

## INTRODUCTION

Being able to communicate meaningfully through writing is an essential life skill. As students progress through school, written assignments become more frequent and more complex. Job positions commonly require a significant amount of formal or technical writing. For these reasons it is vital that each student receive a solid foundation in writing instruction.

Once labeled in importance as the second “R,” writing has often been less emphasized than reading and math, even science and social studies. While these other school subjects were easily broken down into specific skills with activities that could be objectively graded, writing skills were much more abstract, hard to grade, and seemingly hard to teach. Recent increased expectations and mandatory testing have renewed an interest in teaching writing. Writing instruction is reemerging with an emphasis in writing across all curriculum areas.

The *Basic Writing Series* is designed for the educator who desires a coherent method for teaching writing. Each activity is presented at a low readability level to support beginning readers and writers. The techniques modeled within this program teach specific repetitive steps and reinforce learned skills with additional practice time. *Basic Writing Series* employs clear instructions, visual cues, repetition, and activities within each learning modality.

## RATIONALE

The philosophy behind the development of *Basic Writing Series* is that writing instruction can, and should, be taught to every learner. This curriculum, through its use of the Think, Organize, Write method, has separated writing instruction into small, specific skills and combined those skills with activities that can be evaluated.

Writing skills can be separated into manageable pieces of instruction and can be compared to the construction of buildings. Buildings are constructed vertically and involve the successful completion of several phases: a strong foundation, a framing support system, walls, and eventually, multiple stories. Each step must be completed successfully before the next phase begins.

The construction and process of writing a paragraph also has phases beginning with a foundation that consists of a readily available bank of words. Provided with repeated experiences in writing words, students are better equipped to select words for specific topics and write clear sentences. Connecting these words into simple sentences provides the writer a primitive framing support system. To transform the simple sentence into a more complex one, special tools and supplies are used to reinforce the existing structure. To create a topic sentence, the addition of a main idea is necessary. Details give support to the main idea through supporting sentences. Finally, thoughtfully constructed sentences can be stacked to build a paragraph. A paragraph is like one story of a building. The completed paragraph must be constructed so that it can stand alone while being connected to the paragraphs which follow it. The *Basic Writing Series* addresses each of these building phases in six units, ordered in developmental progression.

## SIX UNITS

Lessons and activities in this book are presented in six units. Each unit builds on skills from the previous unit. The units are:

Writing Warm-Up	Writing Words
Topics	Topic Sentences
Supporting Details	Paragraph Writing

## UNIT OVERVIEW

While each unit contains teacher instructions, a parent/guardian letter, and activity pages, it also contains components unique to the skills presented within the unit. An overview of the additional components included in each unit is listed below:

### Unit 1: Writing Warm-Up

- Review of capital and lowercase letters
- Introduction of 18 thematic word lists
- Construction of a Word Book

### Unit 2: Writing Words

- Four sets of "I Have, Who Has ...?" game cards
- Two additional thematic word lists to be added to student Word Book

### Unit 3: Topics

- Think, Organize, Write song used to introduce and reinforce three basic steps of the writing process
- Three additional thematic word lists to be added to the student Word Book

### Unit 4: Topic Sentences

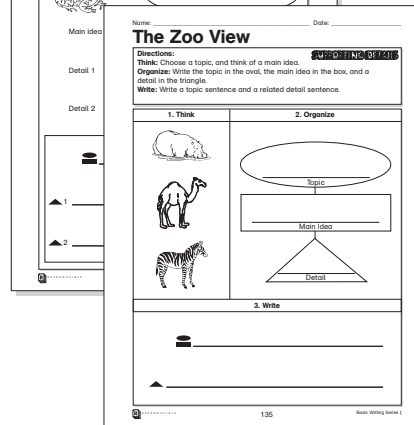
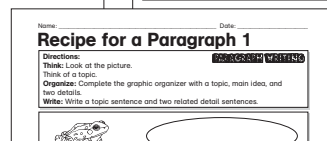
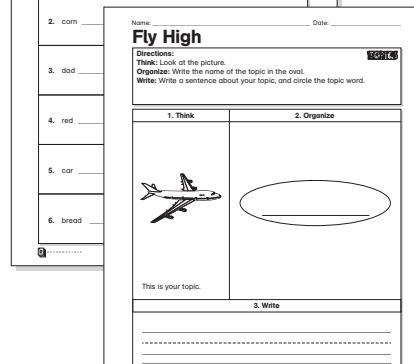
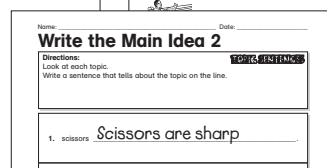
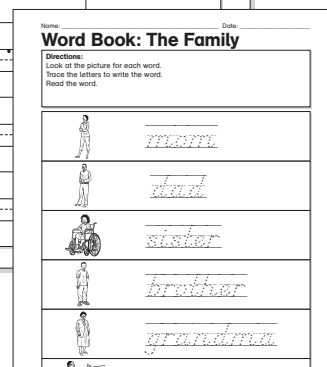
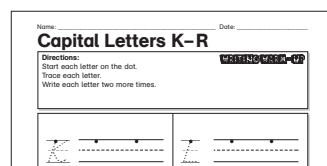
- Two sets of game cards to match topic and main idea
- Talk About the Topic game board and 48 question cards
- A dictionary template for students to add words of their choice to the Word Book
- Two additional thematic word lists to be added to the student Word Book

