In a balanced approach to literacy instruction, teachers integrate instruction with authentic reading and writing and experiences so that students learn how to use literacy strategies and skills and have opportunities to apply what they are learning. The 10 components of a balanced approach are:

- Reading
- Phonics and Other Skills
- Strategies
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Literature
- Content-Area Study
- Oral Language
- Writing
- Spelling

In this photo essay, you’ll see how Mrs. Peterson uses a balanced approach to literacy instruction in her sixth grade classroom. She is teaching a literature focus unit on *Bunnicula: A Rabbit-Tale of Mystery* (Howe & Howe, 1979), a hilarious novel about modern family life, written from the viewpoint of the family’s dog. *Bunnicula*, an invented word made by combining *bunny* and *Dracula*, is the name given to the black-and-white bunny that the family finds at a vampire movie. The pets believe that the rabbit is a vampire and try to warn the family.

Mrs. Peterson shares a box of objects related to the novel—white vegetables, a bunny, and a children’s version of *Dracula* as she introduces *Bunnicula: A Rabbit-Tale of Mystery.*
The sixth graders talk about the novel in a grand conversation. They analyze events in the story, make predictions about what will happen next, clarify misconceptions, and make connections.

Mrs. Peterson is sharing information about the author in this minilesson. She has collected photos and information about his life to share with the students.

This boy is writing an entry in his reading log. Sometimes he writes in response to a question Mrs. Peterson has asked; sometimes he writes a summary; and sometimes he reflects on his use of strategies while reading.
These girls share the “Count Dracula’s Vampire Facts” poster with classmates. One girl reads each fact aloud and classmates decide whether the fact is true or false. Then the other girl lifts the red tab to check the answer.

Mrs. Peterson teaches a minilesson on invented words such as Bunnicula, and then students practice matching the invented words with the words that were combined to form them at the word work center.

This student practices her presentation skills as she shares vampire jokes and riddles with classmates.
Chapter 1

Becoming an Effective Teacher of Reading

Chapter Questions

• Which theories guide the effective teaching of reading and writing?
• What is a balanced approach to literacy?
• How do effective teachers organize their classrooms?
• Which four instructional approaches do effective teachers use?
• How do effective teachers link instruction and assessment?

Fourth Graders Participate in a Yearlong Author Study

There's a busy hum in Miss Paniccia's fourth-grade classroom. The students are involved in a 40-minute writing workshop; this is the time when students develop and refine pieces of writing on topics they've chosen themselves. They work with classmates to revise and edit their rough drafts and then use AlphaSmart® keyboards for word processing. Next, they transfer their compositions to a classroom computer and print out copies of their drafts for a final editing conference with Miss Paniccia. Afterward, they print out the finished copies.

Today, the fourth graders are putting the finishing touches on the collections of stories they've worked on for 7 months. Each student has written at least seven stories and published them by pasting them into bound books with blank pages. The spring back-to-school night is 2 days away, and these students are eager for the parents to read their newly published books.

The class has been involved in an ambitious yearlong project on Chris Van Allsburg, the popular author and illustrator of award-winning fantasy picture books, including Jumanji (1981) and The Polar Express (1985). A list of his books is shown in the box on page 5. The students have read some of these stories in their basal readers and some
during literature circles, and Miss Paniccia has read others aloud. The stories they've been writing accompany the illustrations and titles in *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* (Van Allsburg, 1984).

### Books by Chris Van Allsburg

- **The garden of Abdul Gasazi.** (1979). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. A wicked magician turns dogs into ducks, or does he?
- **Ben's dream.** (1982). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. In a dream, Ben and his friend visit the world's major monuments, including the Eiffel Tower and the Great Wall of China.
- **The Z was zapped: A play in 26 acts.** (1987). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. An eerie alphabet book showing a transformation of each letter (e.g., the N was nailed).
- **Two bad ants.** (1988). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Two greedy, nonconformist ants confront many dangers as they explore a kitchen.
- **The wretched stone.** (1991). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. A mysterious stone transforms a ship's crew into apes, but finally, after a storm, the men return to normal.
- **Zathura.** (2002). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. This sequel to *Jumanji* picks up where the first story left off: The Budwig brothers take on the fantasy board game, but this time, the game is set in space on the planet of Zathura.
The Chris Van Allsburg unit began in September when Miss Paniccia read aloud *Jumanji* (Van Allsburg, 1981), the story of two children who play a jungle adventure board game that comes to life. She also read aloud the sequel *Zathura* (2002) about a space adventure board game, and students watched the movie version. They also made board games and wrote directions for playing them. She used the story to emphasize the importance of listening to her directions in the classroom, following parents’ directions at home, and reading the directions on state achievement tests.

Miss Paniccia regularly teaches minilessons on writing strategies and skills that students then apply in their own writing. She began with a series of lessons on revising and editing that students use in writing workshop. Next, she taught a series of lessons about the elements of story structure: plot, characters, setting, point of view, and theme. Posters about each story element hang in the classroom, testimony to the learning taking place in this classroom. Students apply what they have learned about story structure as they create their own stories because they develop story cards as a prewriting activity. They develop story ideas by sketching out the characters, plot, and setting and share their ideas with a classmate to further expand their thinking before they begin to write. In addition to the lessons about story structure, Miss Paniccia has taught lessons about reports and other writing genres after they are introduced in the basal reading program.

The students use a process approach to writing that involves all five stages of the writing process. The box on page 7 shows the activities that Miss Paniccia’s students participate in at each stage of the process. During the second semester of third grade, students at this school take an afterschool touch-typing course, so these fourth graders know the fundamentals of finger placement on the keyboard and are developing typing fluency as they use the AlphaSmart® word processing machines.

Month after month, the students have been drafting, revising, rewriting, proofreading, word processing, and printing out final copies of their stories. Seth’s story for the illustration entitled “Mr. Linden’s Library” is shown in the box on page 8. The illustration depicts a girl sleeping in bed with an open book beside her; vines are growing out of the book and are spreading across the girl’s bed. As you read Seth’s story, you will see how his story idea developed from the illustration and how he has applied what he has learned about story structure.

Today during writing workshop, Miss Paniccia is meeting with Alfonso, Martha, and Yimleej to proofread their stories and correct errors. Other students are word processing their last stories or are printing out their final copies and gluing them in their books. Miguel and Lindsey have finished their books, so they’re helping their classmates word process, transfer to the computer, and print out their stories. Miss Paniccia is optimistic that everyone will be done by lunchtime tomorrow. She plans to start author’s chair during writing workshop tomorrow: Students will take turns reading their favorite stories aloud to their classmates. Author’s chair is a popular classroom activity; most students will be eager to share their stories, and their classmates will enjoy listening to them read aloud because the students have learned how to read with expression and hold their classmates’ interest.

Last week, the students created this introductory page for their story collections:

**Thirty years ago a man named Harris Burdick came by Peter Wenders’s publishing office. Mr. Burdick claimed that he had written 15 stories and illustrated them. All he brought with him on that day were the illustrations with titles. The next day Harris Burdick was going to bring the stories to Mr. Wenders, but he never returned. In fact, Harris Burdick was never seen again.**

**Chris Van Allsburg met with Mr. Wenders and that is where he came across the illustrations. Mr. Wenders handed Mr. Van Allsburg a dust-covered box full of drawings, and Chris Van Allsburg was inspired to reproduce them for children across the nation.**
### Students’ Writing Process Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prewriting</strong></td>
<td>Story Cards</td>
<td>Students create story cards to develop their ideas for the story. A story card is a sheet of paper divided into six sections: idea, character, setting, problem, climax, and solution.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Peer Conference</td>
<td>Students meet with a classmate for a “one-on-one” where they share their story cards, talking out their ideas and answering their classmate’s questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Drafting</strong></td>
<td>Drafting</td>
<td>Students write their rough drafts in pencil, working from their story cards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revising</strong></td>
<td>Peer Conference</td>
<td>Students meet with two classmates to share their rough drafts, getting more feedback about their stories. Then they make revisions based on the feedback they received.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conference With Miss P.</td>
<td>They recopy their drafts in pen and have Miss Paniccia read and respond to their stories. Students make more revisions based on their teacher’s feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Editing</strong></td>
<td>Proofreading</td>
<td>Students proofread their drafts and correct the errors they notice. Then they have two classmates proofread their drafts to identify and correct remaining spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Word Processing</td>
<td>Students word process their stories using word processing machines. After correcting the errors they notice, they transfer their stories to the classroom computer, put them into their own files, and print out a copy in a legible font.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conference With Miss P.</td>
<td>Students meet with Miss Paniccia to proofread and fix the remaining errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publishing</strong></td>
<td>Final Copy</td>
<td>Students print out a final copy and cut the papers to fit into their bound, blank book. They glue the papers into the book and add illustrations.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Right here in room 30, we have worked hard all year creating stories for the illustrations. Even though we have completed our stories, the mystery of Harris Burdick still remains.

It is a class collaboration: Miss Paniccia and the students developed it together, and copies were made for each student. By writing the introduction together, the teacher was able to review writing skills and strategies and ensure that all students had a useful introduction for their books.
Seth’s Story About “Mr. Linden’s Library”

“I would like to check out this book,” Sally Olger said. The book that she wanted to check out was called Adventures in the Wild. She had skipped as she had gone up to the counter. Sally loved to go to this library. It was owned by Mr. Linden, so everybody just called it Mr. Linden’s library.

The expression on the man at the counter’s face changed when he saw the book that Sally was holding. The man warned Sally that if she left the book out on one page for over an hour, something dangerous would come out of the book.

Sally didn’t really hear or care about what the man said. She checked out the book and started reading it in bed that night. The book was really interesting. It had tons of short stories in it. At 12:00 midnight, Sally turned the page to a story called “Lost in the Jungle,” yawned, and fell asleep. At 1:00 A.M. vines started to grow out of the book. He had warned her about the book. Now it was too late. Soon Sally’s whole room was covered in vines. By 2:00, they were making their way up the stairs.

BBBRRRRIIIINNNNNNGGGGGG! went Sally’s alarm clock.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA” screamed Sally. Now the whole house was covered in vines. Sally slowly made her way to her parents’ bedroom through the vines and woke them up. They screamed too. As quickly as possible (which wasn’t very fast) the Oliers got out of their house, got in their car and drove to the library. They told the man at the desk what had happened. He said that the only way to get rid of the vines was to cut their roots (they would be sticking right out of the book) and then haul all of the vines off to the dump. Luckily, the town dump wasn’t very far away from the Oliers’ house.

By the time Mr. Olger had found and cut the roots away from the book, Sally and Mrs. Olger had rounded up the whole neighborhood to help take the vines to the dump. By 5:00 P.M. in the afternoon they had cleared away all of the vines. Sally had learned her lesson to listen when someone warns you about something.

After beginning the author study in September, Miss Paniccia has continued to read stories each month. In October, she and her students read The Stranger (Van Allsburg, 1986), a story included in their basal readers. In the story, the Baileys take in an injured stranger, a man who doesn’t speak or seem to know who he is, but he appears to be attuned with the seasons and has an amazing connection with wild animals. The stranger is Jack Frost, although that statement is never made explicitly in the story. They take several days to read the story. On the first day, the teacher introduced the key vocabulary words, including autumn, etched, mercury, peculiar, and hypnotized, and the class previewed the story, examining the illustrations and making predictions. Miss Paniccia used a shared reading procedure: The students listened to the story read aloud on the professional CD that accompanies the textbook and followed along in their textbooks. Some inferred that the stranger is Jack Frost, but others didn’t. That’s when she introduced making inferences, which she calls “reading between the lines.”

They read the story a second time, searching for clues that led their classmates to guess that the stranger is Jack Frost, and afterward made a cluster, a spider web–like
diagram, with the clues. They wrote the words *The Stranger* in the center circle, drew out rays from this circle, and wrote clues at the end of each ray. The clues included that he wears odd clothing, is confused by buttons, and works hard, but doesn’t get tired. Afterward, they completed page 156 in the Practice Book that accompanies the textbook as well as other pages that emphasize comprehension.

Then Miss Paniccia asked students to closely examine the illustrations in the story. They noticed how the perspective in the illustrations varies to draw readers into the scenes and create the mood. The students read the story a third time with partners, talking about how Chris Van Allsburg used viewpoint in the illustrations.

In November, students read other books by Chris Van Allsburg in literature circles. Miss Paniccia presented book talks about these four books: *Two Bad Ants* (Van Allsburg, 1988), *Just a Dream* (Van Allsburg, 1990), *The Sweetest Fig* (Van Allsburg, 1993), and *The Wreck of the Zephyr* (Van Allsburg, 1983). Then students formed small groups to read one of the books. They assumed roles and took on responsibilities in the small groups as they read and talked about the book. Then students read another of the four books during a second literature circle in January.

Miss Paniccia read aloud the award-winning holiday story *The Polar Express* (Van Allsburg, 1985) in December. In the story, being able to hear Santa’s bells jiggle represents belief in the magic of Christmas, so Miss Paniccia gave each student a small bell to jiggle each time it was mentioned in the story. The students discussed the story in a grand conversation; much of their conversation focused on the theme and how the author states it explicitly at the end of the story. “What an awesome story!” Hunter concluded, and his classmates agreed. They also talked about their own holiday traditions and wrote about them during writing workshop.

They continued to read other books by Chris Van Allsburg: In February, Miss Paniccia read *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi* (Van Allsburg, 1979), and in March, she read *The Wretched Stone* (Van Allsburg, 1991). These books are difficult for students to comprehend because they have to make inferences: In *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi*, readers have to decide whether the magician changes the dog into a duck, and in *The Wretched Stone*, they need to understand that the stone represents television or video games. Miss Paniccia taught a series of minilessons on inferencing, and she modeled how to make inferences as she reread the stories, showing the fourth graders how to use their background knowledge, the clues in the story, and self-questions to read between the lines. Then students reread the stories with partners, talked about clues in the stories, and made inferences as their teacher had.

In March, Miss Paniccia also taught a series of minilessons on the fantasy genre. They developed a chart with these characteristics of fantasies that they posted in the classroom:

- Characters have unusual traits.
- The setting is not realistic.
- Some events could not really happen.
- Magic is involved.

Then the students divided into small groups to reread the Chris Van Allsburg books and examine them for these characteristics. They developed a data chart with the titles of the books written across the top of the grid and the characteristics of fantasies written down the left side. Then they completed the chart by indicating how each characteristic is represented in each book.

This month, students are reading Chris Van Allsburg’s books independently. Some students are reading those they haven’t yet read, and others are rereading their favorite ones. As they read, they search for the white dog that Van Allsburg includes in each
book. In some books, such as *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi*, the dog is alive, but in others, he’s a puppet, a hood ornament, or a picture. In several books, only a small part of him shows; in *The Wretched Stone*, for example, you see only his tail on one page. In addition, they continue to notice the fantasy elements of the stories, they use inferencing when needed, and they notice Van Allsburg’s use of perspective in his illustrations.

This author study has been successful because Miss Paniccia’s literacy program is balanced with a combination of direct instruction, small-group and whole-class literacy activities, and independent reading and writing opportunities. Her schedule is shown in the box below. By combining several instructional approaches, Miss Paniccia juggles the district’s adopted basal reading program with other activities that enrich and extend her students’ literacy experiences.

### Miss Paniccia's Literacy Program Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:50–9:30</td>
<td><strong>Writing Workshop/Literature Circles</strong></td>
<td>Students alternate writing workshop and literature circles. Currently, they doing writing workshop; during literature circles, they read and discuss chapter books in three ability-based groups while Miss Paniccia circulates, meeting with each group each day. They also write in reading logs, summarizing their reading, making connections, and predicting what will happen next. Students read several Van Allsburg stories in literature circles, and during the last round of literature circles, the groups read <em>Dogs Don’t Tell Jokes</em> (Sachar, 1991), <em>Fudge-a-Mania</em> (Blume, 1990), and <em>My Side of the Mountain</em> (George, 1988).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30–10:00</td>
<td><strong>Centers</strong></td>
<td>Students work in small groups, moving each week through the spelling center, the listening center, the grammar center, and the SRA Reading Laboratory Kit center. In the SRA kit, the students practice comprehension and study skills. Miss Paniccia also administers the spelling pretest on Monday and final test on Friday during this period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00–10:50</td>
<td><strong>Basal Reading Textbooks</strong></td>
<td>Students read stories and informational articles in the textbook together as a class, and Miss Paniccia teaches the accompanying vocabulary, decoding and comprehension strategies, and grammar skills. They complete some workbook pages during this period and others at the spelling and grammar centers.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The children of the 21st century will face many challenges that will require them to use reading and writing in different forms. As we begin the new millennium, teachers are learning research-based approaches to teach reading and writing that will prepare their students for the future. Teachers make a significant difference in children’s lives, and this book is designed to help you become an effective reading teacher. Researchers have examined many teaching practices and have drawn some important conclusions about the most effective ones: We must teach students the processes of reading and writing, as well as how to use reading and writing as learning tools. Bill Teale (1995) challenges us to teach students to think with and through reading and writing, to use reading and writing to get a wide variety of things done in their lives, and to use reading and writing for pleasure and insight.

Let’s start with some definitions. Literacy used to mean knowing how to read but the term has broadened to encompass both reading and writing. Now literacy means the competence “to carry out the complex tasks using reading and writing related to the world of work and to life outside the school” (International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English, 1989, p. 86). Educators are also identifying other literacies that they believe will be needed in the 21st century (Harris & Hodges, 1995). Our reliance on radio and television for conveying ideas has awakened us to the importance of “oracy,” the ability to express and understand spoken language. Visual literacy, the ability to create meaning from illustrations, is also receiving a great deal of attention.

The term literacy is being used in other ways as well. For example, teachers are introducing even very young children to computers and developing their “computer literacy.” Similarly, math and science educators speak of mathematical and scientific literacies. Hirsch (1987) called for another type of literacy, “cultural literacy,” as a way to introduce children “to the major ideas and ideals from past cultures that have defined and shaped today’s society” (p. 10). Literacy, however, is not a prescription of certain books to read or concepts to define. Rather, according to Rafferty (1999), it is a tool, a way to learn about the world and a means to participate more fully in the technological society of the 21st century.

Reading and writing are both processes of constructing meaning. Sometimes children describe reading as “saying all the words right,” or writing as “making all your letters neatly,” but when they do they are focusing only on the surface features of reading and writing. In actuality, readers create meaning for the words in the book based on their own knowledge and experiences. Similarly, writers organize ideas using their knowledge of spelling and grammar to transcribe their thoughts onto paper or computer screens. Phonics, decoding, and reading aloud are all part of reading, but the essence of reading is the creation of meaning. By the same token, spelling, handwriting, and using capital letters correctly are parts of writing, but without ideas to communicate, neat handwriting isn’t very important.

The International Reading Association’s position statement Honoring Children’s Rights to Excellent Reading Instruction (2000) emphasizes that all children deserve excellent literacy instruction and support so that they become competent readers and writers. In that light, this chapter introduces eight principles of an effective reading program; each principle is stated in terms of what an effective teacher does.

**Principle 1: Effective Teachers Understand How Children Learn**

Understanding how children learn, and particularly how they learn to read and write, influences the instructional approaches that effective teachers use. Until the 1960s,
behaviorism, a teacher-centered theory, was the dominant view of learning; since then, student-centered theories, including constructivism, have become more influential, and literacy instruction has changed to reflect these theories. In the last few years, however, behaviorism has begun a resurgence as evidenced by the federal No Child Left Behind legislation, the renewed popularity of basal reading programs, the current emphasis on curriculum standards, and the mandated testing programs. The instructional activities that Miss Paniccia used in the vignette at the beginning of the chapter and that other teachers use today represent a balance between teacher-centered and student-centered theories. Figure 1–1 presents an overview of these learning theories.

**Behaviorism**

Behaviorists focus on the observable and measurable aspects of human behavior. They believe that behavior can be learned or unlearned, and that learning is the result of stimulus-and-response actions (O’Donohue & Kitchener, 1998). This theory is described as teacher centered because it focuses on the teacher’s active role as a dispenser of knowledge. Skinner (1974) explained that students learn to read by learning a series of discrete skills. Teachers use direct instruction methods to teach skills in a planned, sequential order. Information is presented in small steps and reinforced through practice activities until students master it because each step is built on the previous one. Traditionally, students practice the skills they are learning by completing fill-in-the-blank worksheets. They usually work individually, not in small groups or with partners. Behavior modification is another key feature: Behaviorists believe that teachers control and motivate students through a combination of rewards and punishments.

**Constructivism**

Jean Piaget’s (1969) theoretical framework differed substantially from behaviorist theories: Piaget described learning as the modification of students’ cognitive structures, or schemata, as they interact with and adapt to their environment. Schemata are like mental filing cabinets, and new information is organized with prior knowledge in the filing system. Piaget also posited that children are active and motivated thinkers and learners. This definition of learning and children’s role in learning requires a reexamination of the teacher’s role: Instead of simply being dispensers of knowledge, teachers engage students with experiences so that they modify their schemata and construct their own knowledge.

**Interactive Theory**

The interactive theory describes what readers do as they read. It emphasizes that readers focus on comprehension, or making meaning, as they read (Rumelhart, 1977; Stanovich, 1980). Readers construct meaning using a combination of text-based information (information from the text) and reader-based information (information from readers’ backgrounds of knowledge, or schemata). The interactive theory echoes the importance of schemata described in the constructivist theories. In the past, educators have argued over whether children’s attention during reading moves from noticing the letters on the page and grouping them into words to making meaning in the brain, or the other way around, from activating background knowledge in the brain to examining letters and words on the page. Educators now agree that the two processes take place interactively, at the same time.

The interactive model of reading includes an executive function, or decision maker: Fluent readers identify words automatically and use word-identification skills...
### Figure 1-1 Learning Theories That Inform Literacy Instruction

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Applications</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher-Centered</strong></td>
<td>Behaviorism</td>
<td>• Teachers provide direct instruction.</td>
<td>Teachers apply behaviorism when they use basal reading programs, post word walls in the classroom, and use tests to measure students’ learning. Children apply this theory when they complete workbook pages.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Teachers motivate students and control their behavior.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Teachers use tests to measure learning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Children are passive learners.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student-Centered</strong></td>
<td>Constructivism</td>
<td>• Children are active learners.</td>
<td>Children apply constructivism when they use K-W-L charts, make personal, world, and literary connections to books they are reading, and choose the books they read and topics for writing.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Children relate new information to prior knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Children organize and relate information in schemata.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive</strong></td>
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<td>• Students use both prior knowledge and features in the text as they read.</td>
<td>Teachers apply interactive theory when they use guided reading and model strategies using think-alouds. Children apply this theory when they use reading and writing strategies and draw graphic organizers to aid their comprehension.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students use word-identification skills and comprehension strategies.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Fluent readers focus on comprehension as they read.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sociolinguistics</strong></td>
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<td>• Thought and language are related.</td>
<td>Teachers apply sociolinguistics when they read aloud to children, use shared reading, the language experience approach, and interactive writing because the teachers provide a scaffold. When children work collaboratively, they are applying this theory.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students use social interaction as a learning tool.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Teachers provide scaffolds for students.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reader Response</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Readers create meaning as they read and write.</td>
<td>Children apply reader response theory when they respond to literature by writing in reading logs and participating in grand conversations and instructional conversations. Other applications include reading and writing workshop.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students vary how they read and write according to aesthetic and efferent purposes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The goal is for students to become lifelong readers and writers.</td>
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<td><strong>Critical Literacy</strong></td>
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<td>• Children are empowered through reading and writing.</td>
<td>Children apply critical literacy theory when they read multicultural literature, consider social issues in books they read, write letters to the editor, and pursue community projects. Teachers apply this theory when they create inclusive communities of learners in their classrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Readers think critically about books they are reading.</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Children become agents for social change.</td>
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when they come across unfamiliar words so that they can focus their attention on comprehension, and the decision maker monitors the reading process and the skills and strategies that readers use. Teachers focus on reading as a comprehension process and teach both word-identification skills and comprehension strategies.

**Sociolinguistics**

The sociolinguists contribute a cultural dimension to our consideration of how children learn: They view reading and writing as social activities that reflect the culture and community in which students live (Heath, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). According to Lev Vygotsky, language helps to organize thought, and children use language to learn as well as to communicate and share experiences with others. Understanding that children use language for social purposes allows teachers to plan instructional activities that incorporate a social component, such as having students talk about books they are reading or share their writing with classmates. And, because children’s language and concepts of literacy reflect their cultures and home communities, teachers must respect students’ language and appreciate cultural differences in their attitudes toward learning and becoming literate.

Social interaction enhances learning in two other ways: scaffolding and the zone of proximal development (Dixon-Krauss, 1996). Scaffolding is a support mechanism that teachers and parents use to assist students. Vygotsky suggests that children can accomplish more difficult tasks in collaboration with adults than they can on their own. For example, when teachers assist students in reading a book they could not read independently or help students revise a piece of writing, they are scaffolding. Vygotsky also suggests that children learn very little when they perform tasks that they can already do independently; he recommends the zone of proximal development, the range of tasks between students’ actual developmental level and their potential development. More challenging tasks done with the teacher’s scaffolding are more conducive to learning. As students learn, teachers gradually withdraw their support so that students eventually perform the task independently. Then the cycle begins again.

