



Writing Strands

TEACHING
COMPANION

Getting the most out of
the Writing Strands program.



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How to Use This *Teaching Companion*

Writing Strands Teaching Companion demonstrates to teachers how to provide supportive and effective feedback on writing assignments. It includes information on common conditions that make teaching composition difficult and on common writing problems, examples of feedback on real assignments, explanations of drafting, and spelling rules. This information is essential to those working with the *Writing Strands* series, but anyone responsible for providing feedback on written works would benefit from this book as well.

Throughout its levels, the series organizes writing into four strands: creative, argumentative, report and research, and expository writing. Success with the four strands of writing is contingent on how well students understand the following foundational skills, which are taught in the lower levels of *Writing Strands*: creative, basic, organizational, and descriptive writing. Once the students have mastered these fundamental skills, they are ready to apply them to the abstract subject matter of the upper-level books. The books also allow students to learn the mechanics of writing: syntax, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Literature Lessons

Literature lessons are now incorporated into the lessons. That way, you can easily follow the suggested sequence of rotating between one writing lesson for a week and one literature lesson for the next week for each *Writing Strands* level.

The *Reading Strands* components of each level have a specific focus on one aspect of literature and the first 5 levels use character-building Bible stories and other biblical texts to illustrate these points. For the most part, these stories all focus on the same biblical characters each year. Sometimes, students will revisit the same story multiple times, always analyzing it from a different angle, while other times they will read stories from different times in these characters' lives.

Overview of Series

Writing Strands Beginning 1 focuses on aspects of literary characters while *Beginning 2* teaches students all about literary setting. *Intermediate 1* introduces students to the elements of literary plot, and *Intermediate 2*'s literature lessons are devoted to learning about literary elements, such as point of view, literary devices, and genre. *Advanced 1* then introduces students to an in-depth study of figurative language. *Advanced 2* has students apply all the literary analysis aspects they have learned as they work their way through John Bunyan's classic *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Helping Students Write

There are some things that students need that you can give them. They need to feel good about what they do. Making your students feel good about learning to write is not hard to do. When they write, they put their hearts on a page; they want to learn and to please. As a teacher, you are in a great position. Find something wonderful in what the student has written and ask him or her to read it aloud because you think it is so beautiful. Now the student will feel good about what has been written. At this point, rather than point out all the things that are wrong with the paper, you can show one or two ways to make it even better. Focus on only one or two at a time to avoid overwhelming the student. Read that one rule and explain how it works. Help the student apply that rule to the writing. This will demonstrate how that

application will improve that sentence. Now, read it again and compliment the student on the sentence! Your students will be encouraged because of your praise and also because your feedback is not just devoted to listing lots of errors.

If you take this approach, your students will look forward to writing; they will not be afraid of making mistakes; they will learn the rules as they apply them to their writing; and they will feel good about what they are learning. The most important benefit of all is that they will learn to love their language.

Part 1: Writing Strands

Understanding Basic Writing Techniques

Rules for Drafting and Formatting

To learn to communicate, students need to have goals, an audience, and a person more adept than they are at word use who can look at their efforts and advise ways to improve them. That is where drafting comes in.

If we give students writing assignments, collect them, write comments on them, grade them, and return them, many students will learn nothing about writing. If writing training is carried on this way, many students will write on the second paper the same way they wrote on the first. They might look at the corrections the teacher made on the first paper, but that is all. They will continue to make the same errors and will have no opportunity to develop the writing skills they so desperately need.

First Rough Draft

There should be a point to any writing experience. It does not help a child to say to him, *“Write anything at all. Just give me a page or two on anything you are thinking.”* That would be hard for anyone to do. For the first draft, students need to concentrate on developing their ideas and explaining them effectively and clearly. We should not look at that first draft and comment about anything other than the big-picture aspects of the paper, such as organization, content, and clarity. Do not worry about spelling or periods or uppercase letters or commas. That comes just before the final draft.

