

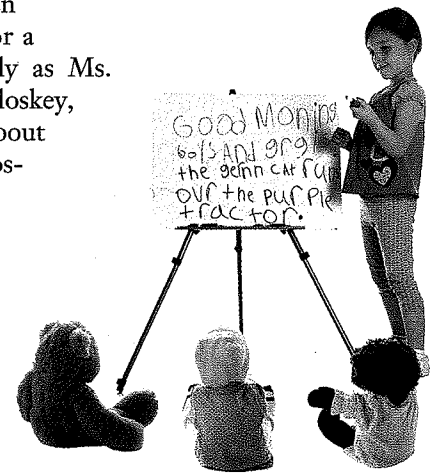
chapter 4

The Youngest Readers and Writers

K-3 Students' Literacy Development. Kindergarten through third grade students sit together on the carpet for a shared reading lesson. They watch and listen intently as Ms. McCloskey prepares to read *Make Way for Ducklings* (McCloskey, 2004), the big-book version of an award-winning story about the dangers facing a family of ducks living in the city of Boston. She reads the title and the author's name, and some children recognize that the author's last name is the same as hers, but she points out that they aren't related. She reads the first page and asks the class to make predictions about what will happen in the story. During this first reading, Ms. McCloskey reads each page expressively and tracks the text, word by word, with a pointer as she reads. She clarifies the meaning as she talks about the illustrations on each page. A child helps balance the book on the easel and turn the pages for her. After she finishes, they talk about the story. Some of the English learners are initially hesitant, but others eagerly relate their own experiences to the story and ask questions to learn more.

The next day, Ms. McCloskey rereads *Make Way for Ducklings*. She begins by asking for volunteers to retell the story. Children take turns retelling each page, using the illustrations as clues. Ms. McCloskey includes this oral language activity because many of her students are English learners. The class is multilingual and multicultural: Approximately 45% are Asian Americans who speak Hmong, Khmer, or Lao; 45% are Hispanics who speak Spanish or English at home; and the remaining 10% are African Americans and whites who speak English.

Next, Ms. McCloskey rereads the story, stopping several times to ask the class to think about the characters, draw inferences, and reflect on the theme. Her questions include: Why did the police officer help the ducks? What would have happened to the ducks if the police officer didn't help? Do you think that animals should live in cities? What was Robert McCloskey trying to say to us in this story? On the third day, Ms. McCloskey reads the story again, and the children take turns using the pointer to track the text and join in reading familiar words. After they finish, the children clap because rereading the now familiar story provides a sense of accomplishment.





In this chapter, you'll learn about how children in kindergarten through third grade learn to read and write. These students move

through three developmental levels—emergent, beginning, and fluent—as they become literate. As you read this vignette, notice how Ms. McCloskey teaches young children at each stage in her multigrade classroom by differentiating instruction. She adapts her use of big books, guided reading groups, and literacy centers to address her students' instructional needs.

Ms. McCloskey understands that her students are moving through three developmental stages—emergent, beginning, and fluent—as they learn to read and write. She monitors each child's development to provide instruction that meets his or her needs. As she reads the big book aloud, she uses a pointer to show the direction of print, from left to right

and top to bottom on the page. She also moves the pointer across the lines of text, word by word, to demonstrate the relationship between the words on the page and the words she's reading aloud. These are concepts that many of the youngest, emergent-stage readers are learning.

Others are beginning readers who are learning to recognize high-frequency words and decode phonetically regular words. One day after rereading the story, Ms. McCloskey turns to one of the pages and asks the children to identify familiar high-frequency words (e.g., *don't*, *make*) and decode other CVC words (e.g., *run*, *big*). She also asks children to isolate individual sentences on the page and note the capital letter at the beginning and the punctuation that marks the end of the sentence.

The children in the third group are fluent readers. Ms. McCloskey addresses their needs, too, as she rereads a page from the story: She asks several children to identify adjectives and notice inflectional endings on verbs. She also rereads the last sentence on the page and asks a child to explain why commas are used in it.

Ms. McCloskey draws the children's attention to the text as a natural part of **shared reading**. She demonstrates concepts; points out letters, words, and punctuation marks; models strategies; and asks questions about concepts of print. As they watch Ms. McCloskey and listen to their classmates, the children think about letters, words, and sentences and learn more about literacy.

Ms. McCloskey and her teaching partner, Mrs. Papaleo, share a large classroom and 40 students; despite the number of children present, the room feels spacious. Children's desks are arranged in clusters around the large, open area in the middle where children meet for whole-class activities. An easel to display big books is placed next to the teacher's chair. Several chart racks stand nearby; one rack holds Ms. McCloskey's morning messages and **interactive writing** texts that children have written, a second one holds charts with poems that the children use for **choral reading**, and a third rack holds a pocket chart with word cards and sentence strips.

On one side of the classroom is the library, with books arranged in crates by topic. One crate has frog books, and others have books about the ocean, plants, and the five senses. Some crates contain books by authors who have been featured in author studies, including Eric Carle, Kevin Henkes, and Paula Danziger. Picture books and chapter books are arranged in the crates; children take turns keeping the area neat. Sets of leveled books are arranged on a shelf above the children's reach for the teachers to use in **guided reading** lessons. A child-size sofa, a table and chairs, pillows, and rugs make the library area cozy and inviting. A listening center is set up at a nearby table with a tape player and headphones that accommodate six children at a time.

A **word wall** with high-frequency words fills a partition separating instructional areas; it's divided into sections for each letter of the alphabet. Arranged on it are nearly 100 words written on small cards cut into the shape of the words. The teachers introduce new words each week and post them on the word wall. The children often practice reading and writing the words as a center activity, and they refer to the word wall to spell words when they're writing.

A bank of computers with a printer are located on another side of the classroom. Everyone uses them, even the youngest children. Those who have stronger computer skills assist their classmates. They use word processing to publish their writing during writing workshop and monitor their independent reading practice on the computer using the Accelerated Reader program. At other times, they search the Internet to find information related to topics they're studying in science and social studies, and use software programs to learn typing skills.

Literacy center materials are stored in another area. Clear plastic boxes hold sets of magnetic letters, puppets and other props, whiteboards and pens, puzzles and games, flash cards, and other manipulatives. The teachers choose materials to use during **minilessons**, and they also set boxes of materials out for children to use during center time.

