

Writers' Workshop Guidelines

Mrs. Marks

Writers' Workshop is designed to enhance our students' writing ability by helping them to edit their own work from rough draft to self-published book. Our job is to aid the children in correcting their mistakes and to instill a yearning for excellence in writing. No writer has ever thought a piece was perfect; every work has room for improvement. All Writers' Workshop materials, as well as the class roster, are located in the Writers' Workshop drawer. The following steps are recommended for each editing session:

1. Select the first student on the list and have them bring a pencil and some lined notebook paper. Initial and date the student's name on the Writers' Workshop list each time you work with him/her. Have the student look through their writing portfolio and select a written piece to publish that would fit the picture book format (i.e. something of interest to others or what they consider their best/favorite story in the portfolio).
2. Allow the child to select a cover for their book from the colored construction paper and card stock. Also have them choose a colored tape for the binding. This is the beginning of visualizing a finished book. Have them think of colors that might go along with the theme of the book or the picture they are planning for the cover.
3. Take the student into a quiet area in the library or outside on the picnic table and have them read their story aloud to you, paying attention to things that might be improved. Errors in sentence, structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation can be noted at this time. You may have them make small tick marks on the original work with a pencil when they come to a problem area. The actual corrections will be made during step #4. Ask whether the story has a beginning, middle and an end. If not, what could be changed to correct this? Are the ideas grouped together in a way that makes sense and will fit together nicely on pages? What picture might go with each page?

4. Have the student recopy their work onto the notebook paper in the form in which they would like it to appear in their book (the “Book Draft”). This will include the **Title Page** information (title, author, illustrator), **Dedication Page**, **Text/Picture Pages** and an **About the Author** page at the end. In the left margin of the book draft, have them write the page number and then the text that will appear on that page. While recopying may seem tedious and they may balk at first, real writers typically go through numerous drafts. Rewrites always yield more improvements than point editing. This method also makes the typing very straightforward and does not destroy the original work with erasing, rewriting and numerous marks. **Note:** For some children a complete rewrite may be physically frustrating. Encourage the child to rewrite, but if they are really struggling, then please intervene and assist. Mrs. Marks will also alert you if the child is likely to have difficulty in this area.
5. Ask the child about the layout. Do they want the text on the top or bottom of the page? Do they want text on both sides of a page or only one side (leaving more room for pictures)? Make notes on layout for the typist.
6. Put this final “Book Draft” in the "Writers Workshop Take Home" folder (included in the Writers Workshop Drawers). Give the folder to Mrs. Marks to give to the typist. The text can be typed and then, cut and pasted; printed in landscape format, printed in half-page format or; use the Writers Workshop Template.

The students get very excited about publishing books, so feed that enthusiasm with praise and encouragement. A child’s lifelong attitude about writing may be sweetened through this experience. Thank you for volunteering for this very important program. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the coordinator, _____

Email address _____ Phone number _____