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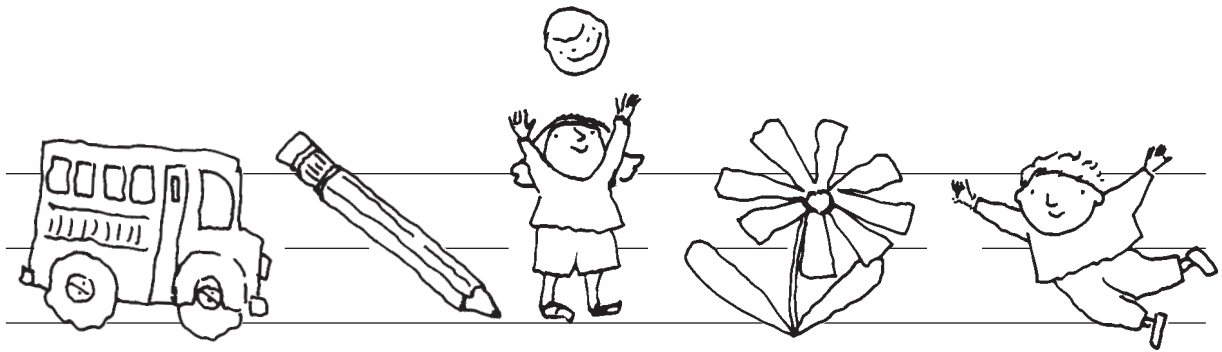
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# Daily Guided Writing

Carol Simpson

Illustrated by Amy O'Brien Krupp



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## Acknowledgments

I wish to thank the following students whose pieces of writing appear within the pages of this book. Their enthusiasm for writing keeps me excited about teaching the often difficult process. Also, I thank their parents for giving me permission to use their work.

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## Dedication

Thank you to Sandy McCombs, a second-grade teacher whose students helped me practice some of what I preach in this book. Thank you to Mary Stevens and Dee Westergren, my fellow Title 1 teachers at Steele Accelerated School, who were willing to try the language-rich, first-grade pull-out program that I suggested. I think they see the value of writing the morning news with at-risk emergent readers.



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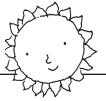
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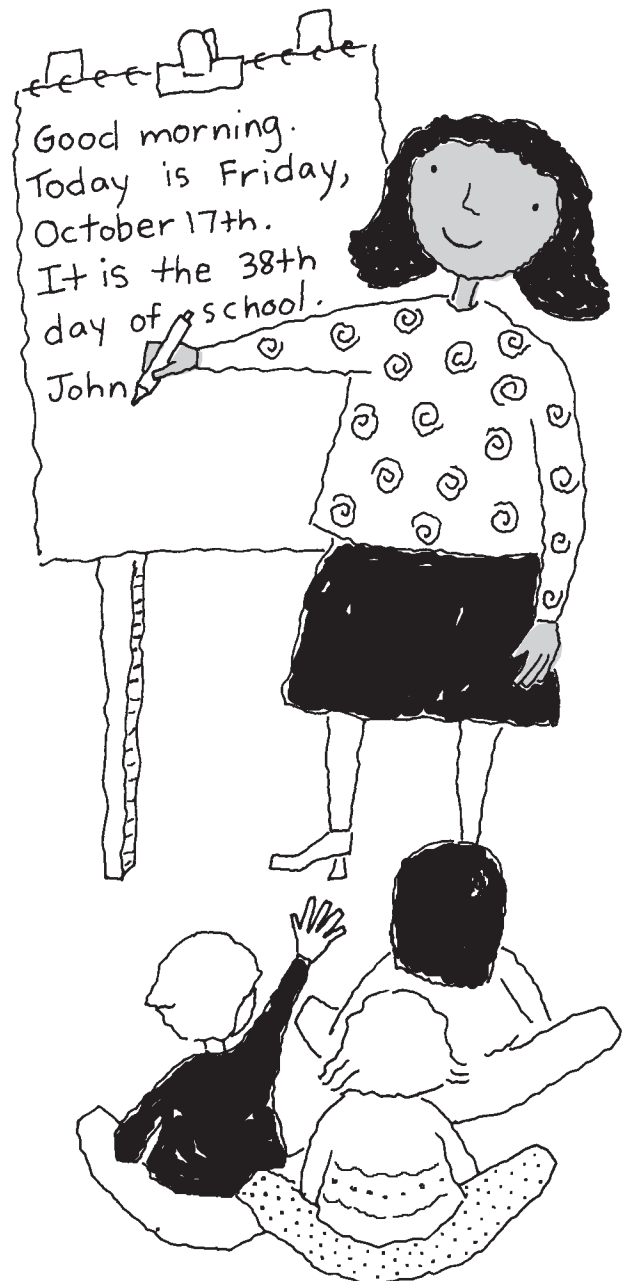
# Introduction

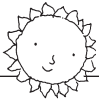
## What Is a Guided Writing Lesson?

