

# GOOD YEAR BOOKS

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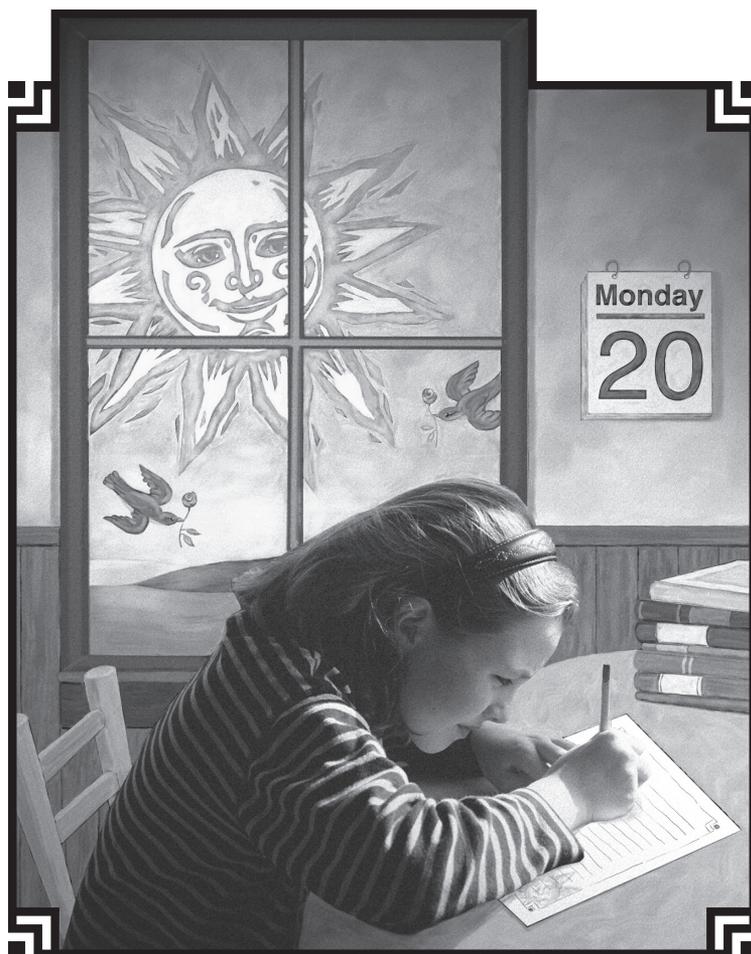
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# Daily Writing Prompts

Carol Simpson



 GOOD YEAR BOOKS

# Dedication

*This book is dedicated to my husband and to my dear Pathways to Literacy friend, Judy Embry.*

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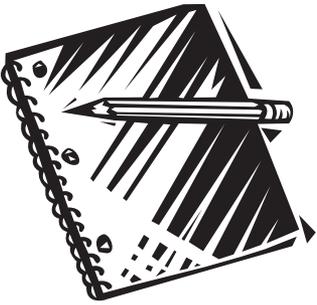
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# Tips for Teaching Writing Skills



In my nearly 30 years of classroom experience with young children, I have found that the teaching of writing skills works better when I base it upon the written work that my students produce. ***The weaknesses and strengths that I see in their writing will dictate the direction of my daily mini-lessons.*** A mini-lesson might deal with capitalization and punctuation or demonstrate descriptive writing with plenty of adjectives and adverbs. It might be a discussion of how to eliminate some of the lengthy run-on sentences that are typically seen in elementary writing. Sometimes it may lead to a worksheet for additional practice and reinforcement. You will find a few of these types of worksheets included in this section.

**Daily mini-lessons** are just as the name implies: daily lessons that teach a skill in a short period of time. Mini-lessons are repeated often so that the skills are continually reintroduced and reinforced. I prefer to teach mini-lessons in the morning when the whole group is sitting together, perhaps on the floor, in front of a large sheet of chart paper. There might also be times when I need to pull a small group of children together for a mini-lesson on a specific skill with which they are having difficulty.

