

Writing Rescue: Skill Instruction for Older Students Who Struggle



Everyone Reading Annual Conference
March 23, 2017

Presenter: Abigail Helfat, Ed.M.
abigail.goen@gmail.com



Writing Rescue: Skill Instruction for Older Students Who Struggle

Writing is a complex task! It requires the integration of **basic skills**, like letter formation, spelling and mechanics, and **higher-level skills**, such as planning, developing ideas and revising. Students may struggle with a few, many or even all of these skills. It is clear from the research that students who do not master basic transcription skills struggle to share their ideas in writing throughout upper elementary school and beyond. Therefore, **we must commit to helping students as soon as skills deficits arise.**

In the early elementary years, **handwriting** and **spelling** are key elements of the composition process. Later, as students are expected to compose longer texts in a variety of formats, **basic skills should be automatic** so that students can focus on **higher level composition tasks.**

For older students who haven't mastered the basics, you can make a **commitment to teach the skills they need** and also **structure writing time** so they can learn more advanced skills to share ideas effectively. With the right support, **all students can meet expectations** and achieve high standards as writers. This packet contains materials and strategies that you can implement right away, but you should get ready to experiment and create materials that will meet your students' needs.

Remember that some kids might need instruction and practice in **basic skills** –

- Writing Fluency
- Spelling
- Capitalization and Punctuation

They will also need support to frame and share ideas –

- Sentence Work
- Paragraph Work
- Using the Writing Process for Planning—Drafting—Revising

Kids who struggle to write will benefit from **structured lessons** that **teach skills** directly. They need lots of encouragement and guided practice to master skills at the sentence and paragraph level before moving on to longer written pieces. I hope some of the materials here will help you consider new ways to target writing instruction for the diverse learners in your classroom.

Please stay in touch if you have questions or comments—

Abigail Helfat

abigail.goen@gmail.com

3. TRACE:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n
o p q r s t u v w x y z

4. COPY:

5. What comes next?

a b c _ e _ _

h _ _ _ l m n _ _ _

q r s _ _ v

w _ y _

Suffix Spelling Rules

<p style="text-align: center;">Rule 1</p> <p>For words ending with s, x, z, ch, or sh, add -es</p> <p>EXAMPLES:</p> <p>dress/dresses miss/misses box/boxes buzz/buzzes church/churches wish/wishes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Rule 2</p> <p>For words ending in one vowel followed by one consonant, double the final consonant if the suffix begins with a vowel</p> <p>EXAMPLES:</p> <p>wet/wets/wetting/wetter/wettest chat/chats/chatting/chatted</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Rule 3</p> <p>For words ending with a silent e, drop the e before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel</p> <p>EXAMPLES:</p> <p>nice/nicer live/lived/living/lively scare/scares/scary/scaring</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Rule 4</p> <p>For words ending with a consonant-y, change the y to i before adding a suffix that begins with e</p> <p>EXAMPLES:</p> <p>baby/babies try/tries/trying key/keys play/plays/played/playing</p>

Sing a Super Sentence!

Use this interactive strategy to teach your students the art of building super sentences, singing a song and reading independently.

Materials needed:

Butcher paper or chart paper

Red, green, pink and blue markers (or 4 colors of your choice)

Procedure:

Divide the chart paper into four columns with the following headings: **adjectives** (describing words), **nouns**, **verbs** (action words) and **prepositional phrases** (where? when?)

Select your topic (i.e., spiders) and ask students to generate/brainstorm words to fit into each column.

Adjectives	Nouns	Verbs	Prepositional Phrases
ugly hairy fuzzy black	spider	crawls climbs runs creeps	on my arm across the floor up the wall in the barn

Sing a super sentence: Begin with "The" or "A", add two adjectives, one noun, one verb and one prepositional phrase and sing to the tune of *The Farmer in the Dell*. (Point to each new word or phrase.)

Ex. The ugly, hairy spider
The ugly, hairy spider
The ugly, hairy spider crawls on my arm.

Extension: Students may write and illustrate super sentences in their journals by following a pattern:

The



Name: _____

Date: _____

Day: _____

- DIRECTIONS: 1. **Read** the sentences below **carefully**.
2. **Mark** the mistakes with your pencil.
3. **Re-write** the sentence with the corrections.
4. Use your **neatest handwriting**.

1. mount everest is part of the Himalayan mountains in asia

2. the statue of liberty is on ellis island in new york harbor

3. is the united states of america between canada and mexico

4. are france, spain, and germany countries in europe

Name: _____

Date: _____

Day: _____

Combining Short Sentences

1. Ella played soccer. Jackson played soccer.

2. Carter skipped across the playground. Carter climbed the jungle gym.

3. Bailey couldn't finish her puzzle. She lost one of the pieces.

4. The car got stuck on the bridge. It was pulled off by a tow truck. The car had smoke under the hood.

***CHALLENGE: Split into short sentences.

5. The mail carrier couldn't deliver any packages because the sidewalks were so icy during the storm.

Topic Sentence Practice - Cut up and mix in envelopes for students.

There are many delicious ice cream flavors to taste.

You can eat vanilla, chocolate, or strawberry ice cream.

You can also pick chocolate chip cookie dough.

You can even have bubble gum ice cream.

I think ice cream is a fantastic treat!

Making lemonade is easy.

First, you need to get lemons, sugar, and water.

You will also need a pitcher and cups.

Next, squeeze the lemons into a pitcher of water.

Then add sugar until it tastes sweet.

Finally, pour a glass for your friends and enjoy a cool drink.

Fresh lemonade is delicious!

There are many interesting kinds of pets.

Some people like cuddly pets such as cats or rabbits.

Others like smaller pets like fish or hamsters.

Many people like to have dogs for pets.

There are also exotic pets like snakes, lizards, monkeys or birds.

Just like people, no two pets are the same.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Day: _____

Topic Sentences

A topic sentence states the **subject** + **category** + **details**. It states a complete thought.

Read the sentences below. Put a star beside the ones that would make good topic sentences.

Puzzles are games that tease your mind.

Puzzles are cool.

I am going to tell you why I like soccer.

Soccer is a sport that helps you stay healthy and have fun.

Minerals can be different colors.

Minerals are materials that can be used in many ways.

Antarctica is a continent with many unique features.

Here are some facts about Antarctica.

Rocks are objects that can be formed by different minerals.

Minerals form rocks.

Reading the newspaper is important.

Newspapers are documents that tell us about world events.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Day: _____

Choose ONE topic sentence below.

Copy on in the space provided and write FOUR supporting detail sentences.

1. Soccer is a sport that everyone should try.
2. There are many reasons why summer vacation should be longer.
3. The subway is an interesting way to travel around the city.
4. It is important to be organized before starting a big project.

Topic sentence: _____

Details:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Day: _____

Paragraph Writing



Topic: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

WORKSHOP SURVEY - WRITING RESCUE

For the first section, please rate each on a scale of 1 -5 (5 is best).

1. How well did the session match the description in the conference materials?
2. Please rate the overall format of the session.
3. How helpful were the sample activities that were demonstrated today?
4. How did this session compare to others you have attended?

5. What elements of the session were most helpful?

6. What recommendations can you make to improve future presentations?

7. Share one current teaching/learning dilemma in your classroom that you would like to learn more about.