

What's New in Writing?

PARENT NEWSLETTER

EmpoweringTM
Writers

Teacher's Name _____ Grade _____

Narrative Writing Newsletter # _____

VOLUME 1

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You often ask how you can help your child become a better writer, or perhaps you want to know what your student is being taught in writing. This newsletter, one of several throughout the year, will guide you to information and offer suggestions for how to support your student writer.

Empowering Writers materials are being used to teach your child the skills necessary to become authors. It is a curriculum model that uses authentic literature to identify and discuss author's technique and craft. It includes, teacher directed modeling of specific skills, offers students opportunity to practice those skills, and ultimately empowers students to apply the skills learned when writing.

FOCUS SKILL AREA: GENRE

Your child will be exposed to many types of writing in their school career. There are three types, identified here, that students will be asked to write to most often.

- **Character-problem-solution** stories focus on the main character. The main character is thrust into a struggle or problem of some kind. Throughout the story they struggle with the problem, and eventually solve their own problem coming out in the end changed in some way. The story problem is a vehicle through which the main character grows or changes, or learns something about him or her self.
- **Personal experience** narrative focuses on the setting or experience of a character. There is no problem in this type of story and it follows a basic beginning, middle, and end sequence. To make up for the lack of story tension (the problem) the author uses vivid, descriptive language to hold the reader's attention. This powerful language allows the reader to experience the story through the five senses of the main character.
- **Expository** writing is informational in purpose. It is written to give information to an audience of others and focuses on a topic. Students usually call this type of writing a report or essay.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT THIS INSTRUCTION? PARENT TIPS:

- 1) In order to support your student writer at home, read a variety of books and then you might ask some questions such as: Did the character in the story have a problem of some kind? What was the main problem? If there was no problem, how did the author keep your attention? Did this book give information of some kind? What was the topic?
- 2) As you read stories to your child begin to look with **author's eyes** at the type of story being read and what the author does to tell the story. Is there any section in the story where the author uses highly vivid descriptive language? Did the main character show any feeling or emotion?
- 3) By asking open ended questions you and your child will begin to notice the details of story. The quality of the questions you ask will reflect the quality of the written work produced by your child.

For those of you who want more information or a list of books that support genre you can go to www.empoweringwriters.com and click on the Teacher's Corner for literature suggestions or parent's corner for additional information.

Have fun with writing and enjoy the stories your child comes up with. Remember that narrative stories are not the literal experiences of the author but rather the experiences of a character. This means that your child is limited only by his/her imagination.