

WRITE!

Foundations and Models for Proficiency A Research-Based Writing Program

"Writing is a powerful instrument of thought. In the act of composing, writers learn about themselves and their world and communicate their insights to others. Writing confers the power to grow personally and to effect change in the world" (NCTE 2008b).

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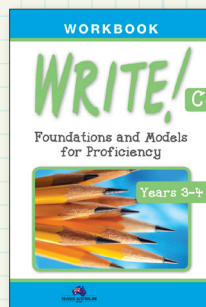
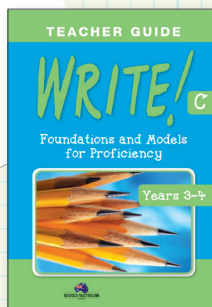
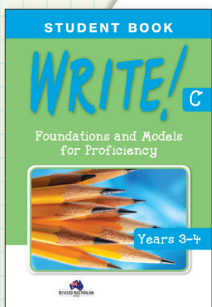
An Introduction to the Series

WRITE! is a writing program with a foundation in grammar, usage and mechanics (GUM). The GUM component of **WRITE!** is both skills-based and grounded in the context of writing. This two-pronged approach meets the needs of today's diverse classroom populations. The writing component of **WRITE!** is process-oriented, with students applying higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, interpretation, evaluation and synthesis as they progress through each on-demand writing lesson.

GUM =
GRAMMAR
USAGE
MECHANICS

It is an essential principle of writing instruction that "students learn to write by writing. Guidance in the writing process and discussion of the students' own work should be the central means of writing instruction" (NCTE 2008b). **WRITE!** meets this recommendation by providing multiple writing opportunities. Books A and B each offer a minimum of 34 writing opportunities. Books C–H each offer at least 37 writing opportunities.

As recent analysis has affirmed, "teaching writing well involves multiple teaching strategies that address both process and product, both form and content" (National Writing Project & Nagin 2003, p. 16). **WRITE!** supports this statement and, in turn, is supported by Australian and international research regarding the instruction of composition and GUM skills in everyday classroom settings and in on-demand writing environments.



"Teachers and students know that effective writers are not created in a day, a week, a month or a year. Effective instruction builds on what was previously learned and what will be learned in the following weeks. It provides planned opportunities for learning about and through writing, for writing practice, for maintenance of skills and strategies and for transfer of skills and understandings to varied contexts."

(Davis 2013, p. 4)

The **WRITE!** program includes

Student Books

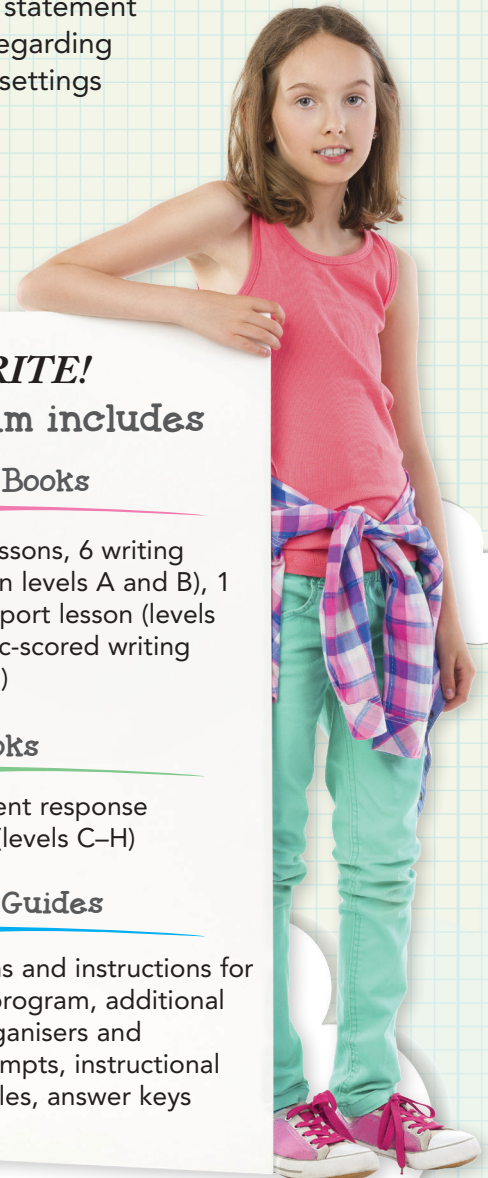
30 GUM lessons, 6 writing lessons (4 in levels A and B), 1 research report lesson (levels C–H), rubric-scored writing (levels C–H)

Workbooks

Blank student response templates (levels C–H)

Teacher Guides

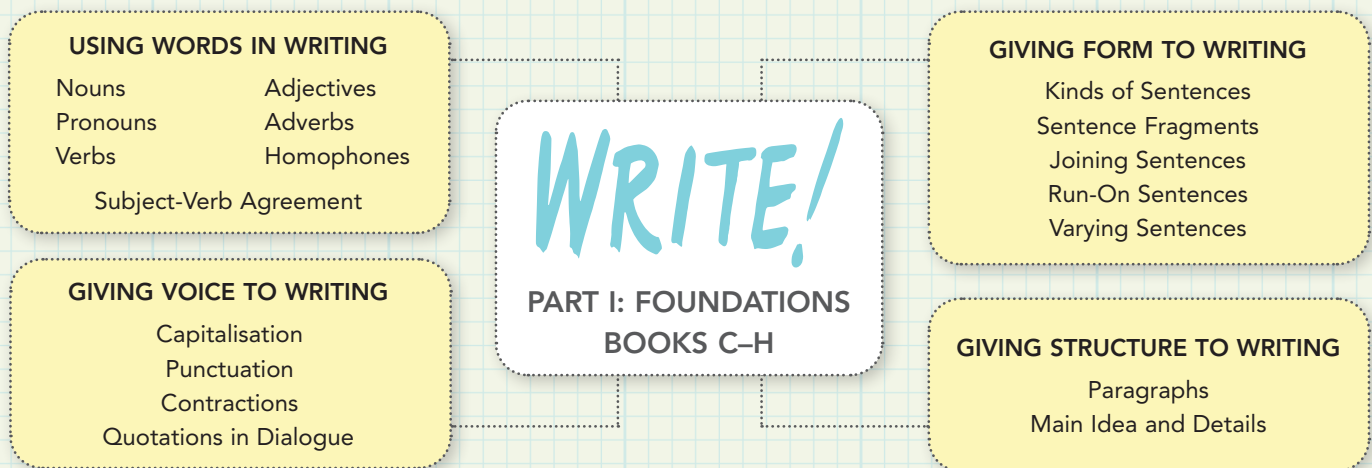
Suggestions and instructions for using the program, additional graphic organisers and writing prompts, instructional reproducibles, answer keys



What Are the Instructional Features of Part I: Foundations?

