



Provide daily time for students to write



Providing adequate time for students to practice writing is an essential element of any effective writing instruction program. Even so, recent surveys of elementary teachers have shown that students spend little time writing during the school day. Instructional time dedicated to learning writing skills and strategies is necessary for students to become effective writers. Students also need opportunities to practice what they learn so that they can gain confidence in their writing ability. During these writing opportunities, teachers can better identify students' difficulties and aid them in learning and applying writing skills.

How to carry out the recommendation

1. Teachers should plan to devote a minimum of one hour per day for writing (30 minutes for kindergarten students).
2. Writing practice can take place during other content-area instruction.

Potential roadblocks

1. It is hard to find an hour each day to devote to writing instruction.

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Reference: Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N. (2012). *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers* (NCEE 2012-4058). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/17>



How to carry out the recommendation

1. Teachers should plan to devote a minimum of one hour per day for writing (30 minutes for kindergarten students).

Daily reading time should be provided for all students in kindergarten through grade 5.

Kindergarten teachers should devote at least 30 minutes to writing each day. The first 15 minutes should involve teaching writing skills appropriate to each student's level, as detailed in the following recommendations:

- Teach students to use the writing process for a variety of purposes.¹
- Teach students to become fluent with handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, typing, and word processing.²
- Create an engaged community of writers.³

In the remaining 15 minutes, students should apply the skills they learned during instruction.

Beginning in grade 1, teachers should plan to devote a minimum of one hour each day to writing. The hour should include at least 30 minutes of teaching writing strategies, techniques, and skills appropriate to students' levels, as detailed in the recommendations above and discussed in further detail in the practice guide. The last 30 minutes should be used to provide students with the opportunity to apply the skills they learned during the first half hour of instruction.

2. Writing practice can take place during other content-area instruction.

Integrating writing tasks into other content areas may encourage students to think more critically about the material they are learning. Consider the following examples:

- Lab reports in science require detailed writing and clear descriptions of observations.
- In social studies, students could write an imaginary diary entry from an individual they are studying.
- Students can write before, during, and/or after reading literature in any subject area. This writing activity not only provides an opportunity for students to practice writing, but it also allows students to articulate what they already know, what they want to know, and what they have learned.

¹ Further information about this recommendation can be found on page 12 of the practice guide referenced on the first page of this document.

² Further information about this recommendation can be found on page 27 of the practice guide.

³ Further information about this recommendation can be found on page 34 of the practice guide.

Potential roadblocks and how to address them

Roadblock	Suggested Approach
<i>It is hard to find an hour each day to devote to writing instruction.</i>	Teachers should prioritize integrating writing and content-area instruction in order to maximize instructional time and provide students with more time to practice writing. Providing writing activities during content-area instruction can help students think more critically about what they are learning, while simultaneously providing an opportunity to practice writing strategies and skills.



For more information on the research evidence and references to support this recommendation, or for more detailed explanation from the What Works Clearinghouse committee who developed this recommendation, please refer to the practice guide cited at the bottom of the first page of this document.