**Reader Response**

Louise Rosenblatt (1978, 1983) and other reader response theorists consider how students create meaning as they read. These theories extend the constructivist theories about schemata and making meaning in the brain, not the eyes. According to reader response theorists, students do not try to figure out the author’s meaning as they read; instead, they negotiate or create a meaning that makes sense based on the words they are reading and on their own background knowledge. Reader response theorists agree with Piaget that readers are active and responsible for their learning.

Rosenblatt (1991) explains that there are two stances or purposes for reading: When readers read for enjoyment or pleasure, they assume an aesthetic stance, and when they read to locate and remember information, they read efferently. Rosenblatt suggests that these two stances represent the ends of a continuum and that readers often use a combination of the two stances when they read, whether they are reading stories or informational books. For example, when students read *Nature’s Green Umbrella* (Gibbons, 1994), an informational book about tropical rain forests, they may read efferently to locate information about the animals that live in rain forests. Or they may read aesthetically, carried off—in their minds, at least—on an expedition to the Amazon River. When students read a novel such as *Sarah, Plain and Tall* (MacLachlan, 1985), a story about a mail-order bride, they usually read aesthetically as they re-live life on the prairie a century ago. Students are encouraged to step into the story
and become a character and to “live” the story. This conflicts with more traditional approaches in which teachers ask students to recall specific information from the story, thus forcing students to read effently, to take away information. Reader response theory suggests that when students read effently rather than aesthetically, they do not learn to love reading and may not become lifelong readers.

Critical Literacy

Critical literacy grew out of Pablo Freire’s theory of critical pedagogy (2000), which called for a sweeping transformation in education so that teachers and students ask fundamental questions about knowledge, justice, and equity (McDaniel, 2004; Wink, 2000). Language is a means for social action. Teachers should do more than just teach students to read and write: Both teachers and students can become agents of social change. The increasing social and cultural diversity in our society adds urgency to resolving the inequities and injustices in society. Think about these issues:

- Does school perpetuate the dominant culture and exclude others?
- Do all students have equal access to learning opportunities?
- Is school more like family life in some cultures than in others?
- Do teachers interact differently with boys and girls?
- Are some students silenced in classrooms?
- Do teachers have different expectations for minority students?

Literacy instruction does not take place in a vacuum; the content that teachers teach and the ways they teach it occur in a social, cultural, political, and historical context (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Giroux, 1988). Consider the issue of grammar instruction, for example: Some people argue that grammar shouldn’t be taught in the elementary grades because it is too abstract and won’t help students become better readers or writers, but others believe that not teaching grammar is one way the majority culture denies access to nonstandard English speakers. Both proponents and detractors of grammar instruction want what is best for children, but their views are diametrically opposed.

Luke and Freebody’s (1997) model of reading includes critical literacy as the fourth and highest level. I have adapted their model to incorporate both reading and writing:

1. **Code Breakers.** Students become code breakers as they learn phonics, word-identification strategies, and high-frequency words as they learn to read and write fluently.

2. **Text Participants.** Students become text participants as they learn about text structures and genres in order to comprehend what they read and as they learn to develop coherent ideas in the texts they write.

3. **Text Users.** Students become text users as they read and write multigenre texts and compare the effect of genre and purpose on texts.

4. **Text Critics.** Students become text critics as they examine the issues raised in books and other texts they read and write.

One way that teachers take students to the fourth level, text critics, is to read and discuss books such as *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2000), the story of a girl in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan who pretends to be a boy to support her family; *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* (Curtis, 1995), the story of an African American family caught in the Birmingham church bombing; and *Homeless Bird* (Whelan, 2000), the story of an Indian girl who has no future when she is widowed. These stories describe injustices that elementary students can understand and discuss (Foss, 2002; Lewiston,
Part 1  What Is a Balanced Approach to Literacy Instruction?

Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002; McLaughlin & De Voogd, 2004; Vasquez, 2003). In fact, teachers report that their students are often more engaged in reading stories about social issues than other books and that students’ interaction patterns change after reading them.

Critical literacy emphasizes children’s potential to become thoughtful, active citizens. The reason injustices persist in society, Shannon (1995) hypothesizes, is because people do not “ask why things are the way they are, who benefits from these conditions, and how can we make them more equitable” (p. 123). Through critical literacy, students become empowered to transform their world (Bomer & Bomer, 2001). They learn social justice concepts, read literature that reflects diverse voices, notice injustices in the world, and use writing to take action for social change.

PRINCIPLE 2: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS SUPPORT CHILDREN’S USE OF THE FOUR CUEING SYSTEMS

Language is a complex system for creating meaning through socially shared conventions (Halliday, 1978). English, like other languages, involves four cueing systems:

- the phonological or sound system
- the syntactic or structural system
- the semantic or meaning system
- the pragmatic or social and cultural use system

Together these systems make communication possible; children and adults use all four systems simultaneously as they read, write, listen, and talk. The priority people place on various cueing systems can vary; however, the phonological system is especially important for beginning readers and writers as they apply phonics skills to decode and spell words. Information about the four cueing systems is summarized in Figure 1–2.

The Phonological System

There are approximately 44 speech sounds in English. Students learn to pronounce these sounds as they learn to talk, and they learn to associate the sounds with letters as they learn to read and write. Sounds are called phonemes, and they are represented in print with diagonal lines to differentiate them from graphemes (letters or letter combinations). Thus, the first grapheme in mother is m, and the phoneme is /m/. The phoneme in soap that is represented by the grapheme oa is called “long o” and is written /ɔ/.

The phonological system is important for both oral and written language. Regional and cultural differences exist in the way people pronounce phonemes; for example, people from Massachusetts pronounce sounds differently from people from Georgia. Similarly, the English spoken in Australia is different from American English. Children who are learning English as a second language must learn to pronounce English sounds; sounds that are different from those in their native language are particularly difficult to learn. For example, because Spanish does not have /θ/, children who have immigrated to the United States from Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries have difficulty pronouncing this sound; they often substitute /d/ for /θ/ because the sounds are articulated in similar ways (Nathenson-Mejia, 1989). Younger children usually learn to pronounce the difficult sounds more easily than older children and adults.

The phonological system plays a crucial role in reading instruction during the primary grades. Children use their knowledge of phonics as they learn to read and write.
### Figure 1–2 Relationships Among the Four Cueing Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Phonological System** | • Phoneme (the smallest unit of sound)  
• Grapheme (the written representation of a phoneme using one or more letters)  
• Phonological awareness (knowledge about the sound structure of words, at the phoneme, onset-rime, and syllable levels)  
• Phonemic awareness (the ability to manipulate the sounds in words orally)  
• Phonics (instruction about phoneme-grapheme correspondences and spelling rules) | • Pronouncing words  
• Detecting regional and other dialects  
• Decoding words when reading  
• Using invented spelling  
• Reading and writing alliterations and onomatopoeia  
• Noticing rhyming words  
• Dividing words into syllables |
| **Syntactic System** | • Syntax (the structure or grammar of a sentence)  
• Morpheme (the smallest meaningful unit of language)  
• Free morpheme (a morpheme that can stand alone as a word)  
• Bound morpheme (a morpheme that must be attached to a free morpheme) | • Adding inflectional endings to words  
• Combining words to form compound words  
• Adding prefixes and suffixes to root words  
• Using capitalization and punctuation to indicate beginnings and ends of sentences  
• Writing simple, compound, and complex sentences  
• Combining sentences |
| **Semantic System**  | • Semantics (meaning)  
• Synonyms (words that mean the same or nearly the same thing)  
• Antonyms (words that are opposites)  
• Homonyms (words that sound alike but are spelled differently) | • Learning the meanings of words  
• Discovering that some words have multiple meanings  
• Using context clues to figure out an unfamiliar word  
• Studying synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms  
• Using a dictionary and a thesaurus  
• Reading and writing comparisons (metaphors and similes) |
| **Pragmatic System** | • Function (the purpose for which a person uses language)  
• Standard English (the form of English used in textbooks and by television newscasters)  
• Nonstandard English (other forms of English) | • Varying language to fit specific purposes  
• Reading and writing dialogue in dialects  
• Comparing standard and nonstandard forms of English |
In a purely phonetic language, there would be a one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds, and teaching students to sound out words would be a simple process. But English is not a purely phonetic language because there are 26 letters and 44 sounds and many ways to combine the letters to spell some of the sounds, especially vowels. Consider these ways to spell long *e*: *sea*, *green*, *Pete*, *me*, and *people*. And sometimes the patterns used to spell long *e* don’t work, as in *head* and *great*. Phonics, which describes the phoneme-grapheme correspondences and related spelling rules, is an important part of reading instruction. Students use phonics information to decode words, but phonics instruction is not a complete reading program because many common words cannot be decoded easily and because good readers do much more than just decode words when they read.

Children in the primary grades also use their understanding of the phonological system to create invented spellings. First graders, for example, might spell *home* as *hm* or *hom*, and second graders might spell *school* as *skule*, based on their knowledge of phoneme-grapheme relationships and the English spelling patterns. As children learn more phonics and gain more experience reading and writing, their spellings become more conventional. For students who are learning English as a second language, their spellings often reflect their pronunciations of words (Nathenson-Mejia, 1989).

### The Syntactic System

The syntactic system is the structural organization of English. This system is the grammar that regulates how words are combined into sentences; the word *grammar* here means the rules governing how words are combined in sentences, not parts of speech.

Children use the syntactic system as they combine words to form sentences. Word order is important in English, and English speakers must arrange words into a sequence that makes sense. Young Spanish-speaking children who are learning English as a second language, for example, learn to say “This is my red sweater,” not “This is my sweater red,” which is the literal translation from Spanish.

Children use their knowledge of the syntactic system as they read: They expect that the words they are reading have been strung together into sentences. When they come to an unfamiliar word, they recognize its role in the sentence even if they don’t know the terms for parts of speech. In the sentence “The horses galloped through the gate and out into the field,” students may not be able to decode the word *through*, but they can easily substitute a reasonable word or phrase, such as *out of* or *past*.

Many of the capitalization and punctuation rules that students learn reflect the syntactic system of language. Similarly, when children learn about simple, compound, and complex sentences, they are learning about the syntactic system.
Another component of syntax is word forms. Words such as *dog* and *play* are morphemes, the smallest meaningful units in language. Word parts that change the meaning of a word are also morphemes; when the plural marker *-s* is added to *dog* to make *dogs*, for instance, or the past-tense marker *-ed* is added to *play* to make *played*, these words now have two morphemes because the inflectional endings change the meaning of the words. The words *dog* and *play* are free morphemes because they convey meaning while standing alone; the endings *-s* and *-ed* are bound morphemes because they must be attached to free morphemes to convey meaning. Compound words are two or more morphemes combined to create a new word: *Birthday*, for example, is a compound word made up of two free morphemes.

During the elementary grades, children learn to add affixes to words. Affixes that are added at the beginning of a word are prefixes, and affixes added at the end are suffixes. Both kinds of affixes are bound morphemes. The prefix *un-* in *unhappy* is a bound morpheme, and *happy* is a free morpheme because it can stand alone as a word.

### The Semantic System

The third cueing system is the semantic or meaning system. Vocabulary is the key component of this system: As children learn to talk, they acquire a continually increasing vocabulary. Researchers estimate that children have a vocabulary of 5,000 words by the time they enter school, and they continue to acquire 3,000 to 4,000 words each year during the elementary grades (Lindfors, 1987; Nagy, 1988). Considering how many words children learn each year, it is unreasonable to assume that they learn words only through formal instruction. They learn many, many words informally through reading and through social studies and science lessons.

Children learn approximately 8 to 10 words a day. A remarkable achievement! As children learn a word, they move from a general understanding of the meaning of the word to a better-developed understanding, and they learn these words through real reading, not by copying definitions from a dictionary. Researchers have estimated that students need to read a word 4 to 14 times.

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*The Cueing Systems*

These students are using all four cueing systems as they write and present a puppet show to their classmates based on characters from the Beverly Cleary books they’ve read. They use the phonological system to spell words while writing the puppet show script, the syntactic system to create sentences for the script and read the sentences during the performance, the semantic system to choose words for the script and to recall these words as they present the puppet show, and the pragmatic system as they create dialogue that is appropriate for the characters. Their classmates are using the four cueing systems, too, as they review the puppet show. You will find that students use the cueing systems in combination for almost every literacy activity.
to make it their own, which is possible only when students read and reread books and write about what they are reading.

The Pragmatic System
The fourth cueing system is pragmatics, which deals with the social aspects of language use. People use language for many purposes; how they talk or write varies according to their purpose and audience. Language use also varies among social classes, ethnic groups, and geographic regions; these varieties are known as dialects. School is one cultural community, and the language of school is Standard English. This dialect is formal—the one used in textbooks, newspapers, and magazines and by television newscasters. Other forms, including those spoken in urban ghettos, in Appalachia, and by Mexican Americans in the Southwest, are generally classified as nonstandard English. These nonstandard forms of English are alternatives in which the phonology, syntax, and semantics differ from those of Standard English. They are neither inferior nor substandard; they reflect the communities of the speakers, and the speakers communicate as effectively as those who use Standard English. The goal is for children to add Standard English to their repertoire of language registers, not to replace their home dialect with Standard English.

As children who speak nonstandard English read texts written in Standard English, they often translate what they read into their dialect. Sometimes this occurs when children are reading aloud. For example, a sentence written “They are going to school” might be read aloud as “They be goin’ to school.” Emergent or beginning readers are not usually corrected when they translate words into nonstandard dialects as long as they don’t change the meaning, but older, more fluent readers should be directed to read the words as they are printed in the book.

Effective teachers understand that children use all four cueing systems as they read and write. For example, when students read the sentence “Jimmy is playing ball with his father” correctly, they are probably using information from all four systems. When a child substitutes dad for father and reads “Jimmy is playing ball with his dad,” he might be focusing on the semantic or pragmatic system rather than on the phonological system. When a child substitutes basketball for ball reads “Jimmy is playing basketball with his father,” he might be relying on an illustration or his own experience playing basketball. Because both basketball and ball begin with b, he might have used the beginning sound as an aid in decoding, but he apparently did not consider how long the word basketball is compared with the word ball. When the child changes the syntax, as in “Jimmy, he play ball with his father,” he may speak a nonstandard dialect. Sometimes a child reads the sentence as “Jump is play boat with his father,” so that it doesn’t make sense: The child chooses words with the correct beginning sound and uses appropriate parts of speech for at least some of the words, but there is no comprehension. This is a serious problem because the child doesn’t seem to understand that what he reads must make sense.

In upcoming chapters, you will learn ways to apply this information on the cueing systems. The information on the phonological system is applied to phonics in Chapter 4, “Cracking the Alphabetic Code,” and the information on the syntactic system is applied to words and sentences in Chapter 5, “Developing Fluent Readers and Writers,” and Chapter 6, “Expanding Students’ Knowledge of Words.” The information on the semantic and pragmatic systems is applied to vocabulary and comprehension in Chapter 6 and in Chapter 7, “Facilitating Students’ Comprehension: Reader Factors.”
Chapter 1  Becoming an Effective Teacher of Reading

PRINCIPLE 3: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS CREATE A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

Classrooms are social settings in which students read, discuss, and write about literature. Together, students and their teachers create the classroom community, and the type of community they create strongly influences students’ learning. Effective teachers establish a community of learners in which students are motivated to learn and are actively involved in reading and writing activities, just as Miss Paniccia’s were in the vignette. Teachers and students work collaboratively and purposefully. Perhaps the most striking quality of classroom communities is the partnership that the teacher and students create. Students are a “family” in which all the members respect one another and support each other’s learning. Students value culturally and linguistically diverse classmates and recognize that all students make important contributions to the classroom (Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992).

Students and teachers work together for the common good of the community. Consider the differences between renting and owning a home. In a classroom community, students and the teacher are joint “owners” of the classroom. Students assume responsibility for their own learning and behavior, work collaboratively with classmates, complete assignments, and care for the classroom. In traditional classrooms, in contrast, the classroom is the teacher’s, and students are simply “renters” for the school year. This doesn’t mean that in a classroom community, teachers abdicate their responsibility to the students; on the contrary, teachers retain all of their roles as guide, instructor, monitor, coach, mentor, and grader. Sometimes these roles are shared with students, but the ultimate responsibility remains with the teacher.

Characteristics of Classroom Communities

Classroom communities have specific characteristics that are conducive to learning and that support students’ interactions with literature:

1. **Responsibility.** Students are responsible for their learning, their behavior, and the contributions they make in the classroom. They see themselves as valued and contributing members of the classroom community.

2. **Opportunities.** Children have opportunities to read and write for meaningful purposes. They read real books and write for real audiences—their classmates, their parents, and community members.

3. **Engagement.** Students are motivated to learn and are actively involved in reading and writing activities. Students sometimes choose which books to read, how they will respond to a book, and which reading and writing projects they will pursue.

4. **Demonstration.** Teachers provide demonstrations of literacy skills and strategies, and children observe in order to learn what more capable readers and writers do.

5. **Risk taking.** Students are encouraged to explore topics, make guesses, and take risks.

6. **Instruction.** Teachers are expert readers and writers, and they provide instruction through minilessons on procedures, skills, and strategies related to reading and writing.
7. **Response.** Children share personal connections to stories, make predictions, ask questions, and deepen their comprehension as they write in reading logs and participate in grand conversations. When they write, children share their rough drafts in writing groups to get feedback on how well they are communicating, and they celebrate their published books by sharing them with classmates.

8. **Choice.** Students often make choices about the books they read and the writing they do within the parameters set by the teacher. When given opportunities to make choices, students are often more highly motivated to read and write, and they value their learning experience because it is more meaningful to them.

9. **Time.** Children need large chunks of time to pursue reading and writing activities; it doesn’t work well for teachers to break the classroom schedule into many small time blocks. Two to three hours of uninterrupted time each day for reading and writing instruction is recommended. It is important to minimize disruptions during the time set aside for literacy instruction; administrators should schedule computer, music, art, and other pull-out programs so that they do not interfere. This is especially important in the primary grades.

10. **Assessment.** Teachers and children work together to establish guidelines for assessment so that children can monitor their own work and participate in the evaluation. (Cambourne & Turbill, 1987)

Figure 1–3 reviews these 10 characteristics, and explains the teacher’s and students’ roles.

### How to Create a Classroom Community

Teachers are more successful when they take the first 2 weeks of the school year to establish the classroom environment (Sumara & Walker, 1991); they can’t assume that students will be familiar with procedures and routines or that they will instinctively be cooperative, responsible, and respectful of classmates. Teachers explicitly explain classroom routines, such as how to get supplies out and put them away and how to work with classmates in a cooperative group, and set the expectation that students will adhere to the routines. Next, they demonstrate literacy procedures, including how to choose a book to read from the classroom library, how to provide feedback about a classmate’s writing, and how to participate in a grand conversation about a book. Third, teachers model ways of interacting with students, responding to literature, respecting classmates, and assisting classmates with reading and writing projects.

Teachers are the classroom managers: They set expectations and clearly explain to students what is expected of them and what is valued in the classroom. The classroom rules are specific and consistent, and teachers also set limits. For example, students might be allowed to talk quietly with classmates when they are working, but they are not allowed to shout across the classroom or talk when the teacher is talking or when students are making a presentation to the class. Teachers also model classroom rules themselves as they interact with students. According to Sumara and Walker (1991), the process of socialization at the beginning of the school year is planned, deliberate, and crucial to the success of the literacy program.

Not everything can be accomplished during the first 2 weeks, however; teachers continue to reinforce classroom routines and literacy procedures. One way is to have student leaders model the desired routines and behaviors. When this is done, other stu-
### Figure 1–3  Ten Characteristics of a Community of Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Teacher’s Role</th>
<th>Students’ Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility</strong></td>
<td>Teachers set guidelines and have the expectation that students will be responsible. Teachers also model responsible behavior.</td>
<td>Students are responsible for fully participating in the classroom, including completing assignments, participating in groups, and cooperating with classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
<td>Teachers provide opportunities for students to read and write in genuine and meaningful activities, not contrived practice activities.</td>
<td>Students take advantage of learning opportunities provided in class. They read independently during reading workshop, and they share their writing during sharing time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Teachers make it possible for students to be engaged by the literature and activities they provide for students. Also, by planning units with students and allowing them to make choices, they motivate students to complete assignments.</td>
<td>Students are actively involved in reading and writing activities. They are motivated and industrious because they are reading real literature and are involved in activities they find meaningful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demonstration</strong></td>
<td>Teachers demonstrate what readers and writers do and use think-alouds to explain their thinking during the demonstrations.</td>
<td>Students observe the teacher’s demonstrations of skills and strategies that readers and writers use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk taking</strong></td>
<td>Teachers encourage students to take risks, make guesses, and explore their thinking. They deemphasize students' need to get things “right.”</td>
<td>Students explore what they are learning, take risks as they ask questions, and make guesses. They expect not to be laughed at or made fun of. They view learning as a process of exploration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instruction</strong></td>
<td>Teachers provide instruction through minilessons. During minilessons, teachers provide information and make connections to the reading and writing in which students are involved.</td>
<td>Students look to the teacher to provide instruction on procedures, concepts, strategies, and skills related to reading and writing. Students participate in minilessons and then apply what they have learned in their own reading and writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
<td>Teachers provide opportunities for students to share and respond to reading and writing activities.</td>
<td>Students respond to books they are reading in reading logs and grand conversations. They share their writing in writing groups and get feedback from classmates. Students are a supportive audience for classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choice</strong></td>
<td>Teachers encourage students to choose some of the books they read and some of the writing activities and projects they develop.</td>
<td>Students make choices about some books they read, some writing activities, and some projects they develop within parameters set by the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>Teachers organize the class schedule with large chunks of time for reading and writing activities. They plan units and set deadlines with students.</td>
<td>Students have large chunks of time for reading and writing activities. They work on projects over days and weeks and understand when assignments are due.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Teachers set grading plans with students before beginning each unit, meet with students in assessment conferences, and assist students in collecting work for portfolios.</td>
<td>Students understand how they will be assessed and graded, and they participate in their assessment. They collect their work-in-progress in folders and choose which work they will place in portfolios.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
students are likely to follow the lead. Teachers also continue to teach additional literacy procedures as students are involved in new types of activities. The classroom community evolves during the school year, but the foundation is laid during the first 2 weeks.

Teachers develop a predictable classroom environment with familiar routines and literacy procedures. Children feel comfortable, safe, and more willing to take risks and experiment in a predictable classroom environment. This is especially true for students from varied cultures, English learners, and students who struggle.

The classroom community also extends beyond the walls of the classroom to include the entire school and the wider community. Within the school, students become “buddies” with students in other classes and get together to read and write in pairs (Morrice & Simmons, 1991). When parents and other community members come into the school, they demonstrate the value they place on education by working as tutors and aides, sharing their cultures, and demonstrating other types of expertise (Graves, 1995).

**PRINCIPLE 4: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS ADOPT A BALANCED APPROACH TO LITERACY INSTRUCTION**

In recent years, we have witnessed a great deal of controversy about the best way to teach reading. On one side are the proponents of a skills-based or phonics approach; on the other side are advocates of a holistic approach. Teachers favoring each side cite research to support their views, and state legislatures have joined the debate by mandating systematic, intensive phonics instruction in the primary grades. Today, many teachers agree with Richard Allington that there is “no quick fix” and no one program to meet the needs of all children (Allington & Walmsley, 1995). Many teachers recognize value in both points of view and recommend a “balance” or combination of holistic and skills approaches (Baumann, Hoffman, Moon, & Duffy-Hester, 1998). That is the perspective taken in this text.

A balanced approach to literacy, according to Spiegel (1998), is a decision-making approach through which teachers make thoughtful and purposeful decisions about how to help students become better readers and writers. A balanced approach “is built on research, views the teacher as an informed decision maker who develops a flexible program, and is constructed around a comprehensive view of literacy” (Spiegel, 1998, p. 117).

Fitzgerald (1999) identified three principles of a balanced literacy approach. First, teachers develop students’ skills knowledge, including decoding skills, their strategy knowledge for comprehension and responding to literature, and their affective knowledge, including nurturing students’ love of
reading. Second, instructional approaches that are sometimes viewed as opposites are used to meet students’ learning needs; direct instruction in phonics and reading workshop, for instance, are two very different instructional programs that are used in a balanced literacy approach. Third, students read a variety of reading materials, ranging from trade books to leveled books with controlled vocabulary and basal reading textbooks.

Even though balanced programs vary, they usually embody these characteristics:

- Literacy is viewed comprehensively, as involving both reading and writing.
- Literature is at the heart of the program.
- Skills and strategies are taught both directly and indirectly.
- Reading instruction involves learning word recognition and identification, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- Writing instruction involves learning to express meaningful ideas and use conventional spelling, grammar, and punctuation to express those ideas.
- Students use reading and writing as tools for learning in the content areas.
- The goal is to develop lifelong readers and writers. (Baumann & Ivey, 1997; McIntrye & Pressley, 1996; Spiegel, 1998; Weaver, 1998)

Miss Paniccia’s balanced literacy program, described in the vignette at the beginning of the chapter, exemplifies many of these characteristics.

Figure 1–4 lists 10 components of a balanced literacy program; they embody the characteristics and recommendations from researchers, professional literacy organizations, and state boards of education. These components are addressed in each chapter of this text to show how the topic of that chapter fits into a balanced literacy program.

