

Writing, Grades 4-6

Classroom Management

In grades 4-6, most students should have had considerable opportunities to learn about writing. If for some reason the class has not, student writing sessions may be short (ten to fifteen minutes), followed by Writing Seminar in order to support and sustain writing. As the year goes on and as they become more experienced writers, students will be able to spend more time on a single writing assignment. Workshop offers the perfect setting for extended work on in-progress writing assignments. Although writing is generally considered part of the language arts block, it can and should be integrated into science, math, and social studies curricula. What is most important is that students write regularly each day.

Mr. Garvin has set up his classroom to make group learning an integral part of his class. Note that he has arranged the desks in a way that gives him and his students the ability to move around smoothly and to work with each other easily. He has chart paper and an overhead projector available for taking notes and making lists as a group.

The following tips may prove helpful in creating an atmosphere conducive to writing.

Writing centers do not need to be elaborate. Use shelves for supplies and a small table for publishing. Creating multiple writing centers, one for each specific aspect of the writing process, can help eliminate competition for resources and space. For example, create a materials center, help center, publishing center, reading center, and so on. You may have recycled paper or scrap paper, pencils, and other writing utensils in the materials center; dictionaries, thesauri, and other reference books in the help center; paper, pens, construction paper, tape, scissors, hole punches, and other craft materials in the publishing center; and various books and magazines in the reading center. Have the students help you set up these centers so they feel involved in the creation of their writing spaces and are familiar with the available materials and resources.

If personal computers are available for the writing center, students using *SRA Imagine It!* can access the [eSuite](#) to view the writing transparencies, graphic organizers, and writing samples, as well as editing games in *eSkills & eGames*.

Writing Folders, which help students keep their writing organized, are invaluable tools for teacher and student assessments. Students should label each piece of writing with their name, the date, and the focus of the writing process (e.g., draft, revision, and so on). Keep all your students' folders in a file drawer or plastic container in a central location. Student helpers may hand out **Writing Folders** during writing times, and students should feel free to get their folders during Workshop.

A few simple rules, generated with your students, set a positive tone for a supportive and constructive writing atmosphere. Some rules that might be appropriate are:

- Do not interrupt the teacher when the teacher is writing or working with another student or group of students.
- Keep the noise level down. Authors are working!
- During writing time, everyone should be involved with a writing-related activity (i.e., planning, drafting, revising, publishing, reading, browsing, researching, using the writing centers, or working with a peer).

Sign-up sheets are useful in each center, along with a separate set of rules, such as, "Only five people at the center at a time," or "Only whispering is allowed."