky, J. (2005). *Read a Rhyme, Write a Rhyme*. Alfred A. Knopf.
A collection of poetry with "poemstarts" to get kids writing!
- 📖 Roberts, S. (2003). *We All Go Traveling By*. Barefoot Books.
Sing about all the different ways children travel to school.

PUTTING WORDS TOGETHER FLUENTLY

The Sentence Building Game

MINI-LESSON

**Play this game on the chalkboard, on chart paper, or orally

Purpose: This game is designed to show young writers that sentences can begin in many different ways. So have fun, use your imagination, and look in books to add to the list of sentence beginnings below!!

1. Invite students to choose a topic (school, dogs, recess, etc.)
2. Write or orally share a sentence beginning.
3. Share only ONE SENTENCE BEGINNING AT A TIME!!!
4. After you share a beginning, challenge students to create an ending that makes a complete sentence.

For example, if the topic was dogs. After you say/write, "In the morning" a child might add, "OUR DOG BARKS." Next you say/write, "A long time ago" another student finishes with, "DOGS WERE WILD."

Some sentence beginning ideas include:

- In the morning . . .
- A long time ago . . .
- Here are some . . .
- Imagine that you . . .
- This is a . . .
- How would you . . .
- After dark . . .
- Crash! . . .
- Have you ever wondered . . .

For a challenge ask students to give you the beginnings and you complete the sentences!!

Adapted from: Northwest Regional Laboratory. (1999). *Seeing with new eyes: A guidebook on teaching and assessing beginning writers* (5th ed.). Portland, OR: Author.

AND-I-TIS

Thanks to Mary Dolan 2nd grade teacher at Owen Elementary School for sharing this engaging and effective mini-lesson!

I begin this mini-lesson by saying to the children, "Boys and girls I have a terrible disease that some writers get, it is called *AND-I-TIS*." Then I share a piece of writing on the overhead (see below). I continue, "When writers get this disease they have a few options. First, they can cross out *AND* then replace it with a period or they can use 'connecting words.' Connecting words help build a bridge from one sentence to the next. Let's make a list of connecting words to help us next time we have *AND-I-TIS*."

Yesterday I went to my friend's birthday party and we went to Chuck E. Cheese and we played games and I won 300 tickets and we opened presents and we ate pizza and my friend blew out the candles and we ate chocolate cake and we had a marvelous time and we went home.

It snowed yesterday so I called my friends and we went outside and played in the snow and we made a snowman and we made a fort and we had a snowball fight and we got cold and we went inside and we had hot chocolate and it was a fabulous day.

Using "and" effectively:

☞ Henkes, K. (2006). *Lilly's Big Day*. New York: Greenwillow.
When Mr. Slinger announces he is getting married Lilly is sure she is going to be the flower girl!

ADD IT ALL UP AND YOUR WRITING HAS VOICE!

Animals have VOICE too! MINI-LESSON

- Build background knowledge by talking about dogs and cats. Make a web of dog and cat characteristics.
 - Share the story *I am the Dog, I am the Cat*. Discuss the differences in the voice of the dog and cat.
 - Students write similar version of the story using different animals. For example: " I am a mouse. I love to scamper and eat cheese. Don't try to catch me because I'm too fast." Encourage students to show their animal's voice in their piece.
 - Invite students to share their piece without telling the animal's name, see if their classmates can guess their animal by listening carefully for its voice.
- 📖 Hall, D. (1994). *I am the Dog. I am the Cat*. Dial.
A dog and a cat take turns describing what makes each of them unique.
- 📖 Cronin, D. (2003). *Diary of a Worm*. HarperCollins.
A hysterical journal that describes the daily life of a worm.
- 📖 Black, I. M. (2009). *Chicken Cheeks*. (K. Hawkes, Illus.). New York: Simon & Schuster.

