



# *Black Mountain Elementary School*

## *Writing Plan*

(updated 4/10/16)

The objective of the Black Mountain Elementary writing plan is to ensure the complete process of writing happens at every grade level. All students, K-8 will have authentic writing opportunities. Writing curriculum shall be aligned to content being taught at each grade level. There shall be an intentional connection between instruction in writing and all content areas.

All students will use communication skills including reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language. All teachers will ensure that students are actively engaged in using communication skills regularly in every class.

Teachers will:

- ❖ Provide multiple opportunities for students to develop complex communication skills for a variety of purposes.
- ❖ Provide access to and use technology tools.
- ❖ Provide access to and use of language resources.
- ❖ Implement procedures for developing and monitoring working folders.
- ❖ Provide feedback to students reading writing and communication skills.
- ❖ Ensure students have as much choice as possible in their writing.

Teachers in grades K-2 will be responsible for adding the following pieces to the students' working folder.

- ✓ Two Writing to Learn pieces (December & April)
- ✓ Two Writing to Demonstrate Learning pieces (December & April)
- ✓ One Writing for Publication piece (ELA Teacher) (April)

Teachers in grades 3-5 will be responsible for adding the following pieces to the students' working folder.

- ✓ Two Writing to Learn pieces (December & April)
- ✓ Two Writing to Demonstrate Learning pieces (December & April)
- ✓ One Writing for Publication piece (ELA Teacher) (April)

Teachers in grades 6-8 will be responsible for adding the following pieces to the students' working folder.

- ✓ Two Writing to Learn pieces (December & April)
- ✓ Two Writing to Demonstrate Learning pieces (December & April)
- ✓ One Writing for Publication piece (ELA Teacher) (April)

**Examples of Writing for Publication:**

**English**

Personal Narrative  
Poem  
Short Story  
Memoir

**Reading**

Play

**Social Studies**

Editorial  
Power Point  
Speech  
Letter

**Science**

Lab Report  
Science Experiment  
Article  
Power Point  
Brochure

### **Writing Timeline for Writing to Learn and Writing to Demonstrate Learning pieces:**

- By the last Friday prior to Christmas break each teacher shall add the first Writing to Learn and Writing to Demonstrate Learning piece to each students' folder.
- By last Friday prior to the month of May each teacher shall add the second Writing to Learn and Writing to Demonstrate Learning piece to each students' folder.

### **Writing Timeline for Writing for Publication pieces:**

- By the last Friday prior to Christmas break each ELA teacher shall have prewriting and a draft completed for the Writing for Publication piece.
- By the last Friday prior to the month of May each ELA teacher shall have a final draft completed for the Writing for Publication piece and added to each students' folder.

Each student at Black Mountain Elementary will have a cumulative working folder. The folder will provide:

- Students an opportunity to focus on their growth as a writer yearly and cumulatively.
- Past writing experiences which could be used as current teaching tools.
- Writing pieces which have been taken through all stages of the writing process.

### **What is a working folder?**

A working folder is a collection of a student's work in which the student and others (e.g., principals, teachers) can see evidence of growth in writing over time. Since a working folder is a place students keep samples of their work as they move from grade to grade, **each working folder is a collection over time**, one that shows evidence of alignment of a school's writing program and evidence of a student's growth as a writer over multiple grades. It is important that a working folder follow a student from one grade level to the next. The working folder should include a variety of **dated** samples that address a variety of writing tasks and allow students and teachers to use past writing experiences as teaching tools for current and projected instruction. Most often this folder contains multiple drafts of a piece of writing. On a regular basis, the student should review and reflect on what has been placed in the folder in order to make decisions about what to keep for further development.

## **Working Folder Organization/Management**

All Black Mountain Elementary teachers will organize and manage working writing folders according the following guidelines:

### Organization

- The contents of the folder will be writing samples at each grade level and in each form designated for that grade. The progression will begin at the lowest grade the folder was established and continue on through the student's years in Harlan County Public Schools.

### Management

- During the school year the folder should be kept in an easily accessible place in the ELA teacher's classroom in a separate, clearly marked container. At the end of the school year they will be stored and passed on to the ELA teacher in the next grade.
- Teachers will get the writing containers and file any writing away in the students' folders and then return the container back to the ELA teacher by the end of the day.
- Folders will be purged in fourth and eighth grade, leaving 3-5 quality pieces to continue on with the student.
- At the end of eighth grade the entire working folder will be sent to Harlan County High School in regular file folders.

