

# Mini-Lesson Ideas & Sample Lessons

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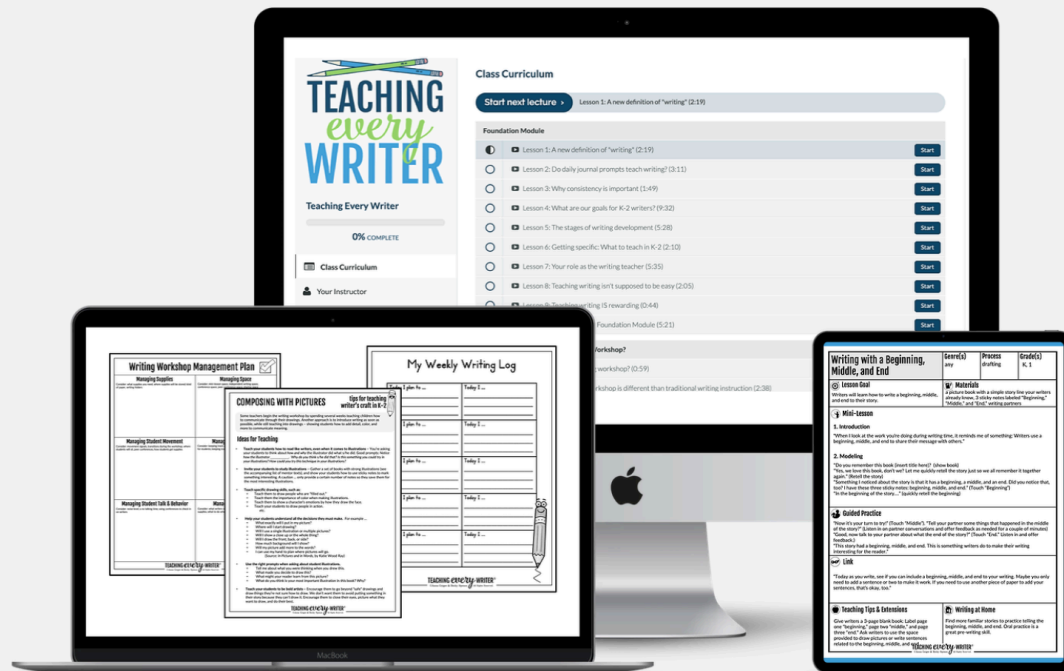
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# Please enjoy this free bonus, adapted from resources within Teaching Every Writer, the online course for teaching writing in K-2.\*

\*Because this freebie is for listeners of the Triple R Teaching Podcast, we've added mini-lesson ideas for grade 3.



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# Check out these resources from the shop!

## WRITING WORKSHOP

GUIDE & PRINTABLES FOR K-8

**How to Teach Kids to Write and love it!**  
a guide to the Writing Workshop Grades K-8  
by Garcia Lopez, M.Ed.

## Phonics Books & Games

PART 3: LONG VOWELS AND MORE

Follow the Path CVCE & CCVCE Words with o-e

Book on a Page u-e

Roll & Read CVCE words with i-e

Look I drew a red car.

mite	wide	bike
quite	while	dime
ice	file	kite
kite	mice	prize
shine	life	line
wife	white	ride

## READER'S THEATER SCRIPTS

10 FAVORITE TALES FOR GRADES 1-3

The City Mouse and the Country Mouse

The Three Little Pigs

The Gingerbread Man

The Tortoise and the Hare

The Ugly Duckling

The Old Man and the Sea

The Boy Who Cried Wolf

The Boy Who Invented the Hot Air Balloon

The Boy Who Invented the Telephone

The Boy Who Invented the Airplane

## NO-PREP MATH & LITERACY GAMES

120 GAMES STUDENTS CAN PLAY ALONE OR IN PAIRS

back, bunk, stuck, hung, crush, bump, jump, drum, plug, sung

What's the Start or Word?

Which One Doesn't Belong?