### Unit 5: Supporting Details

- Instructions for a modified version of the "I Spy" game

### Unit 6: Paragraph Writing

- An introduction to paragraph writing



## PROGRAM COMPONENTS

*Basic Writing Series* contains activities designed to motivate students to develop their language and writing skills as well as many tools to assist the teacher. Each unit contains the following components: teacher instructions, parent/guardian letter, and activity sheets.

**Teacher Instructions:** The teacher instructions are found at the beginning of each unit. These instructions include a list of student objectives, an overview of the unit, and motivational activities to engage students in writing. The student objectives identify the skills covered within the unit. Definitions are included, where appropriate, to clarify terms used in the unit. The unit overview provides a quick summation of the student activities. The Getting Students Motivated section includes activities that employ a variety of learning styles to assist the teacher in lesson preparation and provide ideas to make writing fun.

**Parent/Guardian Letter:** Each unit includes a letter that should be sent home with every student at the beginning of the unit. The parent/guardian letter explains the current writing skill being taught and suggests activities that help reinforce the new skills. Home activities are designed to provide additional practice of the skills taught in prior units.

**Activity Sheets:** Each unit includes several activity sheets with clear and simple instructions, employing a variety of learning styles to ensure students' mastery of the skills. Each activity page represents one writing lesson meant to stand alone. Activity sheets can be used individually, with a partner, or in small groups. If students work with partners or in small groups, each member should bring his or her activity page to the group. The student activity sheets can be completed in class or sent home for additional practice, review, or homework.

## BLACKLINE MASTERS

Blackline masters have been included for teachers who wish to provide additional writing experiences for students. A Word Book blackline master (page XX) can be used to incorporate thematic classroom word lists into the writing curriculum. Two Think, Organize, Write blackline masters (pages XXI and XXII) provide continuity for students when writing in other subject areas. Use the Think, Organize, Write masters in cross-curricular activities to give students more writing practice and reinforce the use of newly acquired writing skills.

**WRITING WORDS**

**TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS**

**Objectives:**  
Students will use the Word Book from Writing Words: Unit 1.  
Students will practice writing words independently.  
Students will develop a writing vocabulary.

**Overview:**  
In this unit, students will practice writing the words introduced in the first unit. The activities have pictures that represent words from the Student Word Book. The students are asked to identify the word that matches each item or object in the picture. Some word lists are introduced at the end of the unit on pages 11-12. The students should complete these lists and add these pages to their Student Books.

**Getting Students Motivated**

- Make flashcards for each word from the Student Book in the first unit. Label different letters each day. Hold up the word cards one by one and have the students read the words aloud. Challenge them to read each word in their first book.
- Select one set of thematic flashcards and cover one letter on each flashcard with a sticky note. Display the first flashcard, and ask the students to identify the missing letter. Allow the students to use their Student Books to help them identify the covered letter and read the word. Then, have the students write the word on paper. Repeat the process with the remaining flashcards in the set. As students improve their abilities to identify the covered letters, increase the number of letters covered for each word.
- Invite the students to read the words listed on a specified page of their Student Book. Call on volunteers to read each word in a sentence. Write the sentences on chart paper. Read all of the sentences aloud together. This helps students make the relationship/communication connection, preparing them for future units.
- Play the game "I Have, Who Has." Prepare for game play by identifying and writing out the key elements sets of game cards on pages 13-15. Have the students sit in a circle, and distribute one set of the game cards from one to the students. The remaining game cards in the set are for the teacher. Instruct the students to look at the picture on the game card and think aloud for 10 seconds. The teacher begins the game by reading the name on the game card aloud. An example is, "Who has a, a?" The students look at their game cards, and the student who has the picture of the cat responds by reading the name on the card, "I have a, who has a, a?" The student with the picture of the fish responds, "I have fish, who has a, a?" The game continues until the last card is read with the picture. Additional sets of game cards may be prepared following the example on the provided cards.