**A** guided writing lesson is one in which the teacher demonstrates for students the process of writing a sentence or paragraph using proper English conventions. Students are then given opportunities to show that they can use these strategies and conventions in their own work. Guided writing lessons can be taught as early as kindergarten and should continue for as long as new styles of writing are being expected of students. The guided writing lesson in kindergarten is obviously going to be very different from that taught to a 14-year-old who will write his or her first term paper.

Guided writing lessons include instruction in spelling, sentence structure, use of punctuation and capitalization, quotation marks, and other English conventions. We can also instruct our students in selecting content to include in their paragraphs and stories. We can demonstrate writing a story beginning, middle, and end. Along with sequencing, we can guide the writing of detailed information and descriptive language to make our stories and paragraphs more colorful and interesting.

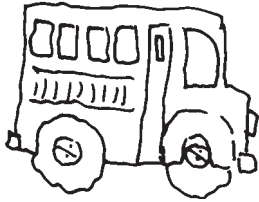
Guiding and explaining writing strategies and conventions takes time to do, but the benefits will be seen in other written work. The carryover into other writing activities will become evident in the days and months ahead. Demonstrating correct writing procedures will show students what we might expect them to do when they write on their own. If guided writing instruction begins at an early age and follows consistently year after year, perhaps our students will feel more confident when we ask them to write those special reports in their later years of schooling.





# What Kinds of Writing Can I Guide?

## Experience Stories



The primary classroom (kindergarten through second grade) is a place of discovery. The teachers in these classrooms need to make use of opportunities to write about the new ideas and experiences that come up every day. We have all asked students for their thoughts on these shared ideas and experiences that they then wrote down for everyone to read. We used our big chart paper and took simple dictation from the children as they gave us the facts, the details, and the events that they remembered from the new idea or experience. We know that these experience stories can be used for a lot more than simple dictation, reading, and rereading. Instead of just taking the dictation, we can demonstrate how to write down what we say, explain the use of punctuation and capitalization, and ask questions about the text in order to make complete sentences. An explanation of using experience stories for guided writing follows in Chapter 1.

## The Daily News



Many primary teachers write a message to their students each day. It may include a simple explanation of what will be taking place that day in the classroom. Sometimes information is included about special school programs or subject matter, which might include local, national, or world news. If the teacher always has the daily news written on the chalkboard prior to the students walking in the door, perhaps he or she should try using the news as a guided writing lesson instead. There are many benefits to taking the time to write the news in front of, and with, the students each day. An in-depth discussion of writing the daily news is included in Chapter 2.

## Journal Writing



Many primary teachers incorporate daily journal writing in their classrooms. At a specified time each day, students throughout the primary grades take out their notebooks or journal folders and write for a period of time. Some will write “stories” and others will write whatever pops into their heads. They may write about something that happened at home the night before. They may write about their pet, their baby brother or sister, or their parents and grandparents. They may create a new fictitious character, perhaps an invisible friend. The subject matter is limitless. There is a great opportunity to look at the writing in the journals, pull examples from what we see within the pages, and then guide a lesson in how to improve or change what is written. If journal writing is done every day, allow time immediately afterward for sharing what is written. Use this sharing time once a week to pull anonymous journal examples to edit and critique with the children. Chapter 3 offers suggestions on using journals for guided writing lessons.

# Experience Stories



Experience stories are written by a group of students who have shared in the same adventure or experience. Teachers are discovering that the experience stories their children dictate to them can be read, reread, and used to teach conventions of the English language. The guided writing lessons in primary classrooms will vary in skill level and length of text. A kindergarten experience story might contain only sentences that begin with the words “(Student’s name) said. . .” Because of time constraints, each child will probably not have a sentence to dictate for each experience story. The teacher will need to make sure to include all children over a period of time and within a variety of experience stories.

