



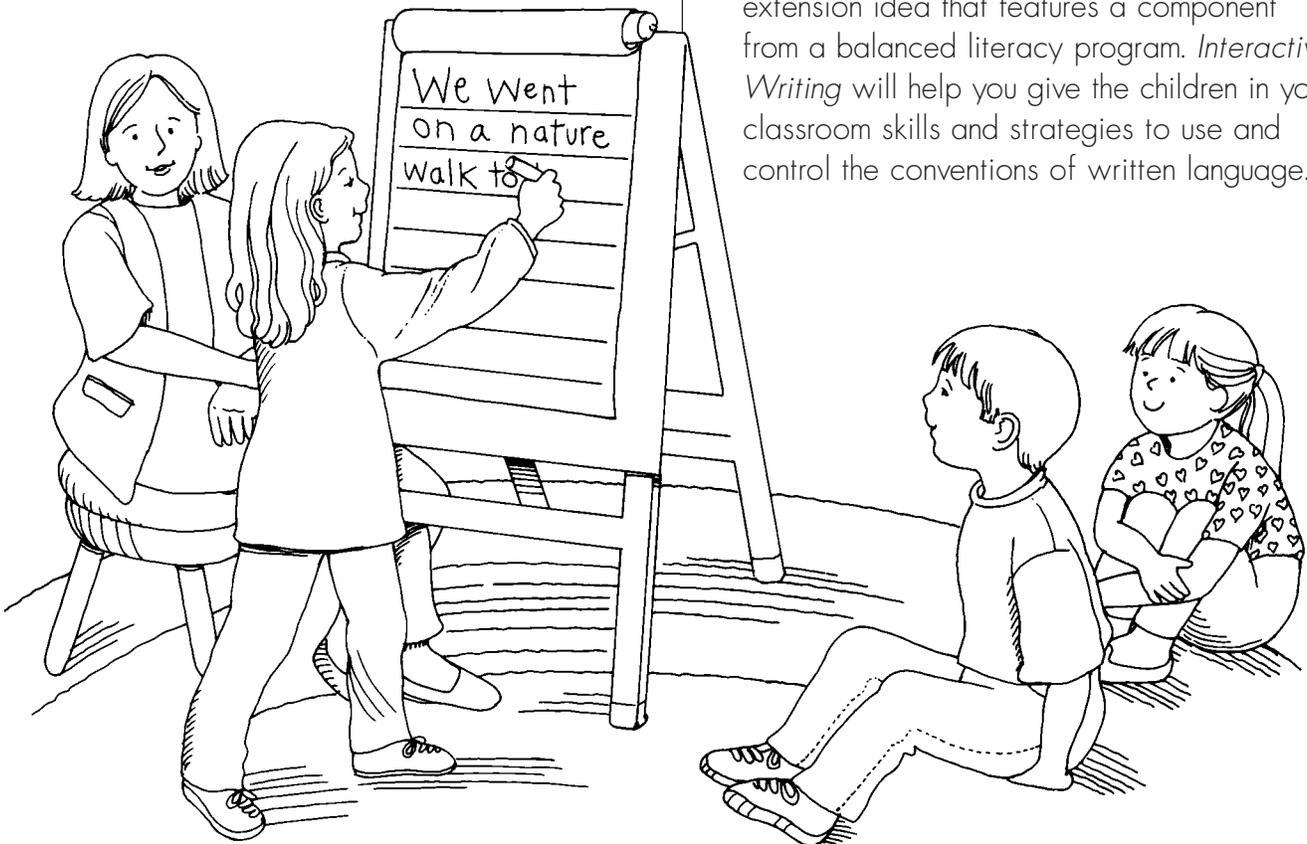
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# Introduction

Interactive writing is a teacher-guided group activity designed to teach children about the process of writing and how written language works. During interactive writing, children and their teacher “share the pen” to create meaningful text. They take turns writing the text together one word or letter at a time. Interactive writing may be about anything from news of the day to a letter, shopping list, or retelling of a familiar story. During interactive writing, children become more aware of the details of letters, sounds, and words while working together with their teacher to write a text that is significant to them. This supportive, dynamic environment helps children focus on the construction of their message while feeling successful and involved.

*Interactive Writing* contains simple directions for incorporating the interactive writing process into your literacy program. You will find tips and techniques for teaching interactive writing, sample interactive writing lessons, ideas for using suggested interactive writing resources, an assessment, and writing activities that include all children—from emergent to developing and more advanced reading levels. The interactive writing activities provide the content to which the interactive writing method is applied. They provide fun formats and topics for conducting interactive writing that encompass language arts, social studies, science, and math. The activities are arranged by curriculum area so you can incorporate interactive writing throughout your day. Each activity has an extension idea that features a component from a balanced literacy program. *Interactive Writing* will help you give the children in your classroom skills and strategies to use and control the conventions of written language.



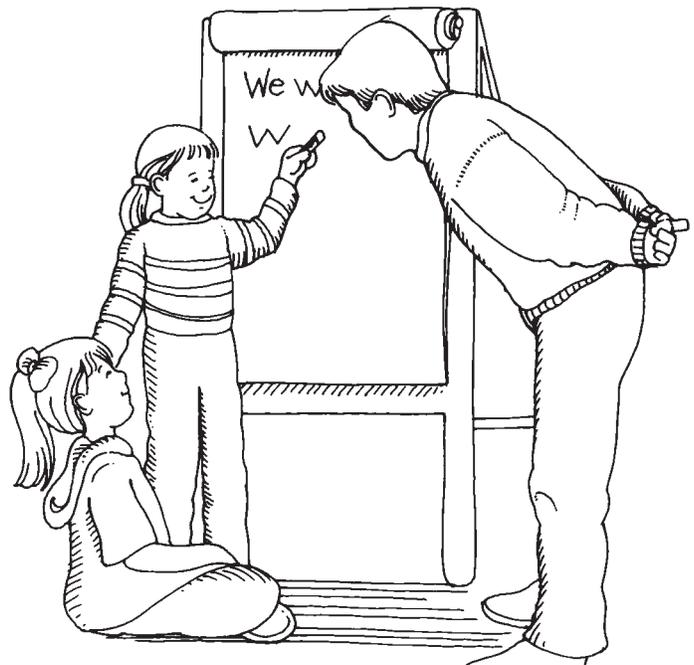
# What Is Interactive Writing?

Interactive writing is a method of writing during which the teacher and child write meaningful text together. This process builds upon what children have learned from language experience (dictation) and shared writing and increases class participation in the act of writing. To begin interactive writing, the teacher gathers children around an easel so they all can see the writing and can quickly come up to the easel to write. The teacher and children create a message or text. Examples of appropriate writing include a description of something the children have learned or seen, labels for a story map or mural, a story, a letter, directions, a list, or any of the activity suggestions found on pages 34–73. Then, individual children come to the easel and write individual letters, groups of letters (word chunks), words they know, or punctuation. The teacher and children say each word slowly to listen for all the sounds in each word. The teacher oversees the work, guiding them and interacting with them, and fills in what is unknown.

In the interactive writing process, every child is given the opportunity to apply what he or she knows about language and build on that prior knowledge. Children take an active role in the writing process as the teacher scaffolds the learning. Scaffolding is a teaching technique that includes responsive conversation, open-ended questions, and encouragement for children to verbalize their thinking. Scaffolding provides children with verbal assistance and promotes discovery based on the child's level of sophistication. The teacher focuses the children's attention on

the sounds and spellings of words and the conventions of print, such as spaces between words, left-to-right and top-to-bottom directionality, capital letters, and punctuation. Whether children are simply providing the space between words, writing the beginning blend in a word, or writing entire words, they are active participants in the writing process.

Since text created during interactive writing is intended to be read again and again, and since the teacher is at hand overseeing the work, all text should adhere to standard conventions of spelling and grammar. This will help children in their understanding of the processes involved in spelling. Interactive writing is an ideal time to teach not only correct spelling and concepts about print, but to introduce correct letter formation, teach the use of punctuation, develop phonics skills, and increase reading fluency while writing meaningful text. It is a powerful tool in teaching children to read and write.



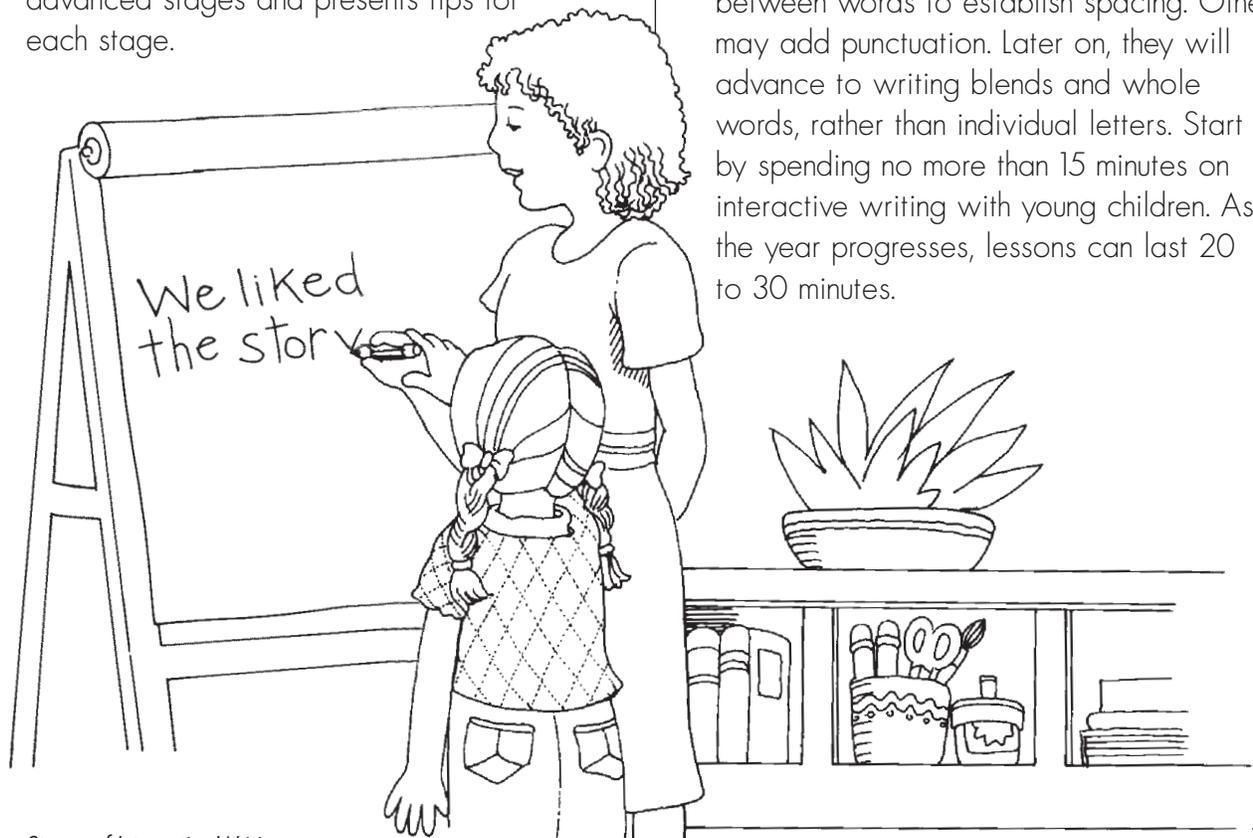
*What Is Interactive Writing?*

# Stages of Interactive Writing

The characteristics of interactive writing change as children become more proficient readers and writers. Since the end product of interactive writing will be used for rereading, all letters and conventions of print need to be accurate and legible. This includes proper letter formation, use of capital letters, punctuation, and spaces between words. During interactive writing, there are numerous opportunities to teach different skills and strategies. Reading by children and teacher with phrasing and fluency should begin on day one. This is why rereading the text as it is written and when it is finished is so important at all stages of interactive writing. The reading should not sound choppy, but should flow like conversation. This section outlines the features of interactive writing during the emergent, developing, and advanced stages and presents tips for each stage.

