



## Writing Fundamentals

### K-1 Touchstone Texts Unit Overview

#### IMMERSION READ-ALoud WORKSHOPS

---

**DAY ONE: The Writer Behind the Words** uses *Knuffle Bunny* by Mo Willems to demonstrate how readers get to know a book/touchstone text and the author who wrote it.

**DAY TWO: A Writer's Passion Inspires Writing** uses *Roller Coaster* by Marla Frazee to show how she focuses in on one thrilling event through pictures and words—an event she knows well.

**DAY THREE: Writers Research** uses *I Know a Lady* by Charlotte Zolotow as an example of the way one writer creates a telling and descriptive list from observations and memories.

**DAY FOUR: Writers Remember** uses *Watch Out for the Chicken Feet in Your Soup* by Tomie de Paola to show students how writers bring memorable people and moments to life.

**DAY FIVE: Writers Love Language** uses *Let's Go Home: The Wonderful Things About a House* by Cynthia Rylant to help students discover and discuss the power of words.

#### UNIT BOOKS

*The Chalk Doll*  
by Charlotte Pomerantz

*Dream Weaver*  
by Jonathon London

*I Know a Lady*  
by Charlotte Zolotow

*Knuffle Bunny*  
by Mo Willems

*Let's Go Home: The Wonderful Things About a House*  
by Cynthia Rylant

*The Moon Was the Best*  
by Charlotte Zolotow

*One of Three*  
by Angela Johnson

*Roller Coaster*  
by Marla Frazee

*Snow*  
by Uri Shulevitz

*Watch Out for the Chicken Feet in Your Soup*  
by Tomie de Paola

## LESSON TITLES & RATIONALES

**Generating Ideas I: Tell Me a Story** uses *The Chalk Doll* by Charlotte Pomerantz

**Rationale:** Ideas often come from questions, family stories, and keepsakes. Students will think about the family stories they often hear and family keepsakes they hold dear to inspire ideas for writing.

**Generating Ideas II: Put Your Thoughts on Paper** uses *One of Three* by Angela Johnson

**Rationale:** Writers reflect and record their thoughts about their world. Students will think about their daily experiences and feelings as inspiration for writing.

**Generating Ideas III: Spotting Good Ideas for Writing** uses *Dream Weaver* by Jonathan London

**Rationale:** When you live a writer's life, you know there are ideas all around. Students will discuss where and how writers look for ideas.

**Generating Ideas IV: Ideas With Focus and Clarity** uses *The Moon Was the Best* by Charlotte Zolotow and *Let's Go Home: The Wonderful Things about a House* by Cynthia Rylant

**Rationale:** One way writers make sure their ideas are focused is by narrowing their topic. Students will examine big ideas and the many writing possibilities inside them.

**Generating Ideas V: Develop Your Ideas** uses *Let's Go Home: The Wonderful Things About a House* by Cynthia Rylant

**Rationale:** Ideas are developed through interesting, relevant details in pictures and words. Students will decide on details to support and communicate their ideas.

---

**Selecting Ideas: Decide What to Stick With** uses *Roller Coaster* by Marla Frazee and *I Know a Lady* by Charlotte Zolotow

**Rationale:** Writers often consider purpose, audience, and commitment to their idea when deciding what to publish. Students will consider these things, too, as they reread the ideas they have collected in their Writing Folders.

---

**Drafting I: Organization – Snapshots** uses *Chalk Doll* by Charlotte Pomerantz and *The Moon Was the Best* by Charlotte Zolotow

**Rationale:** Writers plan the structure of their writing and envision its organization as a whole. Students will try a common text structure as a way to organize their writing.

**Drafting II: Organization – Chronological Order** uses *Watch Out For the Chicken Feet in Your Soup* by Tomie de Paola

**Rationale:** Writers plan how their stories will be organized so they are fully understood by the reader. Students will recognize how stories are often told through a sequence of events and try this common structure with their own ideas.

---

**Revision I: Reread – Do You Get the point?** uses *One of Three* by Angela Johnson

**Rationale:** Revision must include ways to help writers reread and “resee” their writing. Students will discuss and practice strategies for rereading their writing.

---

**Revision II: Models of Good Writing** uses *Roller Coaster* by Marla Frazee

**Rationale:** Writers use touchstone or mentor texts to identify ways of improving their own writing. Students will reread a touchstone text to study the author’s craft. They will name and use these techniques to enhance their writing.

---

**Revision III: Tell Me More** uses *Snow* by Uri Shulevitz and *The Chalk Doll* by Charlotte Pomerantz

**Rationale:** Writers often slow time down by focusing on details and painting vivid scenes and images. Students will reread their drafts to decide on places they can add these slowed-down moments.