Find the End Paragraph

Addition Facts

14-7=0	5-7=0	1-7=0	5-7=0	4-7=0	10-7=0
7-7=0					4-7=0
5-7=0	4	7	9	1	0
3-7=0	3	2	5	8	3
3-7=0	5	7	free	1	6
7-7=0	4	6	8	5	1
6-7=0	9	2			
3-7=0	6-7=0				

## HANDWRITING WORKSHEETS

GIANT BUNDLE OF 330 WORKSHEETS

Roll & Race

Ee

Hh

Aa

Ii



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# Procedure Mini-Lessons

- What to expect during each phase of the workshop: mini-lesson, independent writing time, and sharing time (K-3)
- Procedure for moving to the mini-lesson area, finding a place to sit, and retuning to your seat (K-3)
- Knowing what must be true for your writing to be “done” so you can move on to a new piece (K-3)
- What it means to be a good listener (K-3)
- What on task before looks like/doesn't look like (K-3)
- Appropriate/inappropriate noise level (K-3)
- How to get help when the teacher is busy (K-3)
- Where to get materials and put them back when you are finished (K-3)

# Craft Mini-Lessons

## Finding Ideas

- When you think of an idea for writing, write or draw it on your “My Ideas for Writing” page. (K-3)
- Choose a topic you know and care about. (K-3)
- Write about a time you felt a particular emotion. (K-3)
- Draw or write a list of places you could write about. (K-3)
- Write about a memory. (K-3)
- Make a heart map to show things that are important to you. (K-3)

## Getting Started with your Drawing or Writing

- Begin each day by re-reading what you wrote or draw the day before. (K-3)
- If you're unsure of how to form a letter, finger-write it in the air before writing it on paper. (K)
- Use magic lines to write a sentence: say your sentence out loud and draw a line for each word. Fill in the blanks. (K-1)
- Add a single word or group of words alongside a picture. (K-1)
- Write a sentence to go with your picture. (K-1)
- Touch each word as you read back your writing. (K-1)
- Reread before you continue to make sure your writing makes sense. (K-3)

## Using a writer's notebook

- Why and how we use a writer's notebook (3)
- Record writing ideas in the notebook. (3)
- Write observations in the notebook. (3)
- Respond to literature in different ways: tell a similar story, write what it reminds you of, write about how you feel after reading the story, etc. (3)
- Understand the difference between a notebook entry and a diary. You don't need to write everything that happened, as you might in a diary. Choose which parts to write about and which to leave out. (3)
- Record discoveries about author's craft that you would like to try. (3)
- Write lists in your notebook. (3)

## Beginning/Lead

- A good lead makes the reader want to keep reading. (K-3)
- Notice different kinds of leads in literature together such as asking a question, saying something startling, giving an astonishing fact, action, etc. Experiment with different kinds of leads in your writing. (K-3)
- Make an anchor chart of interesting types of leads. (K-3)
- Avoid the beginning that gives never-ending small talk. (2-3)
- Begin your story as close to the action as possible. (1-3)

## Organization

- As a pre-writing activity, write details for your story on separate cards. Then put them in order before starting to write your draft. (1-3)
- Brainstorm before you begin writing by creating a web. (1-3)
- Brainstorm and group similar thoughts together to form paragraphs. (2-3)
- Use a graphic organizer to plan your writing. (2-3)

## Organization

- A story in a booklet is about one thing. (K)
- Every story has a "big idea." Your story needs to be about that and not a lot of other little things. (K-1)
- Make sure your pictures and words go together. (K-2)
- Cross off parts where you go off topic. (K-3)
- Think about how to pace your story. Slow down events to give the reader a deeper look at what's happening, and speed through parts that aren't as important. (3)

## Details

- Add details to a drawing to tell more. (K-2)
- Use color to add detail to a drawing. (K-1)
- Draw people in action instead of standing straight, looking forward. (K-1)
- Add details to your picture to tell more about the setting. (K-2)
- 5-finger story planner: Trace your hand. Write the topic on the palm and one detail on each finger, with your feelings on the thumb. (1-3)
- Use description to highlight and draw the reader's attention to important characters, settings, or objects. Don't waste time describing things that aren't important to the story's outcome. (2-3)
- Cut up and expand – when a story is a collection of organized, blah sentences, cut the sentences apart. Glue each to the top of a blank piece of paper, and expand each one into its own paragraph. (2-3)

## Voice

- Notice what stands out about the artwork of several children's book illustrators. When you can identify the illustrator without looking at the name on the cover, you recognize the illustrator's artistic voice. *You* have a writer's voice – something that makes your writing sound like you. (K-3)
- You can emphasize voice by changing the font – make it large, small, bold, artistic, etc. (K-3)
- Writing is talking on paper. Try speaking your words aloud before you write them on paper. (K-2)
- After reading a mentor text, make a class chart. On the left, write the sentences that stand out. On the right, explain why the writing stands out. This will show you how the writer uses voice. (1-3)
- Try writing a piece in second person so you are talking to the reader. (1-8)
- Add voice to writing by including feelings. (1-3)