Now is the time to compliment the child on his thinking. *“I can see you have thought about this subject some. Did this occur to you? How about this? I like your thinking here, nice touch. What a wonderful idea you had at this point. I sure would like to see more about that.”*

After reading the first draft, you should give the student directions for further explorations of his ideas. Try to provide general comments about the flavor of his work, encouragement to re-examine his thinking, or new avenues of thought that might produce what you feel should be explored in the exercise.

As long as the student is trying to do as the directions indicate, your comments at this point should all be positive and very supportive.

Second Rough Draft

The student has taken your encouragement and advice and rewritten his first draft. Now there should be some form to the writing. You should be able to tell whether the student is doing as the directions suggest. The directions in *Writing Strands* are very explicit, and you should expect the student to follow them, or you can change them and have the student follow yours. In either case, you should see in the second draft how the student is producing writing consistent with the objectives listed at the beginning of each exercise.

This draft is where you can look for the details that will produce a well-written third rough draft or final draft. Now check for the ideas as they flow through the sentences. Look for paragraphing. Make suggestions about redundancies and awkward phrases. Mention accidental rhyming and check for clichés. This is the kind of help your student needs at this point. If you see that the assignment is brief enough to not need more than three drafts, suggest that your student check the spelling and punctuation before the final copy is written.

Final Copy or Draft

After the student has rewritten the second draft using your suggestions, you should ask to see it before it is turned in to you as completed. If the student wants to take the chance on using ink, that is no problem. You should be able to catch little problems and point them out in this last draft. If you feel it is important that you have a finished paper to keep on file, then you can ask that the paper be written in ink. This version should be polished.

Remember, nobody can write a perfect paper. However, as students learn to write, they can substantially improve. Keep a list in your *Writing Strands* book (or a separate notebook) of the problems that you and your student will solve in the future. They cannot all be solved this week. It will be hard, but it is important that you have patience with misuse of apostrophes until you get to them. One problem solved each week will, in two years, produce quality writing.

Formatting

In most university classes, the instructors will tell the students what style sheet to use for the papers done for each class. If this isn't done, the university library will have style sheets recommended by the various departments.

For *Writing Strands* exercises, we recommend some formatting to get the student in the habit of following these types of directions. This will also help your student's work look tidier over the years.

1. Your student's full name should be in the upper left corner of the paper. Under that should be the assignment title or number. Under that should be the date. This information should only appear on the first page.
2. There should be a title with the major words capitalized on the first line of the paper. The title should never be underlined unless the words are also the title of a book. Then there should be one skipped line before the body of the paper.
3. The top, side, and bottom margins should all be the same size. This is usually one inch. Paper final drafts of papers written after the eighth grade should be double spaced and typed if possible. Only white paper should be used, and only one side should be written on.
4. The pages after the first page should be numbered in the center at the bottom of the page. There should never be the words *The End* written at the end of any paper or story.

Issues that Make Teaching Writing Hard

Fear and insecurity are the two conditions that are the most damaging to writing competence.

What you need is a program of instruction that is appropriate for each child's skill level, that has easy-to-follow steps, and that leads to the production of essays, reports, descriptions, and pieces of fiction. With such a program, you can help children become competent writers. *Writing Strands* is such a program and gives you the resources to help your students succeed at writing. If you follow the advice in this book, you will transmit confidence to your students, and you will convince them that they can learn to write well.

Lack of motivation is a problem for some children. They do not see the importance of writing. All it takes is ten minutes every day. If children see adults sit down with books for ten minutes each day and that they let nothing interfere with their "reading time," the children will soon accept the value of words on paper. A student who is eager to learn to read will be just as eager to learn to write. Giving your students a love of reading and writing is of great value.

Lack of concentration is a problem for many children. If the problems with concentration are not clinical, there are some things you can do to help. Concentration is greatly aided by focus. The child needs to know what to do, how to do it, where to do it, when to do it, and that it is possible to do it. The lessons show the student what to do and how to do it. You must provide the "where to do it, when to do it" and convince the child that it is "possible to do it." If you give each child a time and a place to write that is distraction free and you show him that you have confidence in his ability, then it will be possible for him to concentrate for the short periods of time necessary to do the daily work in *Writing Strands* lessons.