## Emergent Stage

In the emergent stage, interactive writing may consist of modeling letter formation on a dry-erase board or magnetic writing board (e.g., MagnaDoodle®). The teacher may even need to hold a child's hand to help him or her write the correct letter. The child may want to practice writing the letter on the dry-erase board or MagnaDoodle before writing it on the easel. At this stage, the teacher assists the children in segmenting words to hear and record individual sounds. Children are typically writing one letter at a time. They are practicing sound-letter relationships. Children can contribute a letter of a word when their name has the same first letter. For example, Bailey could write the *b* in *bus* and Samantha could add the *s*. Some children can serve as "spacers," by placing two fingers between words to establish spacing. Others may add punctuation. Later on, they will advance to writing blends and whole words, rather than individual letters. Start by spending no more than 15 minutes on interactive writing with young children. As the year progresses, lessons can last 20 to 30 minutes.

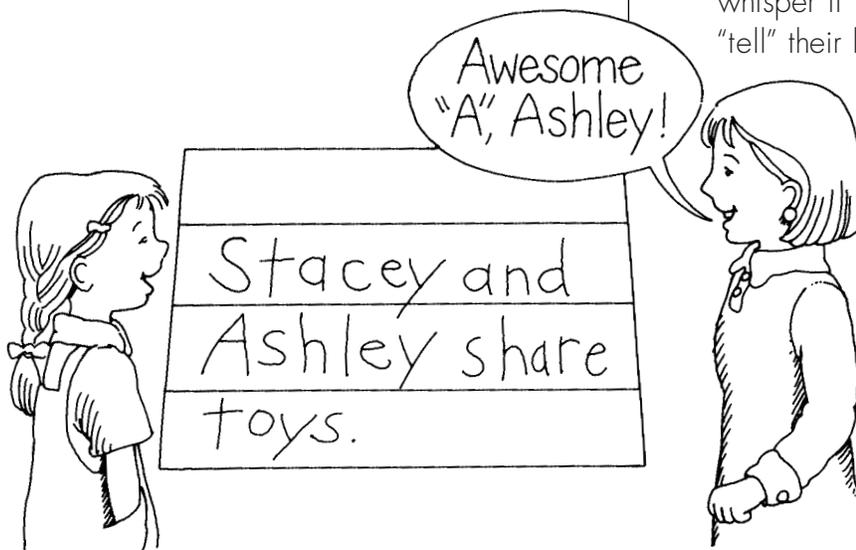




Through interactive writing, you can demonstrate and engage children in every aspect of the writing process. During the emergent stage of interactive writing, keep in mind the following suggestions:

- Ensure all text is student-generated.
- Keep the text short.
- Have children sit close to the writing area.
- Model correct letter formation on a dry-erase board or MagnaDoodle.
- Invite children to practice writing their contribution on a dry-erase board or MagnaDoodle before writing on the easel.
- For students who need extra help, write a letter or word in pencil, and have them trace it in marker.
- Model phoneme segmentation.
- Teach these concepts about print:
  - Address how text is written and read in a left-to-right progression.
  - Count the number of words in a sentence.
  - Point out the spaces between words.
  - Capitalize the first letter of a sentence.
  - Teach the correct usage of ending punctuation (e.g., period, question mark, exclamation point).
  - Explain the difference between a letter and a word.
  - Discuss return sweep.

- Edit spelling using magic “fix-it” tape (correction tape or white mailing labels).
- Maximize children’s involvement by having them clap syllables of new words and use their hands to “stretch” each word.
- Give alliterative praise when children write individual letters, such as “super s’s,” “terrific t’s,” and “outrageous o’s.” This helps children feel proud of their contribution and gives extra phonemic awareness practice.
- Choose a child to be the spacer whenever a space is needed between words. This will especially benefit children who are just beginning to develop concepts about print. They feel like they have made a contribution. All children feel successful, and every child is a writer.
- Have children count the words and jump up for each word.
- Reread the text before adding each new word.
- For longer messages, write one sentence (or one word) at each sitting. Reread previous sentences before composing new ones.
- Model fluency and expression.
- Have children rehearse the sentence so they remember it. Invite them to tell the sentence to their neighbors and then whisper it to you. Invite children to also “tell” their knees, elbows, feet, etc.





# Emergent Stage

Kim likes  
ice cream.

Kim wrote the first letter in her name.

Mike wrote the last letter in Kim because his name starts with M.

Joshua wrote the period.

Connie wrote the C in cream with a capital C. The magic fix-it tape covered the error, and she corrected it.

Bill volunteered to write the i in ice.

Mitch held up two fingers to add space between the words.

## Developing Stage

As children develop their writing skills, they begin to record blends, “chunks” (parts of words), and whole words (high-frequency words and known words). During the developing stage, they use known words to write unknown but similar words. For example, if a sentence contains the unknown word *let*, the teacher could say *You know get, so you can spell let*. This teaches children to make analogies. Children in the developing stage are ready as a group to write more than one sentence during the interactive writing process.

During each interactive writing session, choose different children to be the “recorders.” These children write the sentences on individual dry-erase boards as other children are interactively writing. When the sentences are complete, the recorders show their writing. (This is a great opportunity for you to assess the recorders’ ability to write sentences.) At this stage, children will be writing the high-frequency words they have learned and those that are on the word wall.

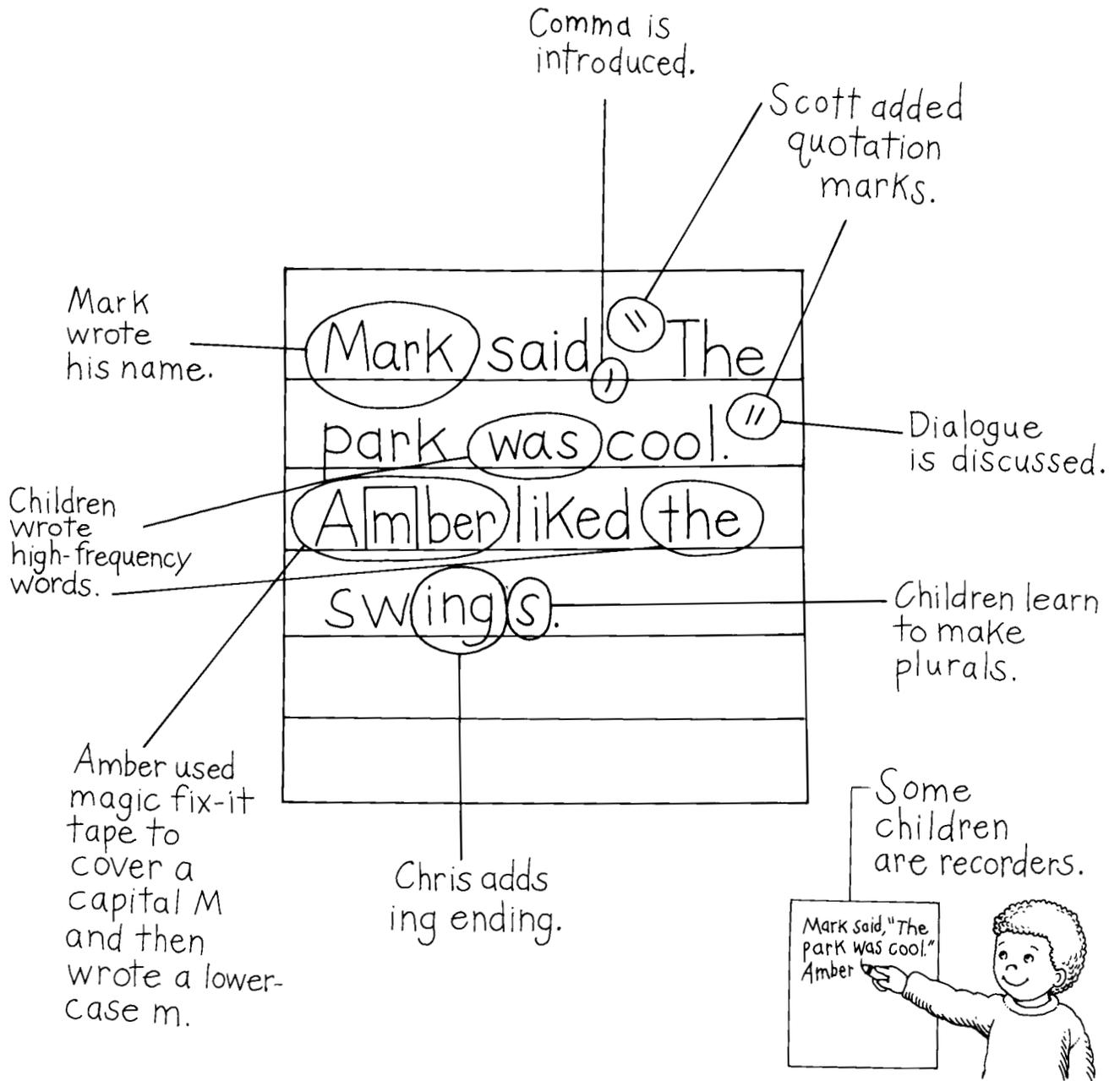
Because they are rereading text they have written, children learn to read with proper phrasing and fluency. Rereading also provides opportunities to teach reading strategies. For example, say *Does it make sense? Does it sound right? Does it look right?* or *Look for little words in big words*.

During the developing stage, keep in mind the following:

- Aid children in phoneme segmentation.
- Focus on beginning blends.
- Have children divide words into chunks and word families.
- Reinforce correct letter formation.
- Edit spelling using magic fix-it tape.
- Reread text with children before adding each new word.
- Address how to form plurals.
- Teach phonics patterns, such as how silent e changes a short vowel to a long one.
- Use correct punctuation, including the introduction of the comma and quotation marks.
- Include polysyllabic words.
- Discuss compound words.



