# Writing Process Learning Progression, Grades 3–8

| | End of Grade 3 Beginning of Grade 4 | End of Grade 4 Beginning of Grade 5 | End of Grade 5 Beginning of Grade 6 | End of Grade 6 Beginning of Grade 7 | End of Grade 7 Beginning of Grade 8 | End of Grade 8 Beginning of Grade 9 |
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| **Generating Ideas for Writing** | • A child at this stage comes to workshop with plans for what pieces she wants to write.<br><br>• If needed, a child at this level can recall strategies learned and quickly (no more than five minutes) jot and sift through in her mind what ideas she has that would make for significant and powerful entries. She has a repertoire of strategies to generate ideas and knows she can reference charts to find strategies.<br><br>• More importantly, at this level she will choose her ideas and strategies purposefully, knowing that the goal is to choose ideas that will allow her to write well with significance and power. Her notebook will reflect a growing sense that the writing done has been designed from the start to be significant.<br><br>• This writer is starting to carry her notebook around with her to be able to catch ideas at all times. | • When asked to generate ideas, a child at this stage comes with ideas, knows and utilizes a wide repertoire of previously learned strategies, and has a sense of which strategies are most effective for her as a writer.<br><br>• At this level a writer is starting to be able to generate ideas for writing from writing. She reflects on her writing and writes about the underlying ideas and uses this writing as a springboard to do more with these ideas. Her notebook shows evidence of reflection entries and writing done from this work.<br><br>• A writer at this level also is starting to generate ideas through thinking about the writing of others. She may say, "I want to write a short story about my family the way James Howe did in 'Everything Will Be Okay,'" or "I really loved how Christine wrote about the last time she saw her friend before he moved. That gave me an idea."<br><br>• This writer is prepared to find ideas in life and carries her notebook. She can be found jotting ideas down quickly or stopping to tell a friend about a new piece she wants to try in workshop. She sees true ideas and potential for writing all around her. | • The student brings ideas and plans to her writing and can use a wide repertoire of strategies effectively to get more ideas, if necessary.<br><br>• The writer shows a willingness to grapple with one idea across multiple notebook entries. The writer is willing to write and rewrite entries about the ideas. | • The student comes with ideas, a clear repertoire of strategies to draw on to get more ideas, and knows which pay off the most for him as a writer.<br><br>• He lets writing lead him to new work, perhaps working on an unfinished entry from other days, reflecting on writing to generate more. | • The student independently and quickly tries out multiple ideas for writing, then sorts to decide which are worth following through on, based on the genre, purpose, and audience of the writing at hand.<br><br>• The writer sees a connection across her writing—she uses the notebook as a resource to bring prior thinking and writing to new projects, and makes clear through labeling or tabs which entries go together or are on hold for now. | • The student can automatically generate some ideas for writing at this point. The student sorts through possible topics in his head, trying out only ones that he is confident are likely to pay off.<br><br>• The writer uses his own past writing, mentor texts, and understanding of the genre, purpose, and audience to create and connect entries that quickly move the writing toward a draft. |