Ms. McCloskey spends the morning teaching reading and writing using a variety of teacher-directed and student-choice activities. Her daily schedule is shown here. After shared reading and a minilesson, the children participate in reading and writing workshop.

The children write books during writing workshop. They pick up their writing folders and write independently at their desks. While most of them are working, Ms. McCloskey brings together a small group for a special activity: She conducts interactive writing lessons with emergent writers and teaches the writing process and revision strategies to more fluent writers.

MS. McCLOSKEY'S SCHEDULE

TIME	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
8:10–8:20	Class Meeting	Children participate in opening activities, read the morning message from their teachers, and talk about plans for the day.
8:20–8:45	Shared Reading	The teachers read big books and poems written on charts; this activity often serves as a lead-in to the minilesson.
8:45–9:00	Minilesson	The teachers teach minilessons on literacy procedures, concepts, strategies, and skills.
9:00–9:45	Writing Workshop	Children write books while the teachers confer with individual children and small groups. They also do interactive writing activities.
9:45–10:00	Recess	
10:00–11:15	Reading Workshop	Children read self-selected books independently while the teachers do guided reading lessons with small groups.
11:15–11:30	Class Meeting	Children share their writing from the author's chair, and they review the morning's activities.
11:30–12:10	Lunch	
12:10–12:30	Read-Aloud	Teachers read aloud picture books and chapter books, and children discuss them in grand conversations.

Today, she's conferencing with six children who are beginning writers; because they're writing longer compositions, Ms. McCloskey has decided to introduce revising. After each child reads his or her rough draft aloud to the group, classmates ask questions and offer compliments, and Ms. McCloskey encourages them to make a change in their writing so that their readers will understand it better. Anthony reads aloud a story about his soccer game, and after a classmate asks a question, he realizes that he needs to add more about how he scored a goal. He moves back to his desk to revise. The group continues with children sharing their writing and beginning to make revisions. At the end of writing workshop, the children come together for author's chair. Each day, three children take turns sitting in the author's chair to read their writing to classmates.

During reading workshop, children read independently or with a buddy while Ms. McCloskey and her teaching partner conduct guided reading lessons. The children have access to a wide variety of books in the classroom library, including predictable books for emergent readers, decodable books for beginning readers, and easy-to-read chapter books for fluent readers. The children know how to choose books that they can read successfully so they're able to spend their time really reading. The children keep lists of the books they read in their workshop folders so that their teachers can monitor their progress.

Ms. McCloskey is working with a group of four emergent readers, and today they'll read *Playing* (Prince, 1999), a seven-page predictable book with one line of text on each page that uses the pattern "I like to ____." She begins by asking children what they like to do when they're playing. Der says, "I like to play with my brother," and Ms. McCloskey writes that on a strip of paper. Some children say only a word or two, so she expands the words into a sentence for the child to repeat; then she writes the expanded sentence and reads it with the child. Next, she introduces the book and reads the title and the author's name. Ms. McCloskey does a picture walk, talking about the picture on each page and naming the activity the child is doing—running, jumping, sliding, and so on. She reviews the "I like to ____" pattern, and then the children read the book independently while Ms. McCloskey supervises and provides assistance as needed. The children eagerly reread the book several times, becoming more confident and excited with each reading.

Ms. McCloskey reviews the high-frequency words *I*, *like*, and *to*, and the children point them out on the classroom word wall. They use magnetic letters to spell the words and then write sentences that begin with "I like to" on whiteboards. Then Ms. McCloskey cuts their sentence strips apart for them to sequence; afterward the children put their sentences into envelopes to practice another day. At the end of the lesson, the teacher suggests that the children might want to write "I like to" books during writing workshop the next day.

During the last 30 minutes before lunch, the children work at literacy centers. Ms. McCloskey and Mrs. Papaleo have set out 12 centers, and the children are free to work at any one they choose. They're familiar with the routine and know what's expected of them at each center. The two teachers circulate around the classroom, monitoring children's work and taking advantage of teachable moments to clarify misunderstandings, reinforce previous lessons, and extend children's learning. A list of the literacy centers is presented in the box on page 108.

After lunch, Ms. McCloskey reads aloud picture books and easy-to-read chapter books. Sometimes she reads books by a particular author, but at other times, she reads books related to a thematic unit. She uses these read-alouds to teach predicting, visualizing, and other reading strategies. This week, she's reading award-winning books, and today she reads aloud *The Stray Dog* (Simont, 2001), the story of a homeless dog that's taken in by a loving family. She uses the **interactive read-aloud** procedure to involve children in the book as she reads, and afterward they talk about it in a **grand conversation**. Ms. McCloskey asks them to share their connections

LITERACY CENTERS

CENTER	DESCRIPTION
Bag a Story	Children use objects in a paper bag to create a story. They draw pictures or write sentences to tell the story they've created.
Clip Boards	Children search the classroom for words beginning with a particular letter or featuring a spelling pattern and write them on paper attached to clip boards.
Games	Children play alphabet, phonics, and other literacy card and board games with classmates.
Library	Children read books related to a thematic unit and write or draw about the books in reading logs.
Listening	Children listen to a tape of a story or informational book while they follow along in a copy of the book.
Making Words	Children practice a making words activity that they've previously done together as a class with teacher guidance.
Messages	Children write notes to classmates and the teachers and post them on a special "Message Center" bulletin board.
Poetry Frames	Children arrange word cards on a chart-sized poetry frame to create a poem and then practice reading it.
Reading the Room	Children use pointers to point to and reread big books, charts, signs, and other texts posted in the classroom.
Research	Children use the Internet, informational books, photos, and realia to learn more about topics in literature focus units and thematic units.
Story Reenactment	Children use small props, finger puppets, or flannel board figures to reenact familiar stories with classmates.
Word Sort	Children categorize high-frequency or thematic word cards displayed in a pocket chart.

to the story, and the teachers record them on a chart divided into three sections. Most comments are text-to-self connections, but several children make other types of connections. Rosario says, "I am thinking of a movie. It was 101 Dalmatians. It was about dogs, too." That's a text-to-text connection. Angelo offers a text-to-world connection: "You got to stay away from stray dogs. They can bite you, and they might have this bad disease called rabies—it can kill you."

