

SECTION D

WRITING PROGRAM AND PORTFOLIO

BALANCED WRITING INSTRUCTION: IMPLEMENTING COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

Role of Writing Instruction

1. Provides opportunity for students to write on topics that are personally meaningful.
2. Provides opportunity for students to write for additional purposes such as writing in response to literature, writing prompts, journals and open ended questions.
3. Guides students to become more skillful writers through use of the following strategies:
 - Process writing
 - Writer's workshop in which teachers model good writing, conference with students about their writing, provide mini-lessons for direct instruction in writing skills and strategies, and encourage peer editing by creating an audience for the writer to elicit feedback (author's chair).
4. Guides students to improve their writing through self-reflection facilitated by maintaining a portfolio of student work, the use of self-reflection sheets, and the use of rubrics for both teacher assessment and student self-assessment
5. Maintains appropriate achievement expectations for student writing through the use of Chelmsford Public Schools Anchor Papers for the district's common end of year writing prompts to represent grade level benchmarks for student proficiency in writing. These anchor papers are based on a common end-of-year prompt used district-wide.

Components of the Chelmsford Writing Program

1. **Writer's Workshop** to teach students the process of writing.
2. **Teachers provide direct instruction** in writing skills and strategies through a variety of resource materials. These materials include the Scholastic Anthology, Write Source Handbooks, and Six Traits curriculum materials. The Lucy Calkins Firsthand series published by Heinemann may also be used to assist teachers in the implementation of Writer's Workshop.
3. The Chelmsford Public Schools **Language Arts Portfolio**
4. **Language Arts Benchmarks for Writing:** The benchmarks are based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and list benchmarks identified by Chelmsford Teachers as appropriate grade level expectations for student mastery.

It is expected that all four of these program components will be implemented as the core writing program in Chelmsford schools.

Explanation of Terms

1. Writer's Workshop

Writer's workshop is a dedicated block of time in which the teacher coaches students in writing strategies and students have time to write and practice the craft of writing. The structure of writer's workshop includes the following elements:

- **The mini-lesson**: The teacher provides a short lesson (10 minutes) on a writing strategy. Often the teacher uses literature to model the use of the strategy.
- **Student writing time** (approximately 40 minutes): During the time students are writing the teacher conferences with individual students or small groups of students. Students may also consult with a partner about their writing.
- **Teacher conferencing**: The teacher reads the student's work and helps the student think about a way to develop his or her work further. Sometimes the teacher offers strategy instruction to the student or a group of students needing assistance with the same skill. Some teachers teach students to peer conference. This is particularly useful for students in upper grade levels.
- **Sharing**: The workshop provides approximately 10 minutes at the end for students to share their writing. This may be done with partners or as a whole class activity where one or two students have a chance to sit in the Author's Chair and read their work.

2. The Writing Process

Students are encouraged to be writer's and learn the process that a writer goes through to develop and refine his or her writing. This process is taught to students during writer's workshop. The steps in the writing process are:

- Prewrite (or brainstorming)
- Write (first draft)
- Revise
- Edit
- Publish

3. Portfolio Instruction

The Chelmsford Public Schools Language Arts Portfolio is a collection of student writing used to track a student's growth as a writer over time. During the school year the student's writing in various stages of completion and publication are maintained in his portfolio. The portfolio is used as an instructional tool because it is used for both the teacher and the student to reflect on the student's work and conference about new goals for the student's development as a writer. Writing record cards maintained in the portfolio chart the student's progress over the course of their school career.

4. Direct Instruction of Strategies and Skills

Sometimes a lesson of longer duration than a mini-lesson is needed. In these instances teachers may design longer lessons, independent of writer's workshop to teach essential skills and strategies. Students should be encouraged to apply these skills when they have the next opportunity to participate in writer's workshop.

5. Six Trait Rubrics

A rubric is a set of scoring guidelines for assessing student work. It is used to help guide the student and the teacher in identifying goals for helping the student improve the quality of his writing. The district has adopted the Six Trait categories for assessing writing but we have developed our own descriptors of student performance to match to these categories. We have made this modification since our own descriptors are more specific and sophisticated in their expectation of quality work. The Six Traits are:

- Ideas
- Organization
- Voice
- Word Choice
- Sentence Fluency
- Conventions

**WRITING EXPECTATIONS TO COORDINATE INSTRUCTION
ACROSS GRADE LEVELS**

1. What type of genre should students write at each grade level and how often should these writing samples be fully scored?