A positive feature of experience stories is that the subject matter is limitless. A group or classroom of students can certainly write an experience story about a field trip they shared. And they can also write a group or class story when they have experienced something unusual together. For example, students can write about the experience of watching a bird build a nest outside the classroom window. They can write an experience story about the pet hedgehog that visited their classroom. The teacher who allows for incidental learning—learning that “just happens” without advance planning—will be able to find a topic for an experience story writing lesson at least once a week. Class experience stories can be about very simple events, such as everyone hearing the same loud sound and then wondering what it could be!



## Sample Kindergarten Lessons

The guided writing lesson using an experience story in a kindergarten classroom should take place when the children have just shared a memorable experience, such as a field trip to a fire station. After the shared experience, kindergartners dictate their thoughts to the teacher, who writes down what is said. Each child who contributes a sentence to the experience story is asked to come up and write his or her name at the beginning of the sentence they dictated. The teacher might take the opportunity to spell children's names together. A sample lesson might sound like this:

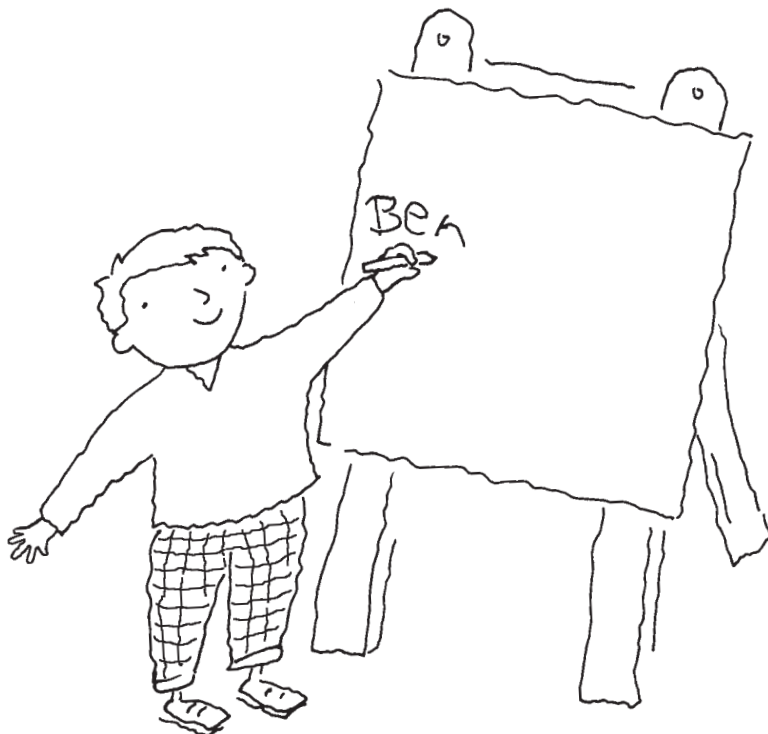


**Teacher:** We have just had a good time visiting the fire department. Who can tell me something they want to remember about our trip?

**Ben:** The fire trucks have loud sirens.

**Teacher:** That's right! Help me write that down. Ben, can you come up here and write your name on our story paper? (Ben writes his name in the appropriate place on the chart paper.) Boys and girls, let's look at Ben's name and say the letters together. (Everyone spells Ben's name aloud.) Good job, Ben. Let's look at the way Ben has written his name. How many of you put a capital letter at the beginning of your name? (All students should raise their hands.) We should all put a capital letter on our name because names are special words. We don't need to make every letter in our name a capital letter, though. What letter is a capital in Ben's name? (B) Are the other letters written as capitals? (No.) Ben has written his name the way I want you to write your name. You

should have only one capital letter, the first letter of your name. Here is what Ben wants us to remember about our field trip. (Teacher says the words as he or she writes them on the chart paper.) Ben, can you read what it says? (Teacher helps Ben read that "Fire trucks have loud sirens.")





As each child who dictated a sentence writes his or her name (probably no more than three or four children), the other students spell or chant the letters and talk about the first letter being the only capital letter. The teacher asks if any other students have a name that starts like Ben's (or whoever has written a name on the chart paper). When the experience story is completed, the teacher guides the students in reading the story aloud. Together they look carefully at the words to find any that are repeated. The word *fire* might appear several times in a story about the fire station. The teacher points to it and asks if anyone sees it written anywhere else in the story. The word is circled each time it appears.

Students can look for other words that begin with or contain the letter *f* and underline those words. The teacher should look for high-frequency words that some students already know how to read.



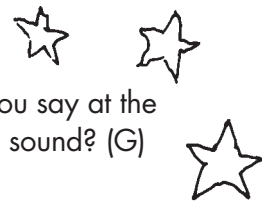
**Teacher:** Does anyone see a word they know how to read?