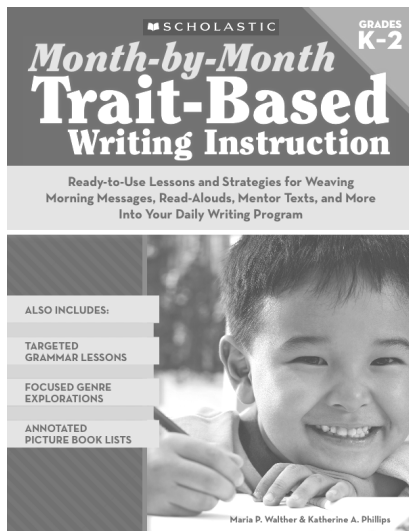
Read this one aloud just for laughs. Then, return to it as a mentor text for "list" books as it lists all the different kinds of animal rear ends. Observant readers will also notice the story of the two ants depicted in the illustrations.

MORE BOOKS WITH VOICE

- 📖 Glasser, R. P. (2006). *Fancy Nancy*. (J. O'Connor, Illus.). HarperCollins.
Also, *Fancy Nancy and the Posh Puppy* (HarperCollins, 2007)
- 📖 Kachenmeister, C. (1989). *On Monday When It Rained*. Houghton Mifflin.
In text and photographs a boy shared the different emotions he experiences.
- 📖 Laden, N. (1994). *The Night I Followed the Dog*. Scholastic.
A boy details his adventures following his dog to the "dog club". (1st person)
- 📖 Long, M. (2003). *How I Became a Pirate*. Harcourt.
Jeremy joins a pirate crew and finds out about pirate life. (1st person)
- 📖 O'Malley, K. (2005). *Once Upon a Cool Motorcycle Dude*. Walker & Co.
A girl and boy tell a fairy tale to the class with two very distinct voices.
- 📖 Orlean, S. (2008). *Lazy Little Loafers*. (G. Brian Karas, Illus.). New York: Abrams.
A young girl's humorous, first-person account of the reasons she thinks babies (lazy little loafers) don't work.
- 📖 Willems, Mo. (2003). *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* Hyperion.
The pigeon tries to convince the reader to let him drive! (1st person)

CELEBRATE WRITING!

- Brown, M. (1996). *Arthur Writes a Story*. Little Brown.
- Bullard, L. (2007). *You Can Write a Story: A Story Writing Recipe for Kids*. (D. H. Melmon, Illus.). Two-Can.
- Kanninen, B. (2007). *A Story With Pictures*. (L. R. Reed, Illus.). Holiday House.
- Kirk, D. (2007). *Library Mouse*. Abrams.
- LaRochelle, D. (2007). *The End*. (R. Egielski, Illus.). Arthur A. Levine.
- Leedy, L. (2004). *Look At My Book: How Kids Can Write and Illustrate Terrific Books*. Holiday House.
- Miller, A.A. (2003). *Treasures of the Heart*. (K. L. Darnell, Illus.). Sleeping Bear Press.
- Pulver, R. (2003). *Punctuation Takes a Vacation*. (L. R. Reed, Illus.). Holiday House
- Rosenthal, A. K. (2006). *One of Those Days*. (R. Doughty, Illus.). G. P. Putnam's Sons.



Books That Have Influenced My Writing Instruction

- Bellamy, P. C. (Ed.). (2005). *Seeing with new eyes: Using the 6 + 1 trait writing model* (6th ed.). Portland, OR: NWREL.
- _____. (2004). *Picture books: An annotated bibliography with activities for teaching writing with the 6 + 1 trait writing model* (6th ed.). Portland, OR: NWREL.
- Cunningham, P. M., Hall, D. P., & Sigmon, C. M. (1999). *The teacher's guide to the four blocks*. Carson-Dellosa.
- Fletcher, R., & Portalupi, J. (2007). *Craft lessons: Teaching writing K-8* (2nd ed.). Stenhouse.
- Fletcher, R., & Portalupi, J. (2001). *Writing workshop: The essential guide*. Heinemann.
- Johnston, P. H. (2004). *Choice words: How our language affects children's learning*. Stenhouse
- Portalupi, J., & Fletcher, R. (2001). *Nonfiction craft lessons*. Stenhouse.
- Ray, K. W., & Cleaveland, L. B. (2004). *About the authors: Writing workshop with our youngest writers*. Heinemann.
- Routman, R. (2005). *Writing essentials*. Heinemann.
- Spandel, V. (2001). *Books, lessons, ideas for teaching the six traits*. Great Source.
- Spandel, V. (2007). *Creating young writers* (2nd ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Stead, T. (2002). *Is that a fact? Teaching non-fiction writing K-3*. Stenhouse.