Mini-lessons usually cover one basic skill, although other peripheral skills might also be included as incidental lessons. I like to use black or brown markers when copying the writing samples that I use for my lessons and a bright color for cor-

rections and/or improvements. The sentences that I use for my mini-lessons come from children's journal entries, story writing assignments, nonfiction science or social studies reports, and any other written material that demonstrates a particular weakness (or strength) that needs to be highlighted in a mini-lesson. The mini-lesson chart paper is left in view during the day so that children might refer to it at a later time. Chart papers from a variety of mini-lessons might also be placed around the room for reference as needed. They can be attached to pants hangers and then hung from a pocket chart stand, if one is available. Children can select the chart they need, just like selecting something to wear out of a clothes closet!

The kinds of skills that can be taught through the daily mini-lessons are limitless. Children need instruction in the correct use of capital letters, punctuation, verb tense, parts of speech, and other basic English language structures. They also need help in eliminating run-on sentences that seem to plague their writing in the early grades. They need to practice writing what I like to call colorful poetic language. They need to do more descriptive writing so that the words in their stories create images in the minds of their readers. These kinds of skills can be demonstrated, practiced in mini-lessons, and then carried over into children's daily work.

# Capitalization



**M**ini-lessons on capitalization are needed when writing samples show that students do not follow the rules for their use. When doing a mini-lesson on capitalization, demonstrate sentences without capital letters at the beginning. Use sample sentences that contain children’s names, days of the week, and other proper nouns, but without the proper capital letters in place. Write the sentences on a large sheet of chart paper and then gather the class (or small group) together. Ask students to help correct the sentences so that everyone sees where capital letters are needed.

You may assign a follow-up worksheet to determine how much information children understand. A similar type of group activity needs to be repeated whenever children’s work indicates that a specific capitalization rule is weak. Remember that children probably do not “get it” with just one lesson. Be prepared to repeat it (using different examples each time) as often as necessary! For some children, the skill may not be mastered for another year. Console yourself with the knowledge that the skill was presented on numerous occasions!

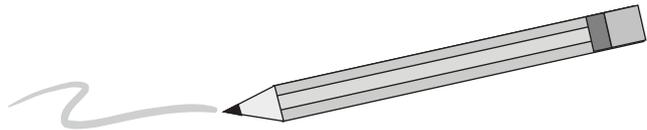
The following pages contain some practice passages that need capital letters. Make copies of the pages and then cut them apart on the lines so you will have several practice lessons to reinforce a variety of capitalization rules. Ask children to mark capital letters where needed, circling them or underlining them. Or, you might ask them to cross out the lowercase letters and write the capitals above them. Tell them to use a red crayon or colored pencil to make their corrections.

Look at the work together and correct it as a whole group, explaining what words needed capital letters and why. Collecting the papers and looking over them at another time will show you how much progress they have made. Some children may not need additional worksheet practice, but some might. Once again, it is the children's written work that will determine for you how much concentration is needed on capitalization rules.



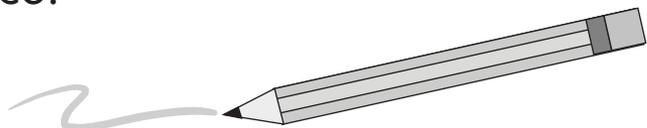
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

my sister went to disneyland last saturday. she  
wanted to see mickey mouse. she had fun. some  
day maybe i can go too.



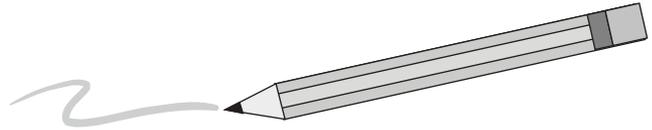
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

on wednesday afternoon i had to go see dr.  
anderson. he is my dentist. he cleans my teeth. he  
has lots of tools. sometimes i'm scared, but he  
doesn't hurt me. he is nice.



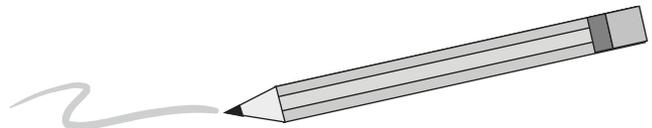
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

my dog rusty is a collie. he is reddish brown. he likes to play ball with me. i got him from uncle arnold last july. rusty is my best friend. we always play outside after school.



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

when winter comes i like to play in the snow. i can build a snowman. I like christmas and valentine's day. they happen in the winter.



