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Introduction

Regardless of your location or the year level you teach, your objective is the same: instruct and encourage students to write effectively. Whether you are focused on form and content or are free to teach writing as you see fit, this book offers ideas and activities that allow students to apply effective writing skills in a more artistic and visually appealing manner.

The book is divided into five main categories. Included are ideas for narrative, expository, persuasive, descriptive and poetry writing. Some of the activities are integrated to correspond with topics and subjects you may already be studying in class. Others suggest a writing activity to go along with a holiday theme. Still others are generic in nature and may be used by students across year levels.

Each activity is first described for the teacher. This description includes pre-writing activities, the steps involved in the assignment, and publishing ideas for when the students finish. Some even offer follow-up ideas for those of you who choose to provide extensions whenever necessary. Most of the activities are followed up with student activity pages. Check the materials list following each teacher explanation to see if a student page is provided. These student activity pages are designed to stand alone if needed. Most allow for free writing by the students without a lot of prompting and filling-in. In this way, the teacher may check to be sure the students are applying their writing form and content skills to miscellaneous tasks.

These activities are writing activities first and are enhanced by visuals second. Visual enhancers may be as simple as using a different lettering or font or by using coloured or textured paper; or they may be more complicated, such as completing an art project that may take a couple of days to finish. Others include, but are not limited to, featuring illustrations, pictures, graphs or charts; utilising shapes (both two- and three-dimensional) to brainstorm ideas and to use within the actual writing; providing accompaniments, such as artwork, dioramas, mobiles or posters; and creating professional-looking documents with word-processing and multimedia programs.

Remember, whatever the task, never settle for your students' second best. Enhancing a writing project with visuals is a lot more fun than just writing. The ideas set forth in this publication may even inspire you to think of creative ways to help turn any ordinary writing assignment into a visually appealing and deceptively fun project.

Get ready, get set, write!



From Head to Toe

No matter what kind of paper students use to write their stories, they may dress them up with simple, eye-catching artwork centred around the theme of their stories. For example, they may write a story about choosing a watermelon from a watermelon patch and sandwich it between a watermelon top and bottom cut from green construction paper. Of course, the watermelon wouldn't be complete without adding two or three 'vines' which can be made by curling green construction paper around a pencil and securing one end to a side of the watermelon.

Students may wish to write a scary story on a large sheet of grey construction paper (or white drawing paper coloured with a grey crayon) which has been cut to resemble a tombstone. (Don't forget the 'RIP' towards the top!)

Writing a story about a silly person? Students may attach a silly head peeking over the top of their story and goofy shoes secured to the bottom.

The possibilities are endless. The prompts on pages 10–14 offer suggestions for visual enhancers. Better yet, let the students be their own designers. Allow them to think of original ways to embellish their own otherwise ordinary-looking stories! These creations make excellent displays on any bulletin board or drab hallway. (See examples on page 15.)

Materials

'In the Watermelon Patch' (page 10)

- large sheet of green construction paper
- light green crayon
- scissors
- glue

'Across the Graveyard' (page 11)

- large sheet of white drawing paper
- grey crayon
- glue

'The Silliest Person' (page 12)

- drawing and construction paper
- crayons or textas
- wool
- glue

'The Wild Beast' (page 13)

- miscellaneous art supplies
- glue

'My Pet Mouse is Lost!' (page 14)

- brown and pink construction paper
- brown pipe cleaners
- brown wool
- tape and/or glue

From Head to Toe *(cont.)*

In the Watermelon Patch

Directions: Write a story to tell about a time your family visited a watermelon patch to select a fresh watermelon for a special occasion. Use the lines below. Continue on a separate sheet of paper if needed. Glue any additional story sheets to the bottom of this page.

Create a watermelon border for your story:

- Use green construction paper. Cut an oblong shape similar to a watermelon out of the paper.
- Use a light green crayon to add lines to the outside rind of the watermelon.
- Cut your melon in half in a zigzag pattern across the middle of the rind.
- Glue the top half of the melon to the top of your story and the bottom half at the end of your story.
- Cut two or three thin strips of green construction paper. Curl the strips of paper by wrapping them around a pencil. Attach the 'vines' to one end of your watermelon.

From Head to Toe *(cont.)*

Bulletin Board Examples