Trouble with thinking through ideas and how to present them is a problem for many young writers. The lessons in *Writing Strands* solve this for you by showing your students how to do each assignment. The lessons in *Writing Strands* have been designed to help the students think through the process of producing each paper.

Mechanical problems exist for all writers, but talking about them with your students need not be the most stressful time of the day. The important thing to keep in mind is that your students will be with you for years. They will get frustrated if you point out everything they do that is wrong. Pick one mechanical problem each week and let the rest slide. The next week pick another one and let the rest slide. Soon you will have covered the major issues without all the frustration.

Trouble with following directions is a big problem with many young writers. Have your students read their assignment and then tell you what they think they will be doing. Then ask them how they plan to start. If they seem to have any trouble, clarify any misunderstandings, go over the directions to see exactly what they state, and then form a plan on how to start. Give lots of congratulations and praise. They need confidence that they can follow directions.

Resistance to writing is not uncommon. It can help a student if the instructor responds, "Done already? You sure must be good at this writing stuff. I'm so proud of what you have done. Read that sentence to me. I think it is beautiful." Even if you need to search very hard for something nice to say about your student's writing, it is important to do so. Say good things and then find one thing that, if changed, might make the writing even better. Remember — address one thing each week (or longer, if necessary). Your student wants to please you, and if you praise his writing, he will want to write.

Reluctance to rewrite is understandable, especially for young writers. Rewriting is a lot of work. If you approach rough drafts as just that, rough, and allow them to remain rough (your students will recognize this), then cleaning them up will not be such a big job.

A rough draft should have lots of problems in it. It is not supposed to be pretty, and the spelling is not supposed to be perfect. There should be cross-outs and missed periods. It is just getting ideas down on

paper. It is your students' thoughts on paper about the subject. Give your students a chance to correct all the problems before you comment on them.

A word processor is a wonderful thing for students to use for writing. It makes rewriting so easy since they can make changes without rewriting the whole paper. If your students are frustrated with the rewriting process, consider letting them write on a computer.

Trouble with proofreading is easy to understand. After all, proofreading is hard to do well. It takes practice, but there are some things you can do to help. Have your students read their papers aloud to you. Your students will hear mistakes when they read aloud that they will miss when reading to themselves. If they do not catch the mistakes, you read to them from their papers. While reading aloud, care should be taken that they read exactly what is on the paper. We all have the tendency to read what we should have written and not the exact words that are there. You might have to read over their shoulders to make sure of this, but it is worth it. They will pick up the habit of proofreading aloud and thus catch many of their own mistakes.

How to Correct Problems in Writing

There are some very important things to keep in mind when working with children and their writing:

1. All of us need to feel good about what we do. Students must feel good about their attempts to write. Every time your students write, find something wonderful about it. Locate the best phrases, expressions, sentences, paragraphs, or ideas and talk to them about how well they are expressed. Have the student read these wonderful words to you. Have them read them to someone else. Have them read them to the class. Discuss why they were written as they were. Enjoy the beauty of the words with them. Your students will be more ready to write next time and share their work with you.
2. You cannot correct all problems with one paper or all problems this week or this month, or even this year. If you find everything that is wrong with every paper, your students will soon become discouraged.
3. If you find one or two words each week that your student uses often that are not spelled correctly, that is enough spelling work for that week. In two or three years, the students will have a large spelling vocabulary at their command.
4. The same approach is true for mechanical and stylistic problems – they are best solved on a need-to-know basis. For example, one week work on apostrophe use for contractions, the next week work on apostrophe use for possession, and the next week work on another, and so on.

Spelling Rules

In *Writing Strands* there are pages for you to keep track of your student's spelling problems. We recommend that you make each of your students an expert at the spelling of only one word or pattern a week. If this word or pattern is pulled from their writing (a word they had chosen to use), then they will see that word as important to them and necessary to their writing. They will understand that learning to spell that word (or pattern) is relevant.