---

**Editing I: Notice Punctuation** uses *Knuffle Bunny* by Mo Willems

**Rationale:** Writers make conscious choices about the final punctuation they choose based on how it enhances the readers’ experience of a piece. Students will discuss the reasons writers choose certain punctuation marks over others and then edit and reconsider their own punctuation choices.

---

**Editing II: Notice More Punctuation** uses *Knuffle Bunny* by Mo Willems

**Rationale:** Writers use punctuation to enhance readers’ understanding and appreciation of a piece. Students will discuss the reasons writers use punctuation and then edit their own drafts to ensure effective punctuation.

---

**Publishing: Check for Finishing Touches** uses *Dream Weaver* by Jonathon London and *Knuffle Bunny* by Mo Willems

**Rationale:** Writers read their final drafts to make sure they have included all the finishing touches for publication. Students will consider the finishing touches they desire for their published piece and complete a checklist to ensure their inclusion.

---

**Evaluation I: How Have I Grown?** uses a Self-Assessment Questionnaire

**Rationale:** Evaluating and reflecting on the writing process enables writers to name what they’ve learned and strengthen their writing identity. Students will reread their pieces with these purposes in mind.

---

**Evaluation II: Teacher Assessment of Student Performance** uses a unit-specific rubric.



## Writing Fundamentals

### 2-3 Touchstone Texts Unit Overview

#### IMMERSION READ-ALoud WORKSHOPS

**DAY ONE: Reading Like a Writer** uses all unit books to build excitement for the new touchstone texts and to introduce the concept of reading like a writer.

**DAY TWO: When Writers Make You Say “Ah!”** uses *Hello, Harvest Moon* by Ralph Fletcher to teach students how to identify memorable language in texts and notice the differences between ordinary and memorable language.

**DAY THREE: How Did They Do That?** uses *My Chinatown* by Kam Mak to examine and discuss the writer’s word choices.

**DAY FOUR: How a Piece Is Built** uses *Water Dance* by Thomas Locker to examine text structures (e.g., circular, alphabet, repetitive words or phrases, etc.).

**DAY FIVE: Noticing All Kinds of Writing** uses *Baby* by Patricia Maclachlan to show students how writers pull their readers into their writing with strong leads.

#### UNIT BOOKS

*Baby*

by Patricia Maclachlan

*Freedom Summer*

by Deborah Wiles

*Hairs/Pelitos*

by Sandra Cisneros

*Hello, Harvest Moon*

by Ralph Fletcher

*Out of the Ocean*

by Debra Frasier

*My Chinatown*

by Kam Mak

*Thirteen Moons on Turtle’s Back*

by Joseph Bruchac and Jonathan London

*Water Dance*

by Thomas Locker

*What You Know First*

by Patricia Maclachlan

*Where the River Begins*

by Thomas Locker

## LESSON TITLES & RATIONALES

**Generating Ideas I: Tell Me About the Time** uses Where the River Begins by Thomas Locker

**Rationale:** Writers know that many people have stories and adventures they like to talk about and share.

**Generating Ideas II: Should I or Shouldn't I?** uses What You Know First by Patricia MacLachlan and Freedom Summer by Deborah Wiles

**Rationale:** Writers often draw from their own lives to create pieces with “internal conflict.” Internal conflict is the quality of being pulled in two directions at one time.

**Generating Ideas III: Writing Reasons** uses What You Know First by Patricia MacLachlan, Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back by Joseph Bruchac and Jonathan London, Out of the Ocean by Debra Frasier, and Freedom Summer by Deborah Wiles

**Rationale:** Writers write for many reasons. By reading the work of other authors, writers can generate possible topics for their own writing purposes.

**Generating Ideas IV: Say Cheese!** uses Freedom Summer by Deborah Wiles

**Rationale:** Writers focus in on specific moments to capture fine details through their writing.

**Generating Ideas V: Senses and Sensibility** uses My Chinatown by Kam Mak

**Rationale:** Authors use sensory details to enhance their writing and make it wonderful.

---

**Selecting: Discovering “The One!”** uses all the books from this unit of study

**Rationale:** Writers write about things that are important to them. Listening to their inner voices helps writers decide what they will write about.

---

**Collecting I: Look Around You!** uses My Chinatown by Kam Mak

**Rationale:** When writers write about a place they look carefully around their setting to notice details to add to their piece.

**Collecting II: Sentimental Journey** uses What You Know First by Patricia MacLachlan

**Rationale:** Writers take a mental walk back in time to collect details to add to their pieces.

**Collecting III: Making It Real** uses Hello, Harvest Moon by Ralph Fletcher

**Rationale:** Personification brings inanimate objects to life, adding details to writing in a sophisticated way.

**Collecting IV: I Am What I Am** uses Water Dance by Thomas Locker

**Rationale:** Authors often use inanimate object text structure as a powerful way to combine noticing, listing, and perspective in their writing.