### Monitoring

- Administration (B. LeFevers, D. Steele, district review team, and writing program review members) will pull folders to check that pieces are being added and organized correctly.

## Three Main Types of Writing

All Black Mountain Elementary teachers will provide students the opportunity to write using the following three types of writing:

### **Writing to Learn**

Definition: Students need to be engaged in many “writing to learn” activities throughout the day. This will help students to learn course content by processing the information they receive.

Audience: the student

Purpose: to understand and learn the content of the course

Examples: learning logs, writer’s notebook, observation notes, double entry journals, information processing strategies, graphic organizers, class notes, admit/exit slips.

### **Writing to Demonstrate Learning**

Definition: Students need many opportunities to use writing to show what they have learned. Rather than providing a steady diet of multiple choice and short-answer test questions, teachers need to develop open-response questions that allow students to do more than simply list facts they have memorized.

Audience: the teacher

Purpose: to show the teacher what the student knows about the content

Examples: answers to open response questions, mathematics entries, traditional lab reports, traditional reports, traditional research papers, test essays, summaries of reading

### **Writing for Publication**

Definition: This is the type of writing that is appropriate for the writing portfolio. Students need to have the opportunity to use what they have learned and experienced to communicate with a reader outside the classroom for a specific purpose.

Audience: Authentic, real-world (various)

Purpose: Authentic, real-world (various)

Examples: feature articles, letters, short stories, plays, poems, editorials, speeches, personal narratives, memoirs, personal essays

# Characteristics of Personal Writing

## Personal Narrative

- Focuses on a single significant incident in the writer's life
- Narrows the event to the most important part in a brief time period
- Has a clear purpose, the significance of which is clear to the reader
- Provides the reader with an understanding of the event and shows (rather than tells) why the event is significant
- Weaves the writer's thoughts and feelings into relating the event
- Has many relevant sensory details
- Is written in first person
- Often includes dialogue

## Memoir

- Focuses on the significance of the relationship between the writer and a particular person, place, animal, object
- Has a particular focus, an element which receives the most emphasis
- Recreates for the reader incidents shared with the person, place, animal, or object
- Reveals the writer's knowledge of and feelings about the person, place, animal, or object
- Is developed through memories of specific experiences
- Provides the reader with an understanding of the importance of the relationship and leaves the reader with a single impression of the subject
- Shares new insights gained in recalling the significance of the subject of the memoir
- Makes the person, place, animal, or object come alive for the reader

## Personal Essay

- Has a clear purpose, focusing on the significance of a central idea
- May contain an internal narrative or story telling technique that is sequenced chronologically
- Employs a natural and informal style of writing
- Includes details and/or personal reflections in order to make their significance to the purpose clear
- Uses descriptive writing to allow readers to connect with the writer's personal experience and reaction to it
- Uses effective connective words and phrases which lead the reader through the experience and the thinking/conclusion reached by the writer
- Highlights the writer's reflection on the focused purpose as an essential part of the personal essay

# Characteristics of Literary Writing

## Short Story

- Focuses on a clear purpose
- Develops an idea through the use of character development setting and plot with conflict/solution
- Develops at least one character through dialogue, thoughts, description, emotions, behavior, and actions
- Contains setting that contributes to understanding the story with setting details woven into the text of the story, allowing the reader entry into the story
- Develops a tightly-woven plot limited to one main idea or purpose
- Creates a problematic conflict which is developed as the story progresses
- Resolves the conflict
- Can be written in the point of view of first person or third person
- Contains idea development through snapshots, thoughtshots, dialogue, description, etc.
- May be one of a variety of fictional genre (realistic fiction, science fiction, tale, fable, fantasy, mystery)

## Poem

- Focuses on a purpose such as painting a picture with words, recreating a feeling or mood, telling a story, capturing a moment, evoking an image or showing an extraordinary perception of the ordinary
- Has a form chosen to suit the purpose
- Uses poetic devices to develop meaning (simile, metaphor, personification, imagery)
- Includes strong imagery
- Is condensed and carefully crafted
- Has strong verbs and precise nouns
- Does not sacrifice meaning for rhyme
- Uses line breaks, punctuation, white space and other surface features to enhance meaning

## Play or Script

- Follows the format for stories (plot, conflict, climax, etc.)
- Has a clear purpose
- Is organized into acts or scenes as transitional devices
- Uses effective, natural dialogue through which the characters are revealed
- Uses all conventions of drama, such as stage directions, scene setting, asides, etc.