# Daily Writing Prompts



**W**hat follows is a collection of writing prompts. Some will lead to stories while others will lead to lists, letters, postcards, and other types of writing. Some will result in works of fiction while others will lead to nonfiction writing. Children need to write daily and with a variety of purposes in mind. Some prompts will result in persuasive writing while others will lead to expository or narrative writing. The main focus of this section of the book is to help you engage children in writing every day.

The writing prompts are arranged in categories to help you organize them. They are not meant to be used in sequence and do not increase in difficulty. Pick and choose subjects as they are needed and will fit into your classroom schedule. Although most prompts lead to individual “stories,” there are some that can result in class collections or class books, if desired.

Whenever possible, the writing prompts are linked to books or poems. Although it is helpful to share the book or poem before putting pencil to paper, it is not a necessity, except in very few instances. The book or poem is meant to lead to a discussion of a topic before the writing takes place. It is possible to initiate the suggested discussion without the use of the book or poem. In a few cases the book or poem is necessary in order to follow a pattern or add text to a story that has something missing.

Two books were used as references for most of the poems you will find listed. Those two books are *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*, with poems selected by Jack Prelutsky, and *Poetry Place Anthology*, published by Scholastic/Instructor Books. The poems that are present on the teacher page are written by the author. They have been shared with children over the years and have been found to be useful in initiating discussions about various subjects.

For your convenience, there is a bibliography at the end of the book that gives citations for each book recommended.





# All About Me

The writing prompts that follow are reflective of personal experiences, feelings, and ideas. All are written from the child's own point of view. Subject matter includes family and friends, favorite books, personal feelings and problems, to name but a few.

Don't forget to help the writing process by putting up Brainstorming Charts when needed (see p. 45). Words that name family members and relatives are often used with these prompts. Often you will find that allowing children to draw a picture to go with their stories augments their writing experience. Sometimes the picture will need to come first and the writing will follow and will describe what has been drawn.

# Quick! Get Me a Bandage!

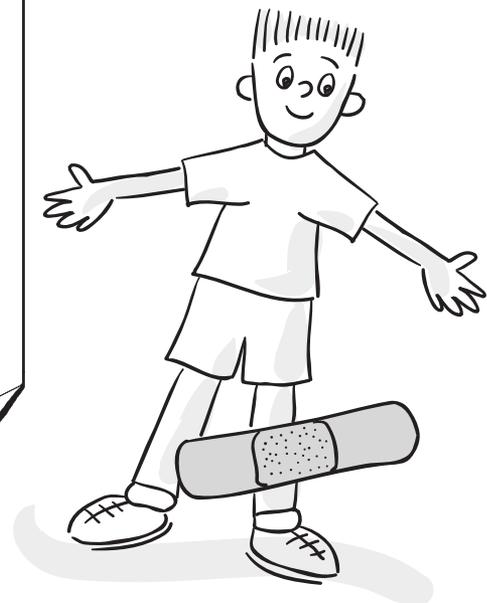


**S**hel Silverstein's "Band-Aid" poem, which can be found in his book *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, names some of the places where kids have placed a bandage to protect a cut or scrape. Have children talk about accidents they have had, such as falling from their bike or being scratched by an animal, and then write about the experience.

Ask children to draw a large picture of themselves showing their full body from head to toe. Then hand each student an adhesive bandage, to be strategically placed on the picture to help tell their story.

Your brainstorming word list might include:

hospital  
doctor  
nurse  
owie  
stitches  
scratch  
scrape  
blood, bled  
accident  
emergency  
injury





# I'm in Big Trouble



**N**ina Payne has written a poem entitled “Bubble Gum.” This poem can be found in *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*. It tells all about getting in trouble because of a wad of sticky gum. The gum sticks to the bubble-blower’s nose, toes, and hair. Lead a discussion of ways in which children have gotten into trouble, not necessarily with a wad of gum. Let their imaginations (and memories) run wild before they write about their own version of trouble.

Look for children’s poetry collections written by Brod Bagert, such as *If Only I Could Fly, Let Me Be . . . the Boss*, and *Chicken Socks*. His poems are written from the child’s point of view, and they allow the child to express emotions and ideas while being humorous. Many of Bagert’s poems fit nicely into “All About Me” prompts.



