

Teaching Writing with ReadyGEN™

Introduction

This tutorial guide explains ReadyGEN™ research-based writing instruction. Through this instruction, students develop the strategies and confidence they need to achieve success as writers in the 21st century.

Types of Writing

Writing instruction continues to focus on teaching students the value of strong content, organization, and style; however, the goal of the Common Core Standards is to ensure college and career readiness. In order for students to achieve this, they must demonstrate three fundamental types of writing: opinion writing, informative or explanatory writing, and narrative writing.

Opinion Writing

One type of Common Core writing is opinion writing. In opinion writing, students develop claims about topics or texts. They use sound reasoning and relevant evidence to support their claims. ReadyGEN™ prepares students to write opinions. During Close Reading, students follow specific steps. They think critically, make claims, and support their claims using evidence from the text.

Close Reading Workshop

REVISIT *ELEPHANTS AND THEIR CALVES* Read aloud the text on p. 6 and p. 8. Then discuss the following questions with the group. Have children include text evidence to support their answers.

- 1 What clues did we read about adult, or grown-up, elephants? The text says a male elephant is called a bull and a female is called a cow. It says bulls and cows mate.)
- 2 What questions can you ask and answer about these pages of the text? (Possible answers: Where do elephants live? What are male and female elephants called? What do bulls and cows do?)
- 3 Where do calves come from? Use information from the text in your answer. (Possible answers: Calves come from the cows. Calves are made when bulls and cows mate.)

**Informative/
Explanatory
Writing**

In informative or explanatory writing, students investigate and explain complex ideas. ReadyGEN™’s daily writing lessons focus on developing strong writers. For example, in this Grade 1 writing lesson, students learn how writers of informational text write to give information about a topic.

WRITE ABOUT A TOPIC

TEACH Remind children that writers of informative texts write to give information about a topic. The topic is what the book is about. The writer includes details to tell more about, or support, the topic. The details are all connected to the topic.

Review that the writer introduces the topic at the beginning of a text selection so that the reader knows quickly what the text is about. Remind children that the title is usually the first place the writer tells the reader what the topic of the text is.

- What is the title of this text selection?
- Does the title help you know what the text is about? How?
- Do the pictures help you know what the text is about? How?
- What does the first sentence on page 44 say? How does the sentence help you know what the text is about?
- What is the topic of this text selection?

**Narrative
Writing**

The third type of Common Core writing is narrative writing. Students write narratives to convey real or imagined experiences. They use effective storytelling techniques, vivid details, and precisely structured event sequences. In ReadyGEN™, students use the anchor and supporting texts as models for their narrative writing.

**What does
writing
instruction look
like in
ReadyGEN™?**

ReadyGEN™ students write every day in whole group and small group. Students have opportunities to write in response to multiple sources, connect ideas within and across texts, and author pieces in the three writing modes—opinion, informative or explanatory, and narrative. Equally important is the art and craft of writing. You will teach conventions, mechanics, and the writing process. You will also teach students to carefully analyze and synthesize sources and defend claims through text evidence. As a result, students produce writing that promotes critical thinking and understanding.

**Writing in
Response to
Reading**

During every ReadyGEN™ lesson, students read the anchor or supporting text twice. Then, students respond to the reading in their *Reader’s and Writer’s Journal*. This write-in journal allows students to demonstrate what they have learned. The prompts require students to make comparisons or connections between texts, state opinions and

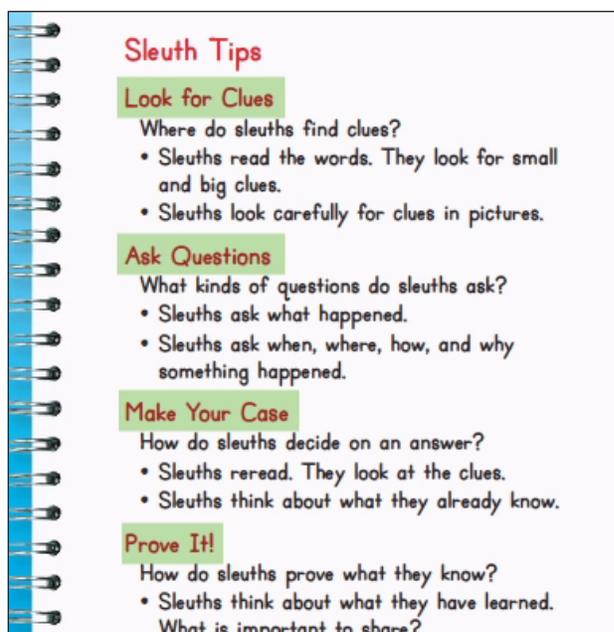
| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Name _____ | Language Analysis |
| Lesson 1 Story Structure | |
| Review your completed Story Structure graphic organizer. Then write a few sentences to summarize the story of <i>Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday</i> . | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |
| _____ | |

support them with evidence, describe characters, and summarize their thinking.

