Writing Conference Guide
Making the most of every conference!

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How’s it going?

Start your conference with a quick check. Begin with the question “How’s it going?” to get your students thinking.

Next, have your students read a passage from their writing.

As they read, think about a specific praise and a teaching point.

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Questions you may lead with...

These are beginning questions written to help children begin thinking about their writing.

• What do you need help with today?
  • What is your purpose?
  • Who is your audience?
  • What is your topic?
Writers who are learning often skip important aspects of their story. When a reader looks at it, it is sometimes not clear what the writer is saying. Use these questions to help the writer figure out what is missing.

- Could you say more about your ideas?
- Is there something that doesn’t fit?
  - What do you mean by...?
  - I don’t understand...

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Parts of a Story

Just like when they’re reading, students should be able to answer W questions about their writing.

• Who is this story about?
• What is the main idea?
• When did this happen?
• Where is the story taking place?
• Why did this happen?
Word Choice

Good writers use good words. Students need practice and guidance using words in new ways:

- What is a creative way to say the same thing?
- Replace overused words (big, small, said, etc.)
- Find exciting adjectives

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Voice

Students are using voice when you can hear how they are speaking as you read their writing.

- The voice makes it clear how the child feels
- Sentences are interesting and varied
- Word choice reflects how a child speaks

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Conventions

Conventions are an important aspect of writing. However, be careful not to rely too heavily on conventions during your writing conferences!

- Work on grammar (subject/verb agreement & more!)
- Work on punctuation
- Look at spelling of word wall words
- Strategies for spelling unknown words
- Introduce quotation marks when appropriate

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Conventions

Younger children are not yet ready to use graphic organizers as planners. However, children often need help organizing their thoughts. Here are some ideas:

• Have a child sketch the beginning, middle and end.
• Use post it notes and a few important words to mark what the child has planned for each page.