**PRINCIPLE 5: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS SCAFFOLD CHILDREN’S READING AND WRITING EXPERIENCES**

Teachers scaffold or support children’s reading and writing as they demonstrate, guide, and teach, and they vary the amount of support they provide according to their instructional purpose and the children’s needs. Sometimes teachers model how experienced readers read or record children’s dictation when the writing is too difficult for children to do on their own. At other times, they guide children as they read a leveled book or proofread their writing. Teachers use five levels of support, moving from the greatest amount to the least as children assume more and more of the responsibility for themselves (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Figure 1–5 summarizes these five levels—modeled, shared, interactive, guided, and independent—of reading and writing.

Teachers working with kindergartners through eighth graders use all five levels. For instance, when teachers introduce a new writing form or teach a reading strategy or skill, they use demonstrations or modeling. Or, when teachers want children to practice a strategy or skill they have already taught, they might use a guided or independent literacy activity. The purpose of the activity, not the activity itself, determines which level of support is used. Teachers are less actively involved in directing independent reading and writing, but the quality of instruction that children have received is clearest when children work independently because they are applying what they have learned.
Figure 1–4  Components of a Balanced Literacy Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>Students participate in a variety of modeled, shared, interactive, guided, and independent reading experiences using trade books, basal reader textbooks, content-area textbooks, and self-selected books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phonics and Other Skills</strong></td>
<td>Students learn to use phonics to decode and spell words. In addition, students learn other types of skills that they use in reading and writing, including comprehension, grammar, reference, and study skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Students use problem-solving and monitoring behaviors called strategies as they read and write. Types of strategies include word-identification, comprehension, writing, and spelling strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>Students learn the meanings of words through wide reading as well as by posting key words from books and thematic units on word walls and by participating in vocabulary activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehension</strong></td>
<td>Students choose appropriate reading materials; activate background knowledge and vocabulary; consider the structure of the text; make connections to their own lives, to the world, and to other literature; and apply reading strategies to ensure that they understand what they are reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literature</strong></td>
<td>Students read and respond to a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts as part of literature focus units, literature circles, and reading workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content-Area Study</strong></td>
<td>Students use reading and writing to learn about social studies and science topics in content-area units. They read content-area textbooks as well as stories, informational books, and poetry, learn to conduct research, and prepare projects to apply what they have learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oral Language</strong></td>
<td>Students participate in oral language activities as they work in small groups, participate in grand conversations and instructional conversations, and present oral reports. They also listen to the teacher during read-alouds, minilessons, and other oral presentations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Students use informal writing when they write in reading logs and other journals and make graphic organizers, and they use the writing process to write stories, essays, reports, and poems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
<td>Students apply phonics, syllabication, and morphemic analysis skills to spell words. They learn to spell high-frequency words first, and then other words that they need for writing through a variety of spelling activities that may include weekly spelling tests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Modeled Reading and Writing**

Teachers provide the greatest amount of support when they demonstrate or model how expert readers read and expert writers write while children observe. When teachers read aloud to children, they are modeling: They read fluently and with expression, and they talk about the strategies they use while they are reading. When they model writing, teachers write a composition on chart paper or using an overhead projector so that all children can see what the teacher does and what is being written. Teachers use this level to demonstrate how to make small books and how to do new writing genres and formats, such as poems and letters. Often teachers talk about or reflect on
their reading and writing processes as they read and write to show students the types of decisions they make and the strategies they use. Teachers use modeling to

- demonstrate fluent reading and writing;
- explain how to use comprehension strategies, such as predicting, monitoring, and revising;
- teach the procedure for a new reading or writing activity;
- show how reading and writing conventions and other skills work.

**Shared Reading and Writing**

At this level, students and the teacher “share” the reading and writing tasks. Teachers use shared reading to read big books with primary-grade children. The teacher does most of the reading, but children join in the reading of familiar and repeated words and phrases. Upper-grade teachers also use shared reading. When students are reading a book that is too difficult for them to read independently, the teacher may read aloud while students follow along, reading silently.

**Figure 1–5  A Continuum of Literacy Instruction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Support</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modeled</strong></td>
<td>Teacher reads aloud, modeling how good readers read fluently and with expression. Books too difficult for students to read themselves are used. Examples: reading aloud to students and listening centers.</td>
<td>Teacher writes in front of students, creating the text, doing the writing, and thinking aloud about writing strategies and skills. Example: demonstrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared</strong></td>
<td>Teacher and students read books together, with the students following as the teacher reads and then repeating familiar refrains. Books students can’t read by themselves are used. Examples: big books, buddy reading.</td>
<td>Teacher and students create the text together; then the teacher does the actual writing. Students may assist by spelling familiar or high-frequency words. Example: Language Experience Approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactive</strong></td>
<td>Teacher and students read together and take turns doing the reading. The teacher helps students read fluently and with expression. Instructional-level books are used. Examples: choral reading and readers theatre.</td>
<td>Teacher and students create the text and share the pen to do the writing. Teacher and students talk about writing conventions. Examples: interactive writing and daily news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guided</strong></td>
<td>Teacher plans and teaches reading lessons to small, homogeneous groups using instructional-level books. Focus is on supporting and observing students’ use of strategies. Example: guided reading groups.</td>
<td>Teacher plans and teaches lesson on a writing procedure, strategy, or skill, and students participate in supervised practice activities. Example: class collaborations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent</strong></td>
<td>Students choose and read self-selected books independently. Teachers conference with students to monitor their progress. Examples: reading workshop and reading centers.</td>
<td>Students use the writing process to write stories, informational books, and other compositions. Teacher monitors students’ progress. Examples: writing workshop and writing centers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers at different grade levels use shared writing in a variety of ways. Primary-grade teachers often use the language experience approach to write children’s dictation on paintings and brainstorm lists of words on the chalkboard, for example, and upper-grade teachers may take students’ dictation when they make K-W-L charts, draw graphic organizers, and write class collaboration poems.

The most important way that sharing differs from modeling is that students actually participate in the activity rather than simply observe the teacher. In the shared reading activity, students follow along as the teacher reads, and in shared writing, they suggest the words and sentences that the teacher writes. Teachers use shared reading and writing to

- involve students in reading and writing activities that they could not do independently;
- provide opportunities for students to experience success in reading and writing;
- provide practice before students read and write independently.

Interactive Reading and Writing

Students assume an increasingly important role in interactive reading and writing activities. At this level, students no longer observe the teacher read or write, repeat familiar words, or suggest what the teacher will write; instead, students are more actively involved in reading and writing. They support their classmates by sharing the reading and writing responsibilities, and their teacher provides assistance when needed. Choral reading and readers theatre are two examples of interactive reading. In choral reading, students take turns reading lines of a poem, and in readers theatre, they assume the roles of characters and read lines in a script. In both of these interactive reading activities, the students support each other by actively participating and sharing the work. Teachers provide support by helping students with unfamiliar words or reading a sentence with more expression.

Interactive writing is a recently developed writing activity in which students and the teacher create a text and “share the pen” to write the text on chart paper (Button, Johnson, & Furgerson, 1996; Tompkins & Collom, 2004). The text is composed by the group, and the teacher assists students as they write the text word by word on chart paper. Students take turns writing known letters and familiar words, adding punctuation marks, and marking spaces between words. The teacher helps them to spell all words correctly and use written language conventions so that the text can be read easily. All students participate in creating and writing the text on chart paper, and they also write the text on small white boards. After writing, students read and reread the text using shared and independent reading. Teachers use interactive reading and writing to

- practice reading and writing high-frequency words;
- teach and practice phonics and spelling skills;
- read and write texts that students could not do independently;
- have students share their reading and writing expertise with classmates.

Guided Reading and Writing

Teachers continue to support students’ reading and writing during guided literacy activities, but the students do the actual reading and writing themselves. In guided reading, small, homogeneous groups of students meet with the teacher to read a book at their instructional level. The teacher introduces the book and guides students as they begin read-
ing. Then students continue reading on their own while the teacher monitors their reading. After reading, students and the teacher discuss the book, and then students often reread the book.

In guided writing, teachers plan structured writing activities and then supervise as students do the writing. For example, when students make pages for a class alphabet book or write formula poems, they are doing guided writing because the teacher has set up the writing activity. Teachers also guide students’ writing when they conference with students as they write, participate in writing groups to help students revise their writing, and proofread with students.

Teachers use guided reading and writing to provide instruction and assistance as students are actually reading and writing. Teachers use guided reading and writing to

- support students’ reading in instructional-level materials;
- teach literacy procedures, concepts, skills, and strategies during minilessons;
- introduce different types of writing activities;
- teach students to use the writing process—in particular, how to revise and edit.

Independent Reading and Writing

Students do the reading and writing themselves during independent reading and writing activities. They apply and practice the procedures, concepts, strategies, and skills they have learned. Students may be involved in reading workshop or literature circles. During independent reading, they usually choose the books they read and work at their own pace. Similarly, during independent writing, children may be involved in writing workshop or work at a writing center. They usually choose their own topics for writing and move at their own pace through the stages of the writing process as they develop and refine their writing.

Through independent reading experiences, children learn the joy of reading and, teachers hope, become lifelong readers. In addition, as they write, students come to view themselves as authors. Teachers use independent reading and writing to

- create opportunities for students to practice the reading and writing procedures, concepts, strategies, and skills they have learned;

Independent Reading

This third grader spends 30 minutes each day reading books she selects from the classroom library. The books are interesting and appropriate for her reading level. Her teacher calls this independent reading activity DEAR time but it also goes by other names, including Sustained Silent Reading. So far this year, this student has read 17 books! As she and her classmates read, they practice reading strategies and skills, become more engaged in reading, and feel their confidence soar. Students who participate in such daily independent reading activities are more likely to become lifelong readers.
• provide authentic literacy experiences in which students choose their own topics, purposes, and materials;
• develop lifelong readers and writers.

**PRINCIPLE 6: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS ORGANIZE LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN FOUR WAYS**

Effective teachers promote literature in their instructional programs, and they combine opportunities for students to read and write with direct instruction on literacy skills and strategies. Teachers choose among four instructional approaches for their reading programs: basal reading programs, literature focus units, literature circles, and reading and writing workshop.

**Basal Reading Programs**
Commercially produced reading programs are known as basal readers. These programs feature a textbook or anthology of stories and accompanying workbooks, supplemental books, and related instructional materials at each grade level. Phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, grammar, and spelling instruction is coordinated with the reading selections and aligned with grade-level standards. Teacher’s manuals provide detailed procedures for teaching the selections and the related skills and strategies. Instruction is typically presented to students together as a class, with reteaching to small groups of struggling students. Testing materials are also included so that teachers can monitor students’ progress. The companies tout these books as complete literacy programs, but effective teachers integrate basal reading programs with other instructional approaches.

**Literature Focus Units**
All students in the class read and respond to the same book, and the teacher supports students’ learning through a variety of related activities. Books chosen for literature focus units should be of high quality; teachers often choose books for literature focus units from a district- or state-approved list of books that all students are expected to read at that grade level.

**Literature Circles**
Teachers select five or six books for a text set. These books range in difficulty to meet the needs of all students in the classroom, and they are often related in theme or written by the same author. Teachers collect five or six copies of each book and give a book talk to introduce the books. Then students choose a book to read from a text set and form a group to read and respond to the book they have chosen.

**Reading and Writing Workshop**
In reading workshop, students individually select books to read and then read independently and conference with the teacher about their reading. Similarly, in writing workshop, students write books on topics that they choose and the teacher confer-
ences with them about their writing. Usually teachers set aside a time for reading and writing workshop, and all students read and write while the teacher conferences with small groups. Sometimes, however, when the teacher is working with guided reading groups, the remainder of the class works in reading and writing workshop.

These four approaches are used at all grade levels, from kindergarten through eighth grade; effective teachers generally use a combination of them, as Miss Paniccia did in the vignette at the beginning of the chapter. Students need a variety of reading opportunities, and some books that students read are more difficult and require more support from the teacher. Some teachers alternate literature focus units or literature circles with reading and writing workshop and basal readers, whereas others use some components from each approach throughout the school year. Figure 1–6 presents a comparison of the four approaches.

As you continue reading, you will often see the terms basal reading programs, literature focus units, literature circles, and reading and writing workshop used because they are the instructional approaches presented in this text. In addition, entire chapters are devoted to each of these instructional approaches in Part III, “How Do Teachers Organize Literacy Instruction?”

**PRINCIPLE 7: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS CONNECT INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT**

Teachers understand that students learn to read and write through a combination of direct instruction on strategies and skills and opportunities to apply what they’re learning in real reading and writing activities. This understanding affects the way they assess students: No longer does it seem enough to grade students’ vocabulary exercises or ask them to answer multiple-choice comprehension questions on reading passages that have no point beyond the exercise. Similarly, it no longer seems appropriate to measure success in writing by means of spelling and grammar tests. Instead, teachers need assessment information that tells about the complex achievements students are making in reading and writing.

Teachers use assessment procedures that they develop and others that are commercially available to:

- determine students’ background knowledge
- identify students’ reading levels
- monitor students’ learning
- identify strengths and weaknesses in students’ reading and writing
- analyze students’ spelling development
- document students’ learning
- showcase students’ best work
- assign grades

Also, teachers use the results of standardized achievement tests as indicators of students’ literacy levels and their strengths and weaknesses, as well as to assess the effect of their instruction.

Assessment is more than testing; it is an integral and ongoing part of teaching and learning (Glazer, 1998). Serafini (2000/2001) describes assessment as an inquiry
What Is a Balanced Approach to Literacy Instruction?

Process that teachers use in order to make informed instructional decisions. Figure 1–7 shows the teach-assess cycle. Effective teachers identify their goals and plan their instruction at the same time as they develop their assessment plan. The assessment plan involves three components: preassessing, monitoring, and assessing.

Preassessing

Teachers assess students’ background knowledge before reading to determine whether students are familiar with the topic they will read about. They also verify that students are familiar with the genre, vocabulary, skills, and strategies. Then, based on the results of the assessment, teachers either help students develop more background knowledge or move on to the next step of their instructional plan. Here are some preassessment tools:

- creating a K-W-L chart
- quickwriting about a topic
- completing an anticipation guide
### Literature Circles vs. Reading and Writing Workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Circles</th>
<th>Reading and Writing Workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers choose five or six books and collect multiple copies of each book. Students each choose the book they want to read and form groups or “book clubs” to read and respond to the book. They develop a reading and discussion schedule, and teachers often participate in the discussions.</td>
<td>Students choose books and read and respond to them independently during reading workshop and write books on self-selected topics during writing workshop. Teachers monitor students’ work through conferences. During a sharing period, students share with classmates the books they read and the books they write.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Books are available at a variety of reading levels.</td>
<td>• Students read books appropriate for their reading levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students are more strongly motivated because they choose the books they read.</td>
<td>• Students are more strongly motivated because they choose the books they read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students have opportunities to work with their classmates.</td>
<td>• Students work through the stages of the writing process during writing workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students participate in authentic literacy experiences.</td>
<td>• Teachers teach minilessons on reading skills and strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Activities are student directed, and students work at their own pace.</td>
<td>• Activities are student directed, and students work at their own pace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers may participate in discussions to help students clarify misunderstandings and think more deeply about the book.</td>
<td>• Teachers have opportunities to work individually with students during conferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers often feel a loss of control because students are reading different books.</td>
<td>• Teachers often feel a loss of control because students are reading different books and working at different stages of the writing process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To be successful, students must learn to be task oriented and to use time wisely.</td>
<td>• To be successful, students must learn to be task oriented and to use time wisely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sometimes students choose books that are too difficult or too easy for them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Monitoring

Teachers often monitor students’ progress in reading and writing as they observe students participating in literacy activities. Students might participate in conferences with the teacher, for example, and talk about what they are reading and writing, the strategies and skills they are learning to use, and problem areas. They reflect on what they do well as readers and writers and on what they need to learn next. Here are some monitoring tools:

- listening to students read aloud
- making **running records** of students’ oral reading “miscues” or errors
- conferencing with students during reading and writing workshop
- listening to comments students make during **grand** and **instructional conversations**
- reading students’ **reading log** entries and rough drafts of other compositions
- examining students’ work-in-progress

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*Chapter 1  Becoming an Effective Teacher of Reading*
Assessing

Teachers document students’ learning and showcase their best work as well as grade their learning at the end of a unit. Besides grading students’ written assignments, teachers collect other assessment information through the following activities:

- observing students’ presentation of oral language projects, such as puppet shows, oral reports, and story retellings
- examining students’ art and other visual projects
- analyzing students’ comprehension through charts, dioramas, murals, Venn diagrams, and other graphic organizers they have made
- examining all drafts of students’ writing to document their use of the writing process
- checking students’ use of newly taught vocabulary in their compositions and other projects
- analyzing students’ spelling using their compositions

Teachers also have students keep track of their progress using checklists that list assignments and other requirements. Then at the end of the unit, teachers collect and grade students’ assignments.

You will learn more about how to monitor, document, and grade student learning in Chapter 9, “Assessing Students’ Literacy Development.”
**PRINCIPLE 8: EFFECTIVE TEACHERS BECOME PARTNERS WITH PARENTS**

Effective teachers communicate the importance of parent involvement to parents, view parents as teaching partners, and understand that even parents with limited education or those who do not speak English are valuable resources. They recognize that families from various cultures use literacy in different ways, but that parents from all sociocultural groups value literacy and want their children to succeed in school (Shockley, 1993).

Parents are the most powerful influence on children’s literacy development, and when parents are involved in their children’s literacy development, children become better readers and writers. Three ways that parents can become involved are as teaching partners in the classroom, as resource people, and as teachers at home (Tinajero & Nagel, 1995).

Teachers are also learning that working with parents of preschoolers and kindergartners can help prevent children’s reading problems later on (France & Hager, 1993). Through parent programs, low-income and minority parents can learn how to create a home environment that fosters literacy and how to read aloud to their young children. Parents with limited literacy skills benefit in other ways, too: They develop their own reading and writing abilities through family literacy programs.

**Providing Literacy Information to Parents**

Today, children are learning to read in new ways, and these instructional methods are often unfamiliar to parents. Not surprisingly, these changes have made many parents anxious about how their children are learning to read and write. Parent information programs are crucial in helping parents to understand why children use trade books as well as textbooks, why children explore meanings of stories they have read through grand conversations, how skills and strategies are taught in minilessons, how writing supports children’s reading development, and what invented spelling is. Teachers provide literacy information to parents in a variety of ways:

- back-to-school nights
- newsletters
- conferences with parents
- workshops on strategies for working with young readers and writers
- homework telephone hot lines
- telephone calls and notes conveying good news

In parent workshops and other information-sharing sessions, teachers use videotapes, demonstrations, and guest speakers to provide information about literacy development and the programs in their classrooms. Teachers share some of the books children are reading, especially books representing the cultures of the children in the classroom. Parents can write small books during a writing workshop session, use the computer for literacy activities, and learn how to examine the work their children bring home. Teachers also show parents how to work with their children at home. Without sharing these types of information, parents often feel isolated from the school and are unsure of how to help their children at home.

Patricia Edwards (1995) developed a literacy program for low-income parents in Louisiana, and she reports that parents want to know how to work with their children.
Parents told her that they didn’t know reading books aloud to their young children was so important and wished they had known sooner how to support their children’s literacy development. In her study, parents were grateful that someone explained and demonstrated to them exactly what teachers expect them to do at home.

**Parent Volunteers**

Schools need lots of adults to read with children and to conference with them about books they are reading and compositions they are writing. Parents, grandparents, older students, and other community volunteers can be extremely useful.

Volunteer experiences can be beneficial for parents, too, and they learn about the school and the literacy program. Come and Fredericks (1995) report that parents need to be involved in planning the program, and that they are more likely to become involved if they believe the school has their needs and those of their children at heart. Rasinski and Fredericks (1988) recommend five steps for establishing a quality volunteer program:

1. **Recruitment.** Teachers invite parents and others to volunteer to assist in the classroom. Sometimes telephone calls and home visits are necessary to let parents know they are truly welcome and needed.

2. **Training.** Volunteers need to be trained so that they know how to work with children, where things are located in the school, and how to assist teachers.

3. **Variety.** Because volunteers may feel more comfortable helping in one way than in another or because they may have a special talent to share, teachers need to offer parents a variety of ways to be involved in schools.

4. **Recognition.** For a volunteer program to be successful, the volunteers need to know they are appreciated. Often schools plan recognition receptions each spring to publicly thank the volunteers for their dedication and service.

5. **Evaluation.** Teachers evaluate their volunteer programs and make changes based on the feedback they get from the volunteers and students.

In bilingual schools with children from many cultural backgrounds, parents play a key role in their children’s education: Monolingual English-speaking teachers rely on parents to develop an environment that is linguistically and culturally relevant for the children. Minority parents also provide a feeling of security and belonging for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Some parents from other cultures feel inadequate to help in schools, either because they speak another language or because they have limited education themselves, so it is the teacher’s responsibility to let parents know they are valued (Tinajero & Nagel, 1995).

**Supporting Literacy at Home**

Parents are children’s first and best teachers, and parents can do many things to support their children’s literacy development at home. In addition to reading to their children and listening to their children read to them, parents can build children’s self-esteem and spend quality time with them.

Families use literacy in many ways. Some read the Bible and other religious publications, and others read the newspaper or novels as entertainment. In some homes, the main reading experience is reading *TV Guide,* and in other homes, families write letters and sign greeting cards. Some parents read to their children each evening, and in other homes, parents are busy catching up on work from the office while children
do homework in the evening. Some children and parents communicate with friends and relatives over the Internet. In many homes, parents demonstrate daily living routines, such as making shopping lists, paying bills, and leaving messages for family members that involve reading and writing.

Many teachers assume that children from families with low socioeconomic status have few, if any, literacy events in their homes, but other teachers argue that such children live in homes where people use print for many and varied functions, even though some of those purposes might be different from those of middle-class families. In an interesting study, researchers uncovered great variation in the number and types of uses of reading and writing in low-income families (Purcell-Gates, L’Allier, & Smith, 1995). Included in the study were white, African American, Hispanic American, and Asian American low-income families, and all children spoke English as their primary language. The findings confirm that teachers cannot make generalizations and must look at each child as an individual from a unique family setting. It is not enough to use demographic characteristics such as family income level to make assumptions about a child’s literacy environment.

Family Literacy

Schools are designing family literacy programs for minority parents, parents who are not fluent readers and writers, and parents who are learning English as a second language. These programs are intergenerational and are designed to improve the literacy development of both children and their parents. Adults learn to improve their literacy skills as well as how to work with their children to foster their literacy development (Holloway, 2004). Family literacy programs have these components:

- **Parent literacy education.** Parents participate in activities to develop their own reading and writing competencies.
- **Information about how young children become literate.** Parents learn how they can support their young children as they emerge into reading and writing and how they can work with their older children at home.
- **Support groups for parents.** Parents get acquainted with other parents and share ways of working with their children.
- **Planned interactions between parents and children.** Parents and their children participate together in reading and writing activities.

Now family literacy programs are based on the “wealth model,” which stresses that all families have literacy patterns within their homes and that family literacy programs should build on these patterns rather than impose mainstream, school-like activities on parents (Morrow, Tracey, & Maxwell, 1995). Cultural differences in reading and writing development and literacy use are now regarded as strengths, not weaknesses. The wealth model has replaced the older deficit model, which assumed that children from minority groups and low-income families lacked the preschool literacy activities necessary for success in school (Auerback, 1989).

Organizations dedicated to family literacy, including The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), and the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, have been instrumental in promoting family literacy initiatives at the national level. The NCFL, which began in 1989, disseminates information about family literacy and works to implement family literacy programs across the country. The NCFL has trained staff for almost 1,000 family literacy programs and sponsors an annual Family Literacy Conference. RIF was formed in 1966 to promote children’s reading. The organization originally provided assistance to local groups in
obtaining and distributing low-cost books for children and sponsoring reading-related events, but since 1982, RIF has developed other programs to support parents as children’s first teachers. Former First Lady Barbara Bush organized the Barbara Bush Foundation in 1989 to promote family literacy. This foundation provides grants for family literacy programs and published a book describing 10 model family literacy programs in the United States (Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, 1989).

A variety of local programs have been developed; some programs are collaborations among local agencies, whereas others are run by adult literacy groups. Businesses in many communities, too, are forming partnerships to promote family literacy. Also, schools in multicultural communities are creating literacy programs for parents who are not yet proficient in English so that they can support their children’s literacy learning. For example, Shanahan, Mulhern, and Rodriguez-Brown (1995) developed a literacy project in a Chicago Latino neighborhood through which parents learned to speak and read English and became actively involved in their children’s education.

Schools also organize writing programs for parents. Susan Akroyd (1995), a principal of a multicultural school in Virginia, developed a weeklong program for her school. She advertised the program in the school’s newsletter for parents, and approximately 15 parents from different cultures speaking languages ranging from Korean and Vietnamese to Urdu attended. Many parents spoke very little English, but they came together to write and to learn more about writing. They wrote about memories, their experiences immigrating to the United States, and hopes and dreams for their children. Some parents wrote in English, and others wrote in their native languages. Akroyd brought in translators so that the parents’ writing could be shared with the group. At each class meeting, parents wrote, shared their writing in small groups, and then shared selected compositions with the class. At the end of the program, Akroyd published an anthology of the parents’ writing. This sort of program can work in diverse communities, even when parents read and write in different languages.