The Part I GUM lessons provide a foundation for the Part II writing lessons. The skills-based GUM lessons are presented within the context of writing: Using Words in Writing, Giving Form to Writing, Giving Voice to Writing and Giving Structure to Writing. Within each section, students are introduced to GUM skills that will improve their writing. "Usage, punctuation, and other aspects of mechanics and sentence structure in the context of writing is considerably more effective than teaching usage and mechanics in isolation" (Weaver 1996, p. 179). This is not a solitary finding. More than 85 years of research point to the lack of transfer from isolated grammar instruction to language development (Simmons & Carroll 2003, p. 371).

The final lesson in Part I focuses on proofreading, which fortifies the connection between GUM and writing.



GUM skills are presented within the context of writing. Students learn how each GUM skill affects the meaning and clarity of writing.

Is there a need for GUM instruction?

1. State-based standardised tests, national assessments like the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) exam and international metrics such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) all require students to answer multiple-choice, GUM-skill questions.
2. According to 2014 NAPLAN results, Australian students' grammatical skills are less than satisfactory: among Year 7 students, "only about 15 per cent used correct punctuation 'most' of the time, while 10 per cent used effective and accurate paragraphs and 4 per cent used correct and varied sentences" (Ferrari 2014).
3. NAPLAN results also "underline the struggle with the mechanics of writing that students experience across the board, high-achieving students having as much difficulty with correct grammar and spelling as low-scoring students with poorer overall literacy skills" (Ferrari 2014).
4. The failure to teach our children how to write could have major consequences for their future lives. According to a report by Western Australia's premier business lobby, "up to 8 million Australians do not have the required ... writing skills" to succeed in the world of industry ("Poor reading and writing skills holding industry back", 2011).

Plural Nouns

Think

Nouns can be singular or plural. A **singular noun** names one person, place or thing. A **plural noun** names two or more people, places or things.

There are three simple rules for making nouns plural.

- Add *s* to most nouns.
- When a noun ends in *sh, ch, s, ss* or *x*, add *es*.
- When a noun ends in a consonant and *y*, change the *y* to *i* and add *es*.

Singular Nouns	horse, wish, sandwich, gas, glass, box, berry
Plural Nouns	horses, wishes, sandwiches, gases, glasses, boxes, berries

Student Book C

In the **Think** section, students learn language about language in order to discuss their writing with peers and teachers.

Add *s* to most nouns to make them **plural**. Add *es* to nouns that end in *sh, ch, s, ss* or *x*. When nouns end in a consonant and *y*, change the *y* to *i* and add *es*.

Student Book C

GLOSSARY OF WRITING AND TESTING TERMS

On pages 58–59 are definitions of some terms found in **WRITE!**

article: nonfiction writing that appears in a newspaper, magazine, encyclopedia or the internet

brainstorm: to collect ideas by thinking of and listing all the possibilities; often used with groups

characters: the people or animals in a story
closing paragraph: the last paragraph in a longer piece of writing; sums up the most important ideas

composition: any writing in which ideas are presented in an organised way; word often used to describe a school writing assignment

descriptive writing: writing that uses sensory words to paint pictures for readers; may exist on its own as a paragraph or an essay or may be part of another type of writing

dialogue: the exact words spoken by the characters in a story

draft: one version of a piece of writing

edit: to improve a piece of writing

essay: a piece of writing in which ideas on a single topic are presented in an organised way

fact: something that can be shown to be true

fiction: writing that comes from a person's imagination

fictional narrative: a story that the writer makes up

grammar: the way in which words are put together to give meaning to writing

graphic organiser: a chart or diagram that can help writers gather and sort information

informative writing: writing that explains a topic or gives directions

main idea: the most important idea in a paragraph or a longer piece of writing

metaphor: a comparison between two things that does not use the word *like* or *as* but suggests instead that one thing is the other (example: The wind made cherries of her checks.)

narrative: writing that tells a true or an imaginary story

nonfiction: writing about real people, places and things

notes: brief reminders, written in one's own words, of important information from another piece of writing

opening paragraph: a paragraph at the beginning of a longer piece of writing; it introduces the topic and gets readers' attention

opinion: what a person thinks or feels about a topic

outline: a type of graphic organiser that helps writers arrange the main ideas and supporting details of a topic

paragraph: a group of sentences about the same idea; the first line of a paragraph is always indented

passage: a written work

personal narrative: a true story about something that happened in the writer's life, told from the writer's point of view; often includes personal thoughts and feelings as well as events

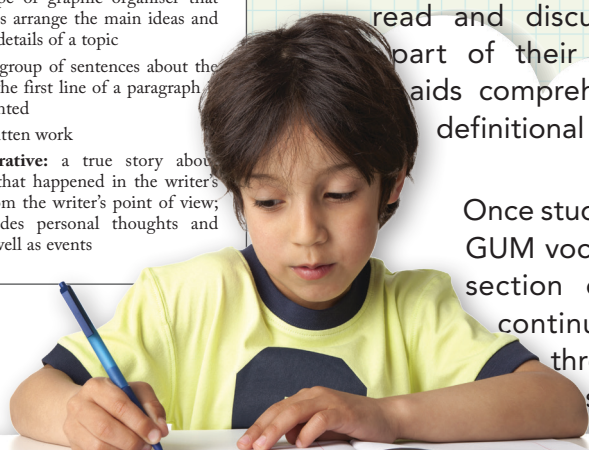
Teacher Guide C

To meet the needs of diverse classroom populations, **WRITE!** presents GUM skills in two ways: through reading and writing experiences and through skills-based practice activities.

