

Writing in the Big Blocks

**Four Blocks Leadership Conference
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Writing Goals

- Students see writing as a way of telling about things
- Students develop fluency in writing
- Students learn to use grammar and mechanics in the context of their own writing
- Students learn about specific forms of writing during focused instruction
- Struggling writers are still supported in order to maintain their motivation and self-confidence.

Writing Block

- 180 minutes a week
- Keep in mind, it needs longer chunks of time

Writing Block

Daily components include:

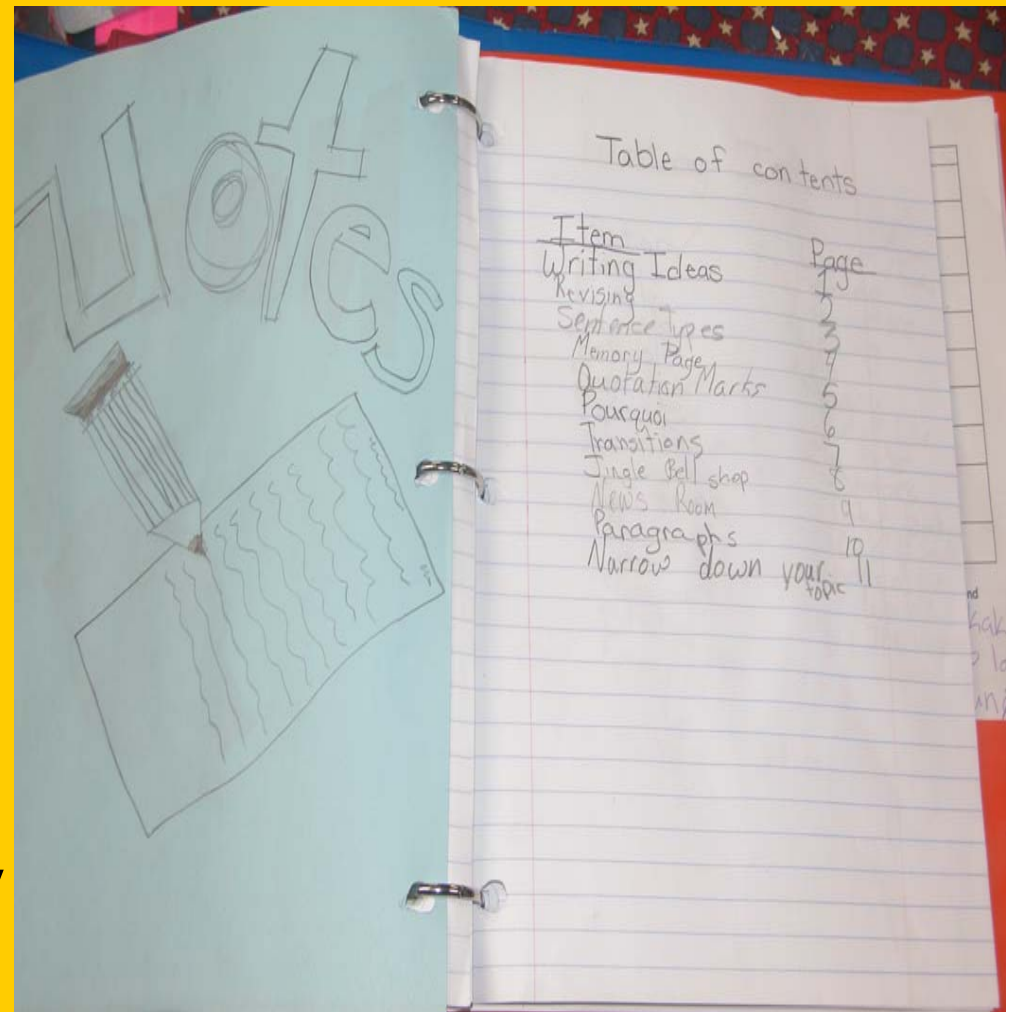
- Mini-lesson: 5-15 minutes of instruction
- Writing time: 20 – 40 minutes
- Sharing time: 5- 10 minutes

Writing Mini-lessons

- Whole group instruction
- Almost always includes you writing in front of students
- Make the writing process visible
- Gathering space – community
- Get ideas from:
 - » Curriculum
 - » Student writing
 - » Professional resources

Writing Handbook

- Create a section in your Big Blocks Notebook
- Students take notes at the end of the mini-lesson
- Teacher decides on what is written
- Student accountability and resource



Writer's Craft

- **Narrowing your focus – small moments**

- **Summer vacation in Northern Michigan**

Lake Michigan – Mackinac Island – Chicago – Sleeping Bear
Dunes

- **Mackinac Island**

Riding the ferry – Thunderstorm – Carriage ride – Renting
Bikes

- **Renting Bikes**

Writing Time

- Students write independently on topics of their choosing
- Organization is the key
 - Materials, storage
 - Location in room

Students are never “finished”.

We DO NOT publish everything

Teacher – Student Conferences

- Meet with students on a regular basis
- Conference is short to allow as many as possible
- Encourage kids to tell you what needs work
- Find a system for recording

Coaching – Revision - Editing

Sharing

“We write to be read.” Nancie Atwell

- Author’s chair
- Partner share
- Focused share
- Outside the classroom
- Published
 - www.arenconsulting.com
 - Published works
 - 2005 Leadership

Focused Writing

- Choose appropriate genres for your grade level/ curriculum/ state standards
- This is not writing to a story starter or prompt
- One genre per quarter
- Spend quality time modeling the genre (3-5 weeks)
- Connect to content area studies whenever possible
- Make sure you have quality examples of that genre in your classroom

Record Keeping

- Quick Check or Status of the Class
- Student Journal of finished pieces
- Anecdotal records of conferences

Making Writing Multilevel

- except during focused writing lessons, let children choose their own topics
- let children take as many days as needed to write each piece
- teach minilessons on a variety of levels
- accept whatever level of first draft writing children can achieve
- during conferences, tailor your instruction for each child