# Developing Stage



## Advanced Stage

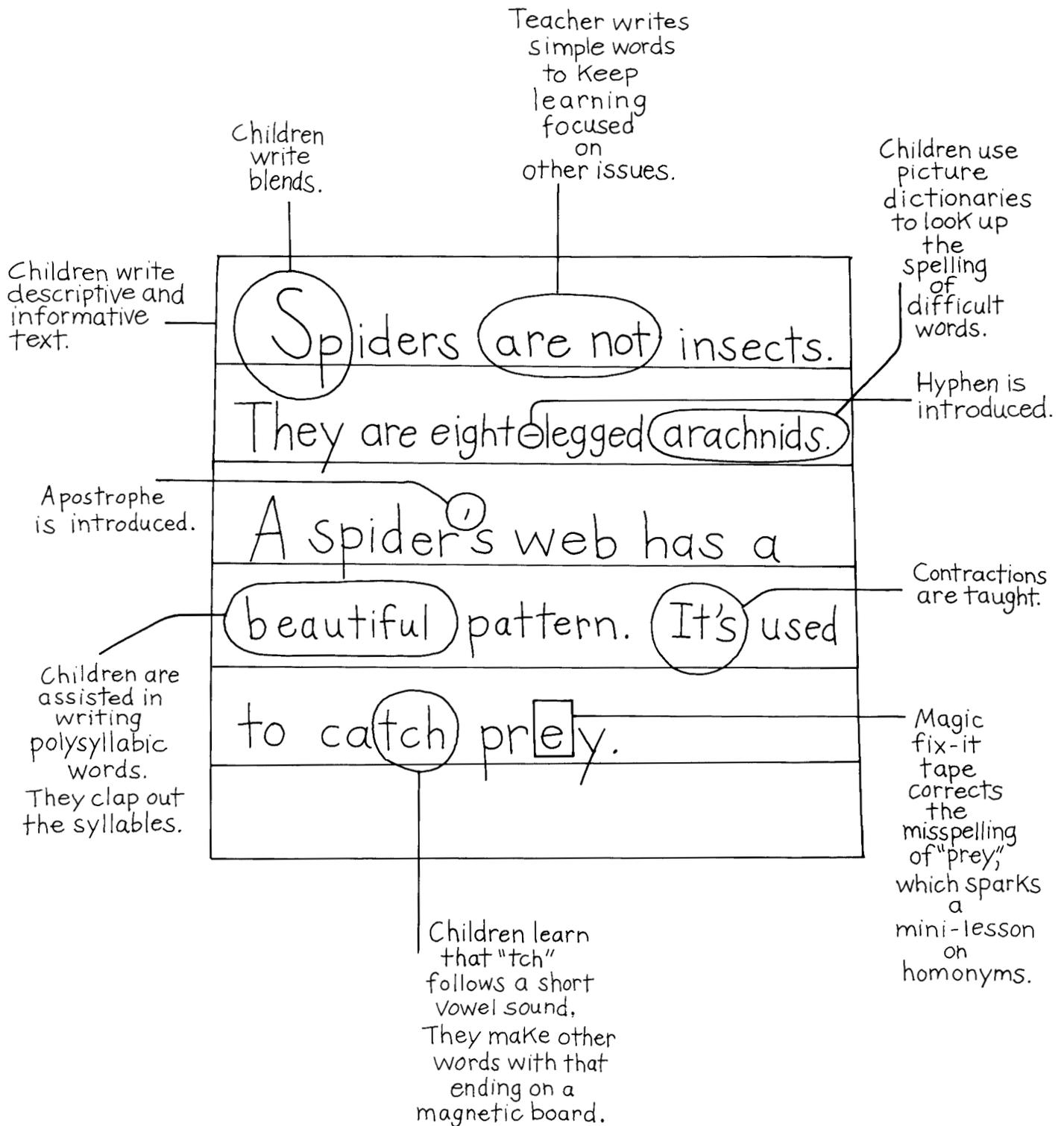
During interactive writing with more advanced children, draw attention to word patterns and make connections between words. Since the writing is student-generated, the text will not be composed to illustrate spelling patterns. But as children are able to compose longer and more complex sentences, many examples emerge to help teach children more about words. Help children create sentences that are descriptive, and recognize opportunities to teach concepts and principles from the children's writing. To save time, write the words that children already know without their help so you can concentrate on the skills you are trying to teach them.



During the advanced stage of interactive writing, keep in mind the following:

- Have all children act as recorders at this stage. Have them record the interactive writing message on dry-erase boards or interactive writing paper (page 74). Combine the paper into books for rereading.
- Have children write several high-frequency words and use segmentation, chunking, and knowledge of word families to spell unknown words.
- Stay on the cutting edge of the children's learning. Supply the easy parts and known words, such as *a, the, to, in,* and *it*, so children will focus on the actual learning at their level of development.
- Help children link words. For example, to write the word *bright*, say *You know night, so you can write bright*.
- Help children learn how to segment and record sounds in compound and polysyllabic words.
- Teach correct spelling and sentence structure.
- Reinforce letter formation.
- Focus on blends and digraphs.
- Divide words into chunks and word families.
- Include descriptive writing.
- Include informational text writing.
- Have children discuss the elements of a story.
- Invite children to retell stories.
- Use more sophisticated punctuation, including the hyphen and apostrophe.
- Teach contractions.

# Advanced Stage



# A Balanced Literacy Program

In addition to interactive writing, the following elements of reading and writing ought to be a part of every balanced literacy program. Each activity in this book contains an extension related to one of the components of a balanced literacy program. The following section describes each component and lists its most important benefits.

## Modeled Reading

Teacher read-alouds are opportunities for modeled reading. During modeled reading, the teacher and children engage in meaningful conversation about the ideas in the book. Children make predictions about the story and comment about the characters and main events. The teacher models the joy of reading and uses correct phrasing and expressive fluency. Modeled reading

- fosters a love and enthusiasm for reading
- exposes children to a variety of genres
- develops knowledge of the structure of language
- enriches concept and vocabulary development
- puts children in touch with their emotions in a nonthreatening way



## Shared Reading

During shared reading, the teacher and children read in unison from the same enlarged-print book, song, or poem. Shared reading enables the teacher to teach skills and reading strategies within the context of a story. Group problem solving occurs during shared reading, as there is conversation about the story such as predicting, reading of familiar phrases, recognition of repeated and new words, and reading of character names. Shared reading

- encourages children to participate and “bond” with the book
- increases children’s ability to find known and unknown words within a text
- allows children to connect stories to background experiences, make predictions, and retell stories
- expands children’s vocabulary
- promotes independent reading



## Guided Reading

During guided reading, the teacher works with children who are grouped according to ability level. The children independently and quietly read the same simple story or one that has been part of several shared reading experiences so they will have successful experiences reading without frustration.

Guided reading

- allows children to view themselves as readers
- gives each child an opportunity to apply learning from shared reading and interactive writing experiences
- encourages children to engage in conversation by asking questions and sharing information that they notice about the text
- builds self-confidence
- allows the teacher to work briefly with individual students as they need it
- provides an opportunity for children to practice using cueing systems so they can maintain comprehension while they read increasingly difficult levels of text
- strengthens children's thinking skills



## Independent Reading

During independent reading, children individually read materials ranging from simple books and charts to increasingly difficult stories as reading skills grow. Independent reading is for practice and enjoyment. Independent reading

- helps children read for meaning
- allows children to solve difficulties using good reading strategies
- is self-paced and self-programmed
- allows children to take responsibility for their own learning
- establishes good reading habits
- promotes fluency and challenges children to become independent problem solvers





## Language Experience

The language experience approach entails individual children dictating text while the teacher records it. Children's own experiences stimulate conversation and writing. The teacher demonstrates forming letters, constructing words and sentences, and using writing conventions and correct punctuation. Language experience

- allows children to see their words in print and the forming of words and sentences
- models that spoken words can be written down and print can be read aloud
- gives children ownership of the written material
- provides an avenue to more sophisticated language because the text is based on the children's oral language, not necessarily text they could write on their own
- motivates children to reread the text



## Modeled Writing

During modeled writing, the teacher writes a message, such as daily news, morning message, center directions, a daily schedule, or a note to the class, in front of the children. The teacher thinks aloud while writing to the class, modeling capital letters, letter/sound relationship, letter formation, punctuation, and completeness of thought. The teacher draws attention to rhyming words, sequence of events, and familiar words. Modeled writing

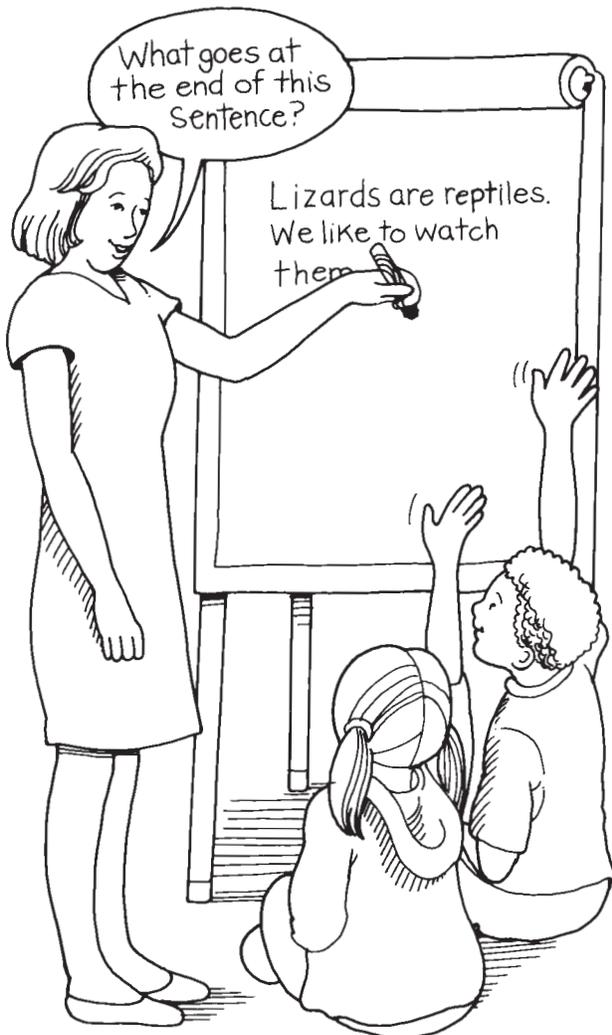
- shows children that writing serves a purpose
- allows children to see writing modeled for them



## Shared Writing

Shared writing involves the teacher recording ideas shared by the children and guides the process so the text is highly readable for them. Shared writing encourages children to share ideas as the teacher asks questions to clarify the meaning and talks with them about the purpose of the writing and its intended audience. The teacher, acting as scribe, writes the collaborated message. Shared writing

- demonstrates “mental modeling” (i.e., the teacher thinks aloud about the writing process, concepts about print, and conventions of print)
- offers frequent opportunities to read and reread the text
- builds self-confidence



A Balanced Literacy Program

## Guided Writing

During guided writing, the teacher works with a group of children similar in strengths and needs and provides instruction through mini-lessons. The teacher offers children choices about what to write through conferences and sharing circles. Guided writing

- models brainstorming of ideas
- provides children with the guidance they need to learn the writing process and produce high-quality writing
- provides an audience for the written word

## Independent Writing

Independent writing includes all writing children do with minimal support. Independent writing

- provides opportunities for open-ended writing experiences, such as writing letters, making invitations, journal writing, creative writing, and making lists
- helps children learn to use strategies that have been introduced during previous writing experiences



# Preparing for Interactive Writing

Conduct interactive writing in a central part of your room where all children can see the writing as it takes place. Choose an easel that can be easily seen and written on by all the children. Use dark-colored markers so the children can easily see the writing. When beginning the interactive writing process, use a different-colored dark marker for each word to help children notice the difference between words and track print.