**Review: How Effective Teachers Teach Reading and Writing**

1. Effective teachers apply learning, language, and literacy theories as they teach reading and writing.
2. Effective teachers support students’ use of the four cueing systems.
3. Effective teachers create a community of learners in their classrooms.
4. Effective teachers adopt a balanced approach to literacy instruction.
5. Effective teachers scaffold students’ reading and writing experiences.
6. Effective teachers use a combination of modeled, shared, interactive, guided, and independent reading and writing activities.
7. Effective teachers use literature in their instructional programs.
8. Effective teachers organize literacy instruction using basal reading programs, literature focus units, literature circles, and reading and writing workshop.
10. Effective teachers become partners with parents.
Professional References


**Children’s Book References**

Chapter Questions

- What are the stages in the reading process?
- What are the stages in the writing process?
- How are the two processes alike?
- How do teachers use these two processes in teaching reading and writing?

Mrs. Goodman's Seventh Graders Read The Giver

The seventh graders in Mrs. Goodman's class are reading the Newbery Medal–winning book The Giver (Lowry, 1993). In this futuristic story, 12-year-old Jonas is selected to become the next Keeper of the Memories, and he discovers the terrible truth about his community. Mrs. Goodman has a class set of paperback copies of the book, and her students use the reading process as they read and explore the book.

To introduce the book, Mrs. Goodman asks her students to get into small groups to brainstorm lists of all the things they would change about life if they could. Their lists, written on butcher paper, include no more homework, no AIDS, no crime, no gangs, no parents, no taking out the garbage, and being allowed to drive a car at age 10. The groups hang their lists on the chalkboard and then share them. Then Mrs. Goodman puts check marks by many of the items, seeming to agree with the points. Next she explains that the class is going to read a story about life in the future. She explains that The Giver takes place in a planned utopian, or “perfect,” society with the qualities that she checked on students’ brainstormed lists.
She passes out copies of the book and uses shared reading to read the first chapter aloud as students follow along in their books. Then the class talks about the first chapter in a grand conversation and ask a lot of questions: Why were there so many rules? Doesn’t anyone drive a car? What does released mean? Why are children called a “Seven” or a “Four”? What does it mean that people are “given” spouses—don’t they fall in love and get married? Why does Jonas have to tell his feelings? Classmates share their ideas and are eager to continue reading. Mrs. Goodman’s reading aloud of the first chapter and the questions that the students raise cause everyone to become interested in the story, even several students who try to remain uninvolved in class activities. The power of this story grabs them all.

They set up a schedule for reading and discussion. Every 3 days, they will come together to talk about the chapters they have read, and over 2 weeks, the class will complete the book. They will also write in reading logs after reading the first chapter and then five more times as they are reading. In these logs, students write reactions to the story. Maria wrote this journal entry after finishing the book:

Jonas had to do it. He had to save Gabriel’s life because the next day Jonas’s father was going to release (kill) him. He had it all planned out. That was important. He was very brave to leave his parents and his home. But I guess they weren’t his parents really and his home wasn’t all that good. I don’t know if I could have done it but he did the right thing. He had to get out. He saved himself and he saved little Gabe. I’m glad he took Gabriel. That community was supposed to be safe but it really was dangerous. It was weird to not have colors. I guess that things that at first seem to be good are really bad.

Ron explored some of the themes of the story:

Starving. He has memories of food. He’s still hungry. But he’s free. Food is safe. Freedom is surprises. Never saw a bird before. Same-same-same. Before he was starved for colors, memories and choice. Choice. To do what you want. To be who you can be. He won’t starve.

Alicia thought about a lesson her mother taught her as she wrote:

As Jonas fled from the community he lost his memories so that they would go back to the people there. Would they learn from them? Would they remember them? Or would life go on just the same? I think you have to do it yourself if you are going to learn. That’s what my mom says. Somebody else can’t do it for you. But Jonas did it. He got out with Gabe.
Tomas wrote about the Christmas connection at the end of the story:

*Jonas and Gabe came to the town at Christmas. Why did Lois Lowry do that? Gabe is like the baby Jesus, I think. It is like a rebirth—being born again. Jonas and his old community didn’t go to church. Maybe they didn’t believe in God. Now Jonas will be a Christian and the people in the church will welcome them. Gabe won’t be released. I think Gabe is like Jesus because people tried to release Jesus.*

During their grand conversations, students talk about many of the same points they raise in their journal entries. The story fascinates the students—at first they think about how simple and safe life would be, but then they think about all the things they take for granted that they would have to give up to live in Jonas’s ordered society. They talk about bravery and making choices, and applaud Jonas’s decision to flee with Gabriel. They also speculate about Jonas’s and Gabe’s new lives in Elsewhere: Will they be happy? Will they ever go back to check on their old community? Will other people escape to Elsewhere?

The students collect “important” words from the story for their word wall. After reading chapters 4, 5, and 6, they add these words to the word wall:

- leisurely pace
- bikeports
- regulated
- invariably
- gravitating
- rehabilitation
- serene
- chastised
- rule infraction
- the wanting
- stirrings
- reprieve
- relinquish
- chastisement
- assignment

Sometimes students choose unfamiliar or long words, but they also choose words such as assignment that are important to the story. Students refer to the list for words and their spellings for the various activities they are involved in. Later during the unit, Mrs. Goodman teaches a minilesson about root words using some of these words.

As students read the story, Mrs. Goodman teaches a series of minilessons about reading strategies and skills. The day after students read about colors in the story, she teaches a minilesson on the visualization strategy. She begins by rereading excerpts from chapters 7 and 8 about Jonas being selected to be the next Receiver and asks students to try to draw a picture of the scene in their minds. She asks them to focus on the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings, and she talks about the importance of bringing a story to life in their minds as they read. Then students draw pictures of their visualizations and share them in small groups.

To review spelling patterns and phonics rules, Mrs. Goodman does a making words activity. She divides the class into six groups and gives each group a different set of letter cards that can be sorted to spell a word from the word wall: stirrings, release, memories, receiver, fascinated, or ceremony. She asks the students in each group to arrange the letter cards to spell as many words as they can; letters from ceremony, for example, can be used to spell me, my, on, no, eye, men, more, core, corn, mercy, and money. Then they arrange all of the letters to spell the word-wall word.

Another minilesson is about literary opposites. Mrs. Goodman explains that authors often introduce conflict and develop themes using contrasts or opposites. She asks students to think of opposites in The Giver; one example that she suggests is safe and free. Other opposites that the students suggest include:

- alive—released
- choice—no choice
- color—black and white
- conform—do your own thing

Part 1  What Is a Balanced Approach to Literacy Instruction?
Mrs. Goodman asks students to think about how the opposites relate to the development of the story and how Lois Lowry made the opposites explicit in *The Giver*. Students talk about how the community seemed safe at the beginning of the story, but chapter by chapter, Lowry uncovered the shortcomings of the community. They also talk about themes of the story reflected in these opposites. Mrs. Goodman ends the minilesson by asking students to look for opposites in other stories they read.

After they finish reading the book, students have a read-around in which they select and read aloud favorite passages to the class. Then students make a quilt to probe the themes in the story: Each student prepares a construction paper quilt square with an illustration and several sentences of text. One quilt square is shown below. The students decide to use white, gray, and black for most of the quilt squares to represent the sameness of Jonas’s community, red for the first color Jonas saw, and colors in the center to represent Elsewhere.

Students also choose projects that they will work on individually or in small groups to apply their reading of *The Giver*. One student makes a book box with objects related to the story, and two other students read *Hailstones and Halibut Bones*.

**One Square for a Quilt on The Giver**

![Quilt Square](image)

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*rules—anarchy*  
*families—family units*  
*stirrings—the pill*  
*memories—no memories*
(O’Neill, 1989) and then write their own collection of color poetry. One student makes an open-mind portrait of Jonas to show his thoughts the night he decided to escape with Gabe. Some students read other books with similar themes or other books by Lois Lowry, including Gathering Blue (2000), and they share their books with the class during a book talk. Other students write about memories of their own lives. They use the writing process to draft, refine, and publish their writing. They share their published pieces at a class meeting at the end of the unit.

The reading process that Mrs. Goodman uses represents a significant shift in thinking about what people do as they read. Mrs. Goodman understands that readers construct meaning as they negotiate the texts they are reading, and that they use their life and literature experiences and knowledge of written language as they read. She knows that it is quite common for two people to read the same story and come away with different interpretations, and that their understanding of the story will depend on what has happened in their own lives. Meaning does not exist on the pages of the book readers are reading; instead, comprehension is created through the interaction between readers and the texts they are reading.

The reading process involves a series of stages during which readers construct interpretations as they read and respond to the text. The term text refers to all reading materials—stories, maps, newspapers, cereal boxes, textbooks, and so on; it is not limited to basal reader textbooks. The writing process is a similar recursive process involving a variety of activities as students gather and organize ideas, draft their compositions, revise and edit the drafts, and, finally, publish their writings.

Reading and writing have been thought of as opposites: Readers decoded or deciphered written language, and writers encoded or produced written language. Then researchers began to note similarities between reading and writing and talked of both of them as processes. Now reading and writing are viewed as parallel processes of meaning construction, and we understand that readers and writers use similar strategies for making meaning with text.

In a balanced literacy program, teachers use the reading and writing processes to organize their instruction and students’ reading and writing experiences. The feature on page 47 shows how the reading and writing processes fit into a balanced program. As you continue reading this chapter, you will learn more about the ideas presented in the feature.

**The Reading Process**

Reading is a process in which readers comprehend and construct meaning. During reading, the meaning does not go from the page to readers. Instead, reading is a complex negotiation among the text, readers, and their purpose for reading that is shaped by many factors:

- Readers’ knowledge about the topic
- Readers’ knowledge about reading and about written language

Part 1  What Is a Balanced Approach to Literacy Instruction?
### How the Reading and Writing Processes Fit Into a Balanced Literacy Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>Teachers use the five-stage reading process to teach reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phonics and Other Skills</strong></td>
<td>Teachers teach phonics and other skills during the exploring stage of the reading process and during the editing stage of the writing process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Teachers teach strategies during the reading and writing processes, and students apply these strategies as they read and write.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>Students learn vocabulary as they read, and teachers involve students in vocabulary activities during the exploring stage of the reading process.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehension</strong></td>
<td>Making meaning is at the heart of both the reading and writing processes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Literature</strong></td>
<td>Students use the reading process as they read stories in literature focus units, literature circles, and reading workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content-Area Study</strong></td>
<td>Students use the reading process as they read informational books and content-area textbooks, and they use the writing process as they create projects during content-area units.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oral Language</strong></td>
<td>Students use talk in both the reading and writing processes to activate background knowledge, clarify their understanding, and share ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Teachers use the five-stage writing process to teach students to write narrative, expository, poetic, and persuasive compositions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
<td>Students focus on correcting spelling errors in the editing stage of the writing process because they learn that conventional spelling is a courtesy to readers.</td>
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</table>

- The language community to which readers belong
- The match between readers’ language and the language used in the text
- Readers’ culturally based expectations about reading
- Readers’ expectations about reading based on their previous experiences (Weaver, 1988).

Teachers involve students in a series of activities as they guide and support students’ construction of meaning during the reading process. These activities serve different purposes and can be organized into five stages or steps: prereading, reading, responding, exploring, and applying. Figure 2–1 presents an overview of these stages.
### Figure 2-1  Key Features of the Reading Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1: Prereading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Set purposes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connect to prior personal experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connect to prior literary experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connect to thematic units or special interests.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Make predictions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Preview the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consult the index to locate information.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Stage 2: Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Make predictions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Apply skills and strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Read independently; with a partner; using shared reading or guided reading; or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen to the text read aloud.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read the illustrations, charts, and diagrams.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read the entire text from beginning to end.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read one or more sections of text to learn specific information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Take notes.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Stage 3: Responding</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Write in a reading log.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participate in a grand conversation or instructional conversation.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Stage 4: Exploring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reread and think more deeply about the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Make connections with personal experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Make connections with other literary experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Examine the author’s craft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identify memorable quotes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learn new vocabulary words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participate in minilessons on reading procedures, concepts, strategies, and skills.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stage 5: Applying</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Construct projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use information in thematic units.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connect with related books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflect on their interpretation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Value the reading experience.</td>
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### Stage 1: Prereading

The reading process does not begin as readers open a book and read the first sentence; on the contrary, the first stage is preparing to read. In the vignette, Mrs. Goodman developed her students’ background knowledge and stimulated their interest in *The Giver* as they brainstormed lists and talked about how wonderful life would be in a “perfect” world. As readers prepare to read, they activate background knowledge, set purposes, and plan for reading.

**Activating Background Knowledge.** Readers activate their background knowledge, or schemata, about the text they plan to read. They make connections to personal experiences, to literary experiences, or to thematic units in the classroom. The topic of the book, the title, the author, the genre, an illustration, a comment someone
makes about the text, or something else may trigger this activation, but for readers to make meaning with the text, schemata must be activated.

**Setting Purposes.** The two overarching purposes for reading are pleasure and information: When students read for pleasure or enjoyment, they read aesthetically, to be carried into the world of the text, and when they read to locate information or for directions about how to do something, they read efferently (Rosenblatt, 1978). Often readers use a combination of purposes as they read, but usually one purpose is more important to the reading experience than the other. For example, when students pick up *The Sweetest Fig* (1993), one of Chris Van Allsburg’s picture-book fantasies, their primary purpose is enjoyment. They want to experience the story, but at the same time, they search for the white dog, a trademark that Van Allsburg includes in all of his books, and they compare this book with others of his they that have read. As they search for the white dog or make comparisons, they add efferent purposes to their primarily aesthetic reading experience.

Purpose setting is directed by the teacher in basal reading programs and literature focus units, but in reading workshop, students set their own purposes because everyone is reading different self-selected books. For teacher-directed purpose setting, teachers explain how students are expected to read and what they will do after reading. The goal of teacher-directed purpose setting is to help students learn how to set personally relevant purposes when they are reading independently (Blanton, Wood, & Moorman, 1990). Students should always have a purpose for reading, whether they are reading aesthetically or efferently, whether reading a text for the first time or the tenth. Readers are more successful when they have a single purpose for reading the entire selection. A single purpose is more effective than multiple purposes, and sustaining a single purpose is more effective than presenting students with a series of purposes as they read.

When readers have purposes for reading, their comprehension of the selection is enhanced in three ways, whether teachers provide the purpose or students set their own purpose (Blanton et al., 1990). First of all, the purpose guides students’ reading. Having a purpose provides motivation and direction for reading, as well as a mechanism for monitoring the reading. As they monitor their reading, students ask themselves whether they are fulfilling their purpose.

Second, setting a purpose activates a plan for readers to use while reading. Purpose setting causes students to draw on background knowledge, consider strategies they might use as they read, and think about the structure of the text they are reading. When students have a purpose for reading, they are better able to identify important information as they read. Teachers direct students’ attention to relevant concepts as they set purposes for reading and show them how to connect the concepts they are reading about to their prior knowledge about a topic.

Students read differently depending on the purpose for reading, and the instructional procedures that teachers use also vary according to the purpose for reading. When students are reading stories, teachers might use the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) to help students predict and then read to confirm or reject their predictions, or have students create story maps to focus their attention on plot, characters, or another element of story structure. When students are reading informational books and content-area textbooks, teachers might use an anticipation guide to activate prior knowledge, or use cubing to explore a concept from different viewpoints.

In contrast to teacher-directed purpose setting, students set their own purposes for reading during literature circles, reading workshop, and at other times when they choose their own books to read. Often they choose materials that are intrinsically interesting or that describe something they want to learn more about. As students gain
experience in reading, identify favorite authors, and learn about genre, they acquire other criteria to use in choosing books and setting purposes for reading. When teachers conference with students, they often ask them about their purposes for reading and why they choose particular books to read.

Planning for Reading. Students often preview the reading selection during the pre-reading stage: They look through the selection and check its length, the reading difficulty, and the illustrations to judge the general suitability of the selection for them as readers. Previewing serves an important function as students connect their prior knowledge, identify their purpose for reading, and take their first look at the selection. Teachers set the guidelines by explaining how the book will be read—independently, in small groups, or as a class—and setting the schedule for reading. Setting the schedule is especially important when students are reading a chapter book. Often teachers and students work together to create a 2-, 3-, or 4-week schedule for reading and responding and then write the schedule on a calendar to which students can refer.

Students make other types of plans depending on the type of selection they will read. Those who are preparing to read stories, for instance, make predictions about the characters and events in the story. Students often base their predictions on the title of the selection and the illustration on the cover of the book or on the first page. If they have read other books by the same author or other selections in the same genre, students also use this information in making their predictions. Sometimes students share their predictions as they talk about the selection, and at other times they write and draw their predictions as the first entry in their reading logs.

When students are preparing to read informational books, they preview the selection by flipping through the pages and noting section headings, illustrations, diagrams, and other charts. Sometimes they examine the table of contents to see how the book is organized, or consult the index to locate specific information they want to read. They may also notice unfamiliar terminology and other words they can check in the glossary, ask a classmate or the teacher about, or look up in a dictionary. Teachers also use anticipation guides, prereading plans, and the survey step of the SQ3R study strategy as they introduce informational books and content-area textbooks.

Students often make notes in learning logs as they explore informational books and content-area textbooks. They do quickwrites to activate prior knowledge and explore the concepts to be presented in the selection, write down important terminology, and make graphic organizers they will complete as they read. As they move through the remaining stages in the reading process, students add other information to their learning logs.

Stage 2: Reading

Students read the book or other selection in the reading stage. To understand what they are reading, they use their knowledge of decoding and word identification, high-frequency words, strategies, skills, and vocabulary. Fluent readers are better able to understand what they are reading because they identify most words automatically and use decoding skills when necessary. They also apply their knowledge of the structure of text as they create meaning. They continue reading as long as what they are reading fits the meaning they are constructing. When something doesn’t make sense, readers slow down, back up, and reread until they are making meaning again.

Outside of school, readers usually read silently and independently. Sometimes, however, people listen as someone else reads. For example, young children often sit in a parent’s lap and look at the illustrations as the parent reads a picture book aloud. Adults also listen to books read aloud on cassette tapes. In the classroom, teachers and students use five types of reading; independent reading, buddy reading, guided reading, shared
reading, and reading aloud to students. Teachers choose the amount of scaffolding students need according to the purpose for reading, students’ reading levels, and the number of available copies of the text.

**Independent Reading.** When students read independently, they read silently by themselves, for their own purposes, and at their own pace (Hornsby, Sukarna, & Parry, 1986). For students to read independently, the reading selections must be at their reading level. Primary-grade students often read the featured selection independently during literature focus units, but this is often after they have already read the selection once or twice with assistance from the teacher.

In the upper grades, many students read chapter books independently, but less capable readers may not be able to read the featured book independently. Students also independently read related books at varied reading levels from the text set as part of these units.

During reading workshop, students read independently; even first graders can participate by rereading familiar books as well as new books at their reading level. Because students choose the books they want to read, they need to learn how to choose books that are written at an appropriate level of difficulty.

Independent reading is an important part of a balanced reading program because it is the most authentic type of reading. This type of reading is what most people do when they read, and this is the way students develop a love of reading and come to think of themselves as readers. The reading selection, however, must be at an appropriate level of difficulty so that students can read it independently. Otherwise, teachers use one of the other four types of reading to support students and make it possible for them to participate in the reading experience.

**Buddy Reading.** In buddy reading, students read or reread a selection with a classmate. Sometimes students read with buddies because it is an enjoyable social activity, and sometimes they read together to help each other. Often students can read selections together that neither student could read individually. Buddy reading is a good alternative to independent reading because students can choose books they want to read and then read at their own pace. By working together, they are often able to figure out unfamiliar words and talk out comprehension problems.

As teachers introduce buddy reading, they show students how to read with buddies and how to support each other as they read. Students take turns reading aloud to each other or read in unison. They often stop and help each other identify an unfamiliar word or take a minute or two at the end of each page to talk about what they have read. Buddy reading is a valuable way of providing the practice that beginning readers need to become fluent readers; it is also an effective way to work with students with special learning needs and students who are learning English. However, unless the teacher has explained the approach and taught students how to work collaboratively, buddy reading often deteriorates into the stronger of the two buddies reading aloud to the other student, and that is not the intention of this type of reading.

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**Nurturing English Learners**

**What should I do if my students can’t read the basal reader?**

If your EL students can’t read the basal reader (or any other book, for that matter), they need a different book—one at their instructional level. Sometimes teachers read a textbook aloud to students when they can’t read it themselves, but that isn’t effective reading instruction because students need to be doing the reading themselves. Before abandoning the basal reader, however, you should try several things to make a book more accessible: Build students’ background knowledge, introduce new vocabulary before reading, do a text walk to preview the reading assignment, or read the first page aloud to get students started. If none of these strategies work, though, it’s time to find a more appropriate book for your English learners to read.
**Guided Reading.** Teachers use guided reading to work with groups of four or five students who are reading at the same level (Clay, 1991). They select a book that students can read at their instructional level, with approximately 90–94% accuracy. Teachers support students’ reading and their use of reading strategies during guided reading (Depree & Iversen, 1996; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Students do the actual reading themselves, although the teacher may read aloud with children to get them started on the first page or two. Young children often murmur the words softly as they read, which helps the teacher keep track of students’ reading and the strategies they are using. Older, more fluent readers usually read silently during guided reading.

Guided reading lessons usually last 25 to 30 minutes. When the students arrive for the small-group lesson, they often reread, either individually or with a buddy, familiar books used in previous guided reading lessons. For the new guided reading lesson, students read books that they have not read before. Beginning readers usually read small picture books at one sitting, but older students who are reading longer chapter books take several days to several weeks to read their books.

Teachers observe students as they read during guided reading lessons. They spend a few minutes observing each student, sitting either in front of or beside the student. They watch for evidence of strategy use and confirm the student’s attempts to identify words and solve reading problems. Teachers take notes about their observations and use the information in deciding what minilessons to teach and what books to choose for students to read.

Teachers also take running records of one or two students during each guided reading lesson and use this information as part of their assessment. Teachers verify that
Chapter 2  Teaching the Reading and Writing Processes

the books students are reading are at their instructional level and that they are making expected progress toward increasingly more difficult levels of books.

**Shared Reading.** Teachers use *shared reading* to read aloud books and other texts that children can’t read independently (Holdaway, 1979). Often primary-grade teachers use big books or texts written on charts so that both small groups and whole-class groups can see the text and read along with the teacher. Teachers model what fluent readers do as they involve students in enjoyable reading activities (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). After the text is read several times, teachers use it to teach phonics concepts and high-frequency words. Students can also read small versions of the book independently or with partners, and the pattern or structure used in the text can be used for writing activities (Slaughter, 1993).

Shared reading is part of a balanced literacy program for children in the primary grades. Teachers read aloud books that are appropriate for children’s interest level but too difficult for them to read for themselves. The books chosen for shared reading are available in both big-book and small-book formats and are close to children’s reading level, but still beyond their ability to read independently. As an instructional strategy, shared reading differs from reading aloud to students because students see the text as the teacher reads. Students often join in the reading of predictable refrains and rhyming words, and after listening to the teacher read the text several times, they often remember enough of the text to read along with the teacher.

Shared reading is also used to read novels with older students when the books are too difficult for students to read independently. Teachers distribute copies of the book to all students, and students follow along as the teacher reads aloud. Sometimes students take turns reading sections aloud, but the goal is not for everyone to have a turn reading. Students who want to read and are fluent enough to keep the reading meaningful volunteer to read. Often the teacher begins reading, and when a student wants to take over the reading, he or she begins reading aloud with the teacher. Then the teacher drops off and the student continues reading. After a paragraph or a page, another student joins in and the first student drops off. Many teachers call this technique “popcorn reading.”

**Reading Aloud to Students.** In kindergarten through eighth grade, teachers read aloud to students for a variety of purposes each day. During literature focus units, for example, teachers read aloud featured selections that are appropriate for students’ interest level but too difficult for students to read themselves. Sometimes it is also appropriate to read the featured selection aloud before distributing copies of it for students to read with buddies or independently. There are many benefits of reading aloud: introducing vocabulary, modeling comprehension strategies, and increasing students’ motivation (Rasinski, 2003).

Reading aloud to students is not the same as “round-robin” reading, a practice that is no longer recommended in which students take turns reading paragraphs aloud as the rest of the class listens. Round-robin reading has been used for reading chapter books aloud, but it is more commonly used for reading chapters in content-area textbooks, even though there are more effective ways to teach content-area information and read textbooks.

Round-robin reading is no longer recommended, for several reasons (Opitz & Rasinski, 1998). First, if students are going to read aloud, they should read fluently. When less capable readers read, their reading is often difficult to listen to and is embarrassing to them personally. Less capable readers need reading practice, but performing in front of the entire class is not the most productive way for them to practice. Better techniques are for them to read with buddies and in small groups during guided
Figure 2–2  A Comparison of the Five Types of Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Reading</strong></td>
<td>Students read a text on their own. There is no teacher scaffolding when students read independently.</td>
<td>• Students may need assistance to read the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Limitations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develops responsibility and ownership.</td>
<td>• Little teacher involvement and control.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-selection of texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Experience is more authentic.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buddy Reading</strong></td>
<td>Two students read or reread a text together.</td>
<td>• Teacher's involvement is limited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Limitations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaboration between students.</td>
<td>• Less teacher control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students assist each other.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use to reread familiar texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develops reading fluency.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students talk and share interpretations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guided Reading</strong></td>
<td>Teacher supports students as they apply reading strategies and skills to read a text.</td>
<td>• Multiple copies of text needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Limitations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teaches skills and strategies.</td>
<td>• Teacher controls the reading experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher provides direction and scaffolding.</td>
<td>• Some students may not be interested in the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities to model reading strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Useful with unfamiliar texts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared Reading</strong></td>
<td>Teacher reads aloud while students follow along using individual copies of book, a class chart, or a big book.</td>
<td>• Multiple copies, a class chart, or a big book needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Limitations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access to books students could not read themselves.</td>
<td>• Text may not be appropriate for all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher models fluent reading.</td>
<td>• Students may not be interested in the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities to model reading strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students practice fluent reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develops a community of readers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Aloud to Students</strong></td>
<td>Teacher or other fluent reader reads aloud to students. Teacher scaffolding is greatest when reading aloud.</td>
<td>• No opportunity for students themselves to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Limitations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access to books students could not read themselves.</td>
<td>• Text may not be appropriate for all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reader models fluent reading.</td>
<td>• Students may not be interested in the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities to model reading strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develops a community of readers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Useful when only one copy of text is available.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

reading. Second, if the selection is appropriate for students to read aloud, they should be reading independently. Third, round-robin reading is often tedious and boring, and students lose interest in reading. In fact, students often follow along only just before it is their turn to read.