**Collecting V: Research, Baby!** uses Out of the Ocean by Debra Frasier

**Rationale:** Writers add facts to the main body of a text by collecting information relevant to their topic. Adding research to a piece informs as well as entertains the reader.

**Drafting I: How Do I Begin?** uses Water Dance by Thomas Locker, My Chinatown by Kam Mak, Hello, Harvest Moon by Ralph Fletcher, Hairs/Pelitos by Sandra Cisneros, and Freedom Summer by Deborah Wiles

**Rationale:** Writers spend time thinking about how to begin their pieces. Some beginnings bring the reader directly into the action while others lead the reader into the story gradually.

**Drafting II: Can You Repeat That?** uses Hairs/Pelitos by Sandra Cisneros and Water Dance by Thomas Locker

**Rationale:** Writers use a repeating word or phrase structure to focus on the main idea of a piece while adding details to help fill in the big picture.

**Drafting III: Nature's Lists** uses Water Dance by Thomas Locker

**Rationale:** Writers often structure texts in a listing arrangement. Listing the features of the topic is a writing strategy that holds a piece together in an organized and predictable way.

**Drafting IV: Time Passages** uses Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back by Joseph Bruchac and Jonathan London

**Rationale:** Writers often use the universal structures that are present in nature to establish a time movement in text.

**Drafting V: Can You Hear My Voice?** uses What You Know First by Patricia MacLachlan

**Rationale:** Writers use voice when they want their personality to come through in their writing. Voice makes it sound like a writing is talking to you.

---

**Revision I: Writer's Stew** uses Freedom Summer by Deborah Wiles and Hairs/Pelitos by Sandra Cisneros

**Rationale:** Writers make decisions about which craft techniques to use to make their writing sound wonderful.

**Revision II: Very Vivid Verbs** uses Water Dance by Thomas Locker

**Rationale:** Writers use vivid verbs to make their writing more vibrant. Powerful verbs create a clear and precise picture of the action in the text.

**Revision III: Words & Pictures** uses Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back by Joseph Bruchac and Jonathan London

**Rationale:** Writers and illustrators work together to create illustrations that add brilliance and detail to their text.

---

**Editing I: What Do You Hear?** uses Freedom Summer by Deborah Wiles

**Rationale:** Writers like Deborah Wiles edit their work not only to examine their writing conventions, such as correct spelling and punctuation; they also listen to the power of their words as they edit.

**Editing II: Worth a Thousand Words** uses Where the River Begins and Water Dance by Thomas Locker

**Rationale:** Writers like Thomas Locker, who also illustrate their texts, make intentional editing decisions about materials, layout, design, and the ways the artwork will support the writing.

**Publishing: Dedicated to My Writing Inspirations** uses all the books used in this unit of study

**Rationale:** Writers publish their books when they complete them. There are particular details that authors include in their published pieces.

---

**Evaluation I: My Writing Reflections** uses a Self-Assessment Questionnaire

**Rationale:** Writers reflect upon their work to develop their craft. The metacognitive skill of self-evaluation and self-assessment enables students to understand and articulate how they have grown as writers as a result of this unit of study.

**Evaluation II: Teacher Assessment of Student Performance** uses a unit-specific rubric.



## Writing Fundamentals

### 4-5 Touchstone Texts Unit Overview

#### IMMERSION READ-ALoud WORKSHOPS

**DAY ONE: “Reading Like Writers”** uses all unit books to introduce students to what it means to read like writers; then uses *Home Run* by Robert Burleigh in a read-aloud session that highlights how the author uses long and short sentences, repetition, and punctuation to create rhythm.

**DAY TWO: Explore the Endless Possibilities in a Single Touchstone Text!** uses *Come On, Rain!* by Karen Hesse to further students’ discovery of what it means to read like a writer.

**DAY THREE: Reading Like Writers** uses *Canoe Days* by Gary Paulsen to further students’ exploration of how to read like writers by identifying and charting Paulsen’s crafting techniques.

**DAY FOUR: Reading Like Writers (cont.)** uses *My Mama Had a Dancing Heart* by Libba Moore Gray to look for interesting craft, language, and writing techniques in Libba Moore Gray’s book as they continue the development of their skills in reading like writers.

**DAY FIVE: Reading Like Writers (cont.)** uses Jacqueline Woodson’s *Coming On Home Soon* to employ and build on students’ ability to read as writers as they look for interesting craft, language, and writing techniques in the author’s text.