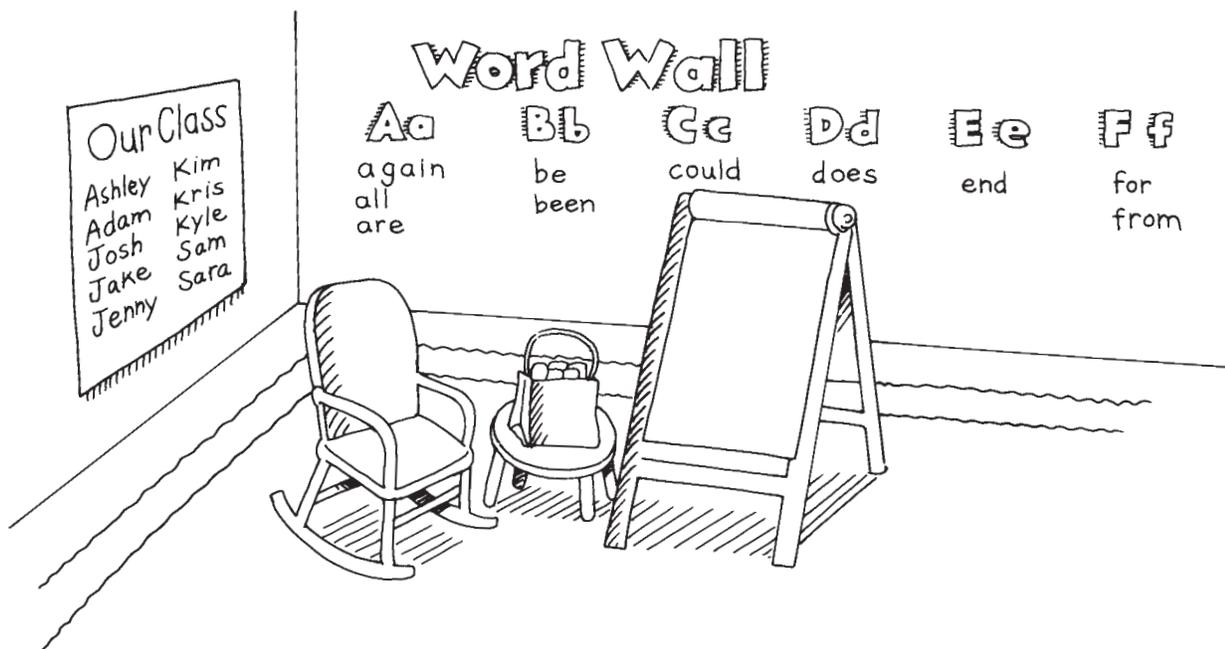
To ensure that every child is successful, establish a nonthreatening environment. Choose children to contribute to the writing based on their background knowledge. For example, ask children to write a letter they know because it is in their name. Create a forgiving environment. For example, when writing the sentence *Today we will eat pizza*, a child may write the numeral 2 in an attempt to begin the word *Today*. Use this as a “teachable moment” by introducing magic

fix-it tape—correction tape or white mailing labels that cover mistakes, or learning opportunities, made by the children. Be sure to use the tape to correct your own errors to model that everyone makes mistakes. Taking part in a forgiving learning environment teaches children that mistakes are acceptable.

To begin interactive writing, gather a variety of classroom materials. Activities in this book refer to “interactive writing materials,” which include items such as the following:

## Reference Materials

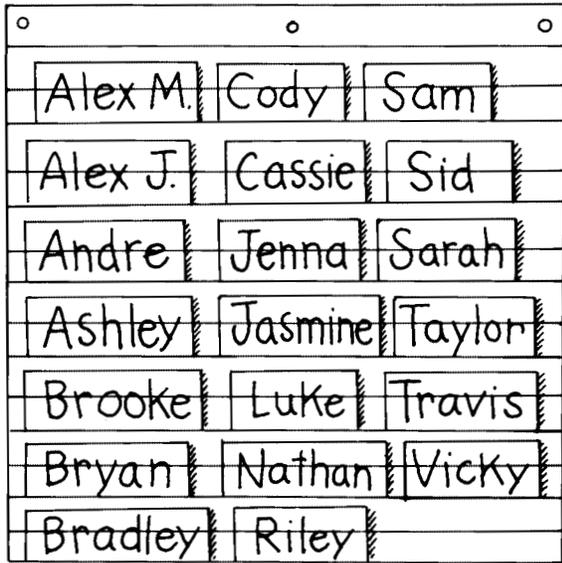
Select current and easy-to-use classroom reference books. Since interactive writing always includes correct spelling and often includes informational text, picture dictionaries, a children’s encyclopedia, a rhyming dictionary, and a children’s thesaurus are useful resources to have.





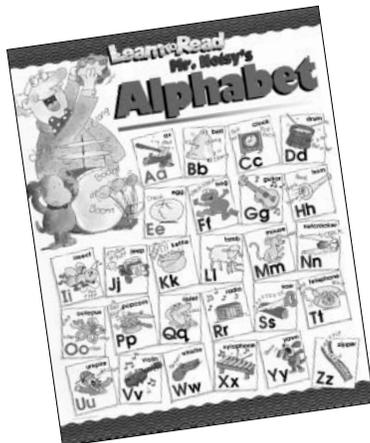
### Name Chart

Create a wall display with children’s names on it. Or, write each child’s name on a sentence strip, glue his or her class photo to the end, and store these name cards in a pocket chart. One of the first things a child learns to write is his or her name, so using children’s names during interactive writing is an effective way to develop letter knowledge.



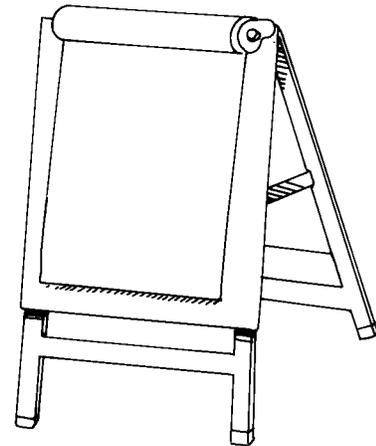
### Alphabet Chart

Post an alphabet chart near the interactive writing area for children’s reference. Display a chart that has uppercase and lowercase letters and a picture beginning with each letter’s sound.



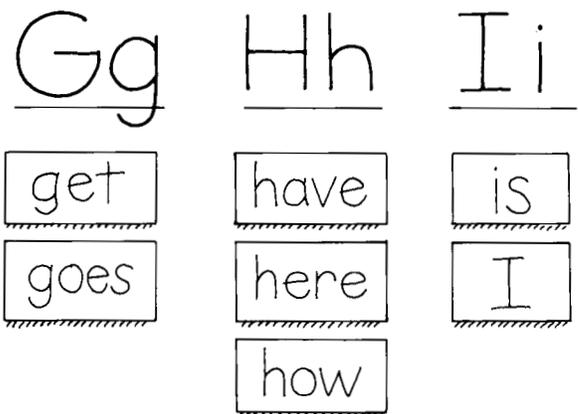
### Easel

An easel is the focal point of any interactive writing lesson. Have all the children seated so they can see the easel and easily come up to write on it. Display chart paper, sentence strips, or large writing paper on the easel.



### Word Wall

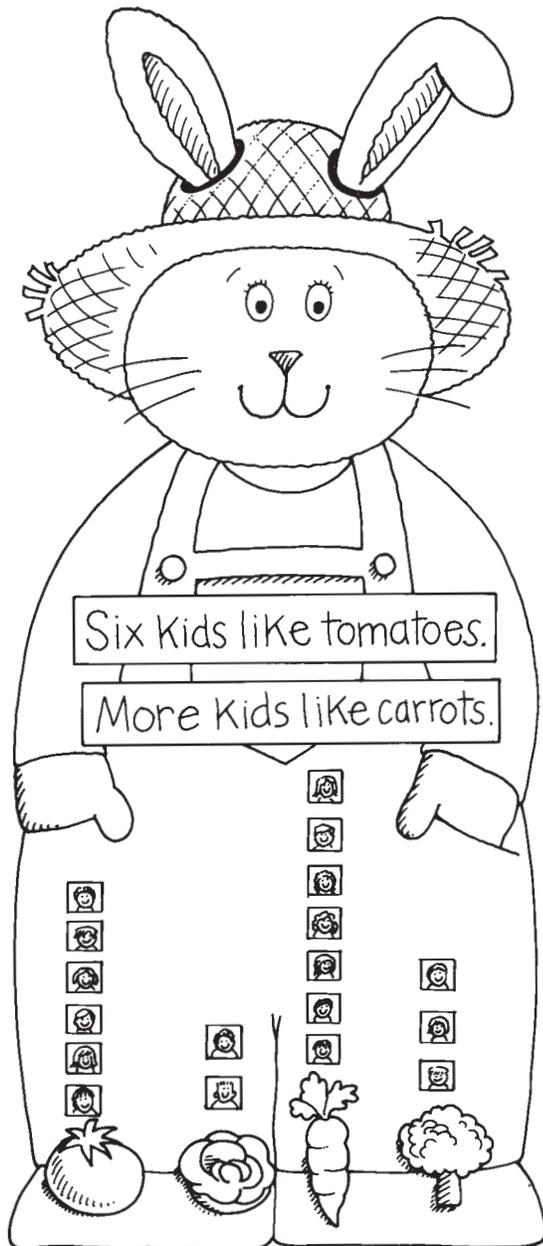
Choose a place in your classroom to display high-frequency words. Create space for words beginning with each letter of the alphabet. As children learn high-frequency words, add them to the word wall. Word walls help children develop a supply of words for writing. Reserve the word wall for only familiar words that you want the children to learn to spell correctly. Always try to incorporate as many high-frequency words as possible to maximize children’s opportunities for reading, writing, and spelling these words.





### Butcher Paper

Create large writing surfaces from butcher paper in the shape of objects that the children write about. For example, cut out a rabbit gardener from butcher paper when recording favorite vegetables. Have children write on sentence strips or cash-register tape so mistakes can be covered up with magic fix-it tape on the white paper instead of directly on the colored butcher paper. The strips also help guide children to write letters and words that are proportionate in size.



### Chart Paper

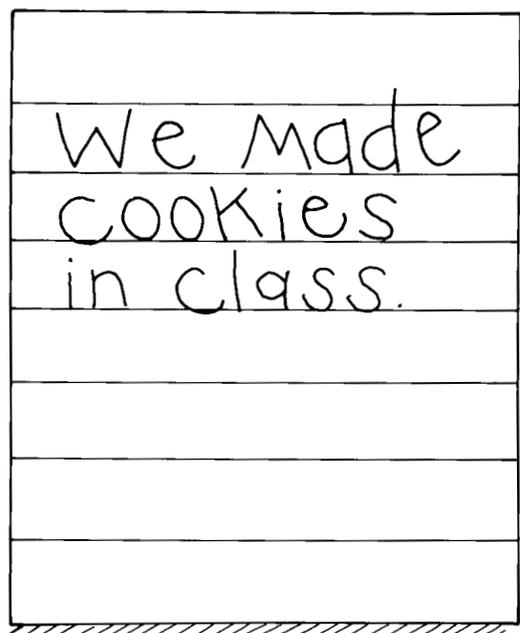
Place chart paper on an easel during interactive writing. Children can begin the interactive writing process on unlined paper. Later, add lines to help guide children in their letter formation and sizing.