## Ending

- A good ending makes the piece feel finished. (K-3)
- Write a surprise ending – after using a predictable pattern throughout the whole book, change it on the last page for a surprise ending. (K-2)
- Try ending a story with a good feeling. (K-3)
- Write a really important piece of information as the ending. (K-3)
- Write a wrap-around ending: take a few key words from the beginning to create an ending that wraps around the writing. (2-3)
- Write an ending that includes a memory, feeling, hope or wish, or a decision. (2-3)



## Revising

- We cross out and do not erase when making revisions so we can keep track of what we've done. (K-3)
- We're not done with our writing after we've first written it. We can make it sound better by revising it. (K-3)
- Ask yourself: How can I change or add to my drawing or writing so my readers will understand my story? (K-1)
- Use a caret to insider words as you revise. (1-3)
- Cut out a sentence that needs more detail. Glue it to a blank page and add more sentences. (1-2)
- Cut and paste revision: To add more to a story, cut it apart. Glue a section to a blank piece of paper and add on. (3)
- As you work, reread and make changes as you see you need them. (1-3)
- After you're done writing your piece, read it over. Where are you getting bogged down or drifting off topic? Cut those parts out. (2-3)

## Editing

- When you're ready to publish, get help with spelling as needed. (K-3)
- Use the CUPS acronym to help you edit: check for capital letters, word usage, punctuation and spelling. (1-3)
- How to have a peer editing conference (2-3)
- Edit your writing using an age-appropriate editing checklist. (1-3)

## Publishing

- How to decide what you'd like to publish (K-3)
- "About the author" page (1-3)
- Know your audience. (K-3)
- Use your best handwriting. (K-3)
- Practice reading your piece so you can read it aloud with fluency. (K-3)

# Conventions Mini-Lessons

## Size, spacing and direction

- Write from left to right and start again at the left side on a new line. (K-1)
- Make sure words are not too large. (K-1)
- Make sure words are not running into each other. (K-1)
- Use small (spaghetti) spaces between letters and larger spaces (meatball) between words. (K-1)

## Punctuation

- Use a period at the end of a telling sentence. (K-2)
- Use a question mark at the end of a question. (K-2)
- Use an exclamation mark to show excitement. (K-2)
- Add quotation marks: Highlight the spoken words with a highlighter and add quotation marks at the beginning and end. (2-3)
- Learn the rules for punctuating dialogue. (3)
- Use commas in dates. (1-2)
- Use commas in a series. (1-3)
- Use commas in the greeting and close of a letter. (1-3)
- Don't overuse quotation marks. (3)
- Use apostrophes in possessive nouns. (2-3)

## Capitalization

- Use lowercase letters for words. (K)
- Capitalize the first word of a sentence. (K-3)
- Capitalize proper nouns. (1-3)








## Spelling








- Add "s" to make something more than one. (K)
- If you don't know the sound a letter makes, refer to an alphabet chart with pictures. (K)
- Use an alphabet chart to help you write letters or words. (K-1)
- Use a picture dictionary to help you spell words. (K-3)
- Write all the sounds you hear. (K-1)
- Spell simple words phonetically. (K-1)

- Streeeeetch the word and write the sounds you hear. (K-2)
- As you write a draft, spell words the best you can and move on. (K-8)
- It's better to write an interesting word that you can't spell than a boring word that's easy to spell. You can fix the spelling when you edit. (K-3)
- Use an "I can spell it" chart to attempt a spelling. (K-3)
- If you aren't sure of a spelling as you write, put a little "sp" in a circle so you remember to come back to the word and check it later. (2-3)
- Know when to double the final consonant before adding a suffix. (3)
- Keep your own personal word wall of common words in the back of your writer's notebook. Keep a personal list of tricky words in your writer's notebook and refer to it when you can't remember how to spell one of them. (3)
- Learn how to use a dictionary to find the correct spelling of a word. (2-3)

## **Grammar / Sentence structure and fluency**

- Make sure the subject and verb agree. (1-3)
- Complete sentences need both a subject/predicate. When writing conversationally or composing dialogue, it may not be necessary to have both parts. (1-3)
- Use "linking words" (conjunctions – *and, or, but, because*) to join short, choppy sentences. (2-3)
- Read your writing aloud and listen to how the sentences flow. If they sound choppy or awkward, change something. (2-3)
- Practice adding information to a simple sentence. (1-3)
- Vary sentence length. (2-3)