Literacy is a process that begins in infancy and continues into adulthood, if not throughout life. It used to be that 5-year-old children came to kindergarten to be “readied” for reading and writing instruction, which formally began in first grade. The implication was that there’s a point in children’s development when it’s time to teach them to read and write. For those not ready, a variety of “readiness” activities would prepare them. Since the 1970s, this view has been discredited because preschoolers have demonstrated that they could recognize signs and other environmental print, retell stories, scribble letters, invent printlike writing, and listen to stories read aloud (Morrow & Tracey, 2007). Some young children even teach themselves to read!

This perspective on how children become literate—that is, how they learn to read and write—is known as *emergent literacy*, a term that New Zealand educator Marie Clay coined. Studies from 1966 on have shaped the current outlook (McGee & Richgels, 2003; Morrow & Tracey, 2007). Now, researchers are looking at literacy learning from the child’s point of view. Literacy development has been broadened to incorporate the cultural and social aspects of language learning, and children’s experiences with and understandings about written language—both reading and writing—are included as part of emergent literacy.

Fostering an Interest in Literacy

Young children’s introduction to written language begins before they come to school. Parents and other caregivers read to them, and they learn to read signs and other environmental print in their community. They experiment with writing and have their parents write messages for them; they also observe adults writing. When young children come to school, their knowledge about written language expands quickly as they learn concepts about print and participate in meaningful experiences with reading and writing. The Common Core State Standards emphasize the importance of fostering children’s interest in reading and writing and developing their understanding of concepts about written language. Check the Common Core State Standards box on page 110 to learn more about the Standards for the youngest readers and writers.

Concepts About Print

Through experiences in their homes and communities, young children learn that print carries meaning and that reading and writing are used for a variety of purposes (Clay, 2000a). They notice menus in restaurants, write and receive postcards and letters to communicate with friends and relatives, and listen to stories read aloud for enjoyment. Children also observe parents and teachers using written language for all these reasons.

Children’s understanding about the purposes of reading and writing reflects how written language is used in their community. Although reading and writing are part of daily life for almost every family, families use written language for varied purposes in different communities (Heath, 1983). Young children have a wide range of literacy experiences in both middle-class and working-class families, even though those experiences might not be the same (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1987). In some communities, written language is used mainly as a tool for practical purposes such as paying bills, and in others, reading and writing are also used for leisure-time activities. In still



This video clip shows how teachers create a print-rich environment. Consider the variety of materials that enhance children’s literacy development.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Concepts About Written Language

The Reading: Foundational Skills Standards emphasize that young children learn concepts of print, the alphabetic principle, and other conventions of the English writing system as part of a comprehensive reading program. Kindergartners and first graders are expected to develop these written-language concepts in preparation for learning to decode and spell words:

- Children demonstrate the progression of print, from left to right and top to bottom.
- Children recognize letters, words, and sentences in print.
- Children name the upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.

The Standards note that instruction should be differentiated because young children vary in their knowledge about and experiences with reading and writing. To learn more about the Standards, go to <http://www.corestandards.org>, or check your state's educational standards website.

other communities, written language serves even wider functions, such as debating social and political issues.

Preschool and kindergarten teachers demonstrate the purposes of written language and provide opportunities for children to experiment with reading and writing in many ways:

- Posting signs in the classroom
- Making a list of classroom rules
- Using reading and writing materials in literacy play centers
- Exchanging messages with classmates
- Reading and writing stories
- Labeling classroom items
- Drawing and writing in journals
- Writing notes to parents

Young children learn other concepts about print through these activities, too: They learn book-orientation concepts, including how to hold a book and turn pages, and that the text, not the illustrations, carries the message. Children also learn directionality concepts—that print is written and read

from left to right and from top to bottom on a page. They match voice to print, pointing word by word to the text as it is read aloud. Children also notice punctuation marks and learn their names and their purposes.

Concepts About Words

At first, young children have only vague notions of literacy terms, such as *word*, *letter*, *sound*, and *sentence*, that teachers use in talking about reading and writing, but they develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of these terms. Papandropoulou and Sinclair (1974) identified four stages of word consciousness. At first, young children don't differentiate between words and things. At the next level, they describe words as labels for things; children consider words that stand for objects as words, but they don't classify articles and prepositions as words because words such as *the* and *with* can't be represented with objects. At the third level, children understand that words carry meaning and that stories are built from words. Finally, more fluent readers and writers describe words as autonomous elements having meanings of their own with definite semantic and syntactic relationships. Children might say, "You make words with letters." Also, children understand that words have different appearances: They can be spoken, listened to, read, and written. Invernizzi (2003) explains the importance of reaching the fourth level this way: "A concept of word allows children to hold onto the printed word in their mind's eye and scan it from left to right, noting every sound in the beginning, middle, and end" (p. 152).

Children develop concepts about words through active participation in literacy activities. They watch as teachers point to words in big books during **shared reading**, and they mimic the teacher and point to words as they reread familiar texts. After many, many shared reading experiences, children notice that word boundaries are marked with spaces, and they pick out familiar words. With experience, children's pointing becomes more exact, and they become more proficient at picking out specific words in the text, noticing that words at the beginning of sentences are marked with capital letters and words at the end of sentences are followed with punctuation marks.

Check the Compendium of Instructional Procedures, which follows Chapter 12, for more information on the **highlighted terms**.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT. Young children begin reading by recognizing logos on fast-food restaurants, department stores, grocery stores, and commonly used household items within familiar contexts (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984). They recognize the golden arches of McDonald's and say "McDonald's," but when they're shown the word *McDonald's* written on a sheet of paper without the familiar sign and restaurant setting, they can't read the word. At first, young children depend on context to read familiar words and memorized texts, but slowly, they develop relationships linking form and meaning as they gain more reading and writing experience.

