

A Yearlong Overview: New Heart Words, Handwriting, ABC/Phonics, and Bookmaking

	Joyful Accelerated Literacy: "Heart Words," Handwriting, and Word Work ♫ Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read! Cd & pages	Use ABC Phonics: Sign, Sign, and Read! to Present Fingerspelling & Phonics: 26 days to 26 letters and sounds!	Writing Workshop and Bookmaking for Authentic Purposes. Writing Totes ☺
Sept	I love, you, see, a (teach handwriting and SSS&R)	abcd, efg (family practice)	Daily name ticket practice
Sept	Mom, Dad, the, cat, A dog (send home words)	hijk, lmnop (See videos)	Tote: write a list, write a message
Sept	me, we, my, house, can, like, To, From ☺ *	qurs, tuv (listening center)	I love you. (sentence power)
Sept	Pink and purple "heart word" sentences	wx, yz (animal research)	Labeling: a cat, my house
Oct	Book, by, the end, house, This is, and, Dear	ABC Phonics Dictionary	Stamping: I see a _____
Oct	am, because, friend (first introduced)	Children as ABC experts	My Friends: Book of Names
Oct	I love you (secret messages) Plural: cats, dogs	Voracious Vocabulary	Rubber Band Books: labeling
Oct	Bool!, yes, no (signing/spelling games) Kindergarten-friendly handwriting & phonics (whole class work)	Extra support for harder-to-accelerate children begins in September. (Volunteers!)	I Love... Book: (mentor text: <i>I Love the Mountains</i>)
Nov	Thank you. (Make books or messages) ♪ H-a-v-e Song, B-o-o-k Book Chant, M-y My/B-y By Song in S,S,S.& R CD ★ ☺ *	*Send home ABC Phonics Book/CD and flashcards!	Family Read & Sing Book Club Stamping Book: This is a _____ Write a book: This is a _____
Nov	are, was, on/off, am, I see my house.	Word family houses: -at -an... Segment, blend, sign CVC words	News stories, clipboard survey
Nov	said, boy, girl, be, play/day, stop/go, his/her	Review "h" siblings, plurals	ABC Animal Research notebook
Nov	if, it, is, in: "heart word" challenge	Play ABC Phonics games	Book of Friends: Fold-a-Book
Dec	I love (pattern book) for, going, how	Fingerspell "I love you" to students. Segment and blend	Start Elephant & Piggie books
Dec	went, they, get, day, as, are, on/off Practice five-point star ★, design pages	Perform at winter program	I Have a... (mentor text: <i>I Have A Cat</i>) Create end pages
Dec	because, favorite: Celebrate mastery!	King of "ing" lesson & crowns	Tote: Write special message ★
Jan	Happy, big, little, Today is..., play, say	First and last names	More Folded Books Stories
Jan	Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?	Silent ē Doll and song	Prolific Writers sentences
Jan	all, of, up, with, as, with, at	CVC phonics practice	New Year's resolutions
Jan	Wow! Do (New "heart words": family practice)	Practice CVC words on white boards: segmenting blending	Study of punctuation, surveys
Feb	Review the pink and purple "heart words" for fluency: <i>Sing, Sign, Spell, and Read!</i> Teach/review the yellow and green "heart words"	Vowel Bat song: Recite	Expect three sentences. Mentor Texts: Elephant & Piggie, writing narrative stories
Feb	Review: To, From, You are my friend	Word family houses: -ill -ell -ing -ick -ight Fountas and Pinnell: <i>Phonics & Word Study</i>	Make gift tickets ♥♥♥
Mar	Each child adds personal high use words from their writing journal: grandma, baby, ballet, soccer	Intensive CVC help as needed for some children	Squish books: informational texts
Mar	Less-experienced writers focus again on power sentences: I love...because... I see, I like, I can, I have, I am... This is my... Build writing stamina!	Review "h" siblings	Proofreading, editing, writing on a topic, bring closure.
April	Once upon a time... (fantasy) blue "heart words"?	Review day, play: common rhymes, blends and diagraphs	Publishing narrative and informational books Interviewing Author Sitting in Author's Chair Author's Celebration!
April	Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?	abc brain exercises for fluency: abcd...z (40 seconds)	Once upon a time... Dear (1 st Grade) Teacher; How-to Books
May	"Heart word" review for miniature messages: Dear, From, favorite, because	Word endings: s, ed, ing	New illustration studies
May	Dear First Grade Teacher letter	Fingerspell new words!	Opinion Writing
May	My favorite book is _____ because...	Perform language! ABC Phonics Song, The Pledge, and Wonderful World in ASL	Presenting research and posters
June	Kindergarten (My favorite things)		Writing songs and poems Blank Books for summer
June	My Bird Study; Prolific Writer Sentences		
June	Prolific Writer Celebration • Summer writing plans • WOW!		Summer library program plan