If you look up a word with your student and show the derivation of the word, (where they come from; Greek or Latin, whether its background is German or French or English) and the prefixes and suffixes that apply and the connotations of the word (how we feel), your student can become an expert in that word. If you have each child make cards with the word boldly printed on them and put the cards up on the end of their beds, on their mirrors, in the bathroom, at their places for dinner, they will become immersed in those words and never lose their correct spelling.

Next week (or whenever your student has mastered last week's word) pick another relevant word or pattern from a writing exercise and have your student become an expert in the new words or patterns. In this way, in a few years, your students will have good vocabularies of words that they use that they can spell, and you will have eliminated the anxiety and failure with memorizing and testing of spelling lists. Research shows that learning spelling words in abstract lists stays with a child only until the test and then is lost. Only short-term memory is used in such exercises. The average adult in this country has a spelling vocabulary of about 300 words. Do not expect young children to have too much more than that.

The above exercises and the following list of spelling rules should make good practical spellers of your students.

These rules have exceptions, but they are easily mastered. Once your students have learned these few rules, they should keep them from making the most common spelling errors; in addition, the rules will assist them in determining the spelling of unfamiliar words.

Write *ie* when the sound is long *e*, except after *c*.

Examples: believe, field, niece, ceiling, receive, conceit

Exceptions: seize, either, neither, weird

Write *ei* when the sound is not long *e*, especially when the sound is long *a*.

Examples: freight, weight, reign, forfeit, height

Exceptions: friend, mischief, conscience

Only one word ends in *-sede* - *supersede*; all other words of similar sound end in *-cede*.

Examples: precede, recede, secede, accede, concede

Adding Prefixes

A prefix is one or more letters or syllables added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning.

When a prefix is added to a word, the spelling of the word itself remains the same.

Examples: dis + satisfy = dissatisfy

mis + spell = misspell

in + numerable = innumerable

re + commend = recommend

Adding Suffixes

A suffix is one or more letters or syllables added to the end of a word to change its meaning.

When the suffixes *-ness* and *-ly* are added to a word, the spelling of the word itself is not changed.

Examples: plain + ness = plainness

casual + ly = casually

Exceptions: Words ending in *y* usually change the *y* to *i* before *-ness* and *-ly*; empty - emptiness; heavy - heaviness; busy - busily; ordinary - ordinarily. One-syllable adjectives ending in *y* generally do not change in spelling; dry - dryness; shy - shyly.

Drop the final *e* before a suffix beginning with a consonant.

Examples: truly, argument, acknowledgment, judgment

Exceptions: love + ly = lovely

hope + ful = hopeful

place + ment = placement

care + less = careless

With words ending in *y* preceded by a consonant change the *y* to *i* before any suffix not beginning with *i*.

Examples: accompany + ment = accompaniment

plenty + ful = plentiful

satisfy + es = satisfies

intensify + ing = intensifying

modify + ing = modifying

Double the final consonant before a suffix that begins with a vowel if both of the following conditions exist: 1) the word has only one syllable or is accented on the last syllable; 2) the word ends in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel.

Examples: swim + ing = swimming (one-syllable word)

confer + ed = conferred (accent on last syllable; single consonant and single vowel)

benefit + ed = benefited (accent not on last syllable)

confer + ence = conference (accent shifted; consonant not doubled)

Spelling of the plural of nouns.

1. The regular way to form the plural of a noun is to add an *s*.

Examples: dog, dogs cat, cats house, houses

2. The plurals of some nouns are formed by adding *es*.

Add *es* to form the plurals of nouns ending in *s*, *sh*, *ch*, *z*, and *x*. The *e* is necessary to make the plural forms pronounceable.