WRITING. As children begin to experiment with writing, they use scribbles and letter-like forms to represent words (Schickedanz & Casbergue, 2004). As they learn about letter names and phoneme-grapheme (sound-letter) correspondences, they use one, two, or three letters to stand for words. At first, they run their writing together, but they slowly learn to mark word boundaries by segmenting writing into words and leaving spaces between words. They sometimes add dots or lines as markers between words or draw circles around words. They also move from capitalizing words randomly to using capital letters at the beginning of sentences and marking proper nouns and adjectives. Similarly, children move from using a period at the end of each line of writing to marking the ends of sentences with periods.

LITERACY PLAY CENTERS. Young children learn about the purposes of reading and writing as they use written language in their play: As they construct block buildings, children write signs and tape them on the buildings; as they play doctor, children write prescriptions on slips of paper; and as they play teacher, children read stories aloud to stuffed animal "students" (McGee, 2007). Young children use these activities to reenact familiar, everyday activities and to pretend to be someone else. Through these literacy play activities, children use reading and writing for a variety of purposes.

Kindergarten teachers add literacy materials to play centers to enhance their value for literacy learning. Housekeeping centers are probably the most common play centers, and they can easily be transformed into a grocery store, a post office, or a medical center by changing the props. They become literacy play centers when materials for reading and writing are included: Food packages, price stickers, and play money are props in grocery store centers; letters, stamps, and mailboxes are props in post office centers; and appointment books, prescription pads, and folders for patient records are props in medical centers. A variety of literacy play centers can be set up in classrooms and coordinated with literature focus units and thematic units.

Concepts About the Alphabet

Young children also develop concepts about the alphabet and how letters are used to represent phonemes. Pinnell and Fountas (1998) identified these components of letter knowledge:

- ☞ The letter's name
- ☞ The formation of the letter in upper- and lowercase manuscript handwriting
- ☞ The features of the letter that distinguish it from other letters
- ☞ The direction the letter must be turned to distinguish it from other letters (e.g., *b* and *d*)
- ☞ The use of the letter in known words (e.g., names and common words)
- ☞ The sound the letter represents in isolation



In this video clip, a teacher discusses how she uses environmental print to enhance her students' literacy development. Consider how students develop a concept of words in this print-rich environment.

FIGURE 4-1 *Routines to Teach the Alphabet***Environmental Print**

Children sort food labels, toy traffic signs, and other environmental print to find examples of a letter being studied.

Alphabet Books

Teachers read alphabet books aloud to build vocabulary, and later, children reread the books to find words when making books about a letter.

Magnetic Letters

Children pick all examples of one letter from a collection of magnetic letters or match upper- and lowercase letterforms of magnetic letters. They also arrange the letters in alphabetical order and use them to spell familiar words.

Letter Stamps

Children use letter stamps and ink pads to print letters on paper or in booklets. They also use letter-shaped sponges to paint letters and letter-shaped cookie cutters to cut out clay letters.

Alphabet Chart

Children point to letters and pictures on the alphabet chart as they recite the alphabet and the name of the picture, such as "A-airplane, B-baby, C-cat," and so on.

Letter Containers

Teachers collect coffee cans or shoe boxes, one for each letter, and place several familiar objects that represent the letter in each container. Teachers use these containers to introduce the letters, and children use them for sorting and matching activities.

Letter Frames

Teachers make circle-shaped letter frames from tagboard, collect large plastic bracelets, or shape pipe cleaners or Wikki-Stix (pipe cleaners covered in wax) into circles for students to use to highlight particular letters on charts or in big books.

Letter Books and Posters

Children make letter books with pictures of objects beginning with a particular letter on each page. They add letter stamps, stickers, or pictures cut from magazines. For posters, the teacher draws a large letterform on a chart and children add pictures, stickers, and letter stamps.

Letter Sorts

Children sort objects and pictures representing two or more letters and place them in containers marked with the specific letters.

Whiteboards

Children practice writing upper- and lowercase forms of a letter and familiar words on whiteboards.

- ☛ The sound the letter represents in combination with others (e.g., *ch*, *th*)
- ☛ The sound the letter represents in the context of a word (e.g., the *c* sounds in *cat*, *city*, and *chair*)

Children use this knowledge to decode unfamiliar words as they read and to create spellings for words as they write.

The most basic information children learn about the alphabet is how to identify and form the letters in handwriting. They notice letters in environmental print and learn to sing the ABC song. By the time children enter kindergarten, they usually recognize some letters, especially those in their own names, in names of family members and pets, and in common words in their homes and communities. Children also write some of these familiar letters.

Research suggests that children don't learn alphabet letter names in any particular order or by isolating letters from meaningful written language in skill-and-drill activities. McGee and Richgels (2008) conclude that learning letters of the alphabet requires many, many experiences with meaningful written language and recommend that teachers take these steps to encourage children's alphabet learning:

Capitalize on Children's Interests. Teachers provide letter activities that children enjoy, and they talk about letters when children are interested in talking about them. Teachers know what features to comment on because they observe children during reading and writing activities to find out which letters or features of letters children are exploring.

Talk About the Role of Letters in Reading and Writing. Teachers talk about how letters represent sounds and combine to spell words and point out capital letters and lowercase letters. Teachers often talk about the role of letters as they write with children.

Provide a Variety of Opportunities for Alphabet Learning. Teachers use children's names and environmental print in literacy activities, do interactive writing, encourage children to use invented spelling, share alphabet books, and play letter games.

Teachers begin teaching letters of the alphabet using two sources of words—children's own names and environmental print. They teach the ABC song to provide children with a strategy for identifying the name of an unknown letter. Children learn to sing this song and point to each letter on an alphabet chart until they reach the unfamiliar one; this is a very useful strategy because it gives them a real sense of independence in identifying letters. Teachers also provide routines, activities, and games for talking about and manipulating letters. During these familiar, predictable activities, teachers and children say letter names, manipulate magnetic letters, and write letters on whiteboards. At first, the teacher structures and guides the activities, but with experience, the children internalize the routine and do it independently, often at a literacy center. Figure 4-1 presents 10 routines to teach the letters of the alphabet.



ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Concepts About Print

Teachers monitor children's growing awareness of the concepts about print as they observe them during shared reading and other reading and writing activities. The most widely used assessment is Marie Clay's Concepts About Print Test:

■ **Concepts About Print (CAP) Test**

The CAP Test (Clay, 2005) assesses young children's understanding of three types of concepts about print: book-orientation concepts, directionality concepts, and letter and word concepts. The test has 24 items and is administered individually in about 10 minutes. The teacher reads a short book aloud while a child looks on. The child is asked to open the book, turn pages, and point out particular print features as the text is read. Four forms of the CAP Test booklet are available: *Sand* (Clay, 2007b), *Stones* (Clay, 2007c), *Follow Me, Moon* (Clay, 2000b), and *No Shoes* (Clay, 2007a), as well as a Spanish version. Teachers carefully observe children as they respond, and then mark their responses on a scoring sheet. The test is available for purchase from Heinemann.

Instead of using the test booklets, teachers can also administer the test using other books available in the classroom.



ASSESSMENT Snapshot

CAP Test Scoring Sheet

Name Adele Date Jan. 10

Title of Book First the Egg

Check the items that the child demonstrates.

1. Book-Orientation Concepts
 - Shows the front of a book.
 - Turns to the first page of the story.
 - Shows where to start reading on a page.
2. Directionality Concepts
 - Shows the direction of print across a line of text.
 - Shows the direction of print on a page with more than one line of print.
 - Points to track words as the teacher reads.
3. Letter and Word Concepts
 - Points to any letter on a page.
 - Points to a particular letter on a page.
 - Puts fingers around any word on a page.
 - Puts fingers around a particular word on a page.
 - Puts fingers around any sentence on a page.
 - Points to the first and last letters of a word.
 - Points to a period or other punctuation mark.
 - Points to a capital letter.

TEACHER'S NOTE

Adele is familiar with books and has book-orientation concepts. She's reached the point where her classmates were in September. She's working on tracking words and needs to learn more about letters, words, and sentences.

Being able to name the letters of the alphabet is a good predictor of beginning reading achievement, even though knowing the names of the letters doesn't directly affect a child's ability to read (Adams, 1990; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). A more likely explanation for this relationship between letter knowledge and reading is that children who have been actively involved in reading and writing activities before entering first grade know the names of the letters, and they're more likely to begin reading quickly. Simply teaching children to name the letters without the accompanying reading and writing experiences doesn't have this effect.

Assessing Children's Concepts About Written Language

Teachers regularly observe children as they look at books and reread familiar ones to monitor their developing knowledge about written language concepts. They also watch as children do pretend writing and write their names and other familiar words and phrases. They notice which concepts children understand and which ones they need to continue to talk about and demonstrate during shared reading.

Teachers use Marie Clay's Concepts About Print (CAP) Test (2005) to assess young children's understanding of written language concepts; the CAP Test is explained in the Assessment Tools feature on page 113. Teachers also create their own versions of the test to use with any story they're reading with a child, as shown in the Assessment Snapshot above. As teachers read aloud a book, they ask the child to point out

book-orientation concepts, directionality concepts, and letter and word concepts. In the Snapshot, a kindergarten teacher asks Adele to point out written language concepts in *First the Egg* (Seeger, 2007); the results indicate that midway through kindergarten, this 5-year-old is making progress but lags behind her classmates.

How Children Develop as Readers and Writers

Young children move through three stages as they learn to read and write: emergent, beginning, and fluent (Juel, 1991). During the emergent stage, young children gain an understanding of the communicative purpose of print, and they move from pretend reading to reading predictable books and from using scribbles to simulate writing to writing patterned sentences, such as *I see a bird. I see a tree. I see a car.* The focus of the second stage, beginning reading and writing, is on children's growing ability to use phonics to "crack the alphabetic code" to decode and spell words. Children also learn to read and write many high-frequency words and write several sentences to develop a story or other composition. In the fluent stage, children are automatic, fluent readers, and in writing, they develop good handwriting skills, spell many high-frequency words correctly, and organize their writing into multiple-paragraph compositions. Figure 4-2 summarizes children's accomplishments in reading and writing development at each stage.

Stage 1: Emergent Reading and Writing

Children gain an understanding of the communicative purpose of print and develop an interest in reading and writing during the emergent stage. They notice environmental print in the world around them and develop concepts about print as teachers read and write with them. As children dictate stories for the teacher to record, for example, they learn that their speech can be written down, and they observe how teachers write from left to right and top to bottom.

During the emergent stage, children accomplish the following:

- ✦ Develop an interest in reading and writing
- ✦ Acquire concepts about print
- ✦ Develop book-handling skills
- ✦ Learn to identify the letters of the alphabet
- ✦ Develop handwriting skills
- ✦ Learn to read and write some high-frequency words

Children are usually emergent readers and writers in kindergarten, but some children whose parents have read to them every day and provided a variety of literacy experiences do learn how to read and write before they come to school. Caroline, a 5-year-old emergent reader and writer in Ms. McCloskey's classroom, is profiled in the Differentiated Instruction feature on pages 117–121.

Young children make scribbles to represent writing. These scribbles may appear randomly on a page at first, but with experience, children line up the letters or scribbles from left to right on a line and from top to bottom on a page. Children also begin to "read," or tell what their writing says (Schickedanz & Casbergue, 2004). At first, they can reread their writing only immediately after writing, but with experience, they learn to remember what their writing says, and as their writing becomes more conventional, they're able to decipher it more easily.

Emergent readers and writers participate in a variety of literacy activities ranging from modeled and shared reading and writing, during which they watch as teachers read and write, to independent reading and writing that they do themselves. Ms. McCloskey's students, for example, listened to her read aloud books and read big books using shared reading, and they also participated in reading and writing workshop. When working with children at the emergent stage, however, teachers often use modeled and shared reading and writing activities because they're demonstrating what readers and writers do and teaching concepts about print.