#### UNIT BOOKS

*The Barn Owls*  
by Tony Johnston

*Canoe Days*  
by Gary Paulsen

*Come On, Rain!*  
by Karen Hesse

*Coming On Home Soon*  
by Jacqueline Woodson

*Earrings!*  
by Judith Viorst

*Home Run*  
by Robert Burleigh

*My Mama Had a Dancing Heart*  
by Libba Moore Gray

*Twilight Comes Twice*  
by Ralph Fletcher

*Welcome to the Green House*  
by Jane Yolen

*When I Was Young in  
the Mountains*  
by Cynthia Rylant

## LESSON TITLES & RATIONALES

**Generating Ideas I: Writing Off of Literature** uses *Home Run* by Robert Burleigh

**Rationale:** Writers use literature to spark ideas for writing.

**Generating Ideas II: Make Ordinary Events Extraordinary** uses *Come On, Rain!* by Karen Hesse

**Rationale:** Writers find ways to make an ordinary event from their life sound extraordinary.

**Generating Ideas III: Writing About People in Our Lives** uses *My Mama Had A Dancing Heart* by Libba Moore Gray

**Rationale:** Writers are inspired to write about people they love and times they have shared with them.

**Generating Ideas IV: Writing About Universal Feelings in Truthful Ways** uses *Coming On Home Soon* by Jacqueline Woodson

**Rationale:** Good writers write about universal feelings in truthful ways that engage their readers and inspire them to make personal connections.

**Generating Ideas V: Times You've Longed for Something** uses *Earrings!* by Judith Viorst

**Rationale:** Writers are often inspired to write about times when they have longed for something.

---

**Selecting: Committing to an Idea for Publishing** uses students' Writers' Notebooks

**Rationale:** Writers use thoughtful questions to help them choose an idea they would like to make a commitment to publish.

---

**Collecting I: Punctuation Possibilities** uses *Come On, Rain!* by Karen Hesse

**Rationale:** Reading like a writer or looking closely at text to learn about writing techniques is an important skill. Students should understand the value and effects of punctuation.

**Collecting II: Using Commas for Effect** uses *Canoe Days* by Gary Paulsen

**Rationale:** Writers learn from techniques used by other writers. Commas are often used by writers to create rhythm, enhance mood, and convey action.

**Collecting III: Creating Writing With Rhythm** uses *Home Run* by Robert Burleigh

**Rationale:** Writers engage readers by creating text that has rhythm and flow.

**Collecting IV: Sentence Structure** uses *Canoe Days* by Gary Paulsen

**Rationale:** Writers learn crafting strategies from other writers. Writing with varied sentence structure helps engage and interest the reader.

**Drafting I: Passage of Time in Planning** uses *My Mama Had a Dancing Heart* by Libba Moore Gray and *Come On, Rain!* by Karen Hesse

**Rationale:** Writers consider different ways their story could be told. Students will determine the passage of time in their selected piece and will map out their story using a graphic organizer.

---

**Drafting II: Crafting Leads** uses *My Mama Had a Dancing Heart* by Libba Moore Gray

**Rationale:** Writers don't wait until revision to try out craft techniques they've collected from touchstone texts. Students will experiment with punctuation, repetition, and sentence structure in their leads.

---

**Revision I: Bringing Out Details in the Setting** uses *Come On, Rain!* by Karen Hesse

**Rationale:** Writers know that some parts of a story are so important that they deserve a little bit of extra attention. Setting is one story element deserving of focus and attention.

---

**Revision II: Using Repetition to Slow Down the Moment** uses *Home Run!* by Robert Burleigh

**Rationale:** Repetition is a tool writers use to create a slow-motion effect in their writing.

---

**Editing I: Correcting Punctuation and Capitalization** uses students' final drafts

**Rationale:** Writers reread to correct punctuation and capitalization because they know it gives their writing rhythm and helps get their meaning across. Writers use other people to help polish a piece of writing as it goes to publication by correcting key punctuation errors.

---

**Editing II: Reading Backwards and Using Spelling Tools to Proofread** uses *Come On, Rain!* by Karen Hesse

**Rationale:** Writers draw on spelling strategies they know so that the piece reads as the author intended. Students will use different spelling tools to fine-tune their piece and get it ready to publish.

---

**Publishing: Writing Celebration** uses students' final drafts

**Rationale:** Writers celebrate accomplishments by sharing their efforts and discussing their work.

---

**Evaluation I: Unit Evaluation and Self-Reflection** uses a Self-Reflection Questionnaire

**Rationale:** Writers grow with each piece they publish. It is important for students to reflect on learning and progress that takes place with each new unit and repeated cycle in the writing process.

---

**Evaluation II: Teacher Assessment of Student Performance** uses a unit-specific rubric.