**Parent/Guardian Letter:**  
A parent/guardian letter that explains the purpose of the unit, identifies skills that will be taught, and suggests activities to complete at home is included on page 16. Send this letter home with the students so that their families can help reinforce writing skills taught in school.

**Activity Sheets:**  
Several activity sheets are included on pages 16-18. Students can complete these activities individually with partners, or in small groups. Any of these activities can be used as a take-home component.

27 Basic Writing Series I

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are beginning a unit on writing words. Be sure to ask your child questions about what he or she writes at school each day.

**Suggested Activities**

- Help your child collect a set of objects, for example, different kinds of postcards, blue toys, different kinds of coins, objects with wheels, objects that use batteries, objects that are soft, or objects that glow. Label the set, and help your child write the names of the objects on a page in your child's handwriting tablet. Point to each word and read it with your child. Ask your child to practice writing these words.
- Ask your child to read the word lists of the collected objects he or she wrote in his or her handwriting tablet. Then, create a new set of objects, and repeat the directions.
- Give your child a set of index cards and a set of tape. Have your child write around the house, writing words on the index cards to label items or objects in the house. Help your child spell each word correctly. Have your child tape each index card to the matching object.

To extend and reinforce our writing lessons, I will be sending activity sheets home for your child to complete. Review these activities with your child, and praise your child's writing efforts. Please return the completed activity sheets to school.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with your child.







Sincerely,

28 Basic Writing Series I

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Album**

**Directions:**  
Name the family member in each picture.  
Write the word for each family member on the lines below.  
Use page 13 in your Word Book to write each word correctly.

	
_____	_____
	
_____	_____
	
_____	_____

29 Basic Writing Series I

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Word Book**

**Directions:**  
Color the picture for each word.  
Trace the letters to write the word.  
Read the word.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

XX Basic Writing Series I

## ASSESSMENTS

Three types of assessment are included in this book: a progress chart, rubric chart, and student writing checklists for student self-evaluation. None of these assessments require marking on the students' work.

**Progress Chart:** A progress chart (page XIII) is included to track students' progress and mastery of writing skills. One way to use the progress chart is to collect weekly writing samples from each student and quickly check the boxes on the chart to record each of the skills the student used on the sample. Once the student has used the same skill in five successive progress checks, the teacher may mark the skill as mastered. The progress chart is a valuable communication tool to inform parents/guardians of their child's success and keep a record of their strengths and areas needing additional practice.

The Progress Chart form includes a header for Name and Evaluated By. It features a grid with 15 rows of skills and 10 columns for tracking progress. The skills listed are: Generate Topic, Generate Main Idea, Identify Related Details, Generate a Related Detail, Generate Two Related Details, Correctly Use Grammatical Organization, Check Word Book When Correcting, Correctly Capitalize, Correctly Punctuate, Write Complete Sentences, Organize an Organization, Volunteer to Share, Write Natural Sentences, Write Paragraphs, Add Words to Word Book, Write Poems, and Generate Writing Ideas. A 'PROGRESS CHART' logo is in the top right corner.

**Rubric Chart:** A rubric chart (page XIV) is included in this book to numerically grade students' writing. While grading a student writing sample, refer to the scoring key to assign each skill a numerical rating of 0–3. To find the final score, add up the ratings and use the scoring scale provided to equate the total score to a grade if desired.

The Rubric Chart form includes a header for Name, Date, and Evaluated By. It features a grid with 15 rows of skills and 3 columns for numerical ratings (0, 1, 2, 3). The skills listed are: Generate Topic, Generate Main Idea, Identify Related Details, Generate a Related Detail, Generate Two Related Details, Correctly Use Grammatical Organization, Check Word Book When Correcting, Correctly Capitalize, Correctly Punctuate, Write Complete Sentences, Organize an Organization, Volunteer to Share, Write Natural Sentences, Write Paragraphs, Add Words to Word Book, Write Poems, and Generate Writing Ideas. A 'RUBRIC CHART' logo is in the top right corner. Below the grid is a 'Scoring Scale' table.