# Characteristics of Transactive Writing

## Transactive (Informational)

- Writes for a real audience an authentic purpose of the student's choice
- Has a clear purpose; the writer makes it clear, usually in the lead what the reader should know, do or believe as the result of reading the piece
- Is written to provide new information or the writer's perspective on old information
- Develops ideas with a variety of specifics, relevant details (facts, examples, opinion, graphics)
- Has a beginning that gives the reader a reason or context for reading
- Has a conclusion that leaves the reader with something to think about

## Transactive (Persuasive)

- Addresses a topic that is authentic and relevant to a real audience
- Focuses on a purpose; the writer makes it clear in the lead what the reader should do or believe as a result of reading the piece
- Is written to an authentic audience
- Uses persuasive techniques (anticipating reader's reactions, considering problems and posing solutions, relating personal experiences, giving facts and opinions, using expert authority, appealing to the reader's emotions)
- Supports ideas with specific, relevant details
- Uses a letter format
- Writes a beginning that gives the reader context or reason for reading

## Persuasive Letter

- Deals with the subject/topic and generates a personal opinion
- Assumes the audience disagrees with your opinion
- Provides background information so the reader and writer have a point of agreement
- Anticipates the audience's reaction
- Disproves any opposing arguments
- Presents supporting details
- Includes a topic sentence near the beginning
- Is built on logic and reasoning
- Appeals to the emotional or psychological side of the audience
- Provides a reasonable conclusion to persuade the audience

## Characteristics of Transactive Writing (continued)

### Feature Article

- Answers a “how” or “why” question
- Develops ideas with specific, relevant details
- Begins with a lead or hook which draws the targeted audience into the article
- Ends with a closing that connects back to the beginning and leaves the audience with something to think about
- Provides audience with new information or a new perspective on old information
- Has pictures, captions, photographs, diagrams, and/or other text features which support the information given
- Is non-fiction/factual
- Utilizes layouts which may include bullets, various fonts and styles (bold, italics) and white space
- Uses catchy titles, headings, and sub-headings
- Achieves success by being researched and well-written

### Editorial

A good editorial is a short, persuasive essay which usually contains the writer’s opinion or reaction to a timely news story or event.

- Addresses a subject that is timely and relevant to the intended audience
- Is concise and coherent (number of words may be limited by the publication)
- Captures the audience’s attention immediately in the opening
- Expresses the writer’s opinion clearly
- Includes specific details that support the opinion and meets the needs of the audience
- Answers potential questions the audience might have
- Conveys a thorough knowledge of the subject and correct information
- Follows an organizational plan that attracts the audience’s attention
- Suggests a possible solution to the problem or issue addressed
- Avoids phrases such as *I think, I believe, in my opinion, it seems to me, or I for one*
- Maintains a courteous and polite tone

## Speech

- Shows an understanding of the audience's perspective
- Writes as an informed speaker to a less-informed listener
- Focuses on the purpose (e.g., to entertain, to persuade, to inform, to demonstrate)
- Anticipates audience's reactions, questions, lack of understanding
- Uses appropriate tone for the event, audience, and purpose
- Makes it clear what the audience member should know, do, and/or believe as a result of hearing the speech
- Develops ideas connected to the core content of the course in which the speech was written
- Uses appropriate strategies to develop ideas (e.g., statistics, stories, personal reflections, visual aids)
- Uses information from a variety of sources (when necessary)
- Clarifies and interprets ideas
- Uses persuasive techniques (when necessary)
- Provides support which is accurate and thorough enough to achieve the purpose of the speech
- Writes an engaging lead to get the audience's attention
- Introduces the points of the speech in the introduction and reviews them in the conclusion
- Places ideas in a meaningful order
- Uses transitions between ideas and maintains coherence and unity
- May use visual aids (e.g., graphic organizer, power point presentation)