Think: This section of each Part I GUM lesson serves as stimulus for students' prior knowledge of the GUM skill. It also provides an explanation of the skill and assistance in applying the skill. Interspersed throughout the section are definitions of GUM content-area vocabulary terms (GUM language). According to best practice, content-area vocabulary instruction should be both direct and indirect in order to be effective (National Reading Panel 2000, pp. 4–24). In Books B–H, direct vocabulary instruction occurs through the definitional instruction given in the Think section and in the **Rule** box. Indirect vocabulary instruction occurs throughout the section. Teaching content-area vocabulary for writing (language about language) is important because it gives teachers and students a common vocabulary for discussing GUM and writing (NCTE 2008a).

The **Glossary of Writing and Testing Terms** is another vocabulary-building feature in **WRITE!** Teacher Guides for Books A–H. The glossary contains terms that often appear on writing assessments and are used in classroom discussions. "Testing vocabulary should be taught the way we would teach any specialized content language: by demonstrating its use in a meaningful context and modeling how we transfer that language to a new context" (Allen 2002, p. 57). According to Johnson (2000), vocabulary words are learned from oral and written contexts – through listening and reading. Students working in Part I: Foundations read and discuss writing vocabulary as part of their instruction. The glossary aids comprehension by providing clear definitional information.

Once students gain knowledge of the GUM vocabulary taught in the Think section of each lesson, students continue their GUM learning through context learning and skills-based practice.




What Are the Instructional Features of Part I: Foundations?

Study a Model: In this context-learning instructional piece, students read a short writing model that exemplifies the lesson's GUM skill. This type of critical reading clarifies for students and teachers how GUM affects a writer's meaning. "Meaning and conventions are connected. Help yourself and the children in your classroom to begin to question how the meaning of a text is enhanced by the use of conventions" (Graves 1994, p. 197). Students analyse and discuss the writing model in terms of how the lesson's GUM skill enables, clarifies or enhances the meaning of the writing. Once students have realised the impact that GUM makes on writing and communicating, they put into practice the GUM skill.

Study a Model

Carlos is going to visit Adrian's home. Read the directions Adrian gave Carlos. The words in red are plural nouns.

From school, walk east for five **blocks**. After you go by a row of **shops**, turn right onto Elm Street. You will pass a park on the left with many **benches** and some tall **bushes**. Next, you will walk by two small **factories** on the right. Our apartment is in the next building, which has three **stories**. I will be waiting for you out the front.



Notice that **blocks** and **shops** form their plural by adding **s**.

Because **bench** and **bush** end in **ch** and **sh**, add **es** to make them plural.

Since **factory** ends in a consonant and **y**, the **y** is changed to **i** before **es** is added. What other noun forms its plural this way?


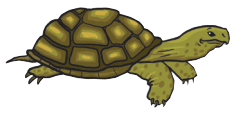
Student Book C

Students study a concrete example that shows how the specific GUM skill enables, clarifies or enhances a writer's meaning.

Practise: In Book A, students practise the GUM skill in a single practice activity. In Books B–H, students apply the GUM skill in three skills-based practice activities. Students progress from applying the GUM skill to single words, to individual sentences and then finally to paragraphs. According to Graves (1994), instruction and practice of GUM is important because "conventions help the writer understand his own thinking just as they help the reader to understand what the writer is trying to say" (p. 161). Graves (1994) goes on to say that students need to be aware of their progression in GUM usage. In **WRITE!**, the Practise activities foster students' awareness of their own incorrect or correct usage before they begin an independent writing activity.

Practise

The verb in each sentence shows what is happening now. Circle the verb.

- The rabbit runs fast. 
- The turtle walks down the street.
- The rabbit sleeps under a tree. 
- The turtle wins the race.

Student Book A

Students experience the effect that the GUM skill has on their writing by independently writing short pieces.

Practise

A Write each underlined noun. Label it **S** for singular or **P** for plural.

- a brown pony
- sandy beaches
- colourful butterflies
- the dull axe
- sealed with a kiss
- two leather shoes
- the thick bushes
- a busy bee

B Read each sentence. Write the plural of the underlined noun.

- My sister and I washed all the dish last night.
- She has two dress hanging in her wardrobe.
- Both school bus will arrive any minute.
- Put all the peach in a basket.
- Zaheer has penpals in three country.
- The politician promised to lower tax.

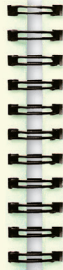
C Read the paragraph. Find the 11 nouns that should be plural. Write them correctly.

Yesterday, all the girl in our Girl Guides group went camping. As we were setting up the two tent, we saw three small fox. These baby peeked out from under some branch on the ground. While walking, we found some wild raspberry and blackberry. What a mess we made as we ate these fruit! At night, we heard screech from some noisy owl. We all enjoyed the sights and sound on our camping trip.

Student Book C

Write

Write directions. Tell how to get from your home to another place. Put the steps in order so that someone can follow them easily. Write the plural nouns correctly.



Writing Tip

Using exact nouns in directions will make them easier to follow. Which direction do you think is clearer?

- Turn left at the building.
- Turn left at Bunny's Bakery.

Student Book C

Write: "Traditional drill and practice will be the most meaningful to students when they are anchored in the context of writing assignments or the study of literary models" (NCTE 2008a). For this reason, students conclude the lesson by creating their own pieces of writing, which are in the same genre as the model presented earlier in the lesson. A **Writing Tip** in Books C–H strengthens the incorporation of the GUM skill into students' writing.

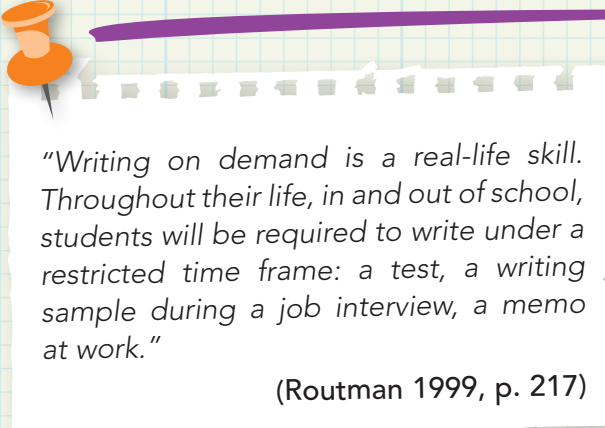
Students may also refer back to the Study a Model and the Practise activity to review the use of the GUM skill in their writing. According to Schallert and Martin (2003), modelling through class discussion allows students to "incorporate or borrow" particular words or phrases to make them their own. From the learning gained from discussion, students may then use the knowledge internally. Students demonstrate their understanding of GUM skills through the short writing piece.