## Writing Process Learning Progression, Grades 3–8 *(cont.)*

| | End of Grade 3<br>Beginning of Grade 4 | End of Grade 4<br>Beginning of Grade 5 | End of Grade 5<br>Beginning of Grade 6 | End of Grade 6<br>Beginning of Grade 7 | End of Grade 7<br>Beginning of Grade 8 | End of Grade 8<br>Beginning of Grade 9 |
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| **Planning and Drafting (Including Fluency, Stamina, and Volume)** | • The child at this level writes in a notebook, producing a page or more of writing each day. She writes one or two entries a day in class, each a page and a half in length, and an additional entry at home. She understands that she can write fast and furiously, filling up a page in ten minutes before moving on to the next page. The child can remain engaged in a writing project for sixty minutes.<br><br>• The child at this level is starting to show initiative in her own writing life, working on a project (independent or unit-based) for longer periods of time than required. | • The child at this level writes fast and furiously each time he writes, producing two pages a day in school, ten pages a week or more in total, and the same amount at home. He can remain engaged for sixty minutes.<br><br>• The child at this level shows initiative in his own writing life, working on a project (independent or unit-based) for longer periods of time than required. | • The student plans before drafting, using supports from the unit or from the teacher to plan a clear structure within the genre of choice.<br><br>• The student can type three pages in a single sitting. The student can remain engaged in a writing project, which can include talking, planning, and drafting, for an hour or more.<br><br>• The student at this level shows initiative on both independent and unit-based writing. | • The student plans with some independence, using supports as a starting point, but trying more than one plan until he is confident.<br><br>• The student can write more than three pages in a sitting and can remain engaged for ninety minutes. The student at this level shows great initiative in writing work on both independent and unit-based projects for longer periods of time than required. | • The student plans independently, using what she knows of the structure of the genre to guide her plans.<br><br>• The student can remain engaged in a writing project for over ninety minutes. At this level the student lets the project determine the time required, however far over the expectations. | • The student plans efficiently and effectively, making use of her knowledge of the genre to create a workable outline that leads to a smooth drafting process.<br><br>• The student remains engaged in writing projects for however long is necessary or desired. His time is well spent and purpose-driven. At this point the quality of his work is just as or more important to him than the quantity. |
| **Revising** | • The child at this level can take one piece through a sequence of drafts, each feeling entirely new and benefiting from large-scale changes. Students at this level have multiple revision strategies. They "write until the water runs clear" and know that more rewriting will lead to better writing. The child also understands that revisions bring out the significance of the piece.<br><br>• The writer is starting to not wait until revision to make a piece stronger but considers this while drafting. | • At this level, children have an internalized sense that yesterday's revision strategies become today's drafting work, and they bring all they know about revision into the initial drafting of their stories. Their revision is large scale and targeted, and they have multiple strategies to draw from. Children at this level begin to look closely and critically at mentor texts during this stage of revision and ask themselves what the author did that they can try. | • The student revises not only drafts but also entries, ratcheting up her work using strategies, mentor texts, and partner talk. Rather than only revising key places, she will search for places where the writing feels weak, rewriting those parts.<br><br>• The student might also revise by experimenting with craft to bring out meaning or to appeal in specific ways to an audience. She considers the effect she wants her writing to have on readers and uses all she knows to achieve these effects. | • Revision for the writer is not just about one piece growing stronger but about writing better in general. He can identify places where his writing is stronger and weaker in a single piece but also looks to find patterns. He might say, "The ending didn't feel right. I have to work on ending my pieces with more strength." He might talk with a partner or read a mentor text to help achieve these goals. | • At this level a student revises based on the purpose and audience of a particular piece of writing and her knowledge of herself as a writer. She seeks out critique from others, using it to grow stronger in her own ability to identify places where revision would help. | • At this level, the student has a clear writing identity, which includes knowing how revision best fits into the process for him. He may revise as he goes or wait until he is finished, but he revises deeply and thoroughly, relying on strategies learned as well as an innate sense of when his writing feels weaker. He also might decide to read professional literature for writers, to support his development in particular areas, for example, saying, "I have trouble with maintaining conflict, so I'm reading *The Plot Thickens*." |

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| **Editing** | • The child at this level knows to draft using correct capitalization, comma usage (series, addresses, dialogue), and quotation marks for dialogue. These are all checked when editing, but the child has most often already used the correct forms of these when writing.<br>• She will begin to check that she has used quotation marks in direct quotes and commas before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence and that she has identified and fixed sentence fragments and/or run-ons.<br>• She uses available resources to check spelling but relies on knowledge of spelling patterns to spell grade-appropriate words correctly when drafting. | • The child at this level knows that yesterday's editing work is part of today's drafting and has accumulated what has been taught in language usage to write with correct capitalization, end punctuation, quotation marks, and commas and in complete sentences.<br>• He will begin to check for incorrect shifts in verb tense and check that he has used punctuation to separate items in a series. He will also begin to more closely check his use of commas. He will check that he has underlined or used quotation marks or italics to indicate titles of works.<br>• At this level, this writer will spell grade-appropriate words correctly when drafting, consulting references as needed. | • The student at this level does not wait for the editing phase of the process to ensure that she is using correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.<br>• At this level she is starting to see that editing is also about considering the tone and cadence of a piece, and she may start to vary sentence lengths to create a desired rhythm or meaning. | • The student edits along the way and also at the end of a project, carefully rereading and using peer support to make sure the piece is publishable for the desired audience.<br>• The writer is starting to recognize the value of being precise and concise and eliminates wordiness and redundancy.<br>• The writer can explain why he has made certain language choices and the effect he believes he has created for his reader. | • The student has developed an efficient and effective editing process, editing along the way to avoid lengthy end-of-project editing.<br>• The writer recognizes and eliminates wordiness and redundancy, as well as searching for the best language for her specific purpose and audience. | • The student has developed an efficient and effective editing process, editing along the way to avoid lengthy end-of-project editing, using peers as well as other references to make sure the piece is correct and publishable for the desired audience.<br>• The writer makes decisions to suit his purpose as well as the conventions of the type of piece he is creating. He may choose to "break" grammar rules for effect and can explain his choices. He may emulate other authors' unconventional use of punctuation and grammar. |