## Characteristics of Reflective Writing

- Demonstrates specific literacy experiences that show impact/growth in writing.
- Demonstrates significance of literacy experiences through insightful analysis of learning events.
- Targets a specific audience and shows careful consideration of audience's needs to clearly communicate the purpose of the piece.
- Demonstrates careful idea development and makes connections to writing by way of literacy growth experiences.
- Demonstrates clear organization with insightful connections through analysis and reflection.
- Demonstrates narration of experience for the transactive purpose of analyzing growth in literacy to show impact on writing and learning (may narrate an event for the transactive purpose of informing).
- Demonstrates careful choice of form given purpose and audience.
- Is very individual to the student and his/her learning experiences.
- Demonstrates student clearly understands his/her literacy goals.

# Writing Process

Students should understand that the writing process is a helpful tool in constructing and demonstrating meaning of content through writing. The stages are sometimes recursive (e.g., in the process of revising, a writer sometimes returns to earlier stages of the process). Writers work through the process at different rates. Often, the process is enhanced by conferencing with others.

## Conferencing

Conferencing is the process of a student communicating with another person about his or her work. The goal of conferencing is constructive feedback on the student's writing, not correction. Conferencing is perhaps one of the most important steps in the writing process, and it can—and should—occur throughout the writing process. There is no “right time” or “wrong time” to conference with students.

**Conferencing partners should be available to help students at all stages of the writing process, whenever they may need it**—during the focusing stage, prewriting, drafting, etc. It is essential that, during these conferences, the student writer retain ownership of his/her writing. While responders (teachers, peers, or others) may ask questions and offer suggestions, the writer will decide what to incorporate and into his or her writing, and what to reject.

Responders should assist students by:

- questioning rather than dictating
- critiquing rather than criticizing
- coaching rather than correcting
- guiding rather than directing
- suggesting rather than imposing

Often, effective conferences are structured this way. The conference partner begins by asking: “Where are you with the writing?” The student must indicate a conferencing point or a question or concern. The pattern of questions and response follows by the teacher offering suggestions which support writing growth. At the end of a conference, the teacher should make certain a student has a clear plan of action for revision of his/her work. Conferencing partners may ask, “What will you do with the writing now?” Too often, students do not know where to begin again in the revision process. However, if the student can articulate his goals, he has a place to begin in revision. Though conferencing may occur at any point of the writing process, the writer will generally move through the process in fairly regular stages. It is important for teachers to understand that the process is recursive; that is, it may repeat itself at different times during the writing cycle given the needs of the individual students.

## Focusing

Focusing is an important first step in the writing process that encompasses everything that happens before anything is put on paper. Students need to focus on and identify what they might be interested in writing to achieve an important level of ownership.

To focus, students will

- connect to content knowledge
- connect with prior learning and experience

- initiate an authentic reason to write
- think about a subject, an experience, a question, an issue or a problem to determine a meaningful reason to write

Teachers should assist students in focusing by

- creating opportunities in the classroom for students to inquire, learn, and think critically as they investigate topics
- providing a variety of activities for students to initiate a reason to write

### **Prewriting**

In prewriting, a writer explores subjects and experiences, determines a focused purpose for writing, begins to consider the needs of an audience, selects ideas and support for the purpose, and begins to organize these ideas.

During prewriting, students will

- establish a purpose and central/controlling idea or focus
- identify and analyze the audience
- determine the most appropriate form to meet the needs of purpose and audience
- generate ideas (e.g., mapping, webbing, note taking, interviewing, researching and other writing-to-learn activities)
- organize ideas – examining other models of good writing and appropriate text structures to match purpose and organize information.

Teachers should assist students during prewriting by

- providing written models and instruction in analyzing writers' forms, purposes, audience awareness, idea development and organizational strategies.
- providing whole class instruction and practice in a variety of prewriting strategies and activities from which students can choose those that best suit their particular needs.
- guiding students as they determine their realistic purpose and audience and real-world form in order to develop their selected topics.
- allowing for some student choice and not depriving students of either ownership of their writing or opportunities to improve their writing abilities.