In Part I: Foundations, students experience instructional exposure to GUM in the context of writing. In Part II: Models, students experience a reinforcing exposure to GUM instruction in the context of writing models. In Books C–H, students analyse several rubric-scored writing models before they create their own piece of writing. Page references encourage students to turn back to Part I GUM lessons for skills reinforcement or strengthening. Throughout **WRITE!**, GUM instruction is interwoven in the context of writing.

Students study and practise grammar, usage and mechanics in the context of writing. Students gain valuable realisations of how GUM can affect the meaning of their writing.



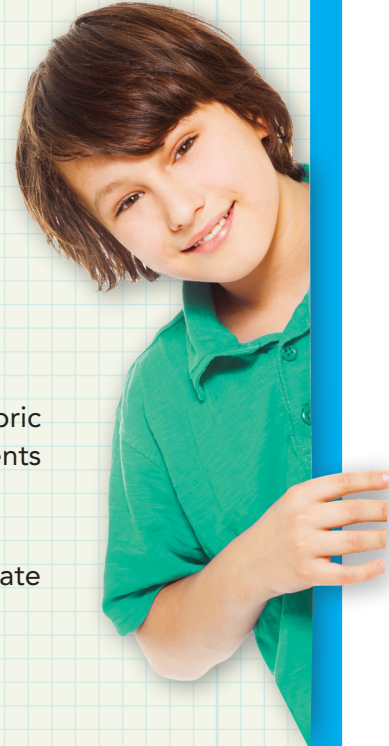
What Are the Instructional Features of Part II: Models?



"Writing on demand is a real-life skill. Throughout their life, in and out of school, students will be required to write under a restricted time frame: a test, a writing sample during a job interview, a memo at work."

(Routman 1999, p. 217)

Throughout Part II, students read and analyse rubric-scored genre-specific models and then go on to create their own writing in the genre. Part II employs rubric-based instruction because rubric assessment is commonly used in classroom settings and in standardised testing situations like NAPLAN.



Through the **WRITE!** lessons, students become familiar and comfortable with rubric terminology and applications, and they develop strong self-evaluation skills. Students can bring their knowledge and skills to any classroom or testing situation.

To aid students in meeting today's writing requirements, the Part II lessons incorporate the following instructional features:

- on-demand writing prompts
- collaborative learning and peer modelling
- self-evaluation practice (Books A and B) rubric-based instruction (Books C–H)

On-Demand Writing Prompts

In the **WRITE!** program, students must write about topics or prompts that are chosen for them. According to Chandler-Olcott and Mahar (2001), providing students with practice of on-demand topics is necessary for several reasons.

1. Students must respond to on-demand writing prompts on state, national and international standardised tests.
2. Students cannot explore a genre as a means of self-expression if they are not aware of the genre. Teachers need to introduce and guide students to genres that are not self-selected.
3. Students will be challenged by the task of attaching their voice, tone and ideas to topics that are not self-selected in order to make them their own.
4. Students will encounter on-demand writing topics in the workplace and other social contexts outside of school.

Fictional Narratives

Sometimes you write stories that are true. And sometimes you write stories that you make up. A **fictional narrative** is a story that you make up.

Here is a sample writing prompt for a fictional narrative.

Write a story about someone who finds something.

Read the fictional narrative. It was written in response to the prompt. Then read the Writing Tips to learn more about fictional narratives.

Student Book C

Persuasive Essays

You probably have thoughts and feelings about many things. When you express these thoughts and feelings in writing, you are writing a **persuasive essay**. In a persuasive essay, you try to make the reader see that you are right.

Here is a sample writing prompt for a persuasive essay.

Write your opinion on whether video games are bad for kids.

Read the persuasive essay. It was written in response to the prompt. Then read the Writing Tips to learn more about persuasive essays.

Student Book C

Practice with responding to writing prompts prepares students for on-demand writing.

Writing Instructions

Now it is your turn to write instructions. Use the prompt.

Write instructions that tell how to make a healthy snack.

Student Book A

Students in Years 1 and 2 will be facing on-demand writing situations in their near future. In **WRITE!** Books A and B, primary-years students are given writing prompts that are tailored to their interests. The topics reflect what these students value in their worlds (Indrisano & Squire 2000, p. 237). In Books A–H, students practise on-demand writing with time restrictions in Prepare for a Test, Part II.

Why Video Games Are Bad for Kids

Video games are bad for your body and for your brain. Parents should not let children play them.

To play video games, you must stay indoors in a dark room. Kids who play video games are unhealthy because they don't get enough fresh air and sunlight.

Video games lead to poor posture. You have to sit still for a long time to play them, and this can cause back problems later in life.

Many video games involve blood and violence. If kids see violent things onscreen, they might be more likely to do violent things for real.

Remember, playing a video game isn't like reading a book. It doesn't teach you useful life skills, and you don't need to use your imagination. There is much more variety in books than in video games.

Children will suffer if their parents let them play too many video games. I think that kids should be reading books or playing outside instead.

Student Book C

Collaborative Learning and Peer Modelling

"Other students' writing is the most powerful model of all. Kids think, *A kid just like me wrote this. I can do this too*" (Routman 1999, p. 221). **WRITE!** provides rubric-scored writing models with sample peer comments for students to read and analyse in Books C–H.

Collaboration between peers is an extrinsic motivation to write well. Students who work collaboratively are active and engaged learners. While analysing peers' writing is a valuable learning experience, students often resist having to work with one another. Collaboration amongst peers is a complicated event because students may be "influenced by the social concerns, relationships, and energy among students themselves" (Dyson & Freedman 2003, p. 971). **WRITE!** helps to reduce this possible resistance to collaborative learning. Students first work with anonymously written models and comments before they go on to actual peer assessments. The anonymously written pieces have no social risks attached to them. As students' confidence increases, their apprehension about working collaboratively should decrease.