Students revisit the text to find specific evidence when responding to the prompts. The *Reader's and Writer's Journal* helps students use text-based evidence to support their writing, an important instructional shift of the Common Core Standards.

Sleuth

Sleuth is a collection of short texts used in the Close Reading Workshop at all grade levels. Using *Sleuth*, students practice the process of close reading and writing to sources. Students read the text closely and follow the Sleuth Steps in order to help them draw meaning from the text. Students look for clues or gather evidence to help them answer questions, ask their own questions based on the reading, make a case



using the answers to their questions and additional text evidence, and prove their claims by completing a performance task. These steps require students to think critically and write using evidence from the text.

Daily Writing Practice

The standards emphasize that students must learn how to adapt their writing so it is appropriate for a given audience, task, and purpose. In order to fully address these areas of emphasis, ReadyGEN™ incorporates daily writing practice into instruction.

You will use excerpts from the anchor and supporting texts as models for these lessons. You will lead students through an analysis of the model and provide more examples to examine and discuss. Using the text as a model helps students learn the value of strong content, organization, and style. Students apply what they learn to their own writing.

Daily Writing Lessons

In the daily ReadyGEN™ writing lessons, students write in response to multiple sources and make connections within and across texts. You'll teach conventions specific to the types of writing as well as the writing process. The suggested time for writing instruction is thirty to forty minutes. Currently, the daily writing lesson plan follows a two-page format; however, in Unit 4 for Grades K–2 and Unit 3 for Grades 3–5 this will change to a four-page format.

Here is an example of a Grade 2 writing lesson. The writing lesson begins by reviewing Informative writing. You will teach how to write a summary using key details from a model anchor text, *Planet Earth*. Then, you will teach conventions. In this lesson, adjectives are explained and modeled using a sentence from the text. Students apply their learning by writing their own sentences in the *Reader's and Writer's Journal*.

The next two pages of the lesson plan focus on the writing process. Students participate in a shared informative writing task and practice writing daily in their *Reader's and Writer's Journal* during Independent Writing Practice.

The screenshot shows a lesson plan page for Unit 4, Module 8. The main heading is "Informative/Explanatory Writing". Below it, there is a "SHARED WRITING" section with a "PREPARE TO WRITE" sub-section. This section explains that students will use *Planet Earth* as a guide to create a mindmap or Concept Web. It lists four steps: 1. Pick a Topic for the Mindmap, 2. Add Key Details to the Mindmap, 3. Develop the Mindmap, and 4. Write a Summary. To the right, there is an "INDEPENDENT WRITING PRACTICE" section. It explains that students should apply the steps from the shared writing activity. It includes a "WRITING" section with a list of three steps: 1. use what they have learned from *Planet Earth* to pick a central idea, 2. collect key details from the text, illustrations, and diagrams in *Planet Earth*, and 3. write summaries of their mindmaps. Below this is a "USE TECHNOLOGY" section suggesting the use of a computer or tablet. At the bottom right, there is a "Writing Wrap-Up" section with a small icon and text asking volunteers to share their mindmaps and summaries.

Each day, students reflect on their writing and share their successes, during Writing Wrap-Up. As a result, they integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

Scaffolded Strategies Handbook

The Scaffolded Strategies Handbook is a valuable resource. It works in tandem with the ReadyGEN™ Teacher's Guides at the module level. It provides models of scaffolded instruction, useful strategies, and practical routines that help support English language learners, struggling learners, and advanced learners. This handbook also contains scaffolded writing lessons that provide grade-appropriate support and guidelines for teaching each of the writing types required by the Common Core Standards.

Performance-Based Assessments

Students must demonstrate their knowledge through writing in order to be college and career ready. The Performance-Based Assessment at the end of each unit module incorporates reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Often, these tasks ask students to gather research and synthesize information from the various texts they read during the unit. It requires students to draw evidence from texts to demonstrate their knowledge of the core understandings. They must apply the writing conventions and skills they learned during the module to complete the task.

Task

Decision Stories

In this unit, you have read stories about characters who have needs and wants. You have read about *Alexander from Alexander, Who Used to Be Rich Last Sunday*, and the girl from *A Chair for My Mother*. Now you will create a character who needs or wants to buy something. You will decide whether or not the character can buy it.

Write the story of what the character wants to buy. Tell whether or not he/she is able to buy it. Describe the decision the character has to make.

Remember to:

- write a short sequence of events, including action.
- include details that tell thoughts and feelings of the character.
- use linking words to show the order of events.
- provide an ending to the story.

Add your story to a class book called *Stories of Needs and Wants*.

Copyright © Pearson Education, Inc., or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

You will use a rubric that assesses focus, organization, development, language and vocabulary, and conventions to score their writing.

Closing

This tutorial guide explained ReadyGEN™ research-based writing instruction. Through this instruction, students develop the strategies and confidence they need to achieve success as writers in the 21st century.