### **Drafting**

During the drafting stage, a writer begins to compose the work by drafting sentences and paragraphs connecting one thought to another. Writers concentrate on creating their meaning, developing thoughts, providing relevant support, addressing their reader's needs, and organizing their work.

During drafting, students will

- write draft(s) for an intended audience.
- develop topic, elaborating, exploring sentence variety and language use.
- organize writing.

Teachers should assist students during drafting by:

- maintaining a supportive environment that allows for different learning styles, provides rich resources and gives ample drafting time in and out of class.
- respecting the writer’s ability to make choices about purpose, audience, form, content and length.
- encouraging students to draw appropriately on their experience, learning, reading and inquiry to accomplish their authentic purposes as writers.

## **Revising**

In revising, the writer begins to make appropriate changes to a draft. Revision is, in a sense, rethinking or “re-visioning” of ideas. During revision, the writer reshapes and reorders the text to match it as closely as possible with the new ideas in his or her head. The general guideline in revision is that the students will make decisions about what to add, delete or change. Teachers and others may respond, but they should ensure that authors have the final say in the revisions they make in their writing.

During the revision stage(s), students will revise for specific criteria:

### **Content**

- reflect to determine where to add, delete, rearrange, define/redefine or elaborate content
- conference with teacher or peer(s) to help determine where to add, delete, rearrange, define/redefine or elaborate content
- check for accuracy of content
- consider voice, tone, style, intended audience, coherence, transitions, pacing
- compare with rubric criteria and anchor papers/models
- Consider effectiveness of language usage and sentences to communicate ideas

### **Idea Development**

- narrow topic for selected writing
- compose a topic sentence of a paragraph that is purposefully placed to enhance reader awareness
- select appropriate supporting details relevant to a specific writing category (e.g., dialogue, predictions, findings from research, needed definitions, causes and effects, comparisons, contrasts, reference to concepts)
- delete extraneous/irrelevant materials

### **Organization**

- correct sentences that are out of chronological/sequential order or insert new sentences in the correct chronological/sequential position
- compose effective and subtle transitions
- develop effective introductions and closures for writing

- apply appropriate usage of parallelism (e.g., word forms, lists, phrases, clauses, sentences, organization, idea development)

### **Word Choice**

- eliminate redundant words and phrases
- apply the most specific word for use in a sentence

Teachers may use a variety of strategies to promote revision by

- raising questions to clarify the student's purpose, audience, meaning, content, ideas and organization.
- modeling and discussing revision while preserving author's ownership.
- teaching students how to review their writing with each other and to talk about possible changes.
- providing class time for revision.
- allowing peers to read each other's writing and offer suggestions for the author to consider.
- encouraging students to read/reread examples of writing to help make decisions about their own writing.
- designing revision checklists for students to use with their own writing and when conferencing with peers.
- allowing students to talk and write about their revisions and the rationale behind them, reflecting upon their work and progress as writers.
- encouraging students to inquire and learn more about their selected topic, drawing on this learning to accomplish their purposes.

### **Editing**

During editing, the writer strives to create a correct piece of writing. The writer's goal in editing is to produce the best possible paper according to his/her developmental level. Arranging for a specific time for editing can help students spot errors and correct them. Teachers should emphasize the role of students as owners of their work in making final decisions.

During editing, students will

- Check for correctness with self, teacher or peer(s) regarding language, sentence structure, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation and documentation of sources
- Use resources to support editing (e.g., spell check, dictionaries, thesauri, handbooks)
- Edit for correctness regarding verb tenses, agreement concerns and usage problems teachers can use a variety of strategies to promote editing, including
- monitoring students' writing development to discover patterns of error and to determine students' critical needs and developmental level in order to plan instruction designed to address specific grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage needs.
- supporting students in self-assessing and making final editing decisions.
- providing mini-lessons and encouraging students to apply lessons to their own writing.
- encouraging students to use appropriate resources such as handbooks, dictionaries, thesauri (print and electronic), spell checkers, or computer writing programs.

Following are some appropriate strategies to use with students when you focus on the editing process:

**Mini-Lessons:** Brief lessons on common editing problems can be of immediate benefit to students when they are taught as part of an editing workshop. After a short lesson at the beginning of an editing session, students can immediately apply the lessons to their own writing, reinforcing new information about correctness through meaningful use rather than isolated exercises. Mini-lessons can be used with smaller groups of students experiencing similar, specific problems.

