

Evidence-Based Recommendations for Remote Writing Instruction in the Elementary Grades

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE™

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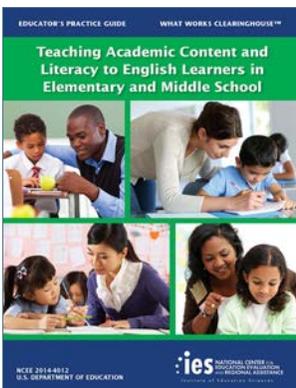
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The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) maintains a library of practice guides (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuides>) for educators and school officials to use to address challenges in their classrooms and schools. These guides synthesize WWC research reviews, the experience of educators, and expert advice into recommendations that can be implemented in the classroom. **Many of these recommendations**

can be implemented for free or at a low cost in remote learning settings by making only small adaptations.

The examples below come from two practice guides about interventions for elementary school instruction in writing. **Each original practice guide contains more details as well as additional recommendations.**



Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners

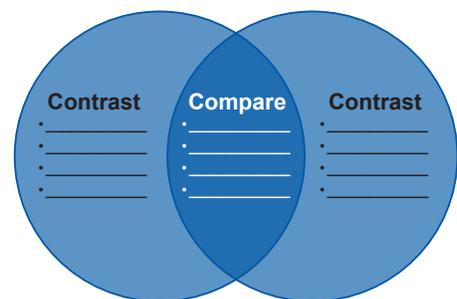
Explore the guide at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/19>.

Help students develop writing skills by providing **regular, structured opportunities to practice**. Have students work on writing assignments that are linked to content and issues covered in their classwork. Use a **consistent set of instructional routines** to guide students through the writing process and provide **explicit instructional support** for academic vocabulary and for incorporating analysis and interpretation in academic writing.

Use remote learning lessons to introduce students to a set of graphic organizers and writing routines.

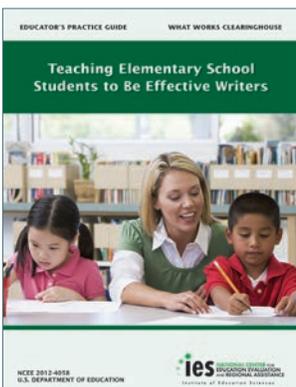
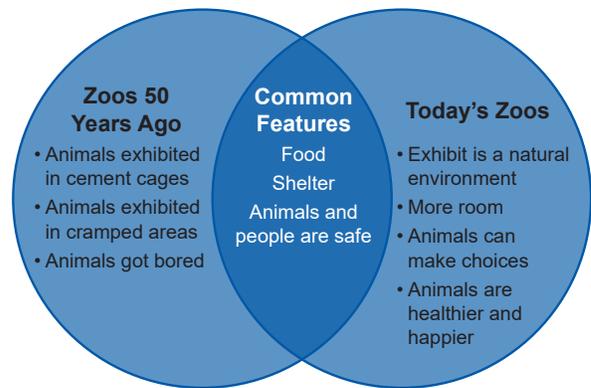
Sustained and repeated exposure to a consistent set of routines can help students avoid defaulting to non-academic topics, everyday vocabulary, and grammatical conventions that do not reflect academic writing. Routines should also guide students through the process of complete sentences, then to a paragraph, and finally to a written composition that reflects revisions from several drafts.

For example, a third-grade class is beginning an essay writing project connected to a science lesson about the effect an environment can have on animals and their behavior. Prior to beginning, review target academic vocabulary that students should use in their essays (listed in the example on page 2), as well as the types of transition and linking phrases useful in compare-contrast essays (for example, *for instance*, *consequently*, *therefore*). Then use a compare-contrast graphic organizer to help students organize their thinking. Over several lessons, provide explicit guidance to help students write their essays.



Think about it. A gorilla living in a zoo today has a very different life than a gorilla that lived in a zoo long ago. The changes made in zoos in the last 50 years have affected gorillas. They have also affected the people who go to visit the zoo. Think about what you would see and how you would feel if you walked into an old zoo to look at the gorillas. Then think about what you would see and how you would feel if you walked into a new zoo and looked at the gorilla exhibit.

Write about it. Decide what kind of zoo you think would be better to visit and write a paragraph that explains your choice. Make sure to compare the new exhibits with the old exhibits. Also, make certain that your paragraph contains at least three of the target words (environment, exhibit, impact, investigation, pursuit, options).

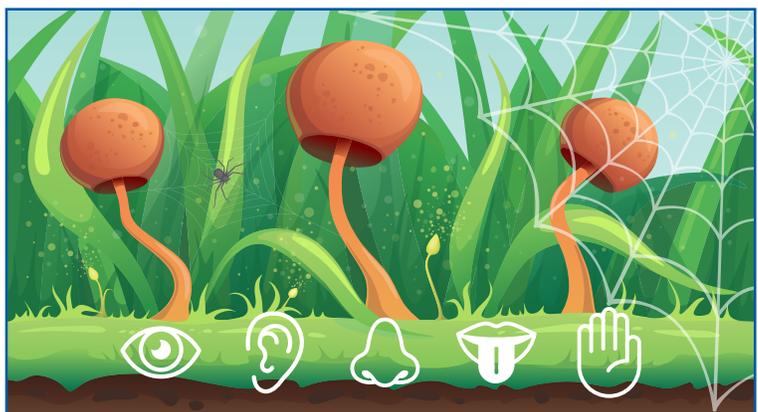


Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers

Explore the guide at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/17>.

Teach students to **use the writing process for a variety of purposes** by exposing students to **exemplary texts** from a several sources, including books, textbooks, your own writing, and peer samples. Select texts that support the lesson's instructional goals; are appropriate for the students' reading levels, interests, and abilities; and provide exemplary models of what students will write. Exemplary texts can illustrate text structure; use of graphs, charts, and pictures; effective word choice; varied sentence structure; or other features.

For example, read a chapter from **E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web*** to teach fourth-grade students to describe a setting using concrete, sensory details. After reading the passage ask, "What words did you hear the author use to describe the sights, sounds, smells, or movements in the barn?" Students then can apply what they learn to compose a rich, sensory description of their own setting, such as their home.



Looking for exemplary texts? Find examples from the American Library Association's list of Newbery Medal award winners (<http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/newberywinners/medalwinners>), the Database of Award-Winning Children's Literature (<http://dawcl.com/introduction.html>), or state departments of education websites (for example, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/rl>).