FIGURE 4-2 *Young Children's Literacy Development*

STAGE	READING	WRITING
Emergent	Children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notice environmental print • show interest in books • pretend to read • use picture cues and predictable patterns in books to retell the story • reread familiar books with predictable patterns • identify some letter names • recognize up to 20 high-frequency words 	Children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish between writing and drawing • write letters and letterlike forms or scribble randomly on the page • develop an understanding of directionality • show interest in writing • write their first and last names • write up to 20 high-frequency words • use sentence frames to write a sentence
Beginning	Children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify letter names and sounds • match spoken words to written words • recognize at least 20 high-frequency words • use beginning, middle, and ending sounds to decode words • apply knowledge of the cueing systems to monitor reading • self-correct while reading • read slowly, word by word • read orally • point to words when reading • make reasonable predictions 	Children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write from left to right • print the upper- and lowercase letters • write one or more sentences • add a title • spell many words phonetically • spell at least 20 high-frequency words correctly • write single-draft compositions • use capital letters to begin sentences • use periods, question marks, and exclamation points to mark the end of sentences • can reread their writing
Fluent	Children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify most words automatically • read with expression • read at a rate of 100 words per minute or more • prefer to read silently • identify unfamiliar words using the cueing systems • recognize at least 100 high-frequency words • use a variety of strategies effectively • often read independently • use knowledge of text structure and genre to support comprehension • make inferences 	Children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the writing process to write drafts and final copies • write compositions with one or more paragraphs • indent paragraphs • spell at least 75 of the 100 high-frequency words • use sophisticated and technical vocabulary • apply vowel patterns to spell words • add inflectional endings on words • apply capitalization rules • use commas, quotation marks, and other punctuation marks

Differentiated INSTRUCTION



Young Children Develop as Readers and Writers

The Differentiated Instruction feature in this chapter highlights three students from Ms. McCloskey's K-3 multigrade classroom. Each child exemplifies the characteristics of one of the three stages of early literacy development; they vary in their knowledge of concepts of print and their ability to read and write words and longer texts. As you read, think about what the students know about literacy and how you'd personalize instruction for them in developmentally appropriate ways.



Meet Caroline, an Emergent Reader and Writer

Five-year-old Caroline is a friendly, eager child who is learning to speak English as she learns to read and write. Her grandparents emigrated from Thailand to the United States; her family speaks Hmong at home, and she speaks English only at school. When Caroline's Hmong-speaking classmates start to talk in their native language, she admonishes them to speak English because "we learn English school."

When she began kindergarten, Caroline couldn't identify any letters of the alphabet and had never held a pencil. She hadn't listened to stories read aloud and had no book-handling experience. She spoke very few words of English. The classroom culture and language were very different than those of her home, but Caroline was eager to learn. For the first few days, she stood back, observing her classmates; then she said "I do" and joined them.

Reading

Caroline has made remarkable progress in 5 months. She's been reading books with repetitive sentences on each page, and now at level 3, she's beginning to use phonics to sound out unfamiliar words. She knows the names of most letters and the sounds that they represent. She can also read almost 20 high-frequency words. Caroline's developed good book-handling skills and follows the line of words on a page. She reads word by word and points at the text as she reads. She's learning consonant and vowel sounds, but because of

her pronunciation of English sounds and lack of vocabulary, she has difficulty decoding words.

Caroline demonstrates that she understands the books she reads, and she makes text-to-self connections. Recently, she was reading a book about a child having a birthday, and she pointed to the picture of a young, blond mother wrapping a child's birthday present. She looked up at Ms. McCloskey and said, "She no mom, she sister. This wrong." The woman in the picture looks nothing like her mother.

Writing

Caroline has participated in writing workshop since the first day of school. For several weeks, she scribbled, but within a month, she learned how to print some letters because she wanted her writing to look like her classmates'. Soon she wrote her own name, copied classmates' names, and wrote words she saw posted in the classroom.

A month ago, Ms. McCloskey gave Caroline a ring for key words. Every few days, Caroline chooses a new word to

add to her ring; Ms. McCloskey writes the word on a word card that's added to the ring. Caroline has 31 words now, including *you* and *birthday*, and she flips through the cards to practice reading and uses the words to write sentences.

After 4 months of instruction, Caroline began writing sentences. Ms. McCloskey introduced the frame "I see a _____" and Caroline wrote sentences using familiar words, including some from her key words ring. Then, to make her writing longer, she wrote the same sentence over and over.

Next, she began reading and writing color words and expanded her writing to two- and three-sentence texts; for example, "I see a horse. It is black. It is fast." Most of the words that Caroline writes are spelled correctly because she uses key words and words she locates in a picture dictionary. Caroline puts a period at the end of each sentence, but recently she's noticed that some of her classmates put a period at the end of each line so she sometimes does the same. When she draws a picture to accompany a sentence, Caroline can usually read her writing immediately afterward, but by the next day, she often doesn't remember what she's written.

Caroline has one of the thickest writing folders in the class, and she's very proud of her writing. Nearly 100 pages

of writing are stuffed into the folder, tracing her development as a writer since the beginning of the school year.

Instructional Implications

Ms. McCloskey explains, "Caroline is an emergent-stage reader and writer. She's making excellent progress because she can read books with repetitive patterns and is learning phonics and high-frequency words and can write words and craft sentences." The emergent-stage characteristics that Caroline exemplifies are listed in the chart.

Now Ms. McCloskey is beginning to ask Caroline to read books without repetitive patterns during guided reading; in these books, she has to recognize high-frequency words and use phonics to identify unfamiliar words rather than rely on repetitive sentence patterns. Similarly, during writing workshop, Ms. McCloskey is encouraging Caroline to write books about events in her life without using repetitive patterns. Working without the support the repetitive patterns provide is difficult for Caroline because her knowledge of English is limited. Ms. McCloskey concludes, "Even though Caroline is learning to speak English at the same time she's learning to read and write, I'm confident that she's up to the challenge."

EMERGENT READER AND WRITER CHARACTERISTICS THAT CAROLINE EXEMPLIFIES

Reading

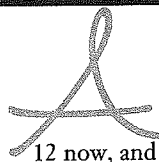
- Shows great interest in reading
- Has developed book-handling skills
- Identifies most of the letters of the alphabet
- Knows some letter sounds
- Sounds out a few CVC words
- Reads almost 20 high-frequency words
- Uses predictable patterns in text to reread familiar books
- Makes text-to-self connections

Writing

- Shows great interest in writing
- Writes from left to right and top to bottom on a page
- Prints most of the letters of the alphabet
- Writes almost 20 high-frequency words
- Leaves spaces between words
- Writes sentences
- Begins sentences with a capital letter
- Puts periods at the ends of sentences
- Rereads what she has written immediately afterward



Meet Anthony, a Beginning Reader and Writer



Anthony, a first grader with a ready smile, is a beginning reader and writer. He's 6 years old and says that he likes to read and write. He's a well-behaved child who's extremely competitive. He reads at level 12 now, and recently he announced to Ms. McCloskey that he wants to read at level 15. She explained that to do that, Anthony needs to practice reading at home with his mom, so he's been taking several books home each night to practice. Ms. McCloskey predicts that Anthony will be reading at level 18 by the end of the year; level 18 is the school's benchmark for the end of first grade.