### Large Writing Paper

As children become more skilled in writing letters, they will improve their letter formation by practicing on lined writing paper. Guide children so they write their letters within a given area.

### Interactive Writing Paper

Have individual children who are more advanced in their writing copy the interactive writing text onto their own interactive writing paper (see page 74). This will keep those children focused on the writing and also give them extra writing practice. Have the children take the paper home and reread it to their families.





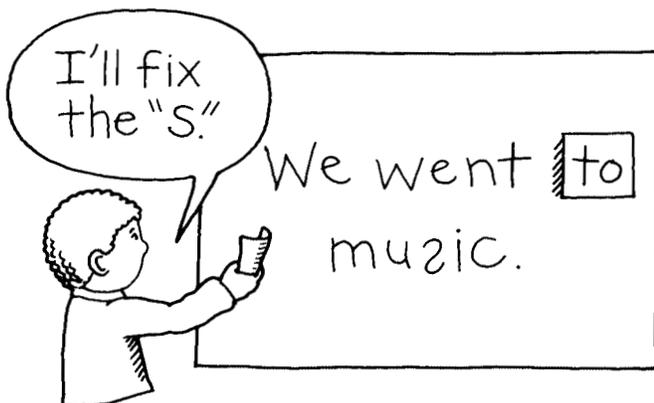
## Monthly Word Bank

Display a chart with words that are appropriate to the month or season. For example, October's word bank might be in the shape of a pumpkin and contain words such as *pumpkin*, *bat*, and *spider*. When seasonal words come up in reading or class discussions, add them to the word bank for use in interactive writing lessons.



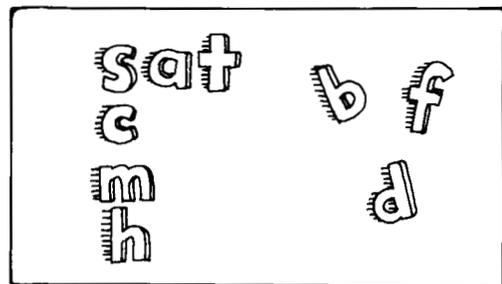
## Magic Fix-It Tape

Magic fix-it tape is simply white correction tape or white mailing labels. Use it to show children that mistakes are learning opportunities. For example, if a child writes an *s* backwards, say *That's all right. We can fix it with the magic fix-it tape!* Then, invite the child to put a piece of tape or a white label on top of the mistake and write over it. Since interactive writing text will be reread many times in the classroom, the text needs to be spelled correctly. Use the magic fix-it tape for all corrections. You will use a ton of it in the beginning. Have a generous supply on hand!



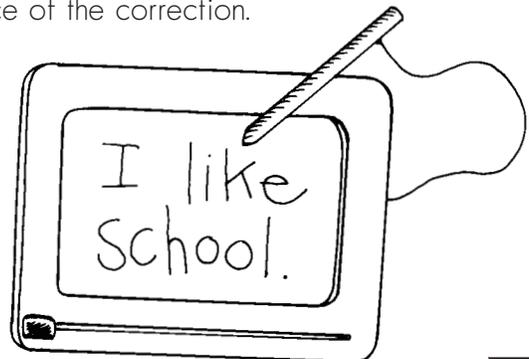
## Magnetic Letters

Magnetic letters can be used for linking known words to unknown words or for generating word families. Put several magnetic letters on a metal surface to play "Make It, Break It." Spell a simple word, such as *cat*. Then, mix up the letters, and ask a child to put them back together. Have children spell other known words with the magnetic letters. Compare them to similar unknown words. Ask children to explain how they are similar. For example, *big* and *wig* both end with the same sound. Have children use the magnetic letters to create other words in the same word family. To demonstrate how little words are sometimes found in bigger words, use magnetic letters to spell *Wednesday*, and have the children locate the words *we* and *day* within the word. Cover a popcorn tin with contact paper. Store the letters in the tin, and have children make words on the outside.



## Magnetic Writing Board

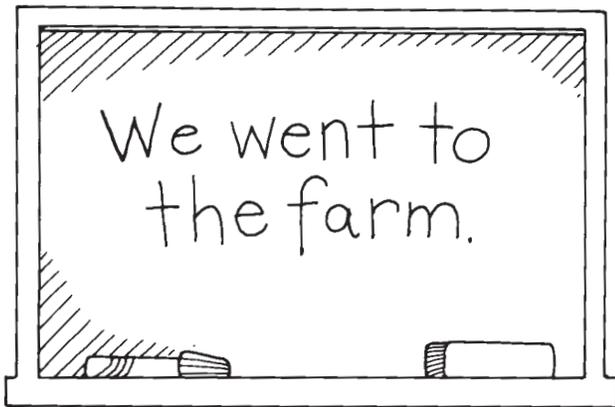
A magnetic writing board (MagnaDoodle) is wonderful for children to use while writing. Children can write on it during interactive writing and then rewrite mistakes without a trace of the correction.





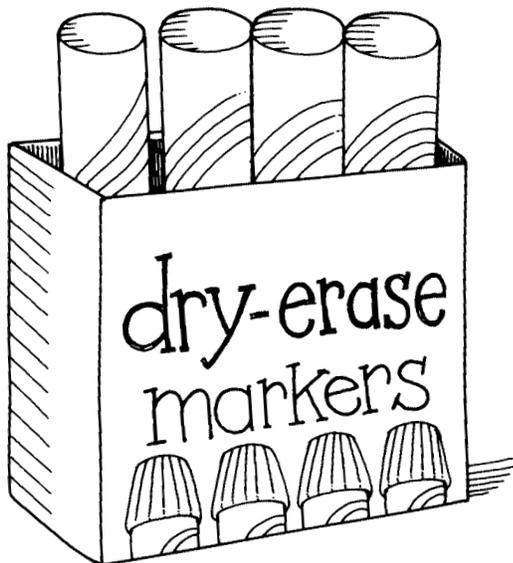
## Dry-Erase Boards

A large dry-erase board is great to use for interactive writing, and a class set of dry-erase boards allows each child to copy the interactive writing text while a classmate writes it on the easel. Individual dry-erase boards can be purchased inexpensively at a local home improvement store. Ask for melamine board to be cut into 9" x 12" (23 cm x 30.5 cm) rectangles.



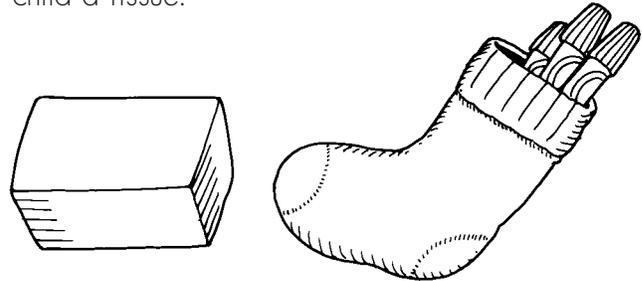
## Dry-Erase Markers

Since dry-erase markers are used so often during interactive writing, ask for parents to donate them. Store the markers tip side down for maximum longevity.



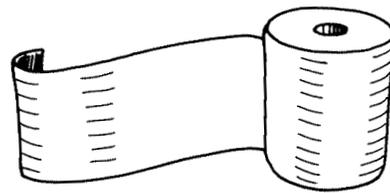
## Erasers

Not only are old socks perfect erasers for dry-erase markers, they are perfect containers for them, too! Or, glue felt to small wooden blocks to make erasers. This is a good parent volunteer job. When all else fails, give each child a tissue.



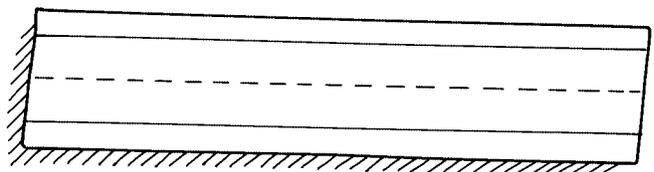
## Cash-Register Tape

Cash-register tape is easy to use and can be purchased at an office supply store. Place the tape over unlined chart paper to create visual lines for children to write on. The white cash-register tape also prevents the magic fix-it tape from showing up when the writing background is on colored butcher paper.



## Sentence Strips

Pocket chart sentence strips work well for children to write on in lieu of the cash-register tape. The lines help guide them in their letter formation and sizing, and the neutral color does not show magic fix-it tape corrections. As a less expensive alternative, photocopy sentence strips and glue the photocopy to chart or butcher paper.



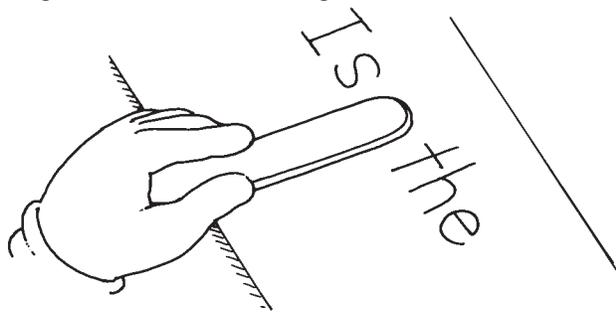


### Colored Markers

Use dark-colored markers for writing on sentence strips, cash-register tape, or chart paper so the words can be easily read from a distance. Have children use different-colored markers for each word so they can easily see the words and differentiate one word from the next. Scented markers are extra fun!

### Spacing Sticks

Tongue depressors and craft sticks make great spacing tools. Children enjoy decorating their own spacer with sequin and bead "jewels" and paint. Spacers allow the children's writing hand to be free as they write. (Sometimes children have trouble putting two fingers down or deciding which hand to use.)



### Magic Reading Glasses

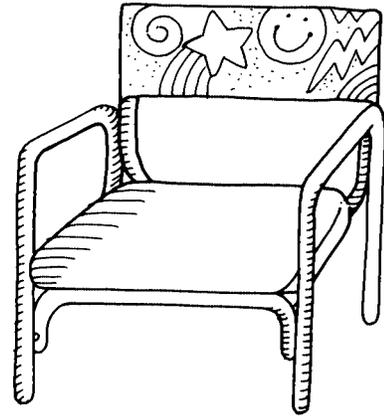
Punch out the lenses of old glasses, and add ribbon to the sides to make magic reading glasses. These are fun for children to wear during "Read the Room" time. This is when children look around the room with a partner and read anything around them, such as words on the word wall, poems on charts, a morning message, or class-made books.



Preparing for Interactive Writing

### Author's Chair

Make an Author's Chair from an inexpensive director's chair. Decorate the back with fabric paints. Invite children to sit in the chair while reading their writing to the class.

