



# Assisting Students to Use Strategies for Writing

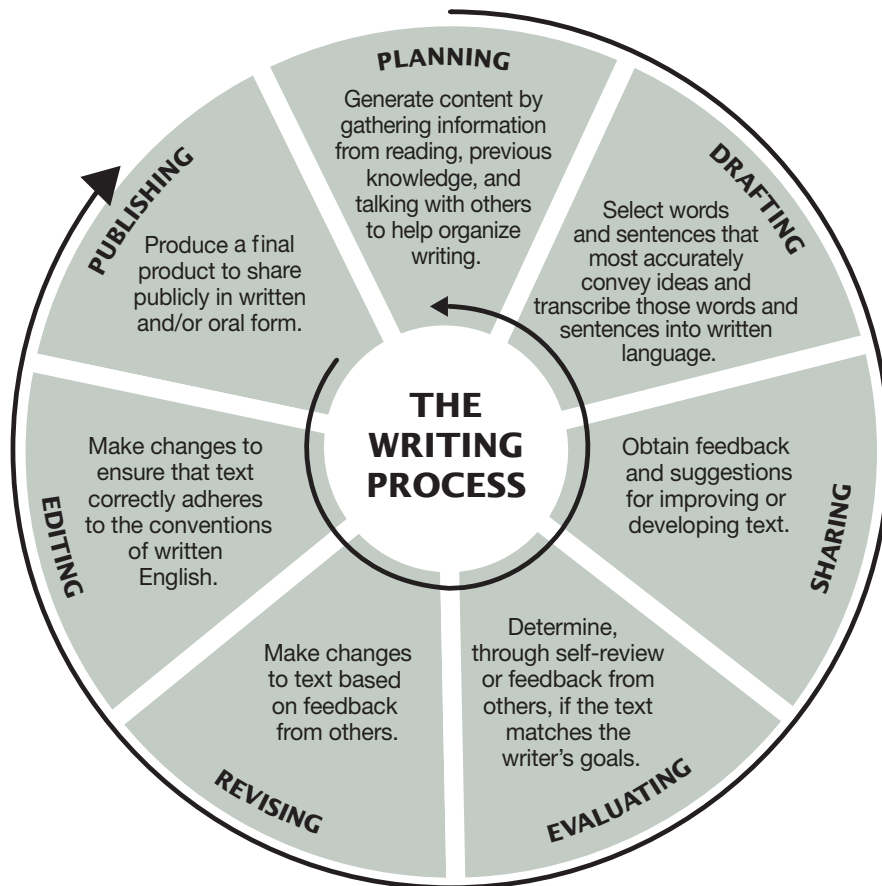
## Strategies for Writing

A **writing strategy** is a series of actions (mental, physical, or both) that writers undertake to achieve their goals. Strategies help students generate content and carry out components of the writing process. Students should acquire specific strategies for each component of the writing process. Many strategies can be used to assist students with more than one component.

The practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers* recommends teaching students about the **components of the writing process** and how to select and use appropriate **writing strategies**.

### Tip: Break down the writing process into components.

- **Introduce** students to the components of the writing process: planning, drafting, sharing, evaluating, revising, editing, and publishing (see graphic below).
- **Students should learn** to move easily back and forth between components of the writing process, often altering their plans and revising their text along the way.



**Tip: Describe and model age-appropriate writing strategies for components of the writing process.**

- **Focus** on basic strategies, such as POW (Pick ideas, Organize their notes, Write and say more) and brainstorming and ordering, in 1st or 2nd grade.
- **Introduce** more complicated strategies, such as brainstorming and outlining, in 3rd grade or later.
- **Describe and model** strategies that can be used for one or more components of the writing process.