Angel is Anthony's best friend, and he's in Ms. McCloskey's classroom, too. They often sit together to read and write, and they spur each other on, striving to read more books and write longer, more exciting stories. The boys eat together in the lunchroom and always play together outside, too.

Reading

According to Ms. McCloskey's assessment of Anthony's reading at the end of the second quarter, he recognizes 80 of the 100 high-frequency words taught in first grade, and he can decode most one-syllable words with short and long vowel sounds, including words with consonant blends and digraphs, such as *shock*, *chest*, and *spike*. He's beginning to try to sound out some of the more complex vowel digraphs and diphthongs (e.g., *loud*, *boil*, *soon*) and *r*-controlled vowels (e.g., *chart*, *snore*), and in the past month, Ms. McCloskey has noticed that his ability to decode words is growing and that about two thirds of the time, he can identify these words with more complex vowel sounds in the context of a sentence. He also is decoding some two- and three-syllable words, such as *dinner*, *parents*, and *hospital*, in books he's reading.

Anthony reads orally and points only when he reads challenging texts. He's beginning to chunk words into phrases as he reads, and he notices when something he's reading doesn't make sense. He uses the cross-checking strategy to make corrections and get back on track.

Anthony has read 17 books this month, according to his reading workshop log. He's increasingly choosing easy-to-read chapter books, including Syd Hoff's *Sammy the Seal* (2000b) and *Oliver* (2000a). After he reads, he often shares his books with his friend Angel, and they reread them together and talk about their favorite parts. He regularly uses the connecting strategy and shares his text-to-self and

text-to-world connections with Angel and Ms. McCloskey. When he reads two or more books by the same author, he shares text-to-text comparisons and can explain to his teacher how these comparisons make him a better reader: "Now I think and read at the same time," he explains.

Writing

Anthony likes to write during writing workshop. He identified his "I Was Sick" story as the very best one he's written, and Ms. McCloskey agrees. Anthony tells an interesting and complete story with a beginning, middle, and end, and you can hear his voice clearly in the story. Here's his story:

I Was Sick

I went out sid [outside] with no! jaket [jacket] on and my throt [throat] started to hrt [hurt]. It rele [really] hrt and I was getting sick. I went to finde my Mom and I tolde her I was sick. My Mom gav me some medisn [medicine] and she mad Cambell's chickn newdl [noodle] soup for me to eat. Then I got all betr [better].

Anthony's spelling errors are characteristic of phonetic spellers. He sounds out the spelling of many words, such as HRT (*hurt*), MEDISIN (*medicine*), and BETR (*better*), and he's experimenting with the final *e* marker at the end of TOLDE and FINDE but ignores it on other words, such as OUT SID (*outside*) and GAV (*gave*). He uses the word wall in the classroom and spells many high-frequency words correctly (e.g., *with*, *went*, *have*).

Anthony writes single-draft compositions in paragraph form, and he creates a title for his stories. He writes in sentences and includes simple, compound, and complex sentences in his writing. He uses capital letters to mark the beginnings of sentences and periods to mark the ends of sentences well, but he continues to randomly capitalize words.

Instructional Implications

“Anthony is a very motivated student: He’s eager to read because he has a goal in mind,” Ms. McCloskey explains. “I’m confident that he’ll reach level 18 by the end of the year. I am encouraging Anthony to read increasingly difficult chapter books and practice using the strategies he’s learned when he’s reading independently.”

Ms. McCloskey plans to teach Anthony about complex vowel patterns and consonant blends and digraphs so he’ll be able to decode unfamiliar words while he’s reading. She’s also noticed that it’s time for Anthony to move beyond single-draft compositions and learn to use the writing process to revise and edit his writing.

BEGINNING READER AND WRITER CHARACTERISTICS THAT ANTHONY EXEMPLIFIES

Reading

- Likes to read
- Reads orally
- Points to words when he reads challenging texts
- Recognizes 80 high-frequency words
- Uses phonics knowledge to decode unfamiliar words
- Makes good predictions
- Uses the cross-checking strategy
- Retells what he reads
- Makes text-to-self and text-to-world connections

Writing

- Likes to write
- Writes single-draft compositions
- Adds a title
- Writes organized compositions on a single topic
- Writes more than five sentences in a composition
- Has a beginning, middle, and end in his story
- Refers to the word wall to spell high-frequency words
- Uses his knowledge of phonics to spell words
- Uses capital letters to mark the beginnings of sentences
- Uses periods to mark the ends of sentences
- Reads his writing to classmates



Meet Jazmen, a Fluent Reader and Writer

Jazmen is a confident and articulate African American third grader with an easy smile. She’s 8 years old, and she celebrated her birthday last fall with a family trip to the Magic Mountain amusement park in Southern California. Jazmen is a computer geek, often providing assistance to her classmates. When asked about her favorite school activity, Jazmen says that she likes using the computer best of all; in fact, she’s interested in learning more about careers that involve computers because she knows that she always wants to work with them.

Ms. McCloskey identified Jazmen for this feature because she’s made such remarkable progress this year. This is the second year that Jazmen’s been in Ms. McCloskey’s class. Last year, she seemed stuck in the beginning stage, not making too much progress, according to Ms. McCloskey, “but this year, it’s like a lightbulb has been turned on!” She’s now a fluent reader and writer.

Reading

Jazmen likes to read, and she reports that she has lots of books at home. According to the Accelerated Reader program, she’s reading at 3.8 (third grade, eighth month) level, which means she’s reading at or slightly above grade level. She enjoys reading the Marvin Redpost (e.g., *Marvin Redpost: A Magic Crystal?* by Louis Sachar, 2000) and Zack Files (e.g.,

Never Trust a Cat Who Wears Earrings, by Dan Greenburg, 1997) series of easy-to-read paperback chapter books. She says that she likes these books because they're funny.