Examples: dress, dresses

box, boxes

sandwich, sandwiches

dish, dishes

waltz, waltzes

bus, buses

3. The plurals of nouns ending in *y* preceded by a consonant are formed by changing the *y* to *i* and adding *es*.

Examples:	country, countries	fly, flies
	forgery, forgeries	theory, theories
	comedy, comedies	salary, salaries

4. The plurals of nouns ending in *y* preceded by a vowel are formed by adding an *s*.

Examples:	boy, boys	journey, journeys
	monkey, monkeys	toy, toys
	tray, trays	buoy, buoys

5. The plurals of most nouns ending in *f* or *fe* are formed by adding *s*. The plurals of some nouns ending in *f* or *fe* are formed by changing the *f* to *v* and adding *s* or *es*.

Examples:

Add <i>s</i> :	gulf, gulfs	safe, safes
	roof, roofs	kerchief, kerchiefs

Change *f* to *v* and add *s* or *es*:

leaf, leaves	wife, wives
shelf, shelves	knife, knives

6. The plurals of some nouns ending in *o* preceded by a vowel are formed by adding *s*; the plurals of most nouns ending in *o* preceded by a consonant are formed by adding *es*.

Examples: *o* following a vowel:

studio, studios	radio, radios
-----------------	---------------

o following a consonant:

potato, potatoes	hero, heroes
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Exceptions:	soprano, sopranos	solo, solos
	piano, pianos	concerto, concertos

7. The plurals of a few nouns are formed in irregular ways.

Examples:	child, children	tooth, teeth
	goose, geese	woman, women
	mouse, mice	ox, oxen

8. The plurals of compound nouns written as one word are formed by adding *s* or *es*.

Examples:	spoonful, spoonfuls	cupful, cupfuls
	leftover, leftovers	strongbox, strongboxes

9. The plurals of compound nouns consisting of a noun plus a modifier are formed by making the modified word plural.

The modified word is the one that tells what the entire compound word does, not what it is. The plural of notary public is *notaries public* (they are *notaries*, not *publics*); the plural of *mother-in-law* is *mothers-in-law* (they are *mothers*, not *laws*)

Examples: runner-up, runners-up editor in chief, editors in chief

10. The plurals of a few compound nouns are formed in irregular ways.

Examples: drive-in, drive-ins six-year-old, six-year-olds
 stand-by, stand-bys tie-up, tie-ups

11. Some nouns are the same in the singular and the plural.

Examples: sheep, deer, trout, salmon, Japanese, fowl

12. The plurals of numbers, letters, signs, and words considered as words are formed by adding an apostrophe and an s.

Examples: two *s's* two *4's* *and's* *that's*
 +*'s* T*'s* *so's*

Part 2: Reading Strands

Understanding and Evaluating Literature

Introduction for the Teachers and Students of Reading

This book was written to help you to understand how to discuss fiction with your children. The ideas presented here are based on the knowledge that there can be great joy in reading and that good literature can enrich anyone's life.

Of course, there is value in solitary reading, but the enjoyment that can be found in stories is greater if it can be shared with others. There are models here of conversations with young readers as a way of showing how reading experiences can be enjoyed by both the young readers and their teachers.

Many adults, faced with the challenge of teaching literature, have the feeling that the job is too great to be reasonable. True, it is a daunting enterprise, but it can be an exciting and fun one. A good rule of thumb when teaching students about fiction is that there are no right answers, but there are some definite wrong ones. In literature, there is no one answer to the question of what a text means, though answers to that question needed to be rooted in what the text actually says. For example, a symbol in a text can have several meanings and there is no one right answer for that meaning, though it would be wrong to just say that the symbol represents aliens when there is no other evidence of that in the text.

The important thing to keep in mind is that reading should be fun. If the young reader does not enjoy reading, it may be because reading is seen as work. The reader is either above or below the level of the material, or the material has not been selected with the reader's interests in mind.

Using Reading Strands and the Principles of Teaching Literature

A teacher must have a clear understanding of the general goals in the reading exercise. “What do I want my student to know or experience?” Think about what you want your student to “get” from the reading you will be doing together. What does your student want? You will find selecting goals that will be compatible with the reader’s goals easier if you give some organized thought to what you want. Some structure to the process may help you select answers that will please both you and your student.