A comparison of the types of reading is outlined in Figure 2–2. In the vignette at the beginning of this chapter, Mrs. Goodman used a combination of these approaches. She used shared reading as she read the first chapter aloud, with students following in their own copies of The Giver. Later, students read together in small groups, with a buddy, or independently. As teachers plan their instructional programs, they include reading aloud to students, teacher-led student reading, and independent reading each day.

Part 1  What Is a Balanced Approach to Literacy Instruction?
Stage 3: Responding

Students respond to what they read and continue to negotiate the meaning. This stage reflects the reader response theory. Two ways that students make tentative and exploratory comments immediately after reading are by writing in reading logs and participating in grand or instructional conversations.

Writing in Reading Logs. Students write and draw their thoughts and feelings about what they have read in reading logs. Rosenblatt (1978) explains that as students write about what they have read, they unravel their thinking and, at the same time, elaborate on and clarify their responses. When students read informational books, they sometimes write in reading logs, as they do after reading stories and poems, but at other times they make notes of important information or draw charts and diagrams to use in thematic units.

Students usually make reading logs by stapling together 10 to 12 sheets of paper at the beginning of a literature focus unit or reading workshop. At the beginning of a thematic unit, students make learning logs to write in during the unit. They decorate the covers, keeping with the theme of the unit, write entries related to their reading, and make notes related to what they are learning in minilessons. Teachers monitor students’ entries during the unit, reading and often responding to students’ entries. Because these journals are learning tools, teachers rarely correct students’ spellings; they focus their responses on the students’ ideas, but they expect students to spell the title of the book and the names of characters accurately. At the end of the unit, teachers review students’ work and often grade the journals based on whether students completed all the entries and on the quality of the ideas in their entries.

Participating in Discussions. Students also talk about the text with classmates in grand conversations and instructional conversations. Peterson and Eeds (1990) explain that in grand conversations, students share their personal responses and tell what they liked about the text. After sharing personal reactions, they shift the focus to “puzzle over what the author has written and . . . share what it is they find revealed” (p. 61). Often students make connections between the text and their own lives or between the text and other literature they have read. If they are reading a chapter book, they also make predictions about what will happen in the next chapter.

Teachers often share their ideas in grand conversations, but they act as interested participants, not leaders. The talk is primarily among the students, but teachers ask questions regarding things they are genuinely interested in learning more about and share information in response to questions that students ask. In the past, many discussions have been “gentle inquisitions” during which students recited answers to factual questions teachers asked about books that students were reading (Eeds & Wells, 1989); teachers asked these questions to determine whether students read and understood

Nurturing English Learners

How can I check my EL students’ comprehension?

One of the best opportunities to monitor students’ comprehension is during the responding stage of the reading process: The comments that students make in grand conversations and instructional conversations are a good check on their understanding of what they have read. Students clarify misconceptions and deepen their comprehension during these conversations as they listen to their classmates’ comments and the teacher’s clarifications. Too often, teachers rely on students’ written work as a comprehension check, and EL students’ limited writing skills may give a false impression that they don’t understand. In addition, if students write in reading logs after participating in a conversation, the quality of their entries will improve because the conversation serves as a warm-up activity.
Stage 4: Exploring

Students go back into the text to explore it more analytically in the exploring stage. This stage is more teacher directed than the other stages; it reflects the teacher-centered theory. Students reread the selection, examine the author’s craft, and focus on words from the selection. Teachers also present minilessons on procedures, concepts, strategies, and skills.

**Rereading the Selection.** As students reread the selection, they think again about what they have read. Each time they reread a selection, students benefit in specific ways (Yaden, 1988): They deepen their comprehension and make further connections between the selection and their own lives or between the selection and other literature they have read. Students often reread a basal reader story, a picture book, or excerpts from a chapter book several times. If the teacher used shared reading to read the selection with students in the reading stage, students might reread it with a buddy once or twice, read it with their parents, and, after these experiences, read it independently.

**Examining the Author’s Craft.** Teachers plan exploring activities to focus students’ attention on the structure of text and the literary language that authors use. Students notice opposites in the story, use story boards to sequence the events in the story, and make story maps to highlight the plot, characters, and other elements of story structure. Another way students learn about the structure of stories is by writing books based on the selection they have read. In sequels, students tell what happens to the characters after the story ends. Stories such as *Jumanji* (Van Allsburg, 1981), a fantasy about a board game that comes to life, suggest another episode at the end of the story and invite students to create a sequel. Students also write innovations, or new versions, for the selection, in which they follow the same sentence pattern but substitute their own ideas; for example, first graders often write innovations for Bill Martin Jr.’s *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (1983) and *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* (1992), and older students write innovations for *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (Viorst, 1977).

Teachers share information about the author of the featured selection and introduce other books by the same author. Sometimes teachers help students make comparisons among several books written by a particular author. They also provide information about the illustrator and the illustration techniques used in the book. To focus on literary language, students often reread favorite excerpts in read-arounds and write memorable quotes on quilts that they create.
Focusing on Words and Sentences. Teachers and students add “important” words to word walls after reading and post these word walls in the classroom. Students refer to the word walls when they write, using these words for a variety of activities during the exploring stage. Students make word clusters and posters to highlight particular words. They also make word chains, do word sorts, create semantic feature analysis charts to analyze related words, and play word games.

Teachers also choose words from word walls to use in minilessons on a variety of concepts. For example, words can be used to teach phonics skills, such as beginning sounds, rhyming words, vowel patterns, r-controlled vowels, and syllabication. Other concepts, such as root words and affixes, compound words, contractions, and metaphors, can also be taught using examples from word walls. Teachers may decide to teach a minilesson on a particular concept, such as words with the -ly suffix, because five or six words representing the concept are listed on the word wall.

Students also locate “important” sentences in books they read; these sentences might be important because of figurative language, because they express the theme or illustrate a character trait, or simply because students like them. Students often copy the sentences onto sentence strips to display in the classroom and use in other exploring activities. Also, students can copy the sentences in their reading logs.

Teaching Minilessons. Teachers present minilessons on reading procedures, concepts, strategies, and skills during the exploring stage. In a minilesson, teachers introduce the topic and make connections between the topic and examples in the featured selection students have read; in this way, students are better able to connect the information teachers are presenting with their own reading process. In the vignette, Mrs. Goodman presented minilessons on the visualization strategy and on root words and affixes using examples from The Giver.

Stage 5: Applying

During the applying stage, readers extend their comprehension, reflect on their understanding, and value the reading experience. Building on the initial and exploratory responses they made immediately after reading, students create projects. These projects can involve reading, writing, talk and drama, art, or research and can take many forms, including murals, readers theatre scripts, and class collaborations and reports, as well as reading other books by the same author. Usually students choose which projects they will do rather than having the entire class do the same project. Sometimes, however, the class decides to work together on a project. In Mrs. Goodman’s class, for example, some students wrote color poems, and others read books and wrote about memories. A list of projects is presented in Figure 2–3. The purpose of these activities is for students to expand the ideas they read about, create a personal interpretation, and value the reading experience.

The Writing Process

The focus in the writing process is on what students think and do as they write. The five stages are prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. The labeling and numbering of the stages do not mean that the writing process is a linear series of neatly packaged categories; rather, research has shown that the process involves recurring cycles, and labeling is simply an aid to identifying and discussing writing activities. In the classroom, the stages merge and recur as students write. The key features of each stage in the writing process are shown in Figure 2–4.
### Visual Projects
- Make a diagram or model using information from a book.
- Create a collage to represent the theme of a book.
- Decorate a coffee can or a potato chip can with scenes from a book and fill it with quotes from the book.
- Construct a shoebox or other miniature scene of an episode for a favorite book (or use a larger box to construct a diorama).
- Make illustrations for each important event in a book.
- Make a map of a book’s setting or something related to the book.
- Construct a mobile illustrating a book.
- Prepare bookmarks for a book and distribute them to classmates.
- Prepare illustrations of characters for pocket props to use in retelling the story.
- Prepare illustrations of the events in the story for clothesline props to use in retelling the story.
- Experiment with art techniques related to the mood of a poem.
- Make a mural or the book.
- Make a book box and decorate it with scenes from a book. Collect objects, poems, and illustrations that represent characters, events, or images from the book to add to the box.

### Writing Projects
- Write a letter about a book to a classmate, friend, or pen pal.
- Write another episode or a sequel for a book.
- Create a newspaper with news stories and advertisements based on characters and episodes from a book.
- Write a simulated letter from one book character to another.
- Copy five “quotable quotes” from a book and arrange them on a poster.
- Make a scrapbook about the book. Label all items in the scrapbook and write a short description of the most interesting ones.
- Write a poem related to the book.
- Write a life line related to a character or the author.
- Write a business letter to a company or organization requesting information on a topic related to the book.
- Keep a simulated journal from the perspective of one character from the book.
- Write a dictionary defining specialized vocabulary in a book.
- Write the story from another point of view.
- Make a class collaboration book.
- Create a PowerPoint presentation about the book.

### Stage 1: Prewriting
Prewriting is the “getting ready to write” stage. The traditional notion that writers have a topic completely thought out and ready to flow onto the page is ridiculous: If writers wait for ideas to fully develop, they may wait forever. Instead, writers begin tentatively—talking, reading, writing—to see what they know and in what direction they want to go. Prewriting has probably been the most neglected stage in the writing process; however, it is as crucial to writers as a warm-up is to athletes. Murray (1982) believes that at least 70% of writing time should be spent in prewriting. During the prewriting stage, students choose a topic, consider purpose, audience, and form, and gather and organize ideas for writing. They also learn about the qualities of good writing.
Figure 2-3 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Projects</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Read another book by the same author or illustrator.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read another book on the same theme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read another book in the same genre.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read another book about the same character.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read and compare another version of the same story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Tape-record a book or an excerpt from it to place in the listening center.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Read aloud to the class a poem that complements the book.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Tape-record background music and sound effects to accompany a book.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Drama and Talk Projects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Give a readers theatre presentation of a book.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Write a script and present a play about a book.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dress as a character from the book and answer questions from classmates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Write and present a rap about the book.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Videotape a commercial for a book.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interview someone in the community who is knowledgeable about a topic related to the book.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literary Analysis Projects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Make a chart to compare the story with another version or with the film version of the story.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Make an open-mind portrait to probe the thoughts of one character.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Make a Venn diagram to compare two characters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Make a plot diagram of the book.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Research Projects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Research the author of the book on the Internet and compile the information on a poster.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research a topic related to the book using book and Internet resources and present the information in a report.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Social Action Projects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper on a topic related to the book.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get involved in a community project related to the book.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Choosing a Topic. Choosing a topic for writing can be a stumbling block for students who have become dependent on teachers to supply topics. For years, teachers have supplied topics by suggesting gimmicky story starters and relieving students of the “burden” of topic selection. These “creative” topics often stymied students, who were forced to write on topics they knew little about or were not interested in. Graves (1976) calls this situation “writing welfare.” Instead, students need to choose their own writing topics.

If some students complain that they don’t know what to write about, teachers can help them brainstorm a list of three, four, or five topics and then identify the one topic they are most interested in and know the most about. Students who feel they cannot generate any writing topics are often surprised that they have so many options available. Then, through prewriting activities, students talk, draw, read, and even write to develop information about their topics.

Asking students to choose their own topics for writing does not mean that teachers never give writing assignments; teachers do provide general guidelines. They may specify the writing form, and at other times they may establish the function, but students should choose their own content.
Part 1  What Is a Balanced Approach to Literacy Instruction?

**Figure 2-4  Key Features of the Writing Process**

**Stage 1: Prewriting**
- Write on topics based on personal experiences.
- Engage in rehearsal activities before writing.
- Identify the audience who will read the composition.
- Identify the purpose of the writing activity.
- Choose an appropriate form for the composition based on audience and purpose.

**Stage 2: Drafting**
- Write a rough draft.
- Emphasize content rather than mechanics.

**Stage 3: Revising**
- Reread the composition.
- Share writing in writing groups.
- Participate constructively in discussions about classmates’ writing.
- Make changes in the composition to reflect the reactions and comments of both teacher and classmates.
- Between the first and final drafts, make substantive rather than only minor changes.

**Stage 4: Editing**
- Proofread the composition.
- Help proofread classmates’ compositions.
- Identify and correct mechanical errors.
- Meet with the teacher for a final editing.

**Stage 5: Publishing**
- Publish writing in an appropriate form.
- Share the finished writing with an appropriate audience.

**Considering Purpose.** As students prepare to write, they need to think about the purpose of their writing: Are they writing to entertain? to inform? to persuade? Setting the purpose for writing is just as important as setting the purpose for reading, because purpose influences decisions students make about audience and form.

**Considering Audience.** Students may write primarily for themselves—to express and clarify their own ideas and feelings—or they may write for others. Possible audiences include classmates, younger children, parents, foster grandparents, children’s authors, and pen pals. Other audiences are more distant and less well known. For example, students write letters to businesses to request information, articles for the local newspaper, or stories and poems for publication in literary magazines.

Children’s writing is influenced by their sense of audience. Britton and his colleagues (1975) define audience awareness as “the manner in which the writer expresses a relationship with the reader in respect to the writer’s understanding” (pp. 65–66). Students adapt their writing to fit their audience, just as they vary their speech to meet the needs of the people who are listening to them.

**Considering Form.** One of the most important considerations is the form the writing will take: a story? a letter? a poem? a journal entry? A writing activity could be handled in any one of these ways. As part of a science unit on hermit crabs, for instance, students could write a story or poem about a hermit crab, write a report on hermit crabs with information about how they obtain shells to live in, or write a
description of the pet hermit crabs in the classroom. There is a wide variety of writing forms or genres that children learn to use during the elementary grades; a list of six genres is presented in Figure 2–5. Students need to experiment with a wide variety of writing forms and explore the potential of these functions and formats.

Through reading and writing, students develop a strong sense of these genres and how they are structured. Langer (1985) found that by third grade, students responded in distinctly different ways to story- and report-writing assignments; they organized the writing differently and included varied kinds of information and elaboration. Similarly, Hidi and Hildyard (1983) found that elementary students could differentiate between stories and persuasive essays. Because children are clarifying the distinctions between various writing genres during the elementary grades, it is important that teachers use the correct terminology and not label all children’s writing “stories.”

Decisions about purpose, audience, and form influence each other. For example, if the purpose is to entertain, an appropriate form might be a story, script, or poem—and these three forms look very different on a piece of paper. Whereas a story is written in the traditional block format, scripts and poems have unique page arrangements. Scripts are written with the character’s name and a colon, and the dialogue is set off. Action and dialogue, rather than description, carry the story line in a script. In contrast, poems have unique formatting considerations, and words are used judiciously. Each word and phrase is chosen to convey a maximum amount of information.

**Gathering and Organizing Ideas.** Students engage in activities to gather and organize ideas for writing. Graves (1983) calls what writers do to prepare for writing “rehearsal” activities. Rehearsal activities take many forms, including reading, talking, and drawing. Through these activities, students develop ideas and collect the words to express them. Sometimes teachers brainstorm words with English learners and other students with limited vocabularies and make a list on the chalkboard that students can refer to as they write.

Teachers also encourage students to draw weblike diagrams called **clusters** or another **graphic organizer** to visually display how they will format their writing. For a cluster, students write the topic in a center circle and then draw rays out from the circle for each main idea; then they add details and other information on additional rays drawn from each main idea. Clusters work best for descriptive writing; other diagrams with boxes, lines, and circles are suitable for other genres. When students prepare to write a story, for example, it is more effective for them to use a three-part diagram with sections for the beginning, middle, and end of their stories; for a cause-and-effect essay, a two-part diagram with a section for the cause and another for the effect is a good choice. Through many, many writing experiences, students learn to design a graphic that best fits their writing plans.

**Stage 2: Drafting**

Students write and refine their compositions through a series of drafts. During the drafting stage, they focus on getting their ideas down on paper. Because writers don’t begin writing with their pieces already composed in their minds, students begin with tentative ideas developed through prewriting activities. The drafting stage is the time to pour out ideas, with little concern about spelling, punctuation, and other mechanical errors.

Students skip every other line when they write their rough drafts to leave space for revisions. They use arrows to move sections of text, cross-outs to delete sections, and scissors and tape to cut apart and rearrange text, just as adult writers do. They write
## Writing Genres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive Writing</strong></td>
<td>Students observe carefully and choose precise language. They take notice of sensory details and create comparisons (metaphors and similes) to make their writing more powerful.</td>
<td>Character sketches, Comparisons, Descriptive essays, Descriptive sentences, Five-senses poems, Found poems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expository Writing</strong></td>
<td>Students collect and synthesize information. This writing is objective; reports are the most common type. Students use expository writing to give directions, sequence steps, compare one thing to another, explain causes and effects, or describe problems and solutions.</td>
<td>Alphabet books, Autobiographies, Biographies, Cubes, Data charts, Directions, Posters, Reports, Simulated journals, Summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Journals and Letters</strong></td>
<td>Students write to themselves and to specific, known audiences. Their writing is personal and often less formal than other genres. They share news, explore new ideas, and record notes. Students learn the special formatting that letters and envelopes require.</td>
<td>Business letters, Courtesy letters, Double-entry journals, E-mail messages, Friendly letters, Learning logs, Personal journals, Postcards, Simulated journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Narrative Writing</strong></td>
<td>Students retell familiar stories, develop sequels for stories they have read, write stories about events in their own lives, and create original stories. They include a beginning, middle, and end in the narratives to develop the plot and characters.</td>
<td>Original short stories, Personal narratives, Retellings of stories, Sequels to stories, Story scripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persuasive Writing</strong></td>
<td>Persuasion is winning someone to your viewpoint or cause using appeals to logic, moral character, and emotion. Students present their position clearly and support it with examples and evidence.</td>
<td>Advertisements, Book and movie reviews, Editorials, Letters to the editor, Persuasive essays, Persuasive letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poetry Writing</strong></td>
<td>Students create word pictures and play with rhyme and other stylistic devices as they create poems. As students experiment with poetry, they learn that poetic language is vivid and powerful but concise, and they learn that poems can be arranged in different ways on a page.</td>
<td>Acrostic poems, Cinquain poems, Color poems, Diamante poems, Free verse, Haiku, “I wish” poems, “If I were . . .” poems, Poems for two voices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
only on one side of a sheet of paper so it can be cut apart or rearranged. As computers become more available in classrooms, revising, with all its moving, adding, and deleting of text, will be much easier. However, for students who handwrite their compositions, the wide spacing is crucial. Teachers might make small x’s on every other line of students’ papers as a reminder to skip lines as they draft their compositions.

Students label their drafts by writing *Rough Draft* in ink at the top or by using a ROUGH DRAFT stamp. This label indicates to the writer, other students, parents, and administrators that the composition is a draft in which the emphasis is on content, not mechanics; it also explains why the teacher has not graded the paper or marked mechanical errors.

Instead of writing drafts by hand, students can use computers to compose rough drafts, polish their writing, and print out final copies. There are many benefits of using computers for word processing. For example, students are often more motivated to write, and they tend to write longer pieces. Their writing looks neater, and they can use spellcheck programs to identify and correct misspelled words. Even young children can word-process their compositions using Magic Slate and other programs designed for beginning writers.

During drafting, students may need to modify their earlier decisions about purpose, audience, and, especially, the form their writing will take. For example, a composition that began as a story may be transformed into a report, letter, or poem; the new format allows the student to communicate more effectively. The process of modifying earlier decisions continues into the revising stage.

As students write rough drafts, it is important for teachers not to emphasize correct spelling and neatness. In fact, pointing out mechanical errors during the drafting stage sends students a false message that mechanical correctness is more important than content (Sommers, 1982). Later, during editing, students clean up mechanical errors in publishing, and they put their composition into a new, final form.

**Stage 3: Revising**

During the revising stage, writers refine ideas in their compositions. Students often break the writing process cycle as soon as they complete a rough draft, believing that once they have jotted down their ideas, the writing task is complete. Experienced writers, however, know they must turn to others for reactions and revise on the basis of these comments. Revision is not just polishing; it is meeting the needs of readers by adding, substituting, deleting, and rearranging material. *Revision* means “seeing again,” and in this stage, writers see their compositions again with the help of classmates and the teacher. Revising consists of three activities: rereading the rough draft, sharing the rough draft in a writing group, and revising on the basis of feedback.

**Rereading the Rough Draft.** After finishing the rough draft, writers need to distance themselves from it for a day or two, then reread it from a fresh perspective, as a reader...
might. As they reread, students make changes—adding, substituting, deleting, and moving—and place question marks by sections that need work; it is these trouble spots that students ask for help with in their writing groups.

**Sharing in Writing Groups.** Students meet in writing groups to share their compositions with classmates. They respond to the writer’s rough draft and suggest possible revisions. Writing groups provide a scaffold in which teachers and classmates talk about plans and strategies for writing and revising (Applebee & Langer, 1983; Calkins, 1983).

Writing groups can form spontaneously when several students have completed drafts and are ready to share their compositions, or they can be formal groupings with identified leaders. In some classrooms, writing groups form when four or five students finish writing their rough drafts; students gather around a conference table or in a corner of the classroom and take turns reading their rough drafts aloud. Classmates in the group listen and respond, offering compliments and suggestions for revision. Sometimes the teacher joins the writing group, but if the teacher is involved in something else, students work independently.

In other classrooms, the writing groups are assigned; students get together when all students in the group have completed their rough drafts and are ready to share their writing. Sometimes the teacher participates in these groups, providing feedback along with the students. Or, the writing groups can function independently. For these assigned groups, each cluster is made up of four or five students, and a list of groups and their members is posted in the classroom. The teacher puts a star by one student’s name, and that student serves as a group leader. The leader changes every quarter.

**Making Revisions.** Students make four types of changes to their rough drafts: additions, substitutions, deletions, and moves (Faigley & Witte, 1981). As they revise, students might add words, substitute sentences, delete paragraphs, and move phrases. Students often use a blue or red pen to cross out, draw arrows, and write in the space left between the double-spaced lines of their rough drafts so that revisions will show clearly; that way, teachers can see the types of revisions students make by examining their revised rough drafts. Revisions are another gauge of students’ growth as writers.

**Revising Centers.** Many teachers set up revising centers to give students a variety of revision options: They can talk about the ideas in their rough draft with a classmate, examine the organization of their writing, consider their word choice, or check that they have included all required components in the composition. A list of revising centers is shown in Figure 2–6. Teachers introduce these centers as they teach their students about the writing process and the qualities of good writing, and then students work at these centers before or after participating in a writing group. Teachers usually provide a checklist of center options that students put in their writing folders, and then they check off the centers that they complete. Through these center activities, students develop a repertoire of revising strategies, and they personalize their writing process.

**Stage 4: Editing**

Editing is putting the piece of writing into its final form. Until this stage, the focus has been primarily on the content of students’ writing. Once the focus changes to mechanics, students polish their writing by correcting spelling mistakes and other mechanical errors. The goal here is to make the writing “optimally readable” (Smith, 1982, p. 127). Writers who write for readers understand that if their compositions are not readable, they have written in vain because their ideas will never be read.
### Figure 2-6  Revising and Editing Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revising</td>
<td>Rereading</td>
<td>Students reread their rough drafts with a partner and the partner offers compliments and asks questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Word Choice</td>
<td>Students choose 5-10 words in their rough drafts and look for more specific or more powerful words for them using a thesaurus, word walls in the classroom, or suggestions from classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graphic Organizer</td>
<td>Students draw a chart or diagram to illustrate the organization of their compositions, and revise their rough drafts if the organization isn’t effective or the writing isn’t complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highlighting</td>
<td>Students use highlighter pens to mark their rough drafts according to the teacher’s direction. Depending on the skills being taught, students may mark topic sentences, descriptive language, or sensory details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sentence Combining</td>
<td>Students choose a section of their rough drafts with too many short sentences (often signaled by overuse of and) and use sentence combining to improve the flow of the writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Students work with a partner to proofread their writing. They locate misspelled words and use a dictionary to correct them. Students may also check for specific errors in their use of recently taught skills, such as contractions or apostrophes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homophones</td>
<td>Students check their rough drafts for homophone errors (e.g., there–their–they’re), and consulting a chart posted in the center, they correct the errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>Students proofread their writing to check for punctuation marks. They make corrections as needed, and then highlight the punctuation marks in their compositions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capitalization</td>
<td>Students check that each sentence begins with a capital letter, the word I is capitalized, and proper nouns and adjectives are capitalized. After the errors are corrected, students highlight all capitalized letters in the compositions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>Students analyze the sentences in their rough drafts, and then categorize them as simple, compound, complex, or fragment on a chart. Then they make any necessary changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mechanics are the commonly accepted conventions of written Standard English; they consist of capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, usage, and formatting considerations specific to poems, scripts, letters, and other writing genres. The use of these commonly accepted conventions is a courtesy to those who will read the composition.