**EXAMPLE. Age-appropriate writing strategies for planning**

Writing Strategy	How Students Can Use the Strategy	Grade Range
<b>POW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pick ideas (i.e., decide what to write about)</li> <li>▪ Organize their notes (i.e., brainstorm and organize possible writing ideas into a writing plan)</li> <li>▪ Write and say more (i.e., continue to modify the plan while writing)</li> </ul>	1–6
<b>Ordering Ideas/Outlining</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brainstorm/generate ideas for their paper</li> <li>▪ Review their ideas and place a number by what will go first</li> </ul>	1–2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brainstorm/generate ideas for their paper</li> <li>▪ Decide which are main ideas and which are supporting ideas</li> <li>▪ Create an outline that shows the order of the main ideas and the supporting details for each main idea</li> </ul>	3–6

Source: Adapted from Graham and Harris (2005).

Note: For the full list of age-appropriate writing strategies, please refer to Table 3, page 16, in the *Educator's Practice Guide on Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers*.

**Tip: Guide students to select and use appropriate writing strategies.**

- **Explain** when, how, and why to use the strategies throughout the writing process.
- **Match** a list of strategies with a list of situations in which they can be used. Ask students to participate in matching. Students can add more situations to the list, including those in other content areas.
- **Encourage** students to set a goal of using strategies in one or more of the situations on the list.
- **Discuss** how the strategies can be modified for different situations.

**EXAMPLE. Wall chart for teaching when to use writing strategies**

**When should I use writing strategies?**

Strategies	Situations
• POW	• Brainstorming ideas for a newspaper article
• Ordering ideas/outlining	• Writing a science report for the first time
• Imitation	• Asking classmates for feedback on a short story
• Sentence generation	• Re-reading an essay written last week
• "Author's chair"	
• Self-evaluating	
• Self-monitoring	
• Peer revising	



# Teaching Students to Write for a Variety of Purposes

## Writing Purposes

Writing is used for a variety of **purposes**, such as conveying information, making an argument, providing a means for self-reflection, sharing an experience, enhancing understanding of reading, or providing entertainment. Understanding different writing purposes helps students adjust their writing to be most effective.

The practice guide *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers* recommends teaching students the connection between **different genres** and writing purposes, as well as how to write for a **variety of audiences**.

### Tip: Teach students that different genres of writing serve different purposes.

- **Teach** students about different genres of writing that fit specific purposes, such as to describe, narrate, inform, persuade, or analyze.
- **Explain** how the features of a genre serve the purpose of the text. For example:
  - A short story includes a description of characters, places, and events, which serves the author’s purpose of telling a story that is interesting to the reader.
  - Instructions include an ordered list of steps, which serves the author’s purpose of informing the reader about how to do something.
- **Relate** genres to real-world scenarios to help students understand when and how to use certain genres.
- **Ask** students to practice selecting a genre and composing text to serve a specific purpose.

A **genre** is a form of writing with specific features that provides context and structure for a particular purpose and audience.

### EXAMPLE. Relating real-world scenarios to purpose and genre and selecting the appropriate genre

Real-world scenario	What’s the purpose of writing?	What genres serve this purpose?	What genres are most effective for this scenario and audience?
Convince school to offer additional art classes	To persuade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Persuasive letter</li> <li>▪ Editorial</li> <li>▪ Compare-and-contrast essay</li> <li>▪ Literary analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Persuasive letter</li> <li>▪ Editorial</li> <li>▪ Compare-and-contrast essay</li> <li>▪ Literary analysis</li> </ul>
Teach a friend how to knit a scarf	To inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Newspaper article</li> <li>▪ Letter</li> <li>▪ Instructions</li> <li>▪ Science report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Newspaper article</li> <li>▪ Letter</li> <li>▪ Instructions</li> <li>▪ Science report</li> </ul>

**Tip: Expand students' concept of audience.**

- **Design** writing activities that naturally lend themselves to different audiences.
- **Help students generate a list** of potential audiences for a given writing assignment. Students then can choose the audience that best fits their writing topic.
- **Encourage** students to practice writing about the same topic for different audiences, to develop the skill of adjusting tone and word choice to suit the audience. For example:
  - When writing persuasive letters, students could practice writing to parents, friends, or teachers.
  - When writing a narrative, students could practice writing a short story for a magazine or a fable for a preschool class.

**EXAMPLE. Listing potential audiences for a specific writing purpose**