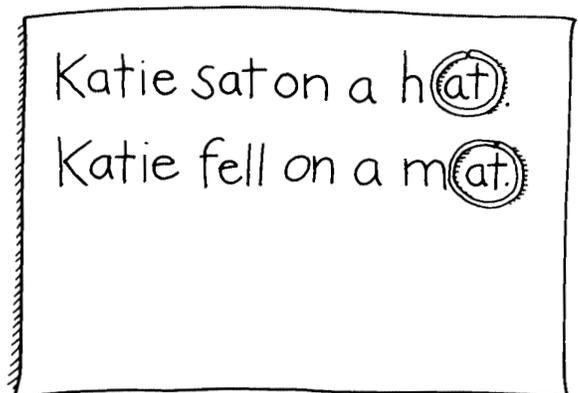


### Photos

Use photos of children, the school environment, and staff during interactive writing. Show photos and ask the children to talk about or describe what is happening in the photos. The photos will help children create text that is important to them.

### Wikki Stix®

Have children use Wikki Stix to locate, circle, or underline letters, word chunks, punctuation, or small words in bigger words. Wikki Stix work like wax-covered pipe cleaners and can be stuck to surfaces to frame words or word parts.



# Tips and Techniques

The interactive writing *process* is more important than the product. To get and keep children interested during the process, keep the beginning interactive writing experiences upbeat, active, and fast paced. Otherwise, you will find children rolling around on the carpet looking for staples. (Really!) To keep all children actively engaged throughout the interactive writing process, employ the following tips and techniques:

- Repeat the sentence before writing it.
- Have children say the sentence to the sky, the door, the floor, and their neighbor.
- Have children say the sentence in a different voice, such as a whisper, robot voice, loud voice, or scary voice.
- When repeating the sentence, have children snap or count with their fingers as they say each word.
- After counting words, have children repeat the sentence as you draw a line for each word. Repeat the sentence, demonstrating a one-to-one correspondence between words and spaces. Make the lines long enough to write the words on.
- When segmenting words to hear each sound, have children move their hands slowly apart as if stretching a rubber band.



- Before writing each new word, have children reread the words that have been written. Have a child use a pointer to track each word as it is read aloud, and invite the class to predict the next word.
- Allow children to become the spacers by having them put their fingers or spacing sticks on the page to mark the space between words.
- Write on a dry-erase board or with magnetic letters words children have already learned that are similar to new words they are writing. Help children make comparisons between the words.
- Help children generate word families when rhyming words occur in the sentence.
- When recording polysyllabic words, invite children to clap each syllable and then segment each syllable to hear and record the sounds.





## Interactive Writing Prompts

Use the following sentences as a template to guide interactive writing. They are written in a sequential order that can be adapted for interactive writing with your class.



### Emergent Stage

- *What do we want to say about \_\_\_\_\_?*
- *Let's say the sentence again. Say it to your \_\_\_\_\_.*
- *Let's count the words in our sentence with our fingers.*
- *What is the first word we will write?*
- *Say the word slowly. What is the first sound you hear?*
- *Who knows how to write the letter \_\_\_\_\_?*
- *Now, let's stretch the word like a rubber band.*
- *How many sounds do you hear?*
- *What sound do you hear next?*
- *Write the middle and last sounds.*
- *Let's read what we wrote.*
- *Does it look right?*
- *What word do we need to write next?*
- *Can you see/find that word anywhere in the classroom?*
- *What goes at the end of a sentence?*
- *What punctuation would you see at the end of a statement/question?*

### Developing and Advanced Stages

- *What do we want to say about \_\_\_\_\_?*
- *Let's say the sentences again. Say them to your \_\_\_\_\_.*
- *Let's count the words in our first sentence with our fingers.*
- *What is our first word?*
- *If a known word, Who knows how to write the word \_\_\_\_\_?*
- *If an unknown word, Let's clap the word to hear how many syllables there are in \_\_\_\_\_.*
- *If a word has a chunk, Who knows what letters make this sound \_\_\_\_\_? (e.g., ight, un, eat, ch, ing)*
- *Who can write the sounds in the first part?*
- *Listen for the ending. What would sound right at the end?*
- *Does it look right?*
- *Add a letter to make it look right.*
- *Think about how the word looks. Do you know another word that looks like that?*
- *Let's read what we wrote.*
- *What word do we need to write next?*



### Emergent Interactive Writing Sample

The following dialogue is an example of the process of writing a sentence using interactive writing.

**Text:** *We took a trip to the beach.*

**Teacher:** *The first word is we. Who knows how to write the word we? Where could we find that word in our room?*

**Class:** *It's on our calendar in the word Wednesday. We.*

**Teacher:** *Good. Took. We know the word look, so we can write the word took. Who wants to come up and write it? (Model -ook word family on a dry-erase board or with magnetic letters.) Let's point and read what we've written so far.*

**Class:** *We took*

**Teacher:** *a. We know how to write a. Who wants to come up and write it?*

**Class:** *We took a*

**Teacher:** *trip. Let's stretch the word trip like a rubber band. (Move hands apart as if stretching a rubber band.) What is the first sound you hear? (/tr/) Trevor, your name starts like that. Would you like to come up and write it for us? I'll write the ending. Say the word in slow motion.*

**Class:** *tr-i-p. We took a trip*

**Teacher:** *to. Who knows how to write the word to? (A child comes up and writes the numeral 2. Now you have a teachable moment.) You're right, that is a 2. That's the*

*number two. We need the word to. (Now you get to teach the word to the class. Write to and add it to the word wall. Use magic fix-it tape to cover the number, and let the same child write the word to. Thank the child for teaching the class.) What have we written now?*

**Class:** *We took a trip to*

**Teacher:** *the. Where can we find the in the classroom? Who wants to come write it?*

**Class:** *The is on our word wall. We took a trip to the*

**Teacher:** *beach. Let's stretch the word beach like a rubber band. (Move hands apart as if stretching a rubber band.) What do you hear at the beginning of beeeeeeeeach? (Children might know the letter b or the word be.) There's a sneaky a in there that we can't hear. I'll write it for you. Let's stretch the word beach again. What do you hear at the end of beeeeach? We have a friend in our class whose name starts like that. Who is it? Chandler! Would you like to come write the first two letters in your name? What's our sentence?*

**Class:** *We took a trip to the beach*

**Teacher:** *What punctuation belongs at the end of our sentence?*

**Class:** *A period.*

**Teacher:** *Who would like to put a period at the end of our sentence so we know where to stop and take a breath? (A child adds the period.)*

**Class:** *We took a trip to the beach.*



### Advanced Interactive Writing Sample

The following shows the attention given to words in an example of interactive writing with a more advanced group of children.

**Sample text:** *We took a trip to the beach. We saw a spiky starfish. It looked bright purple in the freezing cold water.*

- Have the class repeat the text they want to write so they remember it. Have the class work on one sentence at a time.
- Have children independently write high-frequency words.
- Write very familiar words, such as *a, to, in, the, and it*, for the children to keep the pace of the lesson moving.
- Have children write the text on individual dry-erase boards or on paper while one child writes on an easel.
- Ask children to write words using chunks (e.g., *-ook, -ed, -ing, -ight, -er*) whenever possible.
- Have children clap the syllables of unknown words and then count the sounds in each part.

- Have children split compound words into syllables. After the word is written, cover each individual word and have children read each one separately.
- Write unheard vowels for the children (e.g., *a* in *beach*).
- Draw attention to silent letters, and ask children to check the word wall for other words with silent letters.
- Conduct mini-lessons on spelling patterns, such as *ar* in *starfish* or *ur* in *purple*. Make connections with the interactive writing text and other words that fit into that pattern.
- Add new words to word walls or monthly word banks.
- Let children contribute parts of the message that they can produce but still need to practice a bit more.
- Have children sort words under categories such as word families. Have children revisit the word sort several times and eventually make a wall chart to add more words in the future.

ar in star	
star <u>fish</u>	har <u>p</u>
star <u>ch</u>	char <u>t</u>
lar <u>ge</u>	smar <u>t</u>
shar <u>k</u>	scar <u>er</u>
alar <u>m</u>	mar <u>ch</u>



## A First Lesson

Use the following sample “script” as an example of a first interactive writing lesson.

### Preparation

Take photographs of the children in your class or of the school. Glue each photo onto construction paper. Use tape or glue to attach a sentence strip or strip of cash-register tape under each picture. Gather the necessary materials from the recommended interactive writing resources listed on pages 16–21.

### Process

1. Show the class the first photo you would like to use for interactive writing.
2. Discuss who or what is in the picture.
3. Guide children to create a simple three- to five-word sentence that describes the picture.
4. Have children repeat the sentence to neighbors, body parts, and the sky.
5. Have children count the words in the sentence with their fingers.

6. Point out on the strip approximately where each word would go or draw lines for the words as the sentence is repeated again.
7. Ask children if they think there is enough writing space for the sentence. If not, be ready to add more cash-register tape or another sentence strip.
8. Help children identify the first word of the sentence.
9. Help children segment the word and identify the first sound.
10. Choose a child whose name has that letter in it to come up and write that letter. Remind children that a sentence begins with a capital letter.
11. Model the correct letter formation on a dry-erase board or MagnaDoodle as the child writes the letter. Modeling will also help the writer feel successful. (Remember, the goal is for every child to feel successful and confident. Sometimes, you may need to take the child’s hand for a “ride” and help him or her write. The most important part is to make writing a fun, exciting, and positive experience.)

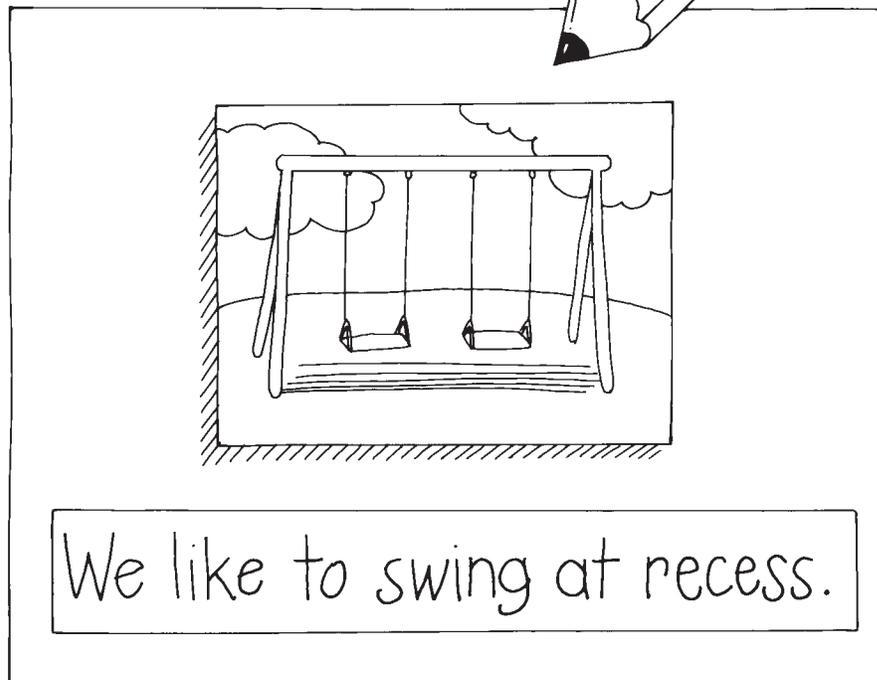
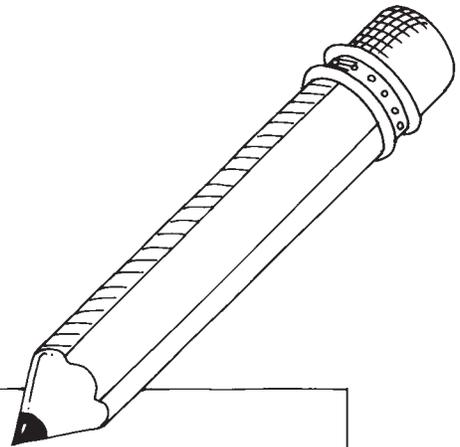




Now you have one letter on the strip. Don't panic! Getting started takes a long time in the beginning stages. Just remember to keep the sentences short. Your patience will pay off soon.