**Student:** I see the word *big*.

**Teacher:** How do you know that the word is *big*?

**Student:** I know that *big* starts with *b* like Ben's name.

**Teacher:** That's right! Say the word *big* slowly. What sound do you say at the end? (Hopefully, someone says /g/.) What letter stands for the /g/ sound? (G)









The teacher can then talk at an appropriate level about letters and sounds. Those children who are ready for letter/sound associations will perhaps try their hand at writing letters that they think they hear when they want to label a related picture they have drawn. Those who are not yet ready to discover that letters stand for sounds will hopefully benefit from the exposure to the concept at a later time when another experience story is written with the class. *The important thing is to be consistent* with guided writing practices. Use guided writing as often as possible and repeat the skill lessons on a regular basis.

Besides the sample experience story described above, kindergartners can help the teacher, as a group, in writing a class "story" that will be illustrated and put into a class book. Imagine that a classroom of kindergartners has just heard the story *Swimmy* by Leo Leoni. The story ends with the little fishes swimming together in the shape of a big fish and scaring the giant tuna away. The children and their teacher brainstorm ideas for a new story about a little fish. The teacher writes down the ideas and then reads them back to the children. If the sentences make sense and are in a reasonable sequence, the teacher writes the sentences on a large sheet of chart paper. When the teacher does this, he or she might put a blank space in the place where some very important and obvious words in the text should be. The children "read" the story together and decide what the missing words might be. They then write the words in the blank spaces, with the teacher's help.

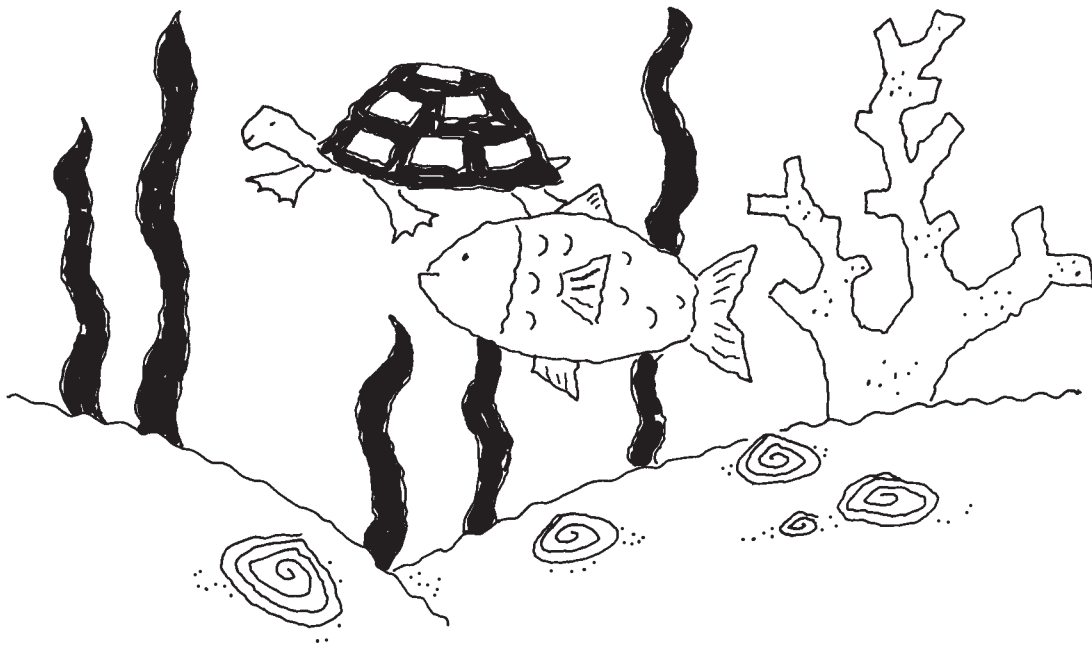


In the following example, the word *fish* might be used in the first two blank spaces. The children can decide what other words to include that will make sense in a story.

Once upon a time, there was a little \_\_\_\_ named Swimmy. The little \_\_\_\_ was very lonely. He didn't have any \_\_\_\_\_. Then, the little \_\_\_\_ met a turtle. The turtle was lonely too. They swam together in the cool blue \_\_\_\_\_, and they had fun.






Children can illustrate copies of their story. The text should be written on several pages, with one or two sentences per page. The little books could be stapled and sent home to share with family and friends.