Students learn mechanical skills best through hands-on editing of their own compositions, not through workbook exercises. When they edit a composition that will be shared with a genuine audience, students are more interested in using mechanical skills correctly so they can communicate effectively. Calkins (1980) compared how teachers in two third-grade classrooms taught punctuation skills. She found that the students in the class who learned punctuation marks as a part of editing could define or explain more marks than the students in the other class, who were taught punctuation skills in a traditional manner, with instruction and practice exercises on each punctuation mark. The results of this research, as well as other studies (Bissex, 1980; Elley,
Barham, Lamb, & Wyllie, 1976; Graves, 1983), suggest that it is more effective to teach mechanical skills as part of the writing process than through practice exercises.

Students move through three activities in the editing stage: getting distance from the composition, proofreading to locate errors, and correcting errors.

**Getting Distance.** Students are more efficient editors if they set the composition aside for a few days before beginning to edit. After working so closely with a piece of writing during drafting and revising, they are too familiar with it to notice many mechanical errors. With the distance gained by waiting a few days, children are better able to approach editing with a fresh perspective and gather the enthusiasm necessary to finish the writing process by making the paper optimally readable.

**Proofreading.** Students proofread their compositions to locate and mark possible errors. Proofreading is a unique type of reading in which students read slowly, word by word, hunting for errors rather than reading quickly for meaning (King, 1985). Concentrating on mechanics is difficult because of our natural inclination to read for meaning; even experienced proofreaders often find themselves reading for meaning and thus overlooking errors that do not inhibit meaning. It is important, therefore, to take time to explain proofreading to students and to demonstrate how it differs from regular reading.

To demonstrate proofreading, teachers copy a piece of writing on the chalkboard or display it on an overhead projector. The teacher reads it several times, each time hunting for a particular type of error. During each reading, the teacher reads the composition slowly, softly pronouncing each word and touching it with a pencil or pen to focus attention on it. The teacher marks possible errors as they are located.

Editing checklists help students focus on particular types of errors. Teachers can develop checklists with two to six items appropriate for the grade level. A first-grade checklist, for example, might have only two items—perhaps one about capital letters at the beginning of sentences and a second about periods at the end of sentences. In contrast, a middle-grade checklist might contain items such as using commas in a series, indenting paragraphs, capitalizing proper nouns and adjectives, and spelling homonyms correctly. Teachers revise the checklist during the school year to focus attention on skills that have recently been taught.

A sample third-grade editing checklist is presented in Figure 2–7. The writer and a classmate work as partners to edit their compositions. First, students proofread their own compositions, searching for errors in each category on the checklist, and, after proofreading, check off each item. After completing the checklist, students sign their names and trade checklists and compositions: Now they become editors and complete each other’s checklist. Having writer and editor sign the checklist helps them to take the activity seriously.

**Correcting Errors.** After students proofread their compositions and locate as many errors as they can, they use red pens to correct the errors independently or with an editor’s assistance. Some errors are easy to correct, some require use of a dictionary, and others involve instruction from the teacher. It is unrealistic to expect students to locate and correct every mechanical error in their compositions; not even published books are always error-free! Once in a while, students may change a correct spelling or punctuation mark and make it incorrect, but they correct far more errors than they create.

Students also work at editing centers to check for and correct specific types of errors. A list of editing centers is also shown in Figure 2–6. Teachers often vary the activities at the center to reflect the types of errors students are making. Students
who continue to misspell common words can check for these words using a chart posted in the center. Or, after a series of lessons on contractions or punctuation marks, for example, one or more centers will focus on applying the newly taught skill.

Editing can end after students and their editors correct as many mechanical errors as possible, or after students meet with the teacher in a conference for a final editing conference. When mechanical correctness is crucial, this conference is important. Teachers proofread the composition with the student, and they identify and make the remaining corrections together, or the teacher makes check marks in the margin to note errors for the student to correct independently.

**Stage 5: Publishing**

In this stage, students bring their compositions to life by writing final copies and by sharing them orally with an appropriate audience. When they share their writing with real audiences of classmates, other students, parents, and the community, students come to think of themselves as authors.

**Making Books.** One of the most popular ways for children to publish their writing is by making books. Simple booklets can be made by folding a sheet of paper into quarters, like a greeting card. Students write the title on the front and use the three remaining sides for their composition. They can also construct booklets by stapling sheets of writing paper together and adding covers made out of construction paper. Sheets of wallpaper cut from old sample books also make sturdy covers. These stapled booklets can be cut into various shapes, too. Students can make more sophisticated books by covering cardboard covers with contact paper, wallpaper samples, or cloth.
Pages are sewn or stapled together, and the first and last pages (endpapers) are glued to the cardboard covers to hold the book together.

**Sharing Writing.** Students read their writing to classmates or share it with larger audiences through hardcover books placed in the class or school library, plays performed for classmates, or letters sent to authors, businesses, and other correspondents. Here are some other ways to share students’ writing:

- Submit the piece to writing contests
- Display the writing as a mobile
- Contribute to a class anthology
- Contribute to the local newspaper
- Make a shape book
- Record the writing on a cassette tape
- Submit it to a literary magazine
- Read it at a school assembly
- Share it at a read-aloud party
- Share it with parents and siblings
- Display poetry on a “poet-tree”
- Send it to a pen pal
- Display it on a bulletin board

**Author’s Chair**

These fifth graders take turns sitting in the special author’s chair to read their published writings aloud to classmates. It’s a celebratory activity, and after reading, students take turns asking questions and offering compliments. These students have learned to show interest in their classmates’ writing, and to think about the writing so that they can participate in the discussion that follows the reading. Afterward, another student is chosen to share, and the process is repeated. As students sharing their writing from the author’s chair, they learn to think of themselves as writers and consider their audience more carefully when they write.
• Make a big book
• Design a poster about the writing
• Read it to foster grandparents
• Share it as a puppet show
• Display it at a public event
• Read it to students in other classes

Through this sharing, students communicate with genuine audiences who respond to their writing in meaningful ways. Sharing writing is a social activity that helps children develop sensitivity to audiences and confidence in themselves as authors. Dyson (1985) advises that teachers consider the social interpretations of sharing—the students’ behavior, the teacher’s behavior, and the interaction between students and teacher—within the classroom context. Individual students interpret sharing differently. Beyond just providing the opportunity for students to share writing, teachers need to teach students how to respond to their classmates. Teachers themselves serve as a model for responding to students’ writing without dominating the sharing.

Qualities of Good Writing

Students learn about the qualities of good writing through minilessons and apply what they are learning as they use the writing process. Spandel (2005) has identified these six qualities, which she calls traits:

1. **Ideas.** The ideas are the essence of a piece of writing. Students choose an interesting idea, narrow it, and develop it using main ideas and details. They choose an idea during prewriting and develop it as they draft and revise their writing.

2. **Organization.** The organization is the skeleton of the piece. Students hook the reader in the beginning, identify the purpose, present ideas logically, provide transitions between ideas, and end with a satisfying conclusion so that the important questions are answered. Students organize their writing during prewriting and follow their plans as they draft.

3. **Voice.** The writer’s distinctive style is voice; it is what breathes life into a piece of writing. Culham (2003) calls voice “the writer’s music coming out through the words” (p. 102). During the drafting and revising stages, students create voice in their writing through the words they use, the sentences they craft, and the tone they adopt.

4. **Word Choice.** Careful word choice makes the meaning clear and the piece more interesting to read. Students learn to choose lively verbs and specific nouns, adjectives, and adverbs; create word pictures; and use idiomatic expressions as they craft their pieces. They focus on word choice as they draft and revise their writing.

5. **Sentence Fluency.** Sentence fluency is the rhythm and flow of language. Students vary the length and structure of their writing so that it has a natural cadence and is easy to read aloud. They develop sentence fluency as they draft, revise, and edit their writing.

6. **Mechanics.** The mechanics are spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar. In the editing stage of the writing process, students proofread their writing and correct spelling and grammatical errors to make their writing easier to read.
### Figure 2-8  Teaching the Qualities of Good Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Ways to Teach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas</strong></td>
<td>Baylor, B. (1986). I’m in charge of celebrations. New York: Aladdin.</td>
<td>• Read aloud books with well-developed ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hall, D. (1994). I am the dog, I am the cat. New York: Dial. (P)</td>
<td>• Have students describe the voice in a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HarperCollins. (U)</td>
<td>• Add emotion to a voiceless piece of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curtis, J. L. (1998). Today I feel silly &amp; other moods that make my</td>
<td>• Learn to use a thesaurus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leedy, L., &amp; Street, P. (2003). There’s a frog in my throat! 440</td>
<td>• Do choral readings of books with sentence fluency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>animal sayings a little bird told me. New York: Holiday House. (P-M-U)</td>
<td>• Collect favorite sentences on sentence strips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence Fluency</strong></td>
<td>Aylesworth, J. (1992). Old black fly. Henry Holt. (P)</td>
<td>• Proofread excerpts from books to find mechanical errors that have been added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grimes, N. (1999). My man blue. New York: Putnam. (M-U)</td>
<td>• Add capital letters to excerpts that have had them removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grossman, B. (1996). My little sister ate one hare. New York: Dragonfly Books.</td>
<td>• Add punctuation marks to excerpts that have had them removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Locker, T. (1997). Water dance. San Diego: Harcourt Brace. (M-U)</td>
<td>• Correct grammatical errors that have been added to excerpts from books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harcourt Brace. (M)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House. (P-M-U)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers teach series of lessons about each quality. They explain the quality, show examples from children’s literature and students’ own writing, involve students in activities to investigate and experiment with the quality, and encourage students to apply what they have learned about the quality in their own writing as they move through the stages of the writing process. Figure 2–8 presents a list of books and activities that teachers can use in teaching the qualities of good writing.

As students study the six qualities, they internalize what good writers do. They learn to recognize good writing, develop a vocabulary for talking about writing, become better able to evaluate their own writing, and acquire strategies for improving the quality of their writing.

**Reading and Writing are Similar Processes**

Reading and writing are both meaning-making processes, and readers and writers are involved in many similar activities. It is important that teachers plan literacy activities so that students can connect reading and writing.

**Comparing the Two Processes**

The reading and writing processes have comparable activities at each stage (Butler & Turbill, 1984). In both reading and writing, the goal is to construct meaning, and, as shown in Figure 2–9, reading and writing activities at each stage are similar. For example, notice the similarities between the activities listed for the third stage of reading and writing—responding and revising, respectively. Fitzgerald (1989) analyzed these two activities and concluded that they draw on similar processes of author-reader-text interactions. Similar analyses can be made for other activities as well.

Tierney (1983) explains that reading and writing are multidimensional and involve concurrent, complex transactions between writers, between writers as readers, between readers, and between readers as writers. Writers participate in several types of reading activities: They read other authors’ works to obtain ideas and to learn about the structure of stories, but they also read and reread their own work in order to problem solve, discover, monitor, and clarify. The quality of these reading experiences seems closely tied to success in writing. Readers as writers is a newer idea, but readers participate in many of the same activities that writers use—generating ideas, organizing, monitoring, problem solving, and revising.

**Classroom Connections**

Teachers can help students appreciate the similarities between reading and writing in many ways. Tierney explains: “What we need are reading teachers who act as if their students were developing writers and writing teachers who act as if their students were readers” (1983, p. 151). Here are some ways to point out the relationships between reading and writing:

- Help writers assume alternative points of view as potential readers.
- Help readers consider the writer’s purpose and viewpoint.
- Point out that reading is much like composing, so that students will view reading as a process, much like the writing process.
- Talk with students about the similarities between the reading and writing processes.
- Talk with students about reading and writing strategies.
Figure 2-9  A Comparison of the Reading and Writing Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Readers Do</th>
<th>What Writers Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prewriting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prereading</td>
<td>Writers use knowledge about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers use knowledge about</td>
<td>• the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the topic</td>
<td>• writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• reading</td>
<td>• literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• literature</td>
<td>• cueing systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• cueing systems</td>
<td>Writers’ expectations are cued by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers’ expectations are cued by</td>
<td>• previous reading/writing experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• previous reading/writing experiences</td>
<td>• genre/format of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• genre/format of the text</td>
<td>• purpose for writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• purpose for reading</td>
<td>• audience for writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• audience for reading</td>
<td>Writers gather and organize ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers make predictions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Drafting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Writers use transcription strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers</td>
<td>• use meaning-making strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use word-identification strategies</td>
<td>• monitor writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use comprehension strategies</td>
<td>• create meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• monitor reading</td>
<td>Writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• create meaning</td>
<td>• respond to the next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• deepen meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• clarify misunderstandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• expand ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Revising</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding</td>
<td>Writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers</td>
<td>• identify and correct mechanical errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• respond to the text</td>
<td>• review paragraph and sentence structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• deepen meaning</td>
<td>Writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clarify misunderstandings</td>
<td>• expand ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• expand ideas</td>
<td>Writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Editing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring</td>
<td>• make the finished copy of their compositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers</td>
<td>• share their compositions with genuine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• examine the impact of words and literary language</td>
<td>audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• explore structural elements</td>
<td>• reflect on the writing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• compare the text to others</td>
<td>• value the composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Publishing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying</td>
<td>• feel success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers</td>
<td>• want to write again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• go beyond the text to extend their interpretations</td>
<td>Writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• share projects with classmates</td>
<td>• make the finished copy of their compositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• reflect on the reading process</td>
<td>• share their compositions with genuine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• make personal, world, and literary connections</td>
<td>audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• value the text</td>
<td>• reflect on the writing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• feel success</td>
<td>• value the composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• want to read again</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Readers and writers use similar strategies for constructing meaning as they interact with print. As readers, we use a variety of problem-solving strategies to make decisions about an author’s meaning and to construct meaning for ourselves. As writers, we also use problem-solving strategies to decide what our readers need as we construct meaning for them and for ourselves. Comparing reading to writing, Tierney and Pearson (1983) de-
scribed reading as a composing process because readers compose and refine meaning through reading much as writers do through writing.

There are practical benefits of connecting reading and writing: Reading contributes to students’ writing development, and writing contributes to students’ reading development. Shanahan (1988) has outlined seven instructional principles for relating reading and writing so that students develop a clear concept of literacy:

1. Involve students in reading and writing experiences every day.
2. Introduce the reading and writing processes in kindergarten.
3. Plan instruction that reflects the developmental nature of reading and writing.
4. Make the reading-writing connection explicit to students.
5. Emphasize both the processes and the products of reading and writing.
6. Emphasize the purposes for which students use reading and writing.
7. Teach reading and writing through authentic literacy experiences.

These principles are incorporated into a balanced literacy program in which students read and write books and learn to view themselves as readers and writers.

Review: How Effective Teachers Teach the Reading and Writing Processes

1. Teachers use the five-stage reading process—prereading, reading, responding, exploring, and applying—for a balanced instructional program.
2. Teachers and students set purposes for reading.
3. Teachers incorporate different types of reading activities into their instructional program: independent reading, buddy reading, guided reading, shared reading, and reading aloud to students.
4. Students respond to their reading as they participate in grand conversations and write in reading logs.
5. Students reread the selection, examine the author’s craft, and focus on words during the teacher-centered exploring stage.
6. Teachers regularly teach minilessons on strategies and skills during the exploring stage.
7. Teachers provide opportunities for students to complete both class collaboration and self-selected application projects.
8. Teachers teach students how to use the five stages of the writing process—prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing—to write and refine their compositions.
9. Teachers use a process approach to teach students about the qualities of good writing—ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions.
10. Teachers understand that the goal of both reading and writing is to construct meaning, and that the two processes involve similar activities at each stage.

Professional References


Alexander and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. New York: Atheneum.


Researchers have identified what students need to learn to become successful readers and writers. The five components:

- **Alphabetic Code**
  Students learn about the English sound-symbol system, including phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling.

- **High-Frequency Words**
  Students learn to read and spell the most common words, such as *the*, *what*, and *said*.

- **Fluency**
  Students develop the ability to read and write effortlessly so that they have cognitive resources available for comprehension.

- **Vocabulary**
  Students acquire a wide vocabulary and develop strategies for unlocking the meaning of unfamiliar words.

- **Comprehension**
  Students learn to use comprehension strategies to direct their reading and similar strategies when they write.

In this photo essay, you’ll see how Ms. McCloskey incorporates these components into her balanced literacy program.

These first graders develop phonemic awareness and phonics knowledge as they sing the Jelly Beans song and pick out rhyming words.
Ms. McCloskey teaches students to make predictions, decode unfamiliar words, and monitor their reading as they read books in guided reading groups.

During literacy centers, these two students practice reading high-frequency words at the word wall.

This first grader is developing writing fluency as he writes on self-selected topics during writing workshop.
Ms. McCloskey uses interactive writing to write the daily news report.

These first graders spend 15 minutes each day reading and rereading books independently or with a classmate.

Ms. McCloskey uses interactive writing to write the daily news report.

After Ms. McCloskey reads a story aloud, students draw questions from the story jar to guide their grand conversation.
Chapter Questions

- How does emergent literacy differ from traditional reading readiness?
- What are the three stages of early literacy development?
- What do children learn as they develop as readers and writers?
- How do teachers scaffold young children’s literacy learning?

Ms. McCloskey’s Students Become Readers and Writers

Kindergarten through third-grade children sit together on the carpet in an open area in the classroom for a shared reading lesson. They watch and listen intently as Ms. McCloskey prepares to read aloud *Make Way for Ducklings* (McCloskey, 1969), the big-book version of an award-winning story about the dangers facing a family of ducks living in the city of Boston. She reads the title and the author’s name, and some children recognize that the author’s last name is the same as hers, but she points out that they are not related. She reads the first page of the text and asks the children to make predictions about the story. During this first reading of the book, Ms. McCloskey reads each page expressively and tracks the text, word by word, with a pointer as she reads. She clarifies the meaning as she talks about the illustrations on each page. A child helps balance the book on the easel and turn the pages for her. After she finishes reading the book, the children participate in a grand conversation and talk about the story. Some of the English learners are hesitant at first, but others are eager to relate their own experiences to the story and ask questions to clarify misunderstandings and learn more about the story.

The next day, Ms. McCloskey prepares to reread *Make Way for Duck-
She begins by asking for volunteers to retell the story. Children take turns retelling each page, using the illustrations as clues. Ms. McCloskey includes this oral language activity because many of her students are English learners. The class is multilingual and multicultural: Approximately 45% of the children are Asian Americans who speak Hmong, Khmer, or Lao, 45% are Hispanics who speak Spanish or English at home, and the remaining 10% are African Americans and whites who speak English.

After the children retell the story, Ms. McCloskey rereads it, stopping several times to ask children to think about the characters, make inferences, and reflect on the theme. Her questions include: Why did the police officer help the ducks? What would have happened to the ducks if the police officer didn’t help? Do you think that animals should live in cities? What was Robert McCloskey trying to say to us in this story?

On the third day, Ms. McCloskey reads the story again, and the children take turns using the pointer to track the text and join in reading familiar words. After they finish reading the story, the children clap. They’re proud of their reading, and rereading the now familiar story provides a sense of accomplishment.

Ms. McCloskey understands that her students are moving through three developmental stages—emergent, beginning, and fluent—as they learn to read and write. She monitors each child’s stage of development to provide instruction that meets his or her needs. As she reads the big book aloud, she uses a pointer to show the direction of print, from left to right and top to bottom on the page. She also moves the pointer across the lines of text, word by word, to demonstrate the relationship between the words on the page and the words she is reading aloud. These are concepts that many of the younger, emergent-stage readers are learning.

Other children are beginning readers who are learning to recognize high-frequency words and decode phonetically regular words. One day after rereading the story, Ms. McCloskey turns to one of the pages and asks the children to identify familiar high-frequency words (e.g., don’t, make) and decode other CVC words (e.g., run, big). She also asks children to isolate individual sentences on the page and note the capital letter at the beginning and the punctuation that marks the end of the sentence.

The third group of children are fluent readers. Ms. McCloskey addresses their needs, too, as she rereads a page from the story: She asks several children to identify the words that are adjectives and to notice inflectional endings on verbs. She also rereads the last sentence on the page and asks a child to explain why commas are used in it.

Ms. McCloskey draws the children’s attention to the text as a natural part of shared reading. She demonstrates concepts, points out letters, words, and punctuation marks, models strategies, and asks questions. All of the children are usually present for these lessons no matter what their stage of development, and as they think about the words and sentences, watch Ms. McCloskey, and listen to their classmates, they are learning more about literacy.
Ms. McCloskey and her teaching partner, Mrs. Papaleo, share a large classroom and the 38 students; despite the number of children in the classroom, it feels spacious. Children’s desks are arranged in clusters around the large, open area in the middle of the classroom where children meet for whole-class activities. An easel to display big books is placed next to the teacher’s chair. Several chart racks stand nearby; one rack holds morning messages and other interactive writings that children have written, a second one holds charts with poems that the children have used for choral reading, and a third rack holds a pocket chart with word cards and sentence strips.

On one side of the classroom is a large classroom library with books arranged in crates by topic. One crate has frog books, and others have books about the ocean, plants, and the five senses. Other crates contain books by authors who have been featured in author studies, including Eric Carle, Norman Bridwell, Paul Galdone, and Paula Danziger. Picture books and chapter books are neatly arranged in the crates; children take turns keeping the area neat. Sets of leveled books are arranged above the children’s reach for the teachers to use in guided reading instruction. A child-size sofa, a table and chairs, pillows, and rugs make the library area cozy and inviting to children. A listening center is set up at a nearby table with a tape player and headphones that can accommodate up to six children at a time.

A word wall with high-frequency words fills a partition separating sections of the classroom. The word wall is divided into small sections, one for each letter of the alphabet. Arranged on the word wall are nearly 100 words written on small cards cut into the shape of the words. The teachers introduce new words each week and post them on the word wall. The children often practice reading and writing the words as a center activity, and they refer to the word wall to spell words when they are writing.

On another side of the classroom are a bank of computers and a printer. All of the children, even the youngest ones, use the computers. Children who have stronger computer skills help their classmates. They use word processing and publishing software to publish their writing during writing workshop. They monitor their independent reading practice on the computer using the Accelerated Reader® program. At other times during the day, they use the Internet to find information related to topics they are studying in science and social studies and use other computer software to learn typing skills.

Literacy, math, and science center materials are stored in another area. Clear plastic boxes hold sets of magnetic letters, puppets and other props, white boards and dry-erase pens, puzzles and games, flash cards, and other manipulatives. The teachers choose materials from the boxes to use during minilessons and guided reading lessons, and they also set carefully prepared boxes of materials out on the children’s desks for them to use during the centers time.

Ms. McCloskey spends the morning teaching reading and writing using a variety of teacher-directed and student-choice activities. Her daily schedule is shown in the box on page 81. After shared reading and a minilesson, the children participate in reading and writing workshop.

Children write books and other compositions during writing workshop. The children pick up their writing folders and write independently at their desks. While most of the children are working, Ms. McCloskey brings together a small group of children for a special activity: She conducts interactive writing lessons with emergent writers and teaches the writing process and revision strategies to more fluent writers. Today she is conferencing with a group of six children who are beginning writers. Because they are writing longer compositions, Ms. McCloskey has decided to introduce revising. After each child reads his or her composition aloud to the group, classmates ask questions and offer compliments, and Ms. McCloskey encourages them to make a change in their writing so that their readers will understand it better. Anthony reads
Ms. McCloskey’s Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:10–8:20</td>
<td>Class Meeting</td>
<td>Children participate in opening activities, including saying the Pledge of</td>
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<td>Allegiance, marking the calendar, and reading the morning message.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:20–8:45</td>
<td>Shared Reading</td>
<td>Ms. McCloskey reads and rereads big books and poems written on charts with</td>
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<td>children. She often uses this activity as a lead-in to the minilesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:45–9:00</td>
<td>Minilesson</td>
<td>Ms. McCloskey teaches a minilesson to a small group or to the whole class on</td>
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<td>a literacy procedure, concept, strategy, or skill, depending on children’s</td>
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<td>needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00–9:45</td>
<td>Writing Workshop</td>
<td>Children write stories, books, letters, and other compositions independently</td>
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<td></td>
<td>while Ms. McCloskey confers with individual children and small groups.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>She also does interactive writing activities with emergent and beginning</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>writers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45–10:00</td>
<td>Recess</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00–11:15</td>
<td>Reading Workshop</td>
<td>Children read self-selected books and reread leveled books independently</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>while Ms. McCloskey does guided reading with small groups of children</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>reading at the same level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15–11:30</td>
<td>Class Meeting</td>
<td>Children meet to review the morning’s activities and to share their writing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>from the author’s chair.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30–12:10</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:10–12:30</td>
<td>Read Aloud</td>
<td>Ms. McCloskey reads aloud picture books and chapter books, and children</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>discuss the books in grand conversations.</td>
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</table>

aloud a story about his soccer game, and after a classmate asks a question, he realizes that he needs to add more about how he scored a goal. He moves back to his desk to revise. The group continues with children sharing their writing and beginning to make revisions. At the end of the writing workshop, the teachers bring the children together for author’s chair. Each day, three children take turns sitting in a special chair called “the author’s chair” to read their writing aloud to their classmates. Classmates clap after each child reads and they offer compliments.