WRITE! empowers students with self-confidence by providing anonymous, peer writing models to analyse before participating in collaborative work with peers.

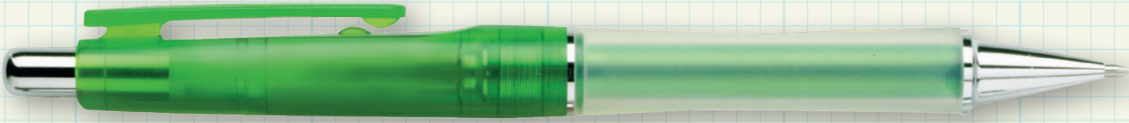
"Given psychological safety and the sense of being supported as a learner, the student is more likely to feel confident that he or she is capable of engaging successfully in the learning experiences offered. And this in turn promotes motivation, empowerment, and other associated characteristics that are critical for learning."

(Weaver 1996, p. 161)

Another benefit from collaborative learning is active learning. "Peer response can be [an] effective means for participation and engagement, as long as students are given the necessary skills and knowledge to respond critically to one another's work.



“Peer response helps students take responsibility for the quality of the work and can support a climate for high standards and expectations in writing” (U. S. National Writing Project & Nagin 2003, p. 82). Students are actively engaged in the lesson as they apply their critiquing skills.



Reading My Writing

- I wrote about a pair of shoes. _____
- I told how the shoes look, feel, smell and sound. _____
- My words will help readers see the shoes in their mind. _____



Now it is time to check your writing. Use this checklist to help you. Answer each question.

Checking My Writing

- Did I use plural nouns correctly? _____
- Did I use special verbs correctly? _____
- Does each sentence have a naming part and an action part? _____
- Did I begin each sentence with a capital letter? _____

Student Book A



Students gain self-evaluation skills in Books A and B through revision checklists.

Self-Evaluation Practice

In Books A and B, students practise using self-evaluation skills. Self-evaluation skills provide students with the first response to their writing. According to Donald H Graves in *A Fresh Look at Writing*, students must be able to evaluate their own writing before they can pass it on to an audience: “Having a topic but not the skill to reread your own work produces an enormous vacuum” (Graves 1994, p. 223).

In **WRITE!** Books A and B, students gain valuable practice by rereading their writing and by completing the **Reading My Writing Checklist** and the **Checking My Writing Checklist** in each lesson. **WRITE!** follows Graves’s recommendation that the elements of writing should be broken down into manageable units. **WRITE!** does this by exploring only one writing genre in each lesson and by including self-evaluation checklists in each lesson. Students read, think and evaluate their writing element by element. This self-evaluation process provides the feedback students need to read their writing objectively.

Teachers also have the option of presenting the more sophisticated self-evaluation checklists included in the Teacher Guides for Books A and B. All writing elements for each genre are listed; however, they are presented in one checklist instead of two, as in the Student Books.

Self-evaluation is a skill that carries over into more advanced skills. The writer’s checklists in Books A and B are an introduction to rubrics, the type of evaluation tool used in Books C–H.

Rubric-Based Instruction

Books C–H use rubrics as assessment tools. Rubrics are also provided in the Teacher Guides for Books A and B for the use of more advanced students. A rubric is a guide, usually presented as a chart, that identifies and describes various levels of performance on any given assignment. The evaluated components aid in determining average, above-average or below-average performance in a specific or general manner. The components that are used to evaluate a piece of writing include grammar, usage and mechanics; organisation; voice; and form.

Rubrics for writing help students interpret the quality of their work. As students analyse and score writing models they see how the different components of the writing rubric work together to create an effective piece of writing. “Many writing teachers have found that engaging students as active participants in the assessment process is an effective classroom practice; it enables them to assume more responsibility for their learning and brings clarity to what often appears to students as arbitrary or inconsistent standards about good writing” (National Writing Project & Nagin 2003, p. 82).

WRITE! fully embodies this belief. Students analyse writing models using rubric-based guidelines. Students also use rubrics to guide and assess their own writing and that of their peers. The **WRITE!** checklists and rubrics allow students to gauge their writing to specific standards. Teachers’ sharing of rubrics with students tends to “empower students, they urge students to become active participants in the writing process, and they substantiate the connections among teaching, learning, and assessment” (Soles 2001).



“Rubrics are a useful tool for focusing on specific dimensions of student writing samples. Holistic scoring techniques allow teachers to consider students’ writing in-depth because ratings are given to a number of different dimensions.”

(Hiebert & Frey 2003, p. 612)

WRITE! uses instructional features that have been proven to be effective in engaging, supporting, and preparing students for on-demand and classroom writing.

Student Book C

Using a Rubric to Score Informative Essays

This rubric is based on a point scale of 1 to 4. It was used to score the essays on pages 108–111. Use this rubric to remember what is important in informative essays.

<p>4 A score of 4 means that the writer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ connects the writing directly to the prompt ☐ almost always uses the correct forms of words ☐ almost always uses capitalisation and punctuation correctly ☐ almost always uses clear and complete sentences and includes variety in sentences ☐ includes effective words ☐ creates a title that relates directly to the topic ☐ introduces the topic clearly at the beginning ☐ creates a clear beginning, middle and ending ☐ explains the topic with at least three main ideas, along with supporting details ☐ puts the ideas in an order that creates a strong and clear essay ☐ begins a new paragraph for each new idea 	<p>2 A score of 2 means that the writer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ connects the writing to the prompt in a general way ☐ uses some incorrect forms of words and some incorrect capitalisation or punctuation ☐ includes little variety in sentences and uses some run-on sentences or sentence fragments ☐ includes mostly simple words ☐ creates a title that relates somewhat to the topic ☐ presents the topic within the essay but uses too few main ideas or details to explain the topic fully ☐ creates a weak beginning, middle or ending ☐ puts the ideas in a weak or choppy order ☐ makes some paragraphing errors
<p>3 A score of 3 means that the writer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ connects the writing to the prompt ☐ usually uses the correct forms of words ☐ usually uses capitalisation and punctuation correctly ☐ usually uses clear and complete sentences and includes some variety in sentences ☐ includes some effective words ☐ creates a title that relates to the topic ☐ introduces the topic towards the beginning ☐ creates a beginning, middle and ending ☐ explains the topic with some main ideas along with some supporting details ☐ puts the ideas in an order that creates a clear sense ☐ usually begins a new paragraph for each new idea 	<p>1 A score of 1 means that the writer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ does not successfully connect the writing to the prompt ☐ uses many incorrect forms of words and often uses incorrect capitalisation or punctuation ☐ includes almost no variety in sentences and uses several run-on sentences or sentence fragments ☐ includes only simple words ☐ creates a poor title or has no title at all ☐ includes the topic in the essay but uses too few main ideas or details to explain the topic ☐ creates an unclear beginning, middle or ending ☐ puts the ideas in an unclear order ☐ makes some paragraphing errors



↑

In Books C–H, students are introduced to writing rubrics, a tool commonly used to assess writing in classroom and testing situations.

