

Pennsylvania State Literacy Plan

Writing: Focus of Instruction

Summary

Birth to Age 5

- Preschool writing development is inextricably linked with the child's fine motor development.
- Beginning writers need encouragement and instruction in composing stories and text using pictures, scribbles, letter-like forms, and letters.
- Emergent writers may also write familiar words and label pictures.
- As children develop understanding of letter-sound correspondence, they may attempt to phonetically spell words.
- Preschoolers need opportunities to develop their ability to communicate in writing (both informational and narrative text).

Grades K-5

- Kindergarten students begin with pre-writing, and by the end of fifth grade, students are expected to experience writing narrative, persuasive, and informational text. The Pennsylvania Core standards for English Language Arts (2014) states the following:
- Students write for different purposes and audiences. Students write clear and focused text to convey a well-defined perspective and appropriate content.
- Provide students with explicit instruction and opportunities to devote significant time and effort to writing, producing numerous pieces over short and extended periods throughout the year.
- The primary goal of instruction is to develop the students' ability to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understanding of the subjects they are studying, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events.
- Students need support in learning to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar, audience, and adapting the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose.
- Students need support to build knowledge on a subject through research projects and to respond analytically to literary and informational sources.

Grades 6-12

- Good writing skills are essential for effective communication.
- As stated in Graham and Perin (2007), "writing skill is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in civic life and in the global economy" (p. 3).
- Students should have opportunities to write in persuasive, informative, and narrative modes, with guidance as needed.
- Students should write routinely over extended periods (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter periods (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

- Effective writers employ detail in their writing, sustain a focus, and produce well-organized writing suited to purpose. They are able to gather information, evaluate sources, and cite evidence.
- Writing should be used as a tool for learning, not just showing what was learned, in all disciplines.
- Writers need to be strategic in creating the writing appropriate to task, whether it be on-demand writing, or drafting and redrafting over time.
- Technology is one of the tools to employ to support the writing process.
- Students need opportunities to build knowledge on a subject through research projects, and to respond analytically to literary and informational sources