**Peer Editing:** Students pair off and edit one another's drafts, pointing out the positions of any errors they see. **Each student makes his/her own corrections, preserving author's ownership.**

**Class Experts:** Students skilled in a specific editing area check the drafts of peers for errors, but do not make direct corrections. Often, a student can explain a point in terms that a classmate can understand.

**Transparency Editing:** Make a transparency of an anonymous student draft from **a previous year** and ask the class to identify editing needs. As students identify and correct errors, the teacher corrects each on the transparency and then asks students to apply these same editing strategies to their own pieces of writing. If this model is followed regularly, students receive numerous short lessons focusing on mechanics and usage and have many opportunities to apply new strategies.

**Minimal Mark:** During an editing conference, the teacher places a dot or check mark in the margin of a line containing an editing error. Students must find and correct the error. Teachers should be careful not to mark all errors during a conference, but instead focus on one or two specific skills during the session.

**Teachers should not at any time actually compose writing for the student or make direct corrections for the student on student work, unless indicated in the student's IEP/504 Plan. (703 KAR 5:070)**

**Modeling:** Teachers should be sure that every piece of their own writing that they share with students is as accurately edited as possible. When errors do occur in teacher models, these errors should be used to facilitate a mini-lesson focusing on the specific skill.

## **Publishing**

In publishing, students make their writing public for others.

- Many forms of publishing are acceptable (bound books, pamphlets, illustrated works, regular manuscripts), but the work should be a size that will fit the standard writing assessment portfolio.
- The writing should be neat and legible. Students may use many methods to produce published pieces (pen or pencil, printing or cursive, word processors or typewriters).

Regardless of the method selected, the students must write, type or word process by themselves unless otherwise noted in an IEP/504 Plan.

**Student authors must first give their permission before any writing can be published for any purpose.**

## Reflecting

During the reflection stage, students think about their writing and their growth as writers. Reflection should occur throughout the writing process and at all grade levels.

Students should reflect in many ways upon many learning experiences including

- progress, growth, and goals as a writer.
- literacy skills.
- who or what has influenced progress and growth.
- approaches used when composing (e.g., free-writing, mental composing, researching, drawing, webbing, outlining).

Teachers may use a variety of strategies to promote reflection, including

- providing class time for reflection.
- offering multiple opportunities for student reflection on a variety of learning experiences.
- creating opportunities in the classroom for writers to identify and explain their writing skills, strategies, and processes (i.e., entries in writers' notebooks, letters, check lists, oral presentations).
- allowing students to talk and write about the decisions they make as writers.
- designing open-ended questions that require students to reflect on their writing.
- encouraging students to assess their strengths and areas for potential growth.
- providing written models and instruction on analyzing how writers use reflection.

# Open-Response Writing

## Guidelines for Open Response:

- Follow format for Types of Open-Response Questions.
- Write content driven questions.
- Utilize power verbs.
- Incorporate critical vocabulary.
- Writing is succinct, not more than 1 page.
- May contain bullets or lists (in addition to narrative).
- May contain math computations, graphs, etc.
- Often has more than one part. Students should label parts of answer (ex: A, B, or C).
- Scored with a rubric written specifically for the question.
- Faculty uses analysis of assessment to drive instruction.
- Responses written on released answer sheet for content area.

# On-Demand Writing

## Guidelines for On-Demand Writing:

- Similar in length, style, and quality to a portfolio piece
- Scored using the Kentucky Writing Scoring Rubric
- Presented in state assessment style:            Situation            Task

### Sample On-Demand Writing Prompt (Grade 5)

Situation: Your teacher is looking for a student of the month. She wants recommendations from students for a classmate who would make a good nominee.

Task: Write a letter to your teacher naming a classmate you think should be student of the month. Explain why you made your nomination.

- Tasks will ask for either a letter or an article (Grade 5).
- Student may use a dictionary and/or a thesaurus when completing the task.
- The task should not be based on content knowledge, but rather be experienced-based.
- Students will show evidence of completing the writing process.
- At grades 5 and 8, practice will be provided in multiple choice format for revising and editing skills.
- On-Demand Writing practice should be incorporated into the curriculum of all language arts classes at all grade levels.