What Instructional Strategies Are Used in Part II: Models?

Learning to write clearly and effectively is a challenging task for students of all abilities: "Writing is best understood as a complex intellectual activity that requires students to stretch their minds, sharpen their analytical capabilities, and make valid and accurate distinctions" (NCWASC 2003, p. 13). Because writing is a complex process to learn, **WRITE!** incorporates several strategies to involve students in a comprehensive learning experience.

- Students use higher-order thinking skills to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the writing models. GUM instruction is reinforced.
- Students strengthen their writing skills through extended instruction of writing genres. Application of genre features to students' writing is strengthened.
- Students use process-oriented writing to create their own written piece that synthesises the combined instruction of GUM skills and writing genres. Higher-order thinking skills are practised.

"Writers move fluently from whole to part and back again, shaping and defining their overall purpose as they develop specific examples and refine passages. They are problem-solvers, deciding as they go along how to tackle the many different challenges that arise."

(NCTE, p. 36)

"The process of writing develops higher-order thinking skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, and interpreting."

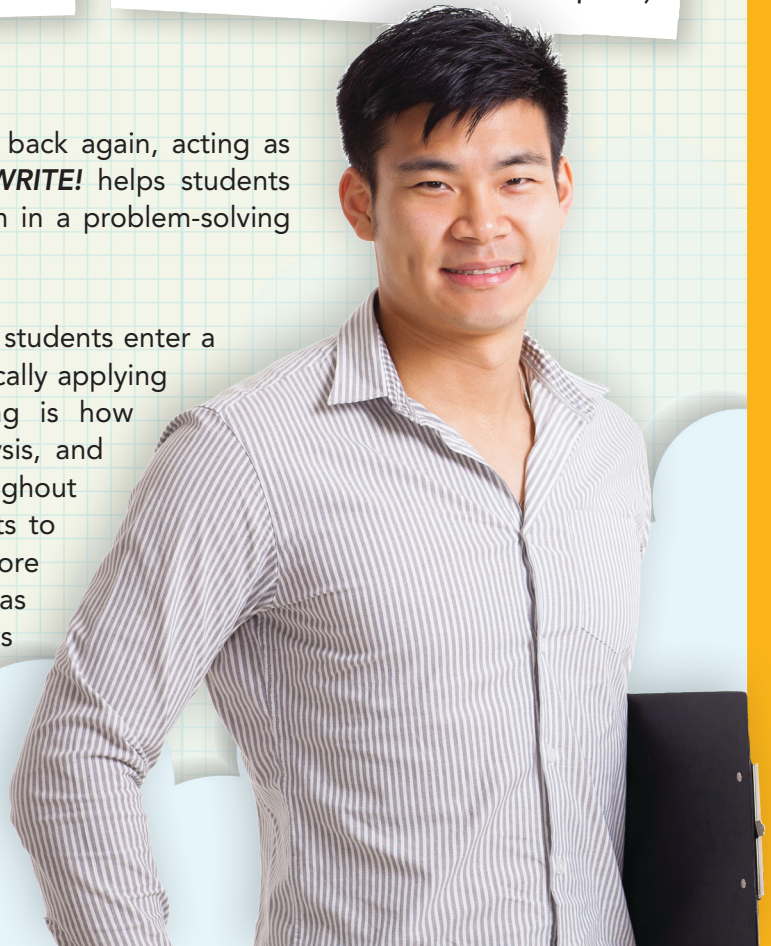
(National Writing Project & Nagin 2003, p. 22)

High-Order Thinking Skills

Good writers move fluently from whole to part and back again, acting as problem solvers to create clear, effective writing. **WRITE!** helps students to become fluent, effective writers by involving them in a problem-solving process that uses higher-order thinking skills.

Once they have analysed anonymous writing models, students enter a new stage in which they build a writing piece, intrinsically applying their problem-solving and analytical skills. "Writing is how we teach students complex skills of synthesis, analysis, and problem-solving. These skills will serve them well throughout life" (Ackerman 2003). "Writing that requires students to manipulate ideas leads to less memorization and to more in-depth understanding. This is critical for learning, as memory for ideas is long term, as are understandings about relationships among ideas and concepts" (Farnan & Dahl 2003, p. 1001).

In order to complete the specific sections of each **WRITE!** lesson, students must apply higher-order thinking skills. Thus, students practise these analytical skills before they begin to write independently.



What Instructional Strategies Are Used in Part II: Models?

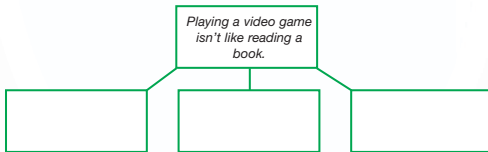
Using Graphic Organisers

Before you write, use **graphic organisers**. They can help you think about, gather and sort the information for your persuasive essay. The person who wrote the persuasive essay on the previous page might have used an **Opinion Chart**, such as the one below.



An Opinion Chart helps writers think about their opinion and the reasons and facts that back it up.

A **Reasons and Facts Chart** can also be helpful for gathering facts or examples that support a key reason for an opinion. How might the writer of the persuasive essay on the previous page have used this chart? Fill in the empty boxes.



A Reasons and Facts Chart helps writers organise information for an opinion. In the main box, writers jot down one reason that backs up their opinion. In the other boxes, they add supporting facts or examples.

Student Book C

Students use higher-order thinking skills when developing graphic organisers.

Think About Your Writing

You have written a description! Think about what you have learnt. Finish these sentences.