Authentic • Integrated • Engaging • Intentional • Systematic • Memorable • Parents are Partners

Kindergarten Writing and the Common Core: Joyful Pathways to Accelerated Literacy (September Guidelines)

For the first month of school, our focus is to build a joyful community of learners and friends. We **develop consistent rituals and routines** so children feel secure and motivated to do their best. We want all children to internalize the *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!* song early on and to begin applying their phonics skills to the writing process. They learn high-frequency "heart words." Explicit whole-group and small-group instruction is used to **model how to draw, how to shape letters and words**, and to practice the beginning skills needed for writing. Multisensory engagement, meaning-centered learning, and high expectations guide our planning. Explicitly teach and expect daily improvement in kindergarten-friendly handwriting.

- **Expect all children to master *ABC Phonics: Sing, Sign, and Read!*** Begin to sing, sign, and read a, b, c, d the first day of school. Add e, f, g several days later. Involve parents in nightly review. Fingerspell names and "heart words." Provide extra support for harder-to-accelerate learners: use flash cards and send home the *ABC Phonics* book. Integrate ABC and Phonics Immersion throughout the day and provide several quick reviews of portions of the song. (See *Kindergarten Writing and the Common Core*, Chapter 2.)
- **Establish a consistent morning ritual of Name Ticket writing**, expecting daily handwriting improvement. Teach tripod grip. Involve Parents as Partners (see Chapter 3), and use children's Name Tickets in meaningful ways.
- **Provide shared musical literacy experiences with *Read and Sing Big Books™***: *I Can Read Colors*, *The More We Get Together*, *I Love the Mountains*, *I Have a Cat*, *The Opposite Song*, *Mary Wore Her Red Dress*, *Teddy Bear*, *Teddy Bear* and favorite songs and poems. Highlight words children know. Create an "I Can Read" classroom.
- **Make several class books featuring the lives of your children.** (See Chapter 1.) Have guided reading texts of the same predictable Big Books available for "Read-to-Self" time. (Study the Daily 5™.)
- **Model, step-by-step, how to draw simple pictures and write a label**, demonstrating how to make the voice-to-print match by stretching out sounds to write unknown words, and writing known "heart words" (i.e. cat, dog, bee, me, face, my house, the sun, a sunflower, a tree). Add two-word titles, phrases, and then sentences: A cat, The dog, My house, I love you, I see the cat. You may choose to provide explicit whole-group instruction to guide the writing and drawing process and delay starting your writing workshop model with student choice of topics until October, depending on your children's readiness and your professional judgment. **There is no "one right way" to begin** writers' workshop except to keep writing meaningful and build on success. All children love to write, draw, tell stories, make lists, messages, and books! Expect "kid writing." Treat children as writers!
- If you have students copying your writing from a distance onto their own paper, be sensitive to the special-needs students who may need a written model close at hand and extra support.
- **Welcome parents into the classroom**; have a clear plan for how to use their volunteer time effectively. Provide training. (See Chapter 11.)
- **Provide a "Welcome to Kindergarten" and parent literacy event** or conference individually with parents to discuss where their child is as a writer and how they can support literacy at home. Encourage families to create a drawing/writing tote for home use. Send home the *ABC Phonics Family Reference Chart*, a "Name Ticket" model, and Name Writing practice book.