GRADE	K	1	2	3	4
Total Quantity of fully scored required writing samples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personal Narratives ▪ Complete without teacher support ▪ Submit to X2 	3	4	4	4	4
Focused Correction Personal Narrative Samples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete with teacher support ▪ Do Not Submit to X2 	Frequent and numerous	Frequent and numerous	Frequent and numerous	Frequent and numerous	Frequent and numerous
Expository: a. Response to Literature b. Informational essay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete with teacher support ▪ Focused Correction ▪ Do Not Submit to X-2 			2	1 1	1 1
Persuasive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete with teacher support ▪ Focused Correction ▪ Do Not Submit to X-2 				1	
Poetry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete with teacher support ▪ 6 Traits Rubric not required ▪ Do Not Submit to X-2 		Some poems throughout the year	Some poems throughout the year	Some poems throughout the year	Some poems throughout the year

2. Should scoring be based on samples that are completed with or without help?

The most important thing that teachers can do to help students improve their writing is to give them help, both in the form of conferencing and in the form of direct instruction. Therefore minimize the times that scoring is done without prior help during the process of writing. Teachers should conference with students even about those samples that were done without help. The only difference in those instances is that the conferencing is done after the piece is completed and scored.

3. When should samples be completed?

Writing samples should be completed and scored on an ongoing basis throughout the year. The chart below shows when each required Personal Narrative sample done without teacher support should be completed and scores submitted to X-2. Focused correction personal narratives and expository writing may be completed at any point in the year, although Grade 4 teachers may choose to complete expository writing samples during the third marking term after the ELA MCAS is completed. Poetry writing should be ongoing throughout the year. Samples not submitted to X2 should be filed in the students' portfolios.

This schedule facilitates the use of class data for grade level team and cross grade level discussions about student progress in writing in accordance with Professional Learning Community (PLC) and Response to Intervention (RTI) initiatives.

Grade	K	1	2	3	4
Term 1 9/3/08-11/21/08	Baseline	Baseline Prompt 1	Baseline Prompt 1	Baseline Prompt 1	Baseline Prompt 1
Term 2 11/24/08-2/27/09	Prompt 2	Prompt 2	Prompt 2	Prompt 2	Prompt 2
Term 3 3/2/09-6/18/08	Prompt 3	Prompt 3	Prompt 3	Prompt 3	Prompt 3

Note: Prompts listed above are those completed *without* teacher support.

**PREPARING THE PORTFOLIO FOR SHOWCASE REVIEW AT THE END OF
THE SCHOOL YEAR**

To provide students with motivation to transform their student portfolio into a showcase portfolio, and to celebrate their good work, it is important to create an end-of-year opportunity for students to share their portfolio with others. There are a variety of options for showcasing the portfolio. A few possibilities are listed below:

1. Schedule a parent day or evening when parents are invited to come to the classroom and meet with their child. Students will present their portfolios to their own parents individually, describing its contents and their favorite entries.
2. Send the portfolio home to the parents with a parent reflection form for parent comments. Ask the parents to return their comments. (If you do this, make sure to copy the items that are going to be passed on in the Language Arts Permanent Record Folder.)
3. Create a different audience. Meet with students from another class and have pairs of students present to each other. Do this in particular, if you are selecting option 2 for parents.
4. On the evening of a spring curriculum fair or other school event, ask parents to come back to the classroom and preview their child's portfolio with their child.

**DIRECTIONS FOR PREPARING THE WRITING PORTFOLIO FOR
DISTRIBUTION TO THE NEXT GRADE LEVEL**

The Writing Portfolio

The Chelmsford Public Schools Writing Portfolio consists of three components:

- the Student Writing Folder
- the Language Arts Permanent Record Folder
- a hanging folder to contain the two folders listed above

The Student Writing Folder (Manila)

The Student Writing Folder is a collection of student writing used to track a student's growth as a writer over time. During the school year the student's writing in various stages of completion and publication are maintained in his portfolio. The portfolio is used as an instructional tool because it is used for both the teacher and the student to reflect on the student's work and conference about new goals for the student's development as a writer. Many teachers have students keep work in progress in a separate folder in a different location. (ex. Two-pocket folder)

Language Arts Permanent Record Folder (Colored)

Any observational checklists, writing assessment record forms or reading assessment record forms that the teacher completes to assess student progress should be maintained in the Language Arts Permanent Record Folder to be kept in the teacher's file cabinet or plastic portfolio bins.

Preparing the Writing Portfolio to be Sent to the Next Grade (3 Pieces)

Student Writing Folder (Manila)

- The teacher should retain the end of year independently edited writing sample in the Student Writing Folder. If it is not representative of the student's proficiency level, add another piece edited independently that represents the student's proficiency more accurately.
- Send all remaining writing samples, including the prior year's end of year writing prompt, home with the student.

Language Arts Permanent Record Folder (Colored)

Retain:

- Chelmsford Public Schools Writing Assessment Record Form for each completed grade K-4
- Guided Reading Record Form K-3
- End of Year Reading Performance Task Score Sheet for Grades 1-3
- Do NOT remove the above records from the previous year.

Distribution to the Next Grade Level

- Grades K – 3: Place the Student Writing Folder (Manila) and the Language Arts Permanent Record Folder (colored) in the hanging folder and distribute to the next year's teacher.
- Grade 4: Place the end of year writing sample in the Language Arts Permanent Record Folder and send the Language Arts Permanent Record Folder to Grade 5.