Reading is one of the important steps children take towards becoming adults. The reading they do helps determine the types of people they will grow into. What you select should be determined by the values held by you and that line up with Scripture.

For most children, the fun of reading is dependent on its effects on their ways of thinking. If the reader cannot relate to the character in a story or to the situation that character is in, or if the reader does not care about these things, that reader will not enjoy the narrative. If the young reader can get involved in the lives and situations of the characters, then this experience can be very satisfying.

Reading can become a rich and rewarding part of life. Teachers/parents can encourage their children to love it using the following suggestions:

1. A beginning reader must have fun reading. The time spent reading each day should be looked forward to with great eagerness.
2. Young readers must observe, as role models, older children, parents, and teachers enjoying reading. If the new reader sees this going on, there will be a desire to join in this pleasure.
3. Young readers should see their role models talking about what they are reading. They should see them read bits and pieces to each other from a variety of sources.
4. Young readers need to have others show an interest in what they are reading and what this makes them think about.
5. Young readers need to talk about what they have read. This ensures that they think about the ideas in the stories, that they remember the actions, and that they can feel the excitement of sharing the stories with others.
6. When a parent/teacher gives a child a love of books, they give not just the books but the world of ideas. It makes possible adventures and intellectual challenges found in no other place.

It is recommended that readers choose at least some of their own books to encourage an interest and love of reading. You will ask questions based on your understanding of the techniques described, and the children will answer based on their reading of their stories and books. In this process, they will learn the techniques of interpretation.

This method of transmitting ideas is helpful in determining how children are understanding the content of their stories. If their communications leave you confused, you know that they need help in organizing their thoughts.

The *Reading Strands* portion of the *Teaching Companion* is a resource for teaching literature to children. This means that you will be using the *Reading Strands* component of this book much as you would use a cookbook, not reading it cover to cover but just that portion you need. More formal weekly lessons, prompts, and activities are now incorporated into the individual books for each *Writing Strands* level. That way, you can easily follow the suggested sequence of rotating between one writing lesson for a week and one literature lesson for the next week for each *Writing Strands* level.

The suggested plan for completing the literature lessons is to spend part of each week learning about the literary analysis element being taught, reading the assigned Bible passage, discussing that passage, and completing the recommended activity. Students should also be assigned a separate book or story to start reading at the beginning of each literature week. At the end of the week, have a literature lesson devoted to the book/story you assigned at the beginning of the week. You can focus on reinforcing the concept taught that week, having a general lesson based on whatever your child has learned until that point, or focusing on literary elements that are especially notable in whatever book/story you assigned.

You will not be teaching children a body of knowledge about literature. You will be teaching them how to extract understanding and meaning from any fiction they read so that they will be able to appreciate literature and benefit from its values for a lifetime of reading.

Establishing Goals and Objectives

Education is a process that changes the learner. Since every relationship of a teacher and a student implies an acceptance of the changes in the student, you must decide which changes are possible and which ones are desirable. In this relationship, both the student and the teacher are responsible for the establishment of goals since both will be intimately involved in producing results. You might now think about what you want your student to “get” from the reading you will be doing together.

What does your student want? Of course, very young children will not be able to articulate these ideas as you will, but still children will “want,” and their desires should be taken into consideration. The goals you establish should be written so that they will be available to you as you work toward them.

It is easy to establish what is possible for a child. It is much harder to establish what is desirable in terms of objectives. These can change with a student’s attitudes, experiences, values, and aspirations for the future. This is a very personal area, and there are few guidelines. What is important to think about is that specific objectives are a necessary step in the education of a child.

There is a difference between goals and objectives in this text. Goals are broad, abstract, and not measurable, while objectives are narrow, concrete, and measurable in terms of specific actions. The following is a short list of goals:

1. Grasps the significance of
2. Has an interest in
3. Appreciates
4. Comprehends
5. Thinks critically
6. Understands
7. Learns
8. Respects
9. Enjoys reading

These goals, along with others such as “Appreciates good books,” and “Discusses literature intelligently,” are admirable, but are not specific enough for planning lessons.