Thinking About My Writing

The best part of my description is _____

The hardest part of writing a description was _____

The sentence I like most is _____

Next time I want to describe _____

Student Book C

Self-assessment and reflective activities are steps that lead students to become better writers.



Graphic Organisers: “When students create and discuss a graphic representation of information, they reread, talk, reason, and see relationships that were not obvious before. Graphic organizers aid writing by supporting planning and revising” (Harrington, Holick & Hurt 1998). According to Indrisano & Squire (2000), students in the early years of schooling are transitioning from oral and symbolic planning of their stories to written plans. Graphic organisers ease primary school students into the practice of planning their writing. In later years, students continue to use graphic organisers to arrange information for writing.

Partner Comments and Think About Your Writing: In Part II of **WRITE!**, students learn to interpret and evaluate the writing of others. Modelled commentaries guide students to make objective and respectful evaluations of others’ writings. This scaffolded reflection leads students toward independent reflection of their own writing, a critical step in students’ writing development (Dyson & Freedman 2003, p. 973). Students self-evaluate their writing by completing the Think About Your Writing form. “To develop as writers, students also need the opportunity to articulate their own awareness and understanding of their processes in learning to write. Self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses, strategies used to improve writing, and their progress and goals for writing can be used by students to demonstrate their learning” (National Writing Project & Nagin 2003, p. 82)

2

Partner Comments

Right away you said that the place is an ice skating rink. I could see it. I felt as if I were at the ice rink with you. This is a good description!

3

Student Book C

Summaries and Research Reports: In Books C–H, two Part II writing lessons, Summaries and Research Reports, extend students’ learning by involving higher-order thinking skills. These lessons go beyond what students need to know for responding to writing prompts commonly found on state and national assessments.

Summaries

One way to know whether you have understood something you have read is to write a **summary**. A summary is a short piece of writing that tells the most important points of a longer piece of writing.

In a summary of nonfiction, you write the most important ideas. In a summary of fiction, you write about the most important characters and events.

Here is a sample prompt for writing a summary of a nonfiction passage.

Read the passage “Lion Prides” on the next page. Then write a one-paragraph summary of the passage.

Read the passage on the next page. Next, read the summary of the passage below. It was written in response to the prompt. Then read the Writing Tips to learn more about summaries.

Writing Tips

- With a long passage that you are going to summarise, look for details that answer **who, what, when, where, why and how** questions. These can guide you to the most important points in the reading passage.
- Sometimes nonfiction reading passages have words or headings printed in special type. You can use these as guides to the most important ideas.
- Most summaries should be one paragraph long.
- In a summary, use your own words whenever possible. It is all right to use some key terms from the main passage. However, don't copy large portions of text from the main passage.
- Keep the summary simple.
- Write the important ideas in the same order as they appear in the main passage.
- Don't add any new ideas to the summary.

Lions live in groups called prides. The males mate and protect the pride. The females hunt. They share what they kill with the other lions. The females also give birth to cubs and care for them. The cubs are helpless at first. They join the pride when they are about eight weeks old. The cubs are playful, and this play gets them ready to be adult lions.

Student Book C

Knowing how to write a summary is a skill that can be applied to all curriculum areas.

Research Reports

Writing to give information is called informative writing. When you see test prompts for informative writing, you must use facts and examples that you already know. In school, however, you are asked to write reports about real people, places or things. For these reports, you have to search out the facts and examples. Here are some tips on writing research reports.

TOPIC

Your teacher will sometimes give you a specific topic for your report. At other times, your teacher will give only a general subject. Then you will have to narrow the subject to a more specific topic. That way, you can write a clearly focused report.

If you have a subject such as "animals" to write about, you can narrow the topic by asking yourself questions. For example: Do I want to write about

- pet animals?
- small animals?
- furry animals?
- animals in the wild?

If you choose animals in the wild, which wild animals do you want to write about? Koalas? Lions? Elephants?

You should choose an animal that interests you and that you can gather specific details about.

If you decide to write about elephants, think of a question that you want your report to answer. This will be the topic.

- Where do elephants live?
- What do elephants look like?
- What do elephants eat?

If you choose what elephants look like as your topic, ask more questions.

- What is an elephant's trunk like?
- What are an elephant's teeth like?
- What are an elephant's ears like?

SOURCES

Once you have narrowed the topic, find sources for information. You might use nonfiction books, encyclopedias, magazine articles and the internet.

NOTES

Once you have found a few good sources, take notes on your topic. You can use graphic organisers. You can also write short notes on index cards or in a notebook.

At last, it's time to organise your notes for your report. An outline is one of the best ways to organise information for a report.

Knowing how to write a summary has relevance to every student in that the ability transfers to an effective study strategy for all content areas: "The power of writing a summary [lies] in the fact that it requires readers to evaluate information and make decisions regarding what represents important ideas and what are supporting details or descriptive details in a way that reconstructs the main points clearly and logically" (Farnan & Dahl 2003, p. 1001). Farnan and Dahl (2003) state that the ability to write summaries seems to improve retention and recall, as well as reading comprehension. In the Summaries lesson, students are instructed to look for main ideas, relevant details in an original source and to write using their own words. Students who use these recommended techniques will be able to write strong summaries (Devine & Kania 2003, p. 947).

WRITE! offers a lesson on writing research reports, a skill often not explored in classrooms today. In Books C–H of **WRITE!**, students are guided through the process of writing a nonfiction research report. This process involves the higher-order thinking skills of analysis, interpretation, evaluation and synthesis. "Nonfiction is an important genre for helping children and ourselves to know an area particularly well. In this sense, nonfiction is probably the most usable kind of writing for school and a lifetime of work" (Graves 1994, p. 313).

Student Book C



WRITE! offers students the opportunity to expand their writing repertoire with a research paper.

Students read suggestions about how to narrow a topic, how to choose a topic and how to choose reliable resources for valid and current information. **WRITE!** approaches a topic in a question format rather than as a thesis statement. This provides "a healthy alternative to the thesis statement, since we actually live in an exploratory world rather than a world of definitive answers" (Nelson & Kinneavy 2003, p. 794). Students actively use these higher-order thinking skills with the following instructional strategies.