If handwriting skills are not fluent, it interferes with the whole writing process.

- **Save a beginning-of-the-year sample of each child's drawing and writing.**
- Take a photo of each child with their family—perhaps with a sign that says “My first day of kindergarten.” (See Chapter 11.)
- **Send home the child's daily drawing and writing pages** or the first drawing and writing book (8-10 blank, white, stapled pages) for families to enjoy! (After first studying them and copying a few pages for assessment purposes.) Note: Your writing workshop program will evolve to fit the needs of each new diverse group of learners.
- **Adorn the walls of your classroom** with drawings, photos, and the names of your children.
- **Teach pink “heart words.”** Sing, sign, spell, and read! Practice handwriting drills on wipe-off boards. Twenty-second reviews are powerful (See Chapter 4.) Refer to “heart word” charts and collections in the classroom.
- **Send sets of 14-16 “pink heart words” home** in a special learning gift box after most children know several of them. Point out large pink and purple heart words on wall posters; challenge learners to quickly master these words; readers love to look for words they know! (Reread Chapter 4.)
- **Begin teaching children to independently use writing totes:** introduce Write a List, Write the Room, Make a Message, and Rubber Band Books as they fit into your curriculum framework.
- **Provide small closely-guided lessons in making Stamp and Read Skinny Books** using “I see the _____.” (Reread Chapter 6.) This center initially requires the most supervision but is perfect for building beginning literacy instruction, teaching the concept of words and sentences.
- **Integrate art, science, music, poetry and story:** chanting nursery rhymes begins and extends throughout the year. Poetry “I Can Read” notebooks begin. Study sunflowers and artist Monet. Do self-portraits. Explore shapes and designs. Give children Read and Sing Big Books™ for English language and fluency.
- **Science:** Take “writerly-scientific walks” (quote from Lucy Calkins) with clipboards. Draw and label signs of fall. Teach a love of trees and leaves; notice colors everywhere, and build voracious vocabulary habits: amber, silver, turquoise, gold, maroon, coral, teal, fuchsia...
- **Math:** Count everything; look for patterns; explore and draw shapes; introduce the calendar.
- **Literacy Play Center** begins as a home center with phone and notepads, clipboards and pens (for making lists) and board books to read to babies. **Block-building** creations are labeled with photos taken!
- **Begin teaching The Pledge of Allegiance in American Sign Language,** using *The American Patriot* CD with Lee Greenwood. Build focus, self-regulation and vocabulary with symbols of our country.
- **Introduce “Read-to-Self” from The Daily 5™.** (Some teachers wait until October to give children individual book boxes and teach how to select “just-right” I Can Read books.)
- **Expose children to sophisticated vocabulary:** nurture voracious vocabulary learners daily!
- **Practice deliberate and purposeful behaviors** to build self-regulation and develop positive habits of mind for success in school—and in life!

Optimal Writing Instruction — Diverse Needs — Our Reality

Whether teaching full day or half day, in a high socioeconomic community or a high-needs school (with a confident fulltime assistant, special needs support and helpful volunteers—or independently carrying the full teaching load), every year my colleagues and I raise our expectations, refine our instruction, and see even more powerful writing gains. There is no ceiling on success using these high-impact writing strategies; however, our administrators and policy makers need to realize we compromise the individual conferencing and coaching time necessary to build the foundation for rigorous Common Core Writing Standards when kindergartens are larger than 20-22 students. Those one-on-one critical teaching moments which we long to give to each young writer are greatly diminished. Yet, we all continue to do what we can for our children. N.E.