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## Sample First-Grade Lessons

**W**hile the kindergarten teacher demonstrates how letter/sound associations work, the first-grade teacher includes other skills as well. He or she might also demonstrate invented spelling strategies:

Say the word slowly. Listen for the sounds. Feel them on your tongue and in your mouth. Write down the letters you think you need.

First-grade teachers will also want to demonstrate the use of letter lines, similar to a Hangman spelling game, in order to spell big words with several syllables. He or she should stress capitalization and punctuation rules in context. Students can also be shown how text wraps around from one line to the next.

Children in a first-grade classroom have just shared the wonderful experience of watching a caterpillar become a butterfly. Some time before, someone had brought in a jar that contained some grass and a furry caterpillar. The teacher had told the children that they could keep it in the classroom and watch what happened to it. Together, they saw the stages of development and wondered what was happening inside the chrysalis. They watched in awe as their butterfly spread its wings and flew away on a cool, sunny afternoon. This shared experience offers an opportunity for guided writing. The teacher asks the children what they remember from watching the butterfly take form. Students eagerly want to tell what they know. Instead of simply taking dictation and writing down what is said as it is told, the teacher can slow the pace a bit and write *with* the students, asking for their help. The guided writing lesson might go something like this:



**Teacher:** Let's make a story together. Who can help me write down what we learned from watching our caterpillar? What happened first?

**Student:** Billy brought in a jar.

**Teacher:** Very good. Let's write that. Billy, please come up here and write your name. (Billy writes his own name.) Billy made a capital *B* at the beginning of his name. The first letter in a name is always a capital letter. Raise your hand if you start your name with a capital letter. (Everyone should raise a hand.) We don't need to make the other letters capitals. Just the first one. Let's all say the letters in Billy's name. (Class chants letters.) Let's see now. Our sentence is going to say that Billy brought in a jar. What is the next word we need to write?

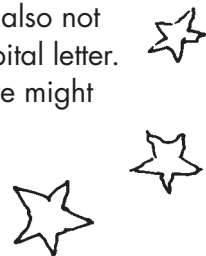
**Student:** *Brought.*

**Teacher:** Good. Help me spell that word. Does *brought* start like another word in our sentence? (Teacher writes seven "letter lines": \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_.)

**Student:** I think it starts like Billy's name.

**Teacher:** You are right! Good job! What letter do we need? (*B*) Is the word *brought* a person's name? (No) The word *brought* is not a name. It is also not the first word in our sentence. So it does not need to begin with a capital letter. (Teacher writes *b* on first letter line.) What other letters do you think we might need to spell this word?

**Student:** I think there is a *t*.





**Teacher:** Is the *t* at the beginning or the end of the word? Say it slowly. Where is the *t* sound?



**Student:** It comes at the end.

**Teacher:** Right. I'll write a *t* over here. (Teacher writes *t* on the last letter line.) Say the first sound of our word. Do you hear another letter working with *b* at the beginning?

**Student:** I think it's an *r*.

**Teacher:** That's right! Good listening! The *r* works with the *b* to say "br" and that letter goes right here. (Teacher writes the letter *r* in its place on the second line.) There are some other letters in the word *brought* that you probably can't hear or feel with your tongue. This word has a funny spelling. It doesn't look the way it sounds. Let me fill in the missing letters. (Teacher continues to spell the word correctly.) Let's read our sentence to find out what is next. So far we have "Billy brought." What else do we want to say?

**Student:** Billy brought in a jar.

**Teacher:** Our next word is *in*. Can someone spell that word?

**Student:** I know how to spell *in*.

**Teacher:** Can you come up and write the word for us? It goes right here. (Teacher points out the space and student is given the marker to write the word.) Let's be sure not to crowd our letters together. We leave room after *brought* so we can see where *in* begins and ends. We always space our words.

**Student:** I know how to spell the word *a*.

**Teacher:** Good. You can come up and write it for us. (Student takes a turn writing.) What is the last word in our sentence? We have "Billy brought in a . . . ." What is next?

**Student:** *Jar*. Billy brought in a jar.

**Teacher:** Good. Let's write *jar*. Can anyone tell me a letter that we might need?

**Student:** I think we need *g*.

**Teacher:** You might think there is a *g*, but we need a letter that sounds just like *g*.

**Student:** Is it *j*?

**Teacher:** Yes. Good for you. We need a *j*. (Teacher writes the letter.) Is there another letter you can hear in the word *jar*?

**Student:** Is it *r*?

**Teacher:** Good listening. Yes. It is an *r*. I'll write it over here and leave space for another letter in between the *j* and *r*. The missing letter is one you might not