During reading workshop, children read and reread books independently while Ms. McCloskey and her teaching partner conduct guided reading lessons. The children have access to a wide variety of books in the classroom library, including predictable
books for emergent readers, decodable books for beginning readers, and easy-to-read chapter books for fluent readers. Ms. McCloskey has taught them how to choose books that they can read successfully so they are able to spend their time reading, either independently or with a buddy. They read library books, reread books they have recently read in guided reading, and read books in the Accelerated Reader® program and take the computer-generated comprehension tests. The children keep lists of the books they read and reread in their workshop folders so that Ms. McCloskey can monitor their progress.

Ms. McCloskey is working with a group of four emergent readers. They will read *Playing* (Prince, 1999), a seven-page predictable book with one line of text on each page that uses the pattern “I like to ______.” She begins by asking children what they like to do when they are playing. Der says, “I like to play with my brother,” and Ms. McCloskey writes the sentence on a strip of paper. Some of the children say only a word or two, and she expands the words into a sentence for the child to repeat. Then she writes the expanded sentence and reads it with the child. Next, she introduces the book and reads the title and the author’s name. Then Ms. McCloskey does a picture walk with the children, talking about the picture on each page and naming the activity the child is doing—running, jumping, sliding, and so on. She reviews the “I like to ______” pattern, and then the children read the book independently while Ms. McCloskey supervises and provides assistance as needed. The children eagerly reread the book several times, becoming more confident and excited with each reading.

Ms. McCloskey reviews the high-frequency words *I, like, and to,* and the children point them out on the classroom word wall. They use magnetic letters to form the words and then write sentences that begin with *I like to ...* on white boards. Then Ms. McCloskey cuts apart their sentence strips for them to sequence, and the children each put their sentences into an envelope to practice another day. At the end of the group session, Ms. McCloskey suggests that the children might want to write “I like to ______” books during writing workshop the next day.

During the last 30 minutes before lunch, the children work at literacy centers. Ms. McCloskey and Mrs. Papaleo have set out 12 centers in the classroom, and the children are free to work at any centers they choose. They practice phonics at the games center, for example, and reread texts at the interactive chart center and the library center. The children are familiar with the routine and know what is expected of them at each center. The two teachers circulate around the classroom, monitoring children’s work and taking advantage of teachable moments to clarify misunderstandings, reinforce previous lessons, and extend children’s learning. A list of the literacy centers is presented in the box on the next page.

After lunch, Ms. McCloskey finishes her literacy block by reading aloud picture books and easy-to-read chapter books. Sometimes she reads aloud books by a particular author, such as Marc Brown, Lois Ehlert, and Paula Danziger, but at other times, she reads books related to a social studies or science unit. She uses these read-alouds to teach comprehension strategies, such as predicting, visualizing, and making connections. This week, she is reading award-winning books, and today she reads aloud *The Stray Dog* (Simont, 2001), the story of a homeless dog that is taken in by a loving family. After she reads the book aloud, the children talk about it in a grand conversation, and Ms. McCloskey asks them to make text-to-self, text-to-world, and text-to-text connections. As the children share their connections, the teachers record them on a chart divided into three sections. Most of their comments are text-to-self connections, but several children make other types of connections: Rosario says, “I am thinking of a movie. It was 101 Dalmations. It was about dogs, too.” Angelo offers,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bag a Story</td>
<td>The teacher places seven objects in a lunch bag. Children use the objects to create a story. They divide a sheet of paper into eight sections, and they introduce the character in the first section and focus on one object in each of the remaining boxes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clip Boards</td>
<td>Children search the classroom for words beginning with a particular letter or featuring a particular characteristic. They read books, charts, and signs and consult dictionaries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Children play alphabet, phonics, opposites, and other literacy card games and board games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Chart</td>
<td>The teacher introduces a poetry frame, and children create a poem together as a class. They brainstorm words to fit the frame and the teacher writes the words on cards. The children arrange the cards in a pocket chart to make the poem. Then the materials are placed in the center, and children arrange the word cards to create poems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Children read books related to a thematic unit. Then they write a sentence or two about the book and draw an illustration in their reading logs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Children listen to a tape of a story or informational book while they follow along in copies of the book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Words</td>
<td>The teacher chooses a secret word related to a story children are reading or to a thematic unit and sets magnetic letters spelling the word in a metal pan for children to use to make words. Children use the letters to spell two-, three-, and four-letter words. Then they arrange all of the letters to discover the secret word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messages</td>
<td>Children write messages to classmates and to Ms. McCloskey and post them on a special bulletin board titled “Message Center.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocket Chart</td>
<td>Children use the high-frequency and thematic word cards displayed in the pocket chart for word sorts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading the Room</td>
<td>Children use pointers to point to and reread big books, charts, signs, and other texts in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Children use the Internet, informational books, photos, and realia to learn about the social studies or science topics as part of thematic units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Reenactment</td>
<td>Children use small props, finger puppets, or flannel board figures to reenact stories they have read or listened to the teacher read aloud.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“You got to stay away from stray dogs. They can bite you, and they might have this bad disease—it can kill you. I know that you have to get shots if a dog bites you.”

Ms. McCloskey knows her students well. She knows about their families, their language backgrounds, their interests, and their academic abilities. She knows how to monitor progress, facilitate their development, and what to do if they are not progressing. She knows the level of achievement that is expected by the end of the school year according to school district guidelines and state-mandated standards. Ms. McCloskey’s literacy program facilitates her instruction and assessment.

Literacy is a process that begins well before the elementary grades and continues into adulthood, if not throughout life. It used to be that 5-year-old children came to kindergarten to be “readied” for reading and writing instruction, which would formally begin in first grade. The implication was that there was a point in children’s development when it was time to begin teaching them to read and write. For those not ready, a variety of “readiness” activities would prepare them for reading and writing. Since the 1970s, this view has been discredited by the observations of both teachers and researchers (Clay, 1989). The children themselves demonstrated that they could recognize signs and other environmental print, retell stories, scribble letters, invent printlike writing, and listen to stories read aloud. Some children even taught themselves to read.

This perspective on how children become literate—that is, how they learn to read and write—is known as emergent literacy, a term that New Zealand educator Marie Clay is credited with coining. Studies from 1966 on have shaped the current outlook (Clay, 1967; Durkin, 1966; Holdaway, 1979; McGee & Richgels, 2003; Morrow & Ashby, 1999; Taylor, 1983; Teale, 1982). Now, researchers are looking at literacy learning from the child’s point of view. The age range has been extended to include children as young as 1 or 2 who listen to stories being read aloud, notice labels and signs in their environment, and experiment with pencils. The concept of literacy has been broadened to incorporate the cultural and social aspects of language learning, and children’s experiences with and understandings about written language—both reading and writing—are included as part of emergent literacy.

Teale and Sulzby (1989) paint a portrait of young children as literacy learners with these characteristics:

- Children begin to learn to read and write very early in life.
- Young children learn the functions of literacy through observing and participating in real-life settings in which reading and writing are used.
- Young children’s reading and writing abilities develop concurrently and interrelatedly through experiences in reading and writing.
- Through active involvement with literacy materials, young children construct their understanding of reading and writing.

In the vignette at the beginning of this chapter, Ms. McCloskey’s students exemplified many of these characteristics.
Teale and Sulzby describe young children as active learners who construct their own knowledge about reading and writing with the assistance of parents, teachers, and other literate people. These adults demonstrate literacy as they read and write, supply reading and writing materials, scaffold opportunities for children to be involved in reading and writing, and provide instruction about how written language works. The feature below shows how young children’s literacy development fits into a balanced literacy program.

### How Young Children’s Literacy Development Fits Into a Balanced Literacy Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Teachers read aloud to children and use shared reading, guided reading, and the Language Experience Approach to teach reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonics and Other Skills</td>
<td>Young children learn concepts about print, the letters of the alphabet, phonemic awareness, and phonics and apply these skills as they learn to read and write.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>Children learn to use the four cueing systems to monitor word identification and spelling as they learn to read and write.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Children learn vocabulary words as they listen to the teacher read books aloud, and they also post important words on word walls as part of literature focus units and content-area units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Teachers teach young children to make predictions and then check to see if their predictions are correct. They also teach children to make connections and use other strategies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Teachers read aloud picture books—both stories and informational books—every day. They also use predictable books in big-book format for shared reading and leveled books for guided reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content-Area Study</td>
<td>Young children participate in social studies- and science-based thematic units to learn about the world around them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Language</td>
<td>Children talk informally with classmates as they participate in small-group activities and share their ideas with the whole class in grand conversations and instructional conversations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Children participate in interactive writing lessons, make class collaboration charts and books, and write independently at writing centers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Young children use invented spelling that reflects their phonics knowledge; as they learn more phonics, their spelling becomes more conventional.</td>
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</table>
Fostering Young Children’s Interest in Literacy

Children’s introduction to written language begins before they come to school. Parents and other caregivers read to young children, and children observe adults reading. They learn to read signs and other environmental print in their community. Children experiment with writing and have their parents write for them; they also observe adults writing. When young children come to kindergarten, their knowledge about written language expands quickly as they participate in meaningful experiences with reading and writing. They learn concepts about print, words, and letters of the alphabet.

Concepts About Print

Through experiences in their homes and communities, young children learn that print carries meaning and that reading and writing are used for a variety of purposes. They read menus in restaurants to know what foods are being served, write and receive letters to communicate with friends and relatives, and read and listen to stories for enjoyment. Children also learn about language purposes as they observe parents and teachers using written language for all these reasons.

Children’s understanding about the purposes of reading and writing reflects how written language is used in their community. Although reading and writing are part of daily life for almost every family, families use written language for different purposes in different communities (Heath, 1983). Young children have a wide range of literacy experiences in both middle-class and working-class families, even though those experiences might be different (Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1987). In some communities, written language is used mainly as a tool for practical purposes such as paying bills, whereas in other communities, reading and writing are also used for leisure-time activities. In still other communities, written language serves even wider functions, such as debating social and political issues.

Ms. McCloskey and other primary-grade teachers demonstrate the purposes of written language and provide opportunities for students to experiment with reading and writing in many ways:

- posting signs in the classroom
- making a list of classroom rules
- using reading and writing materials in literacy play centers
- exchanging messages with classmates
- reading and writing stories
- labeling classroom items
- drawing and writing in journals
- writing morning messages
- writing notes to parents

Young children learn other concepts about print through these activities, too: They learn book-orientation concepts, including how to hold a book and turn pages, and that the text, not the illustrations, carries the message. Children also learn directionality concepts—that print is written and read from left to right and from top to bottom on a page. They match voice to print, pointing word by word to the text as it is read aloud. Children also notice punctuation marks and learn their names and purposes (Clay, 1991).
Concepts About Words

At first, young children have only vague notions of language terms, such as word, letter, sound, and sentence, that teachers use in talking about reading and writing, but children develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of these terms during the primary grades (Downing & Oliver, 1973–1974). Researchers have investigated children’s understanding of a word as a unit of language. Papandropoulou and Sinclair (1974) identified four stages of word consciousness. At first, young children do not differentiate between words and things. At the next level, children describe words as labels for things; they consider words that stand for objects as words, but they do not classify articles and prepositions as words because words such as the and with cannot be represented with objects. At the third level, children understand that words carry meaning and that stories are built from words. Finally, more fluent readers and writers describe words as autonomous elements having meanings of their own with definite semantic and syntactic relationships. Children might say, “You make words with letters.” Also children understand that words have different appearances: They can be spoken, listened to, read, and written. Invernizzi (2003) explains the importance of reaching the fourth level this way: “A concept of word allows children to hold onto the printed word in their mind’s eye and scan it from left to right, noting every sound in the beginning, middle, and end” (p. 152).

Children acquire concepts about words through active participation in literacy activities. They watch as teachers point to words in big books during shared reading lessons, and they mimic the teacher and point to words as they reread familiar texts. After many, many shared reading experiences, children notice that word boundaries are marked with spaces, and they pick out familiar words. Through Language Experience Approach activities and interactive writing, young children have additional experiences reading and writing words and marking word boundaries. With experience, children’s pointing becomes more exact and they become more proficient at picking out specific words in the text, noticing that words at the beginning of sentences are marked with capital letters and words at the end of sentences are followed with punctuation marks.

Environmental Print. Children move from recognizing environmental print to reading decontextualized words in books. Young children begin reading by recognizing logos on fast-food restaurants, department stores, grocery stores, and commonly used household items within familiar contexts (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984). They recognize the golden arches of McDonald’s and say “McDonald’s,” but when they are shown the word McDonald’s written on a sheet of paper without the familiar sign and restaurant setting, they cannot read the word. Researchers have found that young emergent readers depend on context to read familiar words and memorized texts (Dyson, 1984; Sulzby, 1985). Slowly, children develop relationships linking form and meaning as they learn concepts about written language and gain more experience reading and writing.

When children begin writing, they use scribbles or single letters to represent complex ideas (Clay, 1975; Schickedanz, 1990). As they learn about letter names and phoneme-grapheme correspondences, they use one, two, or three letters to stand for words. At first, they run their writing together, but they slowly learn to segment words and to leave spaces between words. They sometimes add dots or lines as markers between words or draw circles around words. They also move from capitalizing words randomly to using capital letters at the beginning of sentences and to marking proper nouns and adjectives. Similarly, children move from using a period at the end of each line of writing to marking the ends of sentences with periods. Then they learn about other end-of-sentence markers and, finally, punctuation marks that are embedded in sentences.
**Literacy Play Centers.** Young children learn about the purposes of reading and writing as they use written language in their play: As they construct block buildings, children write signs and tape them on the buildings; as they play doctor, children write prescriptions on slips of paper; and as they play teacher, children read stories aloud to classmates who are pretending to be students or to doll and stuffed animal “students.” Young children use these activities to reenact familiar, everyday activities and to pretend to be someone or something else. Through these literacy play activities, children use reading and writing for a variety of purposes.

Kindergarten teachers adapt play centers and add literacy materials to enhance the value of the centers for literacy learning. Housekeeping centers are probably the most common play centers in kindergarten classrooms, but these centers can be transformed into a grocery store, a post office, or a medical center by changing the props. They become literacy play centers when materials for reading and writing are included: Food packages, price stickers, and money are props in grocery store centers; letters, stamps, and mailboxes are props in post office centers; and appointment books, prescription pads, and folders for patient records are props in medical centers. A variety of literacy play centers can be set up in classrooms, and they can often be coordinated with literature focus units and content-area units.

**Concepts About the Alphabet**
Young children also develop concepts about the alphabet and how letters are used to represent phonemes. Pinnell and Fountas (1998) have identified these components of letter knowledge:

- The letter’s name
- The formation of the letter in upper- and lowercase manuscript handwriting
- The features of the letter that distinguish it from other letters
- The direction the letter must be turned to distinguish it from other letters (e.g., b and d)
- The use of the letter in known words (e.g., names and common words)
- The sound the letter represents in isolation
- The sound the letter represents in combination with others (e.g., ch, th)
- The sound the letter represents in the context of a word

Children use this knowledge to decode unfamiliar words as they read and to create spellings for words as they write.

The most basic information children learn about the alphabet is how to identify and form the letters in handwriting. They notice letters in environmental print, and they often learn to sing the ABC song. By the time children enter kindergarten, they can usually recognize some letters, especially those in their own names, in names of family members and pets, and in common words in their homes and communities. Children can also write some of these familiar letters.

Young children associate letters with meaningful contexts—names, signs, T-shirts, and cereal boxes. Baghban (1984) notes that the letter M was the first letter her daughter noticed—she pointed to M in the word **K Mart** and called it “McDonald’s.” Even though the child confused a store and a restaurant, this account demonstrates how young children make associations with letters. Research suggests that children do not learn alphabet letter names in any particular order or by isolating letters from meaningful written language. McGee and Richgels (2001) conclude that learning let-
ters of the alphabet requires many, many experiences with meaningful written language. They recommend that teachers take three steps to encourage children’s alphabet learning:

1. **Capitalize on children’s interests.** Teachers provide letter activities that children enjoy, and they talk about letters when children are interested in talking about them. Teachers know what features to comment on because they observe children during reading and writing activities to find out which letters or features of letters children are exploring. Children’s questions also provide insights into what they are curious about.

2. **Talk about the role of letters in reading and writing.** Teachers talk about how letters represent sounds and how letters combine to spell words, and they point out capital letters and lowercase letters. Teachers often talk about the role of letters as they write with children.

3. **Teach routines and provide a variety of opportunities for alphabet learning.** Teachers use children’s names and environmental print in literacy activities, do interactive writing, encourage children to use invented spellings, share alphabet books, and play letter games.

   Teachers begin teaching letters of the alphabet using two sources of words—children’s own names and environmental print. They also teach the ABC song so that children will have a strategy to use to identify a particular letter. Children learn to sing this song and point to each letter on an alphabet chart until they reach the unfamiliar letter; this is an important strategy because it gives them a real sense of independence in identifying letters. Teachers also provide routines, activities, and games for talking about and manipulating letters. During these familiar, predictable activities, teachers and children say letter names, manipulate magnetic letters, and write letters on white boards. At first, the teacher structures and guides the activities, but with experience, the children internalize the routine and do it independently, often at a literacy center. Figure 3–1 presents 10 routines or activities to teach the letters of the alphabet.

   Being able to name the letters of the alphabet is a good predictor of beginning reading achievement, even though knowing the names of the letters does not directly affect a child’s ability to read (Adams, 1990; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). A more likely explanation for this relationship between letter knowledge and reading is that children who have been actively involved in reading and writing activities before entering first grade know the names of the letters, and they are more likely to begin reading quickly. Simply teaching children to name the letters without the accompanying reading and writing experiences does not have this effect.

**How Children Develop as Readers and Writers**

Young children move through three stages as they learn to read and write: (1) emergent, (2) beginning, and (3) fluent (Juel, 1991). During the emergent stage, young children gain an understanding of the communicative purpose of print, and they move from pretend reading to reading repetitive books and from using scribbles to simulate writing to writing patterned sentences, such as *I see a bird. I see a tree. I see a car.* The focus of the second stage, beginning reading and writing, is to teach children to use phonics to “crack the alphabetic code” in order to decode and spell words. In addition, children learn to read and write many high-frequency words. They also write several sentences to develop a story or other composition. In the fluent stage, children

Visit Chapter 3 on the Companion Website at www.prenhall.com/tompkins to connect to web links related to young children’s literacy development.
### Figure 3-1  Routines to Teach the Letters of the Alphabet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Print</strong></td>
<td>Children sort food labels, toy traffic signs, and other environmental print to find examples of a letter being studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alphabet Books</strong></td>
<td>Teachers read aloud alphabet books to build vocabulary, and later children reread the books to find words when making books about a letter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Magnetic Letters</strong></td>
<td>Children pick all examples of one letter from a collection of magnetic letters or match upper- and lowercase letter forms of magnetic letters. They also arrange the letters in alphabetical order and use the letters to spell familiar words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter Stamps</strong></td>
<td>Children use letter stamps and ink pads to print letters on paper or in booklets. They also use letter-shaped sponges to paint letters and letter-shaped cookie cutters to cut out clay letters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alphabet Chart</strong></td>
<td>Children point to letters and pictures on the alphabet chart as they recite the alphabet and the name of the picture, such as &quot;A-airplane, B-baby, C-cat,&quot; and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter Containers</strong></td>
<td>Teachers collect coffee cans or shoe boxes, one for each letter, and place several familiar objects that represent the letter in each container. Teachers use these containers to introduce the letters, and children use them for sorting and matching activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter Frames</strong></td>
<td>Teachers make circle-shaped letter frames from tagboard, collect large plastic bracelets, or shape pipe cleaners or Wikki-Stix (pipe cleaners covered in wax) into circles for students to use to highlight particular letters on charts or in big books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter Books and Posters</strong></td>
<td>Children make letter books with pictures of objects beginning with a particular letter on each page. They add letter stamps, stickers, or pictures cut from magazines. For posters, the teacher draws a large letter form on a chart and children add pictures, stickers, and letter stamps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter Sorts</strong></td>
<td>Children sort objects and pictures representing two or more letters and place them in containers marked with the specific letters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Boards</strong></td>
<td>Children practice writing upper- and lowercase forms of a letter and familiar words on white boards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

move from slow, word-by-word reading to become automatic, fluent readers, and in writing, they develop good handwriting skills, spell many high-frequency words, and organize their writing into more than one paragraph.

The goal of reading and writing instruction in the primary grades is to ensure that all children reach the fluent stage by the end of third grade. Figure 3–2 summarizes children’s accomplishments in reading and writing development at each of the three stages.
Emergent Reading and Writing

Children gain an understanding of the communicative purpose of print and develop an interest in reading and writing during the emergent stage. They notice environmental print in the world around them and in the classroom. They develop concepts about print as teachers read and write with them. As children dictate stories for the teacher to record during Language Experience Approach activities, for example, they learn that their speech can be written and they observe how teachers write from left to right and top to bottom.
Children make scribbles to represent writing. The scribbles may appear randomly on a page at first, but with experience, children line up the letters or scribbles from left to right and from top to bottom. Children also begin to “read,” or tell what their writing says (Harste et al., 1984; Temple, Nathan, Burris, & Temple, 1988). At first, they can reread their writing only immediately after writing, but with experience, they learn to remember what their writing says, and as their writing becomes more conventional, they are able to read it more easily.

During the emergent stage, children accomplish the following:

- develop an interest in reading and writing
- acquire concepts about print
- develop book-handling skills
- learn to identify the letters of the alphabet
- develop handwriting skills
- learn to read and write some familiar and high-frequency words

Children are usually emergent readers and writers in kindergarten, but some children whose parents have read to them every day and provided a variety of literacy experiences do learn how to read before they come to school (Durkin, 1966).

Emergent readers and writers participate in a variety of literacy activities ranging from modeled and shared reading and writing, during which they watch as teachers read and write, to independent reading and writing that they do themselves. Ms. McCloskey’s students, for example, listened to her read aloud books and read big books using shared reading, and they also participated in reading and writing workshop. When working with children at the emergent stage, however, teachers often use modeled and shared reading and writing activities because they are demonstrating what readers and writers do and teaching concepts about print.

One shared literacy activity is morning messages. The teacher begins by talking about the day and upcoming events, and children share their news with the class. Then the children and teacher, working together, compose the morning message (Kawakami-Arakaki, Oshiro, & Farran, 1989). The message includes classroom news that is interesting to the children. Here is a morning message that Ms. McCloskey and her students wrote:

Today is Friday, March 10. Ms. McCloskey brought 3 frogs and 10 tadpoles for us to observe. They are in the pond.

The teacher writes the morning message on chart paper as children watch. While writing the message, the teacher demonstrates that writing is done from left to right and top to bottom and how to form letters. Then the teacher reads the message aloud, pointing to each word as it is read. The class talks about the meaning of the message, and the teacher uses the message to point out spelling, capitalization, or punctuation skills. Afterward, children are encouraged to reread the message and pick out familiar letters and words. As the school year progresses, the morning message grows longer, and children assume a greater role in reading and writing the message so that the activity becomes interactive writing.

Through the routine of writing morning messages, young children learn a variety of things about written language. Reading and writing are demonstrated as integrated processes, and children learn that written language is used to convey information. They learn about the direction of print, the alphabet, spelling, and other conventions used in writing. Children also learn about appropriate topics for messages and how to organize ideas into sentences.
Beginning Reading and Writing

This stage marks children’s growing awareness of the alphabetic principle. Children learn about phoneme-grapheme correspondences and phonics generalizations in *run, hand, this, make, day, and road,* and *r*-controlled vowel words, such as *girl* and *farm.* They also apply (and misapply) their developing phonics knowledge to spell words. For example, they spell *night* as NIT and *train* as TRANE. At the same time, they are learning to read and write high-frequency words, many of which can’t be sounded out, such as *what, are, there,* and *get.*

Children usually read aloud slowly, in a word-by-word fashion, stopping often to sound out unfamiliar words. They point at each word as they read, but by the end of this stage, their reading becomes smoother and more fluent, and they point at words only when the text is especially challenging.

Although the emphasis in this stage is on decoding and recognizing words, children also learn that reading involves understanding what they are reading. They make predictions to guide their thinking about events in stories they read, and they make connections between what they are reading and their own lives and the world around them as they personalize the reading experience. They practice the cross-checking strategy so that they learn what to do when what they are reading doesn’t make sense. They learn to consider phonological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic information in the text and make self-corrections (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). They also learn about story structure, particularly that stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and they use this knowledge to guide their retelling of stories.

Children move from writing one or two sentences to developing longer compositions, with five, eight, or more sentences, organized into paragraphs by the end of this stage. Children’s writing is better developed, too, because they are acquiring a sense of audience, and they want their classmates to like their writing. Children continue to write single-draft compositions but begin to make a few revisions and editing corrections as they learn about the writing process toward the end of the stage.

Children apply what they are learning about phonics in their spelling, and they correctly spell many of the high-frequency words that they have learned to read. They have learned to spell some of the high-frequency words, and they locate other words on word walls that are posted in the classroom. They learn to use capital letters to mark the beginnings of sentences and punctuation to mark the ends of sentences. Children are more adept at rereading their writing, both immediately after writing and days later, because they are able to read many of the words they have written.