Genre Instruction in the Context of Writing

“Writers incorporate what they have learned about language, structure, and style from the texts they have encountered as readers” (Langer & Flihan 2000, p. 122). Langer and Flihan (2000) writes that students share and transfer their knowledge of genres to their own writing by incorporating literary techniques. In early years, students are most familiar with stories and the basic elements of stories.

WRITE! Books A and B build on students’ awareness of story structure by providing two narrative writing lessons. Strickland and Feeley (2003) state that primary-school children may lack in awareness of other types of genre because of their gravitation toward the story genre. This unawareness also has a negative effect on students’ abilities to revise their writing. “When children are not used to writing reports, poetry, or fiction, they do not know how to reread their work, and revision is difficult for them” (Graves 1994, p. 237). Thus, **WRITE!** Books A and B also present two informative genres to expand students’ writing experiences.

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Student Book A

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Student Book F

Writing a Fictional Narrative

Now you get to write your own fictional narrative. Use the prompt below.

Write a story that you make up from your imagination.

When You Write Your Fictional Narrative

1. **Think** about what you want to write. Ask yourself some questions.
 - Where and when will the story take place?
 - Who will be in the story?
 - What problem will the characters have to deal with?
 - How will the characters try to solve the problem?
 - What will be the result?
2. **Write** your first draft. Be sure your fictional narrative has a clear beginning, middle and ending. Your story can be imaginary, but it must always make sense.
3. **Read** your draft. Use the checklist that your teacher will give you to review your writing.
4. **Edit** your story. Make changes until your story reads well.
5. **Proofread** your story one last time.
6. **Write** a neat copy of your story and give it to your partner.

Work with a Partner

7. **Read** your partner’s fictional narrative.
8. **Score** your partner’s story from 1 to 4, using the rubric on page 102. Then complete the Partner Comments sheet that your teacher will give you. Tell what you liked about the story and what you think would make it better.
9. **Switch** essays.
10. **Think** about your partner’s comments. Read your story again. Make any changes that you think will improve your fictional narrative.
11. **Write** a final neat copy of your fictional narrative.

Making Connections

- ◆ Have you ever heard a story that you wished had a different ending? Make up a new ending of your own. Write the story with your new ending.
- ◆ When you read about a past event, think about how that event could be written as a realistic story. What would the setting be? Who would the characters be? What would the problem be? Would you include art with the story? What would the art be?
- ◆ TV and movie characters may seem real because you can see them. Still, they must be developed through what they say, what they do and how the other characters feel about them. Think about this the next time you watch your favourite program.

Student Book C

Process-Oriented Writing

Harris, Schmidt and Graham (2015) explain that “the process approach to writing places the learner and the learner’s needs at the center of interactive learning among teachers and students. Learning is seen as a socially situated activity enhanced in functional and meaningful literacy contexts.” In their view, “writing conferences, peer collaboration, mini-lessons, modeling, sharing, and classroom dialogue are all essential components of process-oriented writing” (Harris, Schmidt & Graham 2015). **WRITE!** uses many of these techniques to explicitly instruct students on the strategies and tools they should use while writing, whether they are in a classroom setting or in a testing situation. Once students have completed their analysis of the rubric-scored writing models in Books C–H, they create a piece of writing based on the lesson’s genre. Process-oriented writing is also applied in Books A and B. Early years students use a variety of subprocesses to create a piece of writing: paying attention to conventions, reading, organising, editing and revising. According to Farnan and Dahl (2003), in the middle years, students use the following strategies to write: generating and organising ideas, formulating meaning, evaluating and revising. Students apply these cognitive processes in each book level of **WRITE!**

In **WRITE!**, students use graphic organisers to plan their ideas. Graphic organisers help students visualise their thinking. Once they see their ideas on paper, they develop a sense of ownership for their work. This sense of ownership acts as intrinsic motivation for students to complete the writing activity.

Then students write a draft, self-evaluate through checklists, revise, proofread and rewrite. The process of writing is further enhanced when students work with partners. By this point in the lesson, students have developed peer-editing skills by studying models of teacher and peer comments presented earlier. Using the constructive feedback of peers, students reflect upon suggested changes to their draft. Students then write their final draft.

In *WRITE!*, students use the process approach to writing:

1. Students complete a graphic organiser to plan their writing.
2. Students write a first draft and then self-evaluate using a writer's checklist.
3. Students edit the first draft.
4. Students proofread.
5. Students rewrite a clean copy to exchange with a peer.
6. Students work with a peer.
7. Students use a checklist or rubric to score the peer's writing in Books C–H.
8. Students reflect upon suggested changes.
9. Students write the final draft.
10. Students have the option to publish their work.

Making Connections: The final section of each lesson is Making Connections. "Many educators have begun to emphasize the value of authentic conversations in the classroom, discussions that allow wonder, that encourage student-to-student as much as student-teacher exchanges, and that invite students to connect their personal knowledge and experiences with that of others through discovering and articulating links between and across texts (text-to-text); links between texts and themselves (text-to-self), and connections from texts to life in a larger sense (text-to-world)" (Schallert & Martin 2003, p. 40). In **WRITE!**, students reflect upon and discuss topics and ideas developed in each lesson. Making these connections demonstrates to students that their writing has application and value beyond the classroom setting.

Student Book C

Making Connections

- ◆ Have you ever heard a story that you wished had a different ending? Make up a new ending of your own. Write the story with your new ending.
- ◆ When you read about a past event, think about how that event could be written as a realistic story. What would the setting be? Who would the characters be? What would the problem be? Would you include art with the story? What would the art be?
- ◆ TV and movie characters may seem real because you can see them. Still, they must be developed through what they say, what they do and how the other characters feel about them. Think about this the next time you watch your favourite program.

Summary

Learning to write is a complex process. Many instructional strategies play significant roles in developing student writers. Active participation and student engagement are driving forces of effective instruction. **WRITE!** engages students through activities that require higher-order thinking skills. GUM instruction in the context of writing helps students transfer GUM skills to their own writing. Students gain self-evaluation and self-reflection skills through teacher and peer modelling. Instruction of genres and their features add to students' knowledge base for classroom and testing applications. These instructional threads weave together to create a program that prepares students to become independent and proficient writers.

Students complete each writing lesson by making text-to-text, text-to-self and text-to-world connections.

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