Specific objectives describe precisely what outcomes, such as cognitive (intellectual) changes, you anticipate as the result of a lesson. Compare the list above with the following:

1. Identify the major forces of conflict in a short story.
2. Describe a character’s motivations in a given situation.
3. Recall specific facts — “There were six people on the fifth floor.”
4. Anticipate with reasonable accuracy the unread events in a piece of fiction.

One way to avoid the problem of overly general goals is to use action-based verbs to define your objectives. The objectives should be specific enough that they can be measured. You can tell if your child “recognizes” a word or a plan or a concept or a character or a part of a story plot. It is easy to establish if a youngster can “predict” what will happen in a story. Some examples of these action verbs are:

1. To recognize
2. To evaluate
3. To predict
4. To volunteer comments
5. To state relationships
6. To list
7. To recall
8. To label actions and motives

It will be helpful to complete the following four items:

1. To list the goals and objectives you hope to attain by the end of the learning period (this should include both long term, semester/year and for the entire training period, and short term, unit/week).
2. To select the materials that will allow your students to achieve those goals and objectives (decide which elements of literature you want them to understand).
3. To help your students integrate the learning experiences by producing continuity and sequence (make sure that the materials are connected and that they are progressively more demanding and sophisticated).
4. To evaluate progress being made toward the goals and objectives chosen.

Some care must be taken in the selection of stories for very young readers and for children who have not yet begun to read. Many reading experts tell us that children need to develop to an extent before they can differentiate between the fantasy of stories and reality. You should choose books that you feel are appropriate for your student and that encourage a Biblical worldview.

Many stories have a moral lesson or theme. You should think carefully about this when making selections. The values expressed by books are not lost on young children. Some books propose particular viewpoints. It is suggested you examine these viewpoints, value judgments, and stereotypes carefully before you select them for your child. They may or may not be consistent with Biblical values. Select only reading material that supports the values you want to reinforce for your student.

Teaching Techniques

When teaching very young or beginning readers, the goal is to lead them toward independently being able to construct meaning from the text. These questions can be used for any reading the student is doing, including the Bible passages in the *Reading Strands* lessons or books the teacher has assigned. The following list may help you formulate your own techniques to teach your very young reader to understand fiction.

I. Prior Knowledge:

- A. Before reading to children, discuss what they already know about the subject. Ask “What do you know about _____?”
- B. Ask your readers to list those points they know for sure are true or which could be true, and those they are not certain about. Discuss this list after the reading.

- C. Have your readers ask prediction questions before the reading based on what they know about a story. As an example: “Our reading today is called *Bob’s New Pet*. What kind of a pet do you think it will be?”
- D. Consider prediction questions as you read to them. As for example, “What do you think will happen next?”
- E. Ask your readers questions after the reading is over. For example: “What do you think was happening even before this story started?”
- F. Ask your readers questions of comparison between the latest book read and prior books read.

II. Sense Making:

- A. Ask children during the reading, “Does this make sense?”
- B. Draw from what the children already know about the situations to help them think about them as they read.
- C. During the reading, have the children list in their minds likenesses and differences or compare the subject matter with what they already know about it.

III. Image Visualization:

- A. Encourage children to make a picture or a movie in their minds about the topic or story as you read to them.
- B. Have children “read” two stories in their minds: one from the words and the other one from the pictures. This is so they can consider similarities and differences.
- C. Have the children stop you if you come to new words they are unfamiliar with.
- D. Encourage the children to draw pictures of what they hear as you read to them, or they can draw after the story is complete.
- E. Use a book that has no words in it and have the children dictate or write the words themselves.
- F. As you read to them, have them “draw” in their minds pictures that would go along with the words, then compare their mental “pictures” with the ones in the book.
- G. Discuss everything you read to them or that they read themselves. Talk about things the authors did not talk about in the stories, such as the expressions on the faces of the people or what was going on in the next room that the authors did not let anyone “see” into.