

# What's New in Writing?

## PARENT NEWSLETTER

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Writers™

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Expository Writing Newsletter # \_\_\_\_\_

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*We are making terrific progress in the area of writing this year! The next skill that we are working on is how to write powerful supporting details. Have you noticed that when you read your child's writing it may have a general quality? It may feel like a simple list of facts rather than a fully developed piece. This is a typical challenge in expository writing. The supporting details are the way in which the author shares and expands on information. Often students state the detail and never quite go into the level of elaboration that is required.*

### FOCUS SKILL AREA: SUPPORTING DETAILS

In class we're working on fully elaborating the details. In order to do so we're learning to ask ourselves effective questions.

These questions include:

- What does the detail look like? (Describe it)
- Why is it important to the main idea?
- Is each detail in a separate sentence? (This eliminates the list-like quality.)
- What are the specific examples? (If I'm writing about birds, do I name the specific bird? *i.e.* robin, penguin, flamingo)

#### What can you do to support Supporting Details?

- You can ask effective questions of your child. Use the ones above as a way of adding information to the piece of writing. For instance, your child might write: *There are many types of birds that live in South America. There are toucans, cockatoos, and rheas.* This is a list of birds. Although the names of the birds are specific there are no other supporting features to give the reader information.
- **Ask** — What do toucans look like? *You can recognize the toucan by its dark black body and large colorful bill.* This adds the next level of detail.
- **Ask** — Why is this important? *The toucan uses its bill to reach deep into the holes of trees to extract bugs and other larvae for food. It is suspected that the colorful bill intimidates other smaller birds.*
- Notice that now the reader has information about the toucan. Previously the reader had a list of birds with no supporting detail.
- Another skill involves the use of statistics, quotes, amazing facts, descriptive segments, and anecdotes. These add power and credibility to the piece – they *show*, rather than *tell*. Look for these powerful details in published pieces. Magazine articles are terrific sources of these kinds of techniques.

For more information on supporting details go to [www.empoweringwriters.com](http://www.empoweringwriters.com). As always if you have specific questions about your child's progress in writing please feel free to contact me.