<h1>Start with Quiet Writing Time</h1>	<b>Genre(s)</b> any	<b>Process</b> any	<b>Grade(s)</b> K, 1, 2
 <b>Lesson Goal</b> Writers will learn to find their writing spot and write (or draw) quietly for the first few minutes to create a routine for writing and build writing stamina.	 <b>Materials</b> quiet classical music, a writing spot for each writer, writing folders or a piece of drawing paper, pencil for each writer		
 <b>Mini-Lesson</b>  <b>1. Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Start by noticing specific behaviors your writers are doing well. Share examples.</li> <li>-“Sometimes writers have a ritual or a routine that gets them in the ‘writing mood.’ Writers might make a cup of coffee or always use a certain notebook to jot down ideas. These rituals or routines help their brain to focus on writing.”</li> <li>-“Today, I’m going to introduce a routine to you called ‘Quiet Writing Time.’ Here’s how it will work:”</li> </ul> <b>2. Modeling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-“When we’re finished with our writing lesson each day, I will play this music.” (Play the quiet music.)</li> <li>-“This will tell your brain it’s time to find your spot. For <u>ten</u> minutes, we’ll work WITHOUT talking. We won’t even whisper. Everyone will stay in their spot and work.” (We recommend that you work up to ten minutes. For example, at the beginning of the year, writers may only be able to do this for two to three minutes. Use this time to build writing stamina.)</li> <li>-“You might write. You might draw. But for a few minutes, even I will stay in my spot and work quietly.”</li> <li>-“Watch what I do.” Model finding a spot and working quietly for 2-3 minutes as an example.</li> </ul>			
 <b>Guided Practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-“Let’s try quiet writing time together.”</li> <li>-Give everyone their writing folder OR a piece of drawing paper. Make sure all writers have a sharpened pencil.</li> <li>-Play the quiet music and practice for a few minutes. Give feedback as needed.</li> </ul>			
 <b>Link</b> “From now on, we’re going to start our writing time with quiet writing time. The quiet music will play, and we’ll all work quietly until the music stops.”			
  <b>Teaching Tips, Extensions, &amp; Writing at Home</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ten minutes of quiet writing time is your goal. It may not happen at first.</li> <li>-Jennifer Jacobson, the author of <i>No More “I’m Done!”</i> suggests turning the music off for the rest of the writing time to signal to your writers that they can now quietly talk, move around the room, and work on their writing.</li> <li>-Some writers may prefer quiet writing time without music. Be flexible in how you implement this.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>TEACHING every WRITER®</b>  <small>©Anna Geiger &amp; Becky Spence. All Rights Reserved.</small> </p>			

<h1>Jot Ideas, Not Whole Sentences Before You Draft</h1>	<b>Genre(s)</b> any	<b>Process</b> pre-writing	<b>Grade(s)</b> K, 1, 2
 <b>Lesson Goal</b> Writers will learn how to just use words and phrases to jot their ideas on a planner to save time in the pre-writing phase.	 <b>Materials</b> chart paper with a simple graphic organizer on it, like a Venn Diagram		
 <b>Mini-Lesson</b>  <b>1. Introduction</b> -Start by noticing specific skills and behaviors your writers are doing well. Share examples. -“It is important to plan out what you want to say before you start to write. A plan gives you a roadmap to follow in your writing. This gives you focus and helps your reader understand your message. Sometimes you might use a graphic organizer or planner to organize your writing, like this one.” (Point to chart.)  <b>2. Modeling</b> -“But here’s something BIG I don’t want you to miss: You DO NOT need to write complete sentences on your planner. It’s actually better if you don’t. Can you believe I’m saying that?” -“You just want to get your main ideas down on paper. Writing complete sentences takes a lot of time and detailed thought. Your planner is for your bigger ideas, not your exact details. You’ll include all the details in your actual draft or writing.” -“Let’s try it together with this Venn Diagram I’ve drawn on my chart paper.”			
 <b>Guided Practice</b> -“Let’s talk about the similarities and differences between a slide and a swing.” (or pick your own topics) -As your writers share the similarities and differences, jot them down as phrases or words. -Model how. -For example, “Jenny just told us, ‘Both swings and slides are found on playgrounds.’ I don’t need to write the entire sentence. I’ll just write ‘playgrounds’ in the middle of my diagram.”			
 <b>Link</b> “Today when you’re planning out what you want to say on your organizer (or perhaps when you’re making a list), remember to write your big ideas in words and phrases, not entire sentences.”			
  <b>Teaching Tips, Extensions, &amp; Writing at Home</b> -Younger learners who mainly draw need to understand they should <i>sketch</i> their pictures on an organizer, NOT draw extremely detailed pictures. -Feel free to use a different kind of organizer or just jot a list for this lesson. -Continue to model jotting words and phrases on any graphic organizer you model or use. -Some learners may struggle with finding the important idea in their sentence. If this is a struggle, take time to talk about finding the main verb or main noun in the sentence.			

