

## Developing a Classroom Vision

Now that you've spent time learning about the recommendations in the Toolkit for how to teach elementary students to be effective writers, you can develop a vision for how writing should look in your classroom. Your school might already have a schoolwide vision for writing—your classroom vision should complement the schoolwide vision but does not have to mirror it. Think about the needs of your individual students and the community you have already built in your classroom.

**This activity will help you** reflect on what writing practice currently looks like in your classroom and brainstorm what ideal writing practice related to each of the recommendations would look like in your classroom. Once you reflect on where your classroom currently is, consider the ideal state—or where you *want* your classroom to be. Then, identify the gaps and what needs to happen to move your classroom from its current state of writing to the ideal state. The final column of the chart is for you to return to periodically to make notes on your progress toward reaching your vision. Don't fill this out now; instead, come back to this table in about one month to check in with your progress. Make sure to move horizontally across each section of the chart. To help you get started, there is an example of a completed Classroom Writing Vision chart at the end of this document.

Finally, taking your recommendation-specific visions into account, create an overarching vision for writing in your classroom. Consider how to succinctly convey your ideal state of writing into one or two sentences. This vision should be in student-friendly language, and you should display it in your classroom. You may even choose to get your students' input on the vision or have them sign their names to signal agreement. You can revisit this vision statement each school year to ensure it meets your students' needs.

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**Developing a Classroom Writing Vision**

<b>What does writing practice currently look like in my classroom?</b>	<b>What do I want writing practice to look like in my classroom?</b>	<b>What are the gaps between the ideal and current state? Why do these gaps exist?</b>	<b>How can we close those gaps?</b>	<b>Progress toward vision</b>
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**Recommendation 1: Provide daily time for students to write**

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**Recommendation 2a: Teach students the writing process**

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**Recommendation 4: Create an engaged community of writers**

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**Our classroom vision:**

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**Example: Developing a Classroom Writing Vision**

<b>What does writing practice currently look like in my classroom?</b>	<b>What do I want writing practice to look like in my classroom?</b>	<b>What are the gaps between the ideal and current state? Why do these gaps exist?</b>	<b>How can we close those gaps?</b>	<b>Progress toward vision</b>
<b>Recommendation 1: Provide daily time for students to write</b>				
<i>Students have a dedicated 30-minute writing block, and sometimes we're able to add in more time throughout the day.</i>	<i>Students should write for 60 minutes each day.</i>	<i>Students aren't consistently writing outside the writing block.</i>	<i>Integrate writing into more subjects (e.g., math and science).</i>	<i>(Fill out the boxes in this column later to reflect on progress.)</i>
<i>During math and science, some students use labels, but many do not.</i>	<i>Students should incorporate writing by labeling figures and diagrams.</i>	<i>There is no consistent expectation or accountability for labeling in math and science.</i>	<i>During circulation in independent practice, I will check for and provide feedback on labels.</i>	

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<b>Recommendation 2a: Teach students the writing process</b>				
<i>I spend most of each lesson modeling, and students spend very little time working in small groups or independently.</i>	<i>Writing instruction should be released from teacher to student, with the majority of time being spent on either collaborative (“we do”) or independent (“you do”) work.</i>	<i>There needs to be more time spent on guided practice and independent work and less time on modeling; I’m worried many students aren’t ready to apply practices independently.</i>	<i>Set a timer during the lesson to remind myself to switch over to guided and independent work; introduce scaffolds to the students who need them during independent practice while allowing for productive struggle.</i>	
<i>I usually tell students which writing strategy to use that day.</i>	<i>Students should be able to select writing strategies that work for them.</i>	<i>I need to allow more flexibility in having students select appropriate writing strategies.</i>	<i>Make an anchor chart listing all the strategies we’ve learned so far and allow students to choose which is appropriate for the stage of the writing process they’re in.</i>	
<i>Students follow the writing process linearly.</i>	<i>Students should move back and forth through components of the writing process.</i>	<i>The writing process is seen as a straight line rather than a fluid process.</i>	<i>Change the writing process anchor chart to show it as a circle; regularly model moving back and forth between components; encourage students to move throughout the circle by editing multiple times, returning to their brainstorm, etc.</i>	

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**Recommendation 4: Create an engaged community of writers**

<i>Many students are writing because they are told to, but not because they want to.</i>	<i>Students should be motivated to write well.</i>	<i>Students don't have intrinsic motivation to improve their writing skills.</i>	<i>Do a lesson on the importance of writing: Have students think about what they want to be when they grow up and how they might need to use writing in that job; give students an authentic writing audience (e.g., peers, principal); incorporate more student choice into writing prompts to ensure they are writing about what they're interested in.</i>	
<i>Feedback right now often sounds like "It's good" or "I like it."</i>	<i>Students should give each other specific, constructive feedback.</i>	<i>Students need to learn how to make their feedback more specific.</i>	<i>Give students sentence stems for feedback; use a think-aloud to model noticing something specific in a student's writing and commenting on it.</i>	
<i>I model writing during the writing block but don't address when I write the rest of the day.</i>	<i>I should participate in our community of writers.</i>	<i>I need to make it more clear how I engage in writing throughout the day.</i>	<i>I will point out instances throughout the day when I'm using writing to communicate, such as when I write the schedule each morning or write in students' homework folders.</i>	

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<b>Our classroom vision:</b>				

*Our classroom will be a place where students feel empowered to communicate their thoughts and ideas through writing, want to work to improve their writing, and enjoy writing together every day.*