12. Repeat the word by segmenting the sounds. Help children hear the next sound. If it is a silent letter or an uncommon sound, write the letter for the class. This also speeds up the process so the focus can be on the planned learning.
13. Choose children to each write the letter that makes each sound.
14. When you come to a new word, select a child to be the spacer. This child will put two fingers or a spacing stick on the page to mark a space between the words.
15. Repeat the text just written, pointing to the word that has just been written. With the children, identify the next word, segment it, and identify the beginning sound. You might want to choose a new color marker to help the children distinguish between the words.

16. Continue this process until the sentence is completed. Remember to reread the text before adding each new word.
17. After writing the last word, ask children about ending punctuation (e.g., period, question mark, or exclamation point), and ask a child to write the ending punctuation.
18. Reread the text once more while counting the words in the sentence. Your first piece of interactive writing is now complete!
19. Display the writing in the classroom for rereading. The next day, before you begin interactive writing, reread this sentence. Then, continue with the interactive writing process.

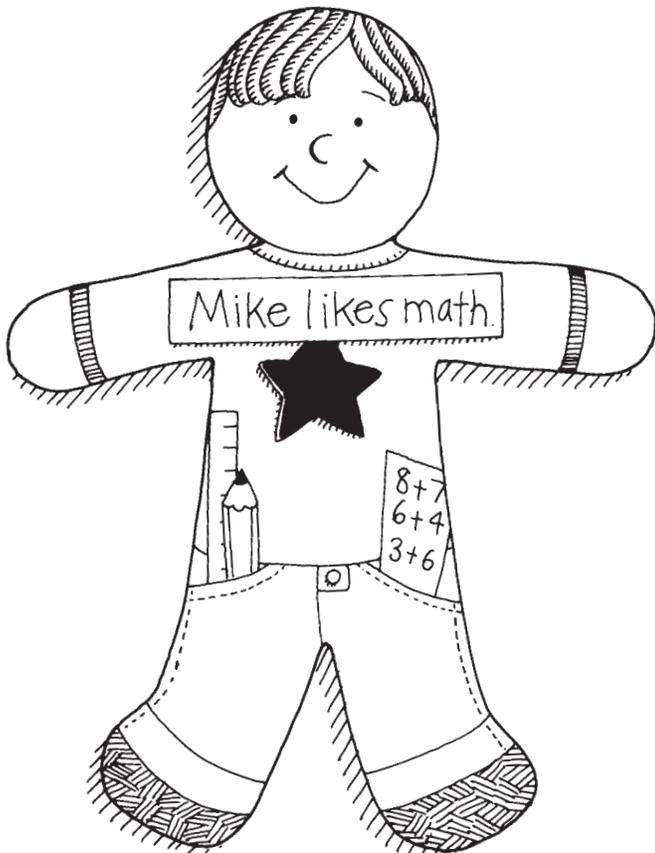




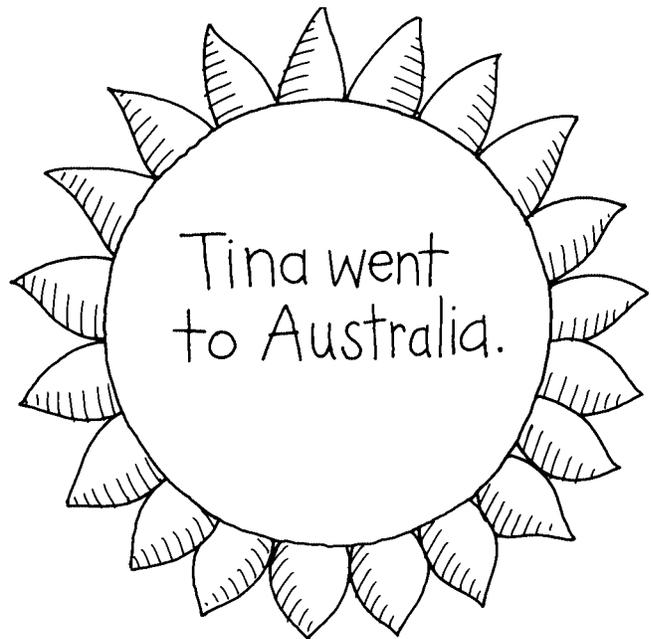
## Quick Activity Ideas

Use the following ideas at the beginning of the year or for first attempts at interactive writing.

- Make a list of needs for the class pet. Each day, add a new need to the list during interactive writing. Put the pages together into a book in the shape of the pet.
- Make a list of favorites, such as foods, sports, or ice-cream flavors, and write repetitive, predictable sentences to record them. For example, *We like \_\_\_\_\_*.
- Trace a large paper doll for each child. Glue a sentence strip to each doll. Every day, use interactive writing to write on a doll something the child likes that begins with the same letter as his or her name. For example, *Trisha likes turtles*. Invite the child to decorate the paper doll to match the sentence.



- Brainstorm classroom rules with children, and write the rules on a chart during interactive writing. Have each child sign his or her name on the chart.
- Invite children to label the classroom with environmental print, such as *window*, *door*, and *sink*.
- Create a list of books the class has read or books by a favorite author.
- Brainstorm topics children want to learn about, and write the topics on a list during interactive writing. Refer back to the list throughout the year.
- Invite the class to help write the schedule for the day. Allow them to check off each task as it is completed. This helps them understand how much needs to be done before lunch, recess, or going home.
- Have children record places they have visited on vacations. For example, *Marco went to the beach*. *Sammy went to Hawaii*. Place the pages into a large sun-shaped book.

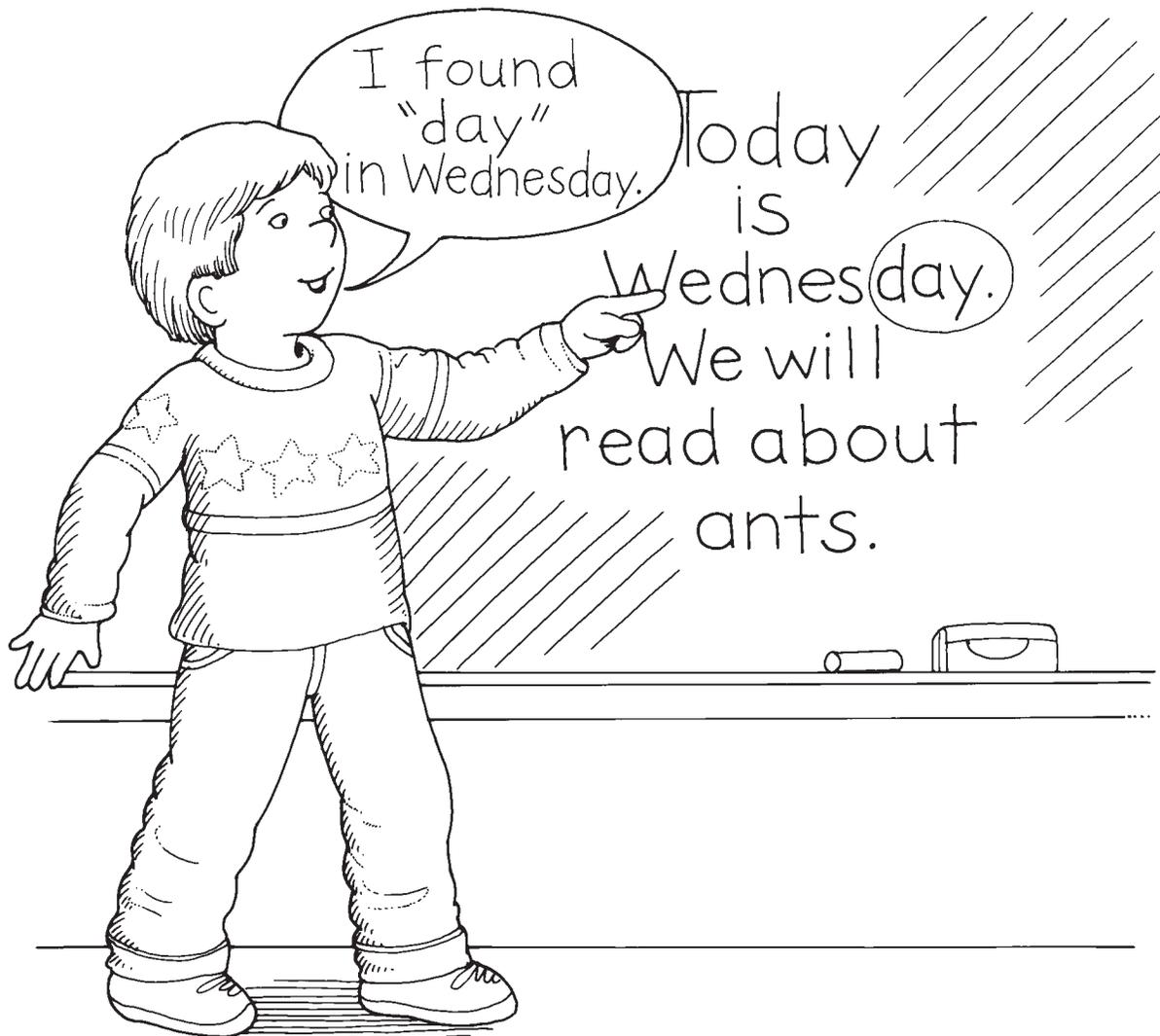




### Morning Message

The morning message is a brief message about recent or upcoming class or school events, something a child wants to share, or information about what the class will do that day. Write a message about the day on the board when children walk into the room. Invite children to help you decide what should be included in the morning message. This is a good time to let a child of the day include a sentence about himself or herself. Have children write their names and known high-frequency words in the morning message. Ask the children to sit down and read the

message together. Track the print, point out known words, or use the message to introduce or reinforce a teaching point (e.g., locate chunks of words, punctuation, parts of speech, names). Extend the morning message activity to other parts of the day. An end-of-the-day message works well in any writing mode—modeled, shared, or interactive writing. It helps tie together what the children learned and did throughout the day so when their families say *What did you do today?* their children won't say *nothing*.

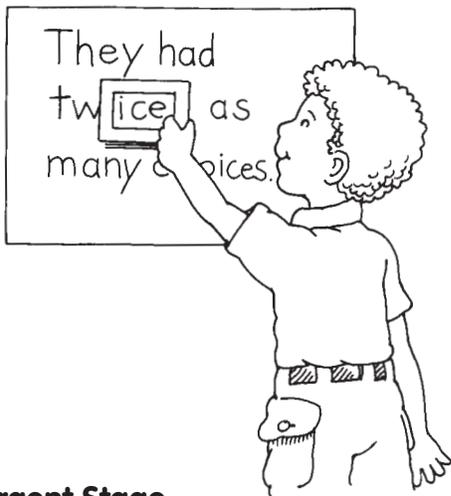


# Interactive Writing Extensions

After completing the interactive writing process, consider some of the following suggestions for extending children's learning and displaying their work during each stage.