Score	Grade
15-18 = 60	25-28 = 60
19-21 = 70	29-31 = 65
22-24 = 75	32-34 = 70

Adjust score if less than 10 skills are evaluated. Add up the total rubric scores, and use the Scoring Scale to obtain a numerical grade.

**Student Writing Checklists:** Student Writing Checklists (pages XV-XVIII), specific to Units 3–6, are included. The Student Writing Checklists may be utilized in different ways. Each student can use the writing checklist to edit his or her own writing when completing each step of the activity. Visual learners will find the checklist helpful for organization and accuracy. A Student Writing Checklist, specific to the unit being studied, may also be laminated and placed in each student's Word Book as a reference. The last two lines can be filled in with other grammar skills being taught that should be included in the students' writing samples. The Student Writing Checklist will need to be replaced periodically to include newly acquired skills. These checklists can be easily modified by the teacher to individualize instruction by highlighting only a few skills on the checklists for a student to work on or by adding additional skills on the two blank lines provided.

The Student Writing Checklist: Unit 3 form includes a header for Name and Date. It contains a 'Directions' section: 'Read each step. Complete each step in the order listed. Put a check in the box after completing each step.' Below are 10 steps with checkboxes: Put my name on the paper, Think of a topic, Write the topic in the circle, Write a sentence using the topic, Begin the sentence with a capital letter, End the sentence with a punctuation mark, Read the sentence, Share the sentence with a partner, and two blank lines for additional skills. A 'STUDENT WRITING CHECKLIST' logo is in the top right corner.

A blank Student Writing Checklist is included on page XIX. Teachers can use the checklist to create an individualized writing checklist specific to the skills the students are currently learning.

## EXPLANATION OF THE THINK, ORGANIZE, WRITE METHOD

The heart of the curriculum is the Think, Organize, Write method which is introduced in Unit 3. The method provides a framework for the writing steps in Units 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Think, Organize, Write is the method of dividing writing skills into smaller, more manageable skills that can be evaluated. The first two steps, Think and Organize, engage students in prewriting activities. Mature writers naturally take time to think and organize their thoughts in a coherent fashion before writing. Novice writers, however, must be taught to do this. The graphic organizer, using the simple geometric shapes of an oval, rectangle, and triangle, provides a way to easily develop prewriting skills. The graphic organizer visually displays each step and becomes so familiar to students that its recognizable geometric shapes are used as visual cues to prompt writing in Units 5 and 6.

The Think, Organize, Write method is introduced in its most rudimentary form in Unit 3. Students learn to look at a picture, think of a writing topic, write the topic in the graphic organizer, and use the topic in a sentence. A simple song is included in the unit to help students master the three basic writing steps. In Unit 4, the method includes the addition of the main idea. Students learn to develop a main idea, graphically organize the main idea, and then combine the main idea and topic to write a topic sentence. The method expands in Unit 5 to reflect the addition of one detail. The triangle is used in the graphic organizer to represent the detail. In this step, the students write a topic sentence and one related detail sentence. The Think, Organize, Write method assimilates all of the steps in Unit 6, teaching students to write a paragraph consisting of a topic sentence and two related detail sentences. The book also includes a Think, Organize, Write template (on page XXI) for teachers who want to use this writing method in additional cross-curricular activities.

The image displays four examples of graphic organizers, each illustrating the Think, Organize, Write method for a specific topic. Each organizer includes a title, a 'Name' and 'Date' line, and a 'Directions' section. The 'Think' step involves choosing a topic from a picture. The 'Organize' step involves writing the topic in an oval, the main idea in a box, and a detail in a triangle. The 'Write' step involves writing a topic sentence and related detail sentences.

- Groceries for Cooking** (Page 70): Shows pictures of a box of crackers, a bunch of grapes, and a bottle of juice. The organizer has sections for '1. Think', '2. Organize' (with an oval for 'Topic'), and '3. Write'.
- More Fruits** (Page 141): Shows pictures of an apple, an orange, and a banana. The organizer has sections for '1. Think', '2. Organize' (with an oval for 'Topic', a box for 'Main Idea', and a triangle for 'Detail'), and '3. Write'.
- Tell About a Plant** (Page 119): Shows pictures of a vine, a cactus, and a flower. The organizer has sections for '1. Think', '2. Organize' (with an oval for 'Topic' and a box for 'Main Idea'), and '3. Write'.
- Recipe for a Paragraph 5** (Page 154): Shows a picture of a cow. The organizer has sections for 'Main Idea' (oval), 'Detail 1' (triangle), 'Detail 2' (triangle), and 'Write' (with lines for writing).