October–November–December: All-Day Kindergarten Writing-to-Read Overview

Writing workshop time (40-60 minutes) may be small heterogeneous group instruction or large group depending on teaching style and objectives. Allow student choice of most topics and provide short individual writing conferences to nudge each child forward. Allow time to share student work. Expect children to be experts at beginning letter/sound correspondence and to instantly know many high-frequency “heart words” and power sentence starters. Provide demonstrations and minilessons to help children apply their phonics skills in their “kid writing.” Continue to intentionally teach children to stretch out words, listening for individual sounds (segmenting and blending), and mapping voice-to-print. Children will progress from hearing beginning sounds (phonemes), ending sounds, and finally medial vowels. Short CVC practice lessons will accelerate their progress with phonetic spelling. **Rich science explorations inspire writing.** Additional one-on-one support is provided for harder-to-accelerate children.

- Writing Workshop Time may include independent work in writing totes and Drawing and Writing books (aka Writing Journals). Children think and verbalize their sentence, and count the words. Repeat the sentence back to them. Teach children to focus and follow through on this first sentence. Remind children of the two kinds of words: “heart words” they already know, and new words where we listen for sounds. Use the “Listen and Count the Sounds” strategy. Use individual *ABC Phonics* dictionaries in student writing folders. Highlight “heart words” children already know.
- Provide large-group minilessons on specific skills and to model the thinking/writing process. With short individualized conferences, affirm one positive and present one challenge to each writer. Nudge each child forward. Share children’s writing daily.
- Use field trips to the farm and pumpkin patch and neighborhood walks to collect leaves and study trees to build voracious vocabulary habits and provide writing workshop topics and interactive writing lessons.
- Provide short, engaging reviews of *Sing, Sign, Spell and Read!* (high-frequency) “heart words” with integrated handwriting daily. Challenge experienced writers to begin learning yellow and green “heart words” while reviewing pink and purple ones with the entire class. Encourage family “heart word” practice. Send home a boxed set of the words and remember to **make copies of the *Sing, Sign, Spell & Read!* CD** (you may legally make copies!) Writing with “heart words” occurs across the curriculum. (Math journals, science notebooks, writing notebooks, weekend news, messages to friends.)
- Children continue performing the *ABC Phonic* song (use track 4 on the CD as instrumental accompaniment) and are acknowledged as experts with a certificate or badge. Continue reading the actual sign language descriptions from the book and introduce expanded vocabulary about each of the *ABC Phonics* objects.
- Study artist Vincent Van Gogh and the painting “Starry Night.” Learn to make different kinds of stars.
☉ * ★ Expect and **practice fluency sentence starters with good handwriting.**
- Review ASL while teaching *The Pledge* and *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* in American Sign Language. Perform at a Thankfulness Feast or Winter Celebration.
- Sing and sign a growing collection of memorable Read and Sing Big Books™ such as *Goodnight Irene*, *Down on Grandpa’s Farm*, *Oh A-Hunting We Will Go*, *Miss Mary Mack*. Teach children to look for words they know—that’s what good readers do!
- Introduce the **Family Read and Sing Book Club** for fluency building. Children select a new Nellie Edge Read and Sing song picture book (from 14 titles) to take home for practice. Envelope is initialed and returned to school.
- Explore illustration in quality fiction and nonfiction books and encourage children to first outline an object in black pen and then fill in the drawing with colored pencils.
- Have high expectations. Use *Kindergarten-Friendly Handwriting, Phonics, and Word Work* pages.
- Introduce the *ABC Phonics Science Research Notebook*, sending it home with a bag of props.
- Continue making books, lists and messages using independent writing totes, balancing choice of topic with whole group lessons where teacher provides the topic and models the writing, thinking, and creative process. An example might be a book of Nocturnal Animals.
- Begin Science Notebooks, Weekend Journals, Literature Logs, Fluency Notebooks, and Math Journals.
- Practice songs for a Thankfulness Feast and/or a Winter Celebration.