## All Stages

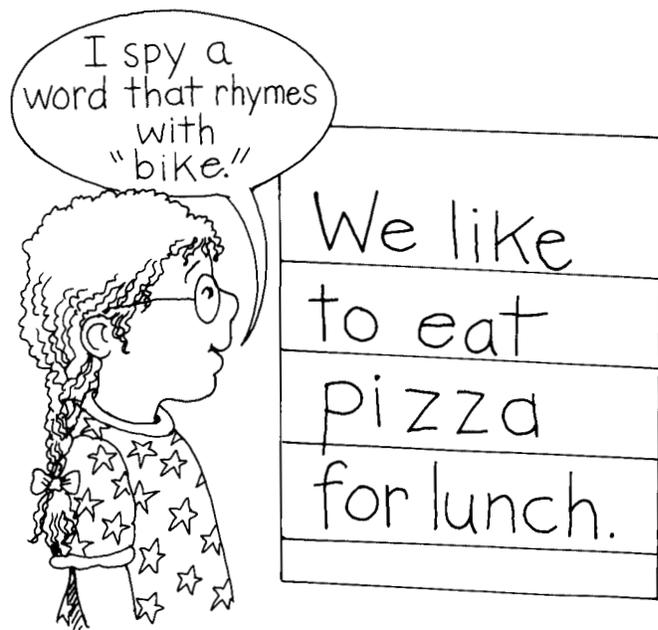
- Display past interactive writing, and have children reread it daily as part of your shared reading.
- Invite one child at a time to search for a word on a word wall that is in the interactive writing. Invite the child to circle the word with Wikki Stix. If you do not have Wikki Stix, cut a hole in an index card to make a frame, or have the children simply "frame" the word with two fingers—one finger on each side of the high-frequency word they found.



## Emergent Stage

- Create rhyme riddles for the children to solve. For example, if the interactive writing says *We like to eat pizza for lunch*, you could say *I spy a word that rhymes with bike*. The children say the rhyming word *like*. Invite one child to frame the word with his or her fingers.

- Reinforce capitalization and punctuation practice. Have children point to the capital letters and punctuation.
- Have children practice sound matching and phonics skills as they relate words in the text to their names or names of pets in your classroom. For example, if the interactive writing says *The Little Red Hen did not share the bread with her friends*, you could say *I spy a word that starts with the same sound as our friend Rachel's name*. The class says *red*, and Rachel points to the word. Extend this lesson by having the class count the letters in *Rachel* and in *red*. Compare which word has more or fewer letters.
- Help children distinguish letters from words. For example, say *I spy a word with four letters*. A volunteer identifies the word or words and shows them to the rest of the class. Count the letters with the class to verify the child's answer. Use magnetic letters to make and break apart that word so children see how letters make up words.



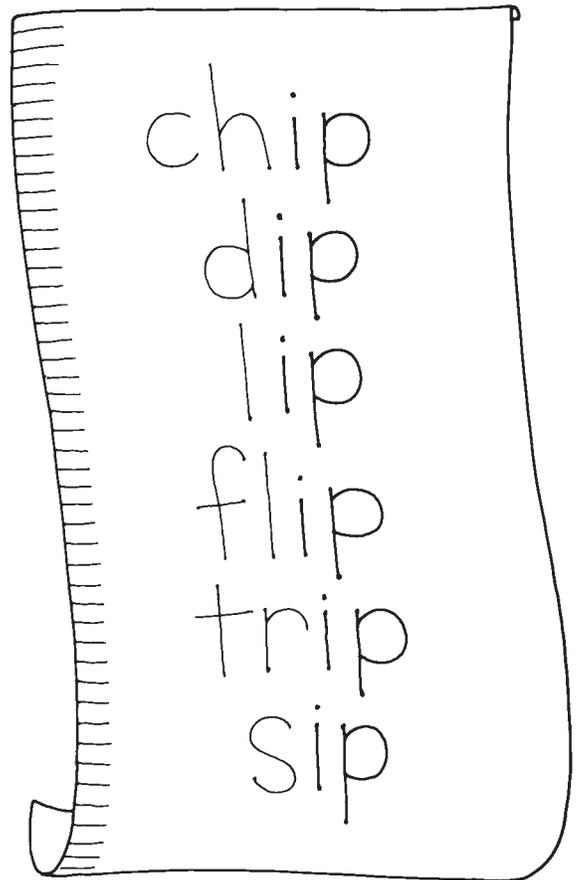


### Developing Stage

- Have children practice reading phrases smoothly. Model how to read a phrase of about three words at a time. Use your hands or construction paper strips to block off a phrase, read it, and have children repeat it. Continue the modeling with the entire text. Then, challenge children to read the text with phrasing by themselves.
- Teach and/or reinforce blends, digraphs, and endings. In the sentences *We baked some delicious chocolate chip cookies today. Then, we ate them and drank red fruit punch,* you could ask children to locate a blend, a digraph, or an ending, such as /ch/, /ed/, or /ay/.



- Have children work on linking words to their word families. Invite individual children to come up to the easel or board and locate a given word. (Choose a word that can generate word families.) Then, have children brainstorm other words that have the same rime. For example, if the story says *We baked some delicious chocolate chip cookies today. Then, we ate them and drank red fruit punch,* you could say *Who can come up and show us the word chip?* After a child comes up and frames the word with his or her fingers, say *What other words do you know that rhyme with chip?* Have children write the words on the board that have the /ip/ rime. Use a different-colored marker to highlight *ip* in each word.

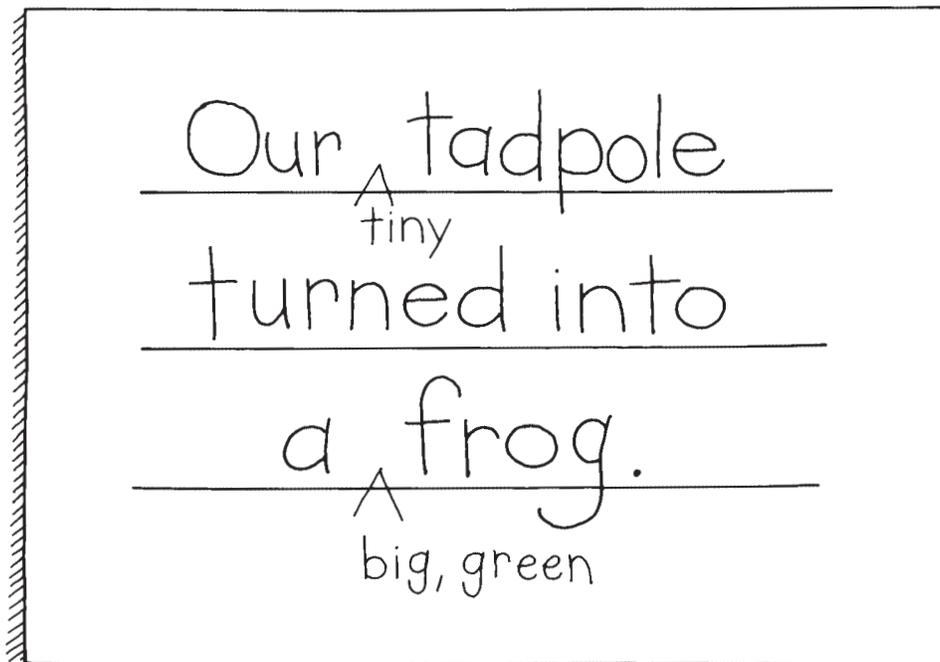




### Advanced Stage

- Teach and/or reinforce how vowels change words. If the class story says *We went on a nature walk*, you could take a word such as *went* and show the class how to change the vowel to an *a* to make the word *want*.
- Teach and/or reinforce the process of revising and editing. After rereading a class story many times, ask children how they could make it even better so readers can picture it in their heads. Suggest that children add more adjectives to the story. Model how to use a caret to add an adjective. For example, a sentence from the story might say *Our tadpole turned into a frog*. Use carets to revise the sentence to say *Our tiny tadpole turned into a big, green frog*.
- Teach and/or reinforce the parts of speech (e.g., noun, verb, adjective, and pronoun). After rereading a class story many times,

ask individual children to locate nouns, verbs, adjectives, and/or pronouns. Have children underline and color-code the words for further discussion. For example, have children underline nouns in red and verbs in green. For even more fun, challenge the class to find a specific noun or adjective. If text from the story says *It is raining so hard outside that we will have to eat lunch in our classroom today. Yeah!*, you could say *Who can find the verb that describes what we will be doing?* A child comes up and shows the class the word *eat*. Or, you could say *I see a noun. It is also a compound word. It has the /oo/ sound. What is the noun?* A child comes up and shows the class the word *classroom*. You will reinforce compound words, sounds, and parts of speech with this kind of riddle. Children love it!



# Assessment

The interactive writing process provides many opportunities to assess children. As children go up to the easel and write selected letters and/or words and word parts, watch them engage in constructing words. Note which words children know how to write quickly and easily, how they use letter-sound relationships, which spelling patterns they pay attention to, and which strategies they use to write new words. Teaching and assessment during interactive writing are linked together because the teacher is constantly determining what skills the children need to learn, practice, or review.

Use the Assessment reproducible (page 75) to assess what children are learning during interactive writing. To accurately assess each child, take time to observe individual children during each interactive writing lesson. Write the child's name on the reproducible, and mark the box next to each skill that you observe. Use a plus sign to indicate mastery, a check to indicate an adequate grasp of the concept or skill, and a minus to indicate a need for improvement or further training. The skills listed are arranged in two sections to address both emergent and more advanced stages of interactive writing. Make notes in the last section to record letters, words, and/or word chunks that the child writes easily and those with which the child needs more practice.

**Assessment**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Correctly grips a marker
- Uses alphabet chart or other visual information as a support for letter recognition
- Recognizes and names the uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet
- Forms uppercase and lowercase letters correctly
- Knows the sound-symbol relationships of most consonants
- Hears dominant sounds in words
- Represents sounds heard with letters
- Sequences sounds heard
- Claps syllables in words
- Leaves adequate space between words
- Uses capitalization correctly
- Uses punctuation correctly
- Recognizes the difference between letters and words
- Indicates the correct number of words in a sentence
- Uses left-to-right progression and return sweep
- Tracks text word-by-word while rereading
- Links words to be written with names of children in the class
- Knows the sound-symbol relationships of vowels
- Writes letters unassisted
- Segments words
- Writes core high-frequency words
- Links known words to unknown words
- Uses familiar chunks to write words (-ed, -ing)
- Uses reading skills and strategies
- Writes letters without copying visual information
- Writes words with little support

	Writes quickly and easily	Needs more practice
Letters		
Words		
Word parts		
Letter-sound relationships		
Spelling patterns		
Strategies used to write new words		

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