# Room for Just Spaceman, *Not* His Rocket Ship

Genre(s)

any

Process

any

Grade(s)

K, 1

## Lesson Goal

Writers will learn how to include appropriate space between letters and words so they can communicate their message in a clear way to the reader.

## Materials

a sentence written with too much space in between words and a sentence written with appropriate space, writers' writing folders

## Mini-Lesson

### 1. Introduction

- “You are getting the hang of putting space in between your words when you write with Spaceman.”
- “I’ve noticed sometimes, though, that the amount of space you put in between your words is big enough for Spaceman and his rocket ship to blast through. You only want Spaceman to fit in there.”

### 2. Modeling

- “Look at this sentence.” (Show a sentence written with way too much space in between the words.)
- “Do you see how there’s WAY too much space in between some of my words? Spaceman’s rocket ship could blast right between this word and that word.” (Read the words.)
- “That’s too much space. And when I put too much space in between my words, it makes it harder for my reader to read what I’ve written.”
- “It also can create another problem: I can run out of room to write on my page. And we don’t want that!”
- Show a sentence with the appropriate amount of space in between words and show how only Spaceman can fit in.

## Guided Practice

“Now it’s your turn to try! Pull out a piece of writing from your writing folder. Check over your work to see if you have included room just enough for Spaceman or if his rocket ship can fit in between your words, too. Can you share examples with us? We can all learn from each other!”

## Link








“Today as you write your words, remind yourself to put room for just Spaceman in between your words, NOT his rocket ship!”

## Teaching Tips & Extensions

- Some writers may put too much space in between the letters of their words.
- You can model how to just include room for spaceman’s oxygen tank cord in between their letters 😊.

## Writing at Home

Very young writers may only use one or two letters to represent a word. This is completely normal and expected. Still encourage them to put the appropriate amount of space in between their “words.”

<h1>A Good Lead makes the Reader Want to Keep Reading</h1>	<b>Genre(s)</b> any	<b>Process</b> drafting, revising	<b>Grade(s)</b> 1, 2
 <b>Lesson Goal</b> Writers will learn how to write a good lead that will interest the reader.	 <b>Materials</b> a magnet, a paper clip, a favorite book with a strong lead like <i>Charlotte's Web</i> or <i>The Hungry Caterpillar</i>		
 <b>Mini-Lesson</b> <b>1. Introduction</b> -"You've been working so hard on your writing!" (Give specific examples.) -"Look at what happens when this magnet passes near this paper clip. The paper clip is attracted to the magnet. It draws closer and closer until it's stuck to the magnet." -"Did you know that writers can be like magnets, and readers can be like paper clips?" -"When a writer begins his/her book or story a certain way, I attracts you. It draws you closer and you want to read more. You want to find out what's going to happen." <b>2. Modeling</b> "Listen to this." (Read the first line of <i>Charlotte's Web</i> .) -"Immediately, we think, 'Where is he going with an ax? I want to read more to find out.'" -"Good writers start their writing with a good lead or beginning. This attracts the reader to keep on reading more or to find answers to questions they may have." -"Listen to one more." (Read the first line of <i>The Hungry Caterpillar</i> .) -"Immediately, we start asking questions. We might think, 'What kind of egg?' or 'What will happen when the sun comes up?' We want to keep reading to find out more."			
 <b>Guided Practice</b> -"I want to hear what you think." -Read another opening line from one of your favorite books. -Ask, "Does it make you want to keep reading? Why or why not?"			
 <b>Link</b> "Today as you write or work on your lead (or beginning), see if you can think like a magnet. What can you write that will attract your readers to keep reading more?"			
  <b>Teaching Tips, Extensions, &amp; Writing at Home</b> -Keep a chart, adding interesting leads from the books that you read together. -Encourage your writers to use the ideas on the chart as inspiration to write their own good leads. -Refer to the free chart on hooking a reader @ <a href="https://thisreadingmama.com/make-it-interesting-for-the-reader-writing-strategy/">https://thisreadingmama.com/make-it-interesting-for-the-reader-writing-strategy/</a>			