During the beginning stage of reading and writing development, children accomplish the following:

- learn phonics skills
- recognize 20–100 high-frequency words
- make reasonable predictions
- self-correct while reading
- write five or more sentences, sometimes organized into a paragraph
- spell phonetically
- spell 20–50 high-frequency words
- use capital letters to begin sentences
- use punctuation marks to mark the ends of sentences
- reread their writing
Most first and second graders are beginning readers and writers, and with instruction in reading and writing strategies and skills and daily opportunities to read and write, children move through this stage to reach the fluent stage.

Teachers plan activities for children at the beginning stage that range from modeled to independent reading and writing activities, but the emphasis in this stage is on interactive and guided activities. Through interactive writing, choral reading, and guided reading, teachers scaffold children as they read and write and provide strategy and skill instruction. For example, Ms. McCloskey’s students were divided into small, homogeneous groups for guided reading lessons. The children met to read leveled books at their reading levels, and Ms. McCloskey introduced new vocabulary words, taught reading strategies, and monitored children’s comprehension.

Teachers introduce the writing process to beginning-stage writers once they develop a sense of audience and want to make their writing better so that their classmates will like it. Children don’t immediately begin writing rough drafts and final copies or doing both revising and editing: They often begin the writing process by rereading their compositions and adding a word or two, correcting a misspelled word, or changing a lowercase letter to a capital letter. These changes are usually cosmetic, but the idea that the writing process doesn’t end after the first draft has been written is established. Next, children show interest in making a final copy that really looks good. They either recopy the composition by hand or word process the composition on a computer and print out the final copy. Once the idea that writing involves a rough draft and a final copy is established, children are ready to learn more about revising and editing, and they usually reach this point at about the same time they become fluent writers.

Fluent Reading and Writing

The third stage is fluent reading and writing. Fluent readers can recognize hundreds and hundreds of words automatically, and they have the tools to identify unfamiliar words when reading. Fluent writers use the writing process to draft, revise, and publish their writing, and they participate in writing groups. They are familiar with a variety of genres and know how to organize their writing. They use conventional spelling and other elements of written language, including capital letters and punctuation marks. By the end of third grade, all students should be fluent readers and writers.

The distinguishing characteristic of fluent readers is that they read words accurately, rapidly, and automatically, and they read with expression. Their reading rate has increased to 100 words or more per minute. They automatically recognize many words and can identify unfamiliar words efficiently.

Most fluent readers prefer to read silently because they can read more quickly than when they read orally. No longer do they point at words as they read. Children actively make predictions as they read and monitor their understanding. They have a range of strategies available and use them to self-correct when the words they are reading do not make sense. Children can read most books independently.

Fluent readers’ comprehension is stronger and they think more deeply about their reading than do readers in the previous stages. Researchers speculate that children’s comprehension improves at this stage because they have more cognitive energy available for comprehension now that they recognize so many words automatically and can identify unfamiliar words more easily (LaBerge & Samuels, 1976; Perfitti, 1985; Stanovich, 1986); in contrast, beginning readers use much more cognitive energy in identifying words. So, as students become fluent readers, they use less energy for word identification and have more cognitive resources available for comprehending what they read.
When children talk about stories they are reading, they retell story events effectively, share details about the characters, and make connections between the stories and their own lives, between stories and the world, and between books or a book and a film. They also use background knowledge and clues in the text to make inferences. When they read informational books, children can distinguish between big ideas and details, notice information in illustrations and other graphics, and use technical vocabulary from the book.

During the fluent reading stage, children read longer, more sophisticated picture books and chapter books, but they generally prefer chapter books because they enjoy getting into a story. They learn more about the genres of literature and literary devices, such as alliteration, personification, and symbolism. They participate in literature focus units that feature a single author, genre, or book, in small-group literature circles where children all read and discuss the same book, and in author studies where they read and compare several books by the same author and examine that author’s writing style. They are able to explain why they liked a particular book, and they make recommendations to classmates.

Fluent readers learn more about comprehension. Through literature discussions and mini-lessons, they learn to make inferences and to think more deeply about stories they are reading. Teachers encourage children to compare books they have read and make text-to-text connections.

Fluent writers understand that writing is a process, and they use most of the writing process stages—prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. They make plans for writing and write both rough drafts and final copies. They reread their rough drafts and make revisions and editing changes that reflect their understanding of writing forms and their purpose for writing. They increasingly share their rough drafts with classmates and turn to their classmates for advice on how to make their writing better.

Children get ideas for writing from books they have read and from television programs and movies they have viewed. They organize their writing into paragraphs, indent paragraphs, and focus on a single idea in each paragraph. They develop ideas more completely and use more sophisticated vocabulary to express their ideas.

Fluent writers are aware of writing genres and organize their writing into stories, reports, letters, and poems. The stories they write have a beginning, middle, and end, and their reports are structured using sequence, comparison, or cause-and-effect structures. Their letters reflect an understanding of the parts of a letter and how the parts are arranged on a page. Their poems incorporate rhyme or other structures to create impressions.

Children’s writing looks more conventional. They spell most of the 100 high-frequency words correctly and use phonics to spell other one-syllable words correctly. They add inflectional endings (e.g., -s, -ed, -ing) and experiment with two-syllable and longer words. They have learned to capitalize the first word in sentences and names and to use punctuation marks correctly at the ends of sentences, although they are still experimenting with punctuation marks within sentences.

Fluent readers and writers accomplish the following:

- read fluently and with expression
- recognize most one-syllable words automatically and can decode other words efficiently
- use comprehension strategies effectively
- make text-to-self, text-to-world, and text-to-text connections
- write well-developed, multiparagraph compositions
- use the writing process to draft and refine their writing
• write stories, reports, letters, and other genres
• spell most high-frequency and other one-syllable words correctly
• use capital letters and punctuation marks correctly most of the time

Some second graders reach this stage, and all children should be fluent readers and writers by the end of third grade. Reaching this stage is an important milestone because it indicates that children are well prepared for the increased literacy demands of fourth grade, in which students are expected to be able to read longer chapter-book stories, use writing to respond to literature, read content-area textbooks, and write essays and reports.

A list of instructional recommendations for each of the three stages of reading and writing development is shown in Figure 3–3.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Teachers who work with young readers and writers use many of the same instructional practices used with older students, such as teaching phonics lessons, doing guided reading with leveled books, teaching from basal reading textbooks, and providing opportunities for independent reading and writing. Teachers adapt these approaches to provide enough scaffolding so that young children are successful. Other instructional practices have been developed specifically for young children and other novice readers and writers.

Shared Reading

Teachers use shared reading to read aloud books that are appropriate for children’s interest level but too difficult for them to read for themselves (Holdaway, 1979; Parkes, 2000). Teachers use the five stages of the reading process in shared reading, as Ms. McCloskey did in the vignette at the beginning of the chapter. The steps in shared reading are presented in Figure 3–4, showing how the activities fit into the five stages of the reading process. Through the reading process, teachers model what fluent readers do as they involve students in enjoyable reading activities (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). After the text is read several times, teachers use it to teach phonics concepts and high-frequency words. Students can also read small versions of the book with partners or independently, and the pattern or structure found in the text can be used for writing activities (Slaughter, 1993).

The books chosen for shared reading are available as big books and are close to children’s reading level, but still beyond their ability to read independently. As an instructional strategy, shared reading differs from reading aloud to students because students see the text as the teacher reads. Also, students often join in the reading of predictable refrains and rhyming words, and after listening to the teacher read the text several times, students often remember enough of the text to read along with the teacher. Through shared reading, teachers also demonstrate how print works, provide opportunities for students to use the prediction strategy, and increase children’s confidence in their ability to read.

Big books are greatly enlarged picture books that teachers use in shared reading, most commonly with primary-grade students. In this technique, developed in New Zealand, teachers place an enlarged picture book on an easel or chart stand where all children can see it. Then they read it with small groups of children or the whole class. Trachtenburg and Ferruggia (1989) used big books with their class of transitional first graders and found that making and reading big books dramatically improved
### Instructional Recommendations for the Three Stages of Reading and Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Emergent** | - Use environmental print.  
- Include literacy materials in play centers.  
- Read aloud to children.  
- Read big books and poems on charts using shared reading.  
- Introduce the title and author of books before reading.  
- Teach directionality and letter and word concepts using big books.  
- Encourage children to make predictions.  
- Encourage children to make text-to-self connections.  
- Have children retell and dramatize stories.  
- Have children respond to literature through talk and drawing.  
- Have children manipulate sounds using phonemic awareness activities.  
- Use alphabet-teaching routines.  
- Take children’s dictation using the Language Experience Approach.  
- Teach 20–24 high-frequency words.  
- Post words on a word wall. | - Have children use crayons for drawing and pencils for writing.  
- Encourage children to use scribble writing or write random letters if they cannot do more conventional writing.  
- Teach handwriting skills.  
- Use interactive writing for whole-class and small-group writing projects.  
- Have children write their names on sign-in sheets each day.  
- Write morning messages.  
- Have children write their own names and names of classmates.  
- Have children inventory words they know how to write.  
- Have children “write the classroom” by making lists of familiar words they find in the classroom.  
- Have children use frames such as “I like _____” and “I see a _____” to write sentences.  
- Encourage children to remember what they write so they can read it. |
| **Beginning** | - Read charts of poems and songs using choral reading.  
- Read leveled books using guided reading.  
- Provide daily opportunities to read and reread books independently.  
- Teach phonics skills.  
- Teach children to cross-check using the cueing systems.  
- Teach the 100 high-frequency words.  
- Point out whether texts are stories, informational books, or poems.  
- Model and teach predicting and other strategies.  
- Teach the elements of story structure, particularly beginning, middle, and end.  
- Have children write in reading logs and participate in grand conversations.  
- Have children make text-to-self and text-to-world connections.  
- Have children take books home to read with parents. | - Use interactive writing to teach concepts about print and spelling skills.  
- Provide daily opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and using different forms.  
- Introduce the writing process.  
- Teach children to develop a single idea in their compositions.  
- Teach children to proofread their compositions.  
- Teach children to spell the 100 high-frequency words.  
- Teach contractions.  
- Teach capitalization and punctuation skills.  
- Have children use computers to publish their writing.  
- Have children share their writing from the author’s chair. |
| **Fluent** | - Have children participate in literature circles.  
- Have children participate in reading workshop.  
- Teach about genres and literary devices.  
- Involve children in author studies.  
- Teach children to make text-to-self, text-to-world, and text-to-text connections.  
- Respond to literature through talk and writing. | - Have children participate in writing workshop.  
- Teach children to use the writing process.  
- Teach children to revise and edit their writing.  
- Teach paragraphing skills.  
- Teach spelling generalizations.  
- Teach homophones.  
- Teach synonyms.  
- Teach root words and affixes.  
- Teach children to use a dictionary and a thesaurus. |
children’s reading scores on standardized achievement tests. The teachers reported that children’s self-concepts as readers were decidedly improved as well.

With the big book on a chart stand or easel, the teacher reads it aloud, pointing to every word. Before long, students join in the reading, especially in repeating the refrain. Then the teacher rereads the book, inviting students to help with the reading. The next time the book is read, the teacher reads to the point that the text becomes predictable, such as the beginning of a refrain, and the students supply the missing text; having students supply the missing words is important because it leads to independent reading. When students have become familiar with the text, they are invited to read the big book independently (Parkes, 2000).

**Predictable Books.** The stories and other books that teachers use for shared reading with young children often have repeated words and sentences, rhyme, or other patterns; books that use these patterns are called *predictable books*. For example, in *The Gingerbread Boy* (Galdone, 1975), a cumulative story, the cookie repeats and expands his boast as he meets each character on his run away from the Little Old Man and the Little Old Woman, and in *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1969), a sequential pattern story, the author uses number and day-of-the-week sequences as the caterpillar eats through an amazing array of foods. Figure 3–5 presents a list of eight types of predictable books and examples of each type. These books are a valuable tool for emergent readers because

### Figure 3–4

**How a Shared Reading Lesson Fits Into the Reading Process**

1. **Prereading**
   - Activate or build background knowledge on a topic related to the book.
   - Show the cover of the book and tell the title.
   - Talk about the author and illustrator.
   - Talk about the book and have students make predictions.

2. **Reading**
   - Use a big book or text printed on a chart.
   - Use a pointer to track during reading.
   - Read expressively with very few stops during the first reading.
   - Highlight vocabulary and repetitive patterns.
   - Reread the book once or twice, and encourage students to join in the reading.

3. **Responding**
   - Discuss the book in a grand conversation.
   - Ask inferential and critical level questions, such as “What would happen if . . . ?” and “What did this book make you think of?”
   - Share the pen to write a sentence interactively about the book.
   - Have students draw and write in reading logs.

4. **Exploring**
   - Reread the book using small books.
   - Add important words to the word wall.
   - Teach minilessons on skills and strategies.
   - Present more information about the author and the illustrator.
   - Provide a text set with other books by the same author and illustrator.

5. **Applying**
   - Have students write an innovation imitating the pattern used in the book.
   - Have students create an art project related to the book.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Houghton Mifflin.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Studio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Taback, S. (1997). There was an old lady who swallowed a fly. New York:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Viking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circular Stories</td>
<td>The plot is organized so that the ending leads back to the beginning.</td>
<td>Aardema, V. (1992). Why mosquitoes buzz in people’s ears. New York:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Puffin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Numeroff, L. J. (1985). If you give a mouse a cookie. New York:</td>
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<td>HarperCollins.</td>
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<td>House.</td>
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<td>Candlewick.</td>
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<td>Martin, B., Jr. (1983). Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?</td>
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<td>Songs</td>
<td>Familiar songs with repetitive patterns are presented with one line or</td>
<td>Galdone, P. (1988). Cat goes fiddle-I-fee. New York: Clarion.</td>
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<td>verse on each page.</td>
<td>Messenger, J. (1986). Twinkle, twinkle, little star. New York:</td>
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<td>Macmillan.</td>
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<td>Westcott, N. B. (1988). The lady with the alligator purse. Boston:</td>
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<td>Little, Brown.</td>
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the repeated words and sentences, patterns, and sequences enable children to predict the next sentence or episode in the text (Bridge, 1979; Tompkins & Webeler, 1983).

**Traveling Bags of Books.** A second way to encourage more shared reading is to involve parents in the program by using traveling bags of books, sets of four or five books that teachers collect on various topics for children to take home and read with their parents (Reutzel & Fawson, 1990). For example, teachers might collect copies of *Hattie and the Fox* (Fox, 1986), *The Gingerbread Boy* (Galdone, 1975), *Flossie and the Fox* (McKissack, 1986), and *Rosie’s Walk* (Hutchins, 1968) for a traveling bag of fox stories. Or, for a set of books about the desert, they might collect *Listen to the Desert/Oye al Desierto* (Mora, 1994), *Desert Dog* (Johnson, 2001), *Dig, Wait, Listen: A Desert Toad’s Tale* (Sayre, 2001), *In the Desert* (Salzmann, 2001), and *The Seed and the Giant Saguaro* (Ward, 2001). Then children and their parents read one or more of the books and draw or write a response to the books they have read in the reading log that accompanies the books in the traveling bag. Children keep the bag at home for several days, often rereading the books each day with their parents, and then return it to school so that another child can borrow it. Text sets usually combine stories, informational books, and poems. Teachers can also add small toys, stuffed animals or puppets, audiotapes of one or more of the books, or other related objects to the bags.

Teachers often introduce traveling bags at a special parents’ meeting at which they explain to parents how to read with their children. It is important that parents understand that their children may not be familiar with the books and that children are not expected to be able to read them independently. Teachers also talk about the responses children and parents write in the reading log and show sample entries from the previous year.
The Language Experience Approach (LEA) is based on children’s language and experiences (Ashton-Warner, 1965; Stauffer, 1970). In this approach, teachers do shared writing: Children dictate words and sentences about their experiences, and the teacher writes down what the children say; the text they develop becomes the reading material. Because the language comes from the children themselves and because the content is based on their experiences, they are usually able to read the text easily. Reading and writing are connected, because students are actively involved in reading what they have written.

Using this approach, students create individual booklets. They draw pictures on each page or cut pictures from magazines to glue on each page, and then they dictate the text that the teacher writes beside each illustration. Students can also make class collaborations, where each child creates one page to be added to a class book. For example, as part of the unit on “The Three Bears,” a kindergarten class made a collaborative book on bears. Children each chose a fact they knew about bears for their page; they drew an illustration and dictated the text for their teacher to record. One page from this class book is shown in Figure 3–6. The teacher took the students’ dictation rather than having the children write the book themselves because she wanted it to be written in conventional spelling so that students could read and reread the book.

When taking dictation, it is a great temptation to change the child’s language to the teacher’s own, in either word choice or grammar, but editing should be kept to a minimum so that children do not get the impression that their language is inferior or inadequate. Also, as children become familiar with dictating to the teacher, they learn to pace their dictation to the teacher’s writing speed. At first, children dictate as they think of ideas, but with experience, they watch as the teacher writes and supply the text word by word. This change also provides evidence of children’s developing concept of a word.
The Language Experience Approach is an effective way to help children emerge into reading. Even students who have not been successful with other types of reading activities can read what they have dictated. There is a drawback, however: Teachers provide a “perfect” model when they take children’s dictation—they write neatly and spell words correctly. After language experience activities, some young children are not eager to do their own writing; they prefer their teacher’s “perfect” writing to their own childlike writing. To avoid this problem, young children should also be doing interactive writing and independent writing at the same time they are participating in language experience activities. This way, they will learn that sometimes they do their own writing and at other times the teacher takes their dictation.

Interactive Writing

In interactive writing, children and the teacher create a text together and “share the pen” as they write the text on chart paper (Button, Johnson, & Furgerson, 1996; McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000). The text is composed by the group, and the teacher guides children as they write the text word by word on chart paper. Children take turns writing known letters and familiar words, adding punctuation marks, and marking spaces between words. All children participate in creating and writing the text on chart paper, and they also write the text on small white boards, on small chalkboards, or on paper as it is written on the chart paper. After writing, children read and reread the text using shared reading and independent reading.

Children use interactive writing to write class news, predictions before reading, retellings of stories, thank-you letters, reports, math story problems, and many other types of group writings (Tompkins & Collom, 2004). Two interactive writing samples are shown in Figure 3–7; the top sample was written by a kindergarten class during a health unit, and the second one is a first-grade class’s interactive writing of a math story problem. After writing this story problem, students wrote other subtraction problems individually. The boxes drawn around some of the letters and words represent correction tape that was used to correct misspellings or poorly formed letters. In the kindergarten sample, students took turns writing individual letters; in the first-grade sample, students took turns writing entire words.

Through interactive writing, students learn concepts about print, letter-sound relationships and spelling patterns, handwriting concepts, and capitalization and punctuation skills. Teachers model conventional spelling and use of conventions of print, and students practice segmenting the sounds in words and spelling familiar words. Students use the skills they learn through interactive writing when they write independently.

During interactive writing, teachers help students spell all words conventionally. They teach high-frequency words such as the and of, assist students in segmenting sounds and syllables in other words, point out unusual spelling patterns such as pieces and germs, and teach other conventions of print. Whenever students misspell a word or form a letter incorrectly, teachers use correction tape to cover the mistake and help students make the correction. For example, when a child wrote the numeral 8 to spell ate in the second sample in Figure 3–7, the teacher explained the eight–ate homophone, covered the numeral with correction tape, and helped the child “think out” the spelling of the word, including the silent e. Teachers emphasize the importance of using conventional spelling as a courtesy to readers, not that a student made a mistake. In contrast to the emphasis on conventional spelling in interactive writing, students are encouraged to use invented spelling and other spelling strategies when writing independently. They learn to look for familiar words posted on classroom word walls or in books they have read, think about spelling patterns and rimes, or ask to learn more about rimes and other phonics and spelling concepts, see Chapter 4, “Cracking the Alphabetic Code.”
a classmate for help. Teachers also talk about purpose and explain that in personal writing and rough drafts, students do use invented spelling. Increasingly, however, students want to use conventional spelling and even ask to use the correction tape to fix errors they make as they write.

**Manuscript Handwriting**

Children enter kindergarten with different backgrounds of handwriting experience. Some 5-year-olds have never held a pencil, but many others have written cursivelike scribbles or manuscript letterlike lines and circles. Some have learned to print their
Writing Center

These first graders write in journals, make books, and compose notes to classmates at the writing center. This center is stocked with writing supplies, a word wall with high-frequency words is displayed on a dry-erase board, and a message center bulletin board (shown in the upper right-hand part of the photo) is available for children to post their notes. They keep their writing projects in folders stored nearby. Children work at this center while the teacher has guided reading groups. Through this center activity, young children develop the independence they need for writing workshop.

names and even a few other letters. Handwriting instruction in kindergarten typically includes developing children’s ability to hold pencils, refining their fine motor control, and focusing on letter formation. Some people might argue that kindergartners are too young to learn handwriting skills, but young children should be encouraged to write from the first day of school. They write letters and words on labels, draw and write stories, keep journals, and write other types of messages. The more they write, the greater their need becomes for instruction in handwriting. Instruction is necessary so that students do not learn bad habits that later must be broken.

To teach children how to form letters, many kindergarten and first-grade teachers create brief directions for forming letters that they sing to a familiar tune; for example, to form a lowercase letter a, try “All around and make a tail” sung to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” As teachers sing the directions, they model the formation of the letter in the air or on the chalkboard using large arm motions. Then children sing along and practice forming the letter in the air. Later, they practice writing letters using sponge paintbrushes dipped in water at the chalkboard or dry-erase pens on white boards as well as in authentic paper-and-pencil writing activities.

Handwriting research suggests that moving models are much more effective than still models in teaching children how to handwrite. Therefore, worksheets on the letters aren’t very useful because children often don’t form the letters correctly. Researchers recommend that children watch teachers to see how letters are formed and then practice forming them themselves. Also, teachers supervise students as they write so that they can correct children who form letters incorrectly. It is important that students write circles counterclockwise, starting from 1:00, and form most lines from top to bottom and left to right across the page. When students follow these guidelines, they are less likely to tear the paper they are writing on, and they will have an easier transition to cursive handwriting.
Writing Centers

Writing centers can be set up in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms so that children have a special place where they can go to write. The center should be located at a table with chairs, and a box of supplies, including pencils, crayons, a date stamp, different kinds of paper, journal notebooks, a stapler, blank books, notepaper, and envelopes, should be stored nearby. The alphabet, printed in upper- and lowercase letters, should be available on the table for children to refer to as they write. In addition, there should be a crate where children can file their work. They can also share their completed writings by sending them to classmates or while sitting in a special seat called the “author’s chair.”

When children come to the writing center, they draw and write in journals, compile books, and write messages to classmates. Teachers should be available to encourage and assist children at the center. They can observe children as they invent spellings and can provide information about letters, words, and sentences as needed. If the teacher cannot be at the writing center, perhaps an aide, a parent volunteer, or an upper-grade student can assist.

Figure 3–8 presents two reading log entries created by kindergartners and first graders at the writing center. The top piece shows a kindergartner’s response to *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (Numeroff, 1985). The child’s writing says, “I love chocolate chip cookies.” The bottom piece was written by a first grader after reading *Are You My Mother?* (Eastman, 1960). The child wrote, “The bird said, ‘Are you my mother, you big ole Snort?’” After students shared their log entries during a grand conversation, this student added, “The mommy said, ‘Here is a worm. I am here. I’m here.’” Notice that the part the mother says is written as though it were coming out of the bird’s mouth and going up into the air.

Young children also make books at the writing center based on the books they have read. For example, they can use the same patterns as in *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* (Martin, 1991), *If you Give a Mouse a Cookie* (Numeroff, 1985), and *If the Dinosaurs Came Back* (Most, 1978) to create innovations, or new versions of familiar stories. A first grader’s four-page book about a mouse named Jerry, written after reading *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, is shown in Figure 3–9. In these writing projects, children often use invented spelling, but they are encouraged to spell familiar words correctly. They also learn to use the books they are reading to check the spelling of characters’ names and other words from the story.

Children also write notes and letters to classmates at the writing center. They learn about the form of friendly letters and how to phrase the greeting and the closing. Then they apply what they are learning as they write to classmates to say hello, offer a compliment, share news, trade telephone numbers, and offer birthday wishes. As they write messages, the children practice writing their names, their classmates’ names, and the words they are learning to read and spell. The classmates who receive the messages also gain practice reading the messages. Teachers participate, too, by regularly writing brief messages to children. Through their activities, they model how to write messages and how to read and respond to the messages they receive. To facilitate the sharing of these messages, teachers often set up a message bulletin board or individual mailboxes made from milk cartons or shoe boxes. This activity is especially valuable because children discover the social purposes of reading and writing as they write and receive notes and letters, and they often become more interested in other literacy activities.
Figure 3-8  Two Children's Reading Log Entries
Teachers understand that young children can participate in reading and writing activities.

2. Teachers provide developmentally appropriate reading and writing activities for children beginning on the first day of school.

3. Teachers demonstrate the purposes of written language through a variety of literacy activities.

4. Teachers teach book-orientation concepts as they do shared reading and read aloud to children.

5. Teachers develop children’s directionality concepts through shared reading and interactive writing.

6. Teachers help children develop letter and word concepts through minilessons and daily reading and writing experiences.

7. Teachers include literacy materials in play centers.

8. Teachers understand that children move through the emergent, beginning, and fluent stages of reading and writing.

9. Teachers monitor children’s literacy development to see that they are moving through the three stages.

10. Teachers match instructional activities to children’s stage of reading and writing development.
Professional References


**Children’s Book References**


