

Lesson 3: Exploring Our Writing Tools

Supplies Needed:

- An old suitcase (or one found at a craft or hobby store)
- Writing supplies. Some suggestions: pencils, crayons, markers, colored pencils, erasers, rulers, stencils, various kinds of blank books and papers for writing)
- Writing Tools Anchor Chart

Procedure:

- Plan out the supplies that you want to be available for your students during independent writing time. This will definitely include pencils, papers/blank books and erasers, but may also be illustrating tools as well. Think about what will work best for you and your classroom.
- Before the lesson, open the suitcase and arrange the materials inside and around the suitcase in a specific area of your classroom. A table in front of a bulletin board is perfect if you intend to hang anchor charts or other resources for students for writing. Think about using small buckets, drawer dividers and stackable file boxes to help keep things neat and tidy within and around the suitcase.
- Gather students around this area and let them know that the materials for their writing journey will be kept here and that they will need to be treated with great care.
- Ask the students about items they might pack for a trip to the beach or a warm sunny place. After discussing some acceptable answers, ask them what they might need to pack for a trip to go skiing or someplace in the mountains where there might be snow. Talk about the difference in what they would take for various journeys, and then relate that conversation to the materials in the suitcase. They will not need ALL of the tools in the suitcase for every single book. Much the same as packing for trips, some things such as pencils and papers will be a necessity, but other supplies will only be used when needed.

- Discuss your procedures for using the writing tools. This is something you will need to think through before the lesson so that you can let students know your expectations. Use the Writing Tools anchor chart to create a list of the guidelines you wish for your class. Be sure to accept student contributions as well as including what your expectations will be. Some possibilities for the anchor chart:
 - Only two writers at the Writing Tools table at one time.
 - Sharpen pencils/colored pencils before returning them to the suitcase.
 - Be sure caps are on all markers before returning them to the suitcase.
 - Leave the suitcase better than the way you found it. (This will encourage students to “fix” something if they see a problem.)
 - No more than a few trips to the Writing Tools table during each Writer’s Workshop time.
- For this initial experience with writing tools, you may want to call up small groups to gather supplies they will need – including making sure that they have the necessities (papers/blank book, pencil and paper).
- Send students to their independent writing spots to begin independent writing time. Again you may want to conduct some informal conferences as students write so that you can make sure the class is focused and on task.
- Gather students together at the end of independent writing time to discuss how things went with the writing tools today. Discuss things that went well and things that need improvement. Add to the anchor chart if needed.

Notes: _____