Currently she's reading Paula Danziger's series of chapter-book stories about a third grader named Amber Brown who deals with the realities of contemporary life, including adjusting to her parents' divorce. The first book in the series is *Amber Brown Is Not a Crayon* (2006), about Amber and her best friend, Justin, who moves away at the end of the book; other chapter books in this "colorful" series are *Amber Brown Goes Fourth* (2007), *Amber Brown Is Feeling Blue* (1999), *Amber Brown Sees Red* (1998), and *Amber Brown Is Green With Envy* (2004).

Jazmen reads fluently. She recognizes words automatically and reads with expression. She says that when you're reading to someone, you have to be interesting, and that's why she reads the way she does. Her most outstanding achievement, according to Ms. McCloskey, is that she thinks inferentially: She can juggle thinking about plot, characters, setting, and theme in order to make thoughtful connections and interpretations. She knows about various genres and literary elements, and she uses this knowledge as she reflects on stories she's reading.

Writing

Jazmen likes to write. She gets her ideas for stories from television programs. She explains, "When I'm watching TV, I get these ideas and I draw pictures of them and that's how I think of a story." She's currently working on a story entitled "Lucky and the Color Purple," about a princess named Lucky who possesses magical qualities. Why are her stories interesting? Jazmen says, "Most important is that they are creative." She shares her stories with her classmates, and they agree that Jazmen is a good writer.

Jazmen is particularly pleased with her story "The Super Hero With Curly Hair." It has a strong voice. Jazmen wanted her story to sound interesting, she explained, so she substituted *whined* and *grouched* for *said*. Ms. McCloskey praised the story because it's complete with a beginning, middle, and end, and because Jazmen uses dialogue as well as quotation marks effectively. The errors remaining on the final draft of the paper also suggest direction for future instruction. Jazmen spelled 95% of the words in her composition correctly. In particular, Jazmen appears ready to learn more about plurals and possessives and using commas within sentences.

Instructional Implications

"Jazmen is a fluent reader," says Ms. McCloskey, "so she's ready to tackle more challenging fiction and nonfiction books, both during guided reading lessons and when she's reading independently." When she reads, Jazmen's focus has changed from decoding the words to comprehending the author's message. Ms. McCloskey plans to teach minilessons about asking questions, making inferences, and using other reading strategies to encourage Jazmen to think more deeply about the books she's reading.

Jazmen has begun to use the writing process to refine her compositions, but most of her pieces have been stories. Ms. McCloskey is encouraging Jazmen to write nonfiction books, poems, letters, and other genres. After reading *Hate That Cat* (Creech, 2010), a novel written in verse, Jazmen decided to imitate the genre and draft her own novel in verse, expanding on an encounter she had with a squirrel. Ms. McCloskey also plans to carefully monitor Jazmen's progress and teach minilessons on concepts and skills that she's attempting to use, including plurals and possessives and commas within sentences.

FLUENT READER AND WRITER CHARACTERISTICS THAT JAZMEN EXEMPLIFIES

Reading

- Recognizes most words automatically
- Reads with expression
- Reads more than 100 words per minute
- Reads independently
- Uses a variety of strategies
- Makes connections when reading
- Thinks inferentially
- Applies knowledge of story structure and genre when reading

Writing

- Uses the writing process
- Has a sense of audience and purpose
- Writes a complete story with a beginning, middle, and end
- Writes in paragraphs
- Indents paragraphs
- Uses sophisticated language
- Spells most words correctly
- Uses capital letters and punctuation to mark sentence boundaries

Stage 2: Beginning Reading and Writing

This stage marks children's growing awareness of the alphabetic principle. Children learn about phoneme-grapheme correspondences, phonics rules in words such as *run*, *band*, *this*, *make*, *day*, and *road*, and word families, including *-ill* (*fill*, *bill*, *will*) and *-ake* (*bake*, *make*, *take*). They also apply (and misapply) their developing phonics knowledge to spell words. For example, they spell *night* as NIT and *train* as TRANE. At the same time, they're learning to read and write high-frequency words, many of which can't be sounded out, such as *what*, *are*, and *there*.

During the beginning stage of reading and writing development, children accomplish the following:

- ♥ Learn phonics skills
- ♥ Recognize 100 high-frequency words
- ♥ Apply reading strategies, including cross-checking, predicting, and repairing
- ♥ Write five or more sentences, sometimes organized into a paragraph
- ♥ Spell phonetically
- ♥ Spell 50 high-frequency words
- ♥ Use capital letters to begin sentences
- ♥ Use punctuation marks to indicate the ends of sentences
- ♥ Reread their writing

Most first and second graders are beginning readers and writers, and with instruction in literacy strategies and skills and daily opportunities to read and write, children move through this stage to reach the fluent stage. Anthony, a 6-year-old beginning reader and writer in Ms. McCloskey's classroom, is also profiled in the Differentiated Instruction feature.

Children usually read aloud slowly, in a word-by-word fashion, stopping often to sound out unfamiliar words. They point at each word as they read, but by the end of this stage, their reading becomes smoother and more fluent, and they point at words only when the text is especially challenging.

Although the emphasis in this stage is on decoding and recognizing words, children also learn that reading involves comprehension. They make predictions to guide their thinking about events in stories they read, and they make connections between what they're reading and their own lives and the world around them as they personalize the reading experience. They monitor their reading to recognize when it doesn't make sense, cross-check using phonological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic information in the text to figure out the problem, and repair or self-correct it (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). They also learn about story structure, particularly that stories have a beginning, middle, and end, and use this knowledge to guide their reading and retelling.

By the end of this stage, children move from writing one or two sentences to developing longer compositions, with five, eight, or more sentences organized into paragraphs. Their writing is better developed, too, because they're acquiring a sense of audience, and they want their classmates to like what they've written. Children continue to write single-draft compositions but begin to make a few revisions and editing corrections as they learn about the writing process toward the end of the stage.



Teach Kids to
BE STRATEGIC!

Beginning Reading Strategies

Introduce these first reading strategies in kindergarten and first grade:

- Cross-check
- Predict
- Connect
- Monitor
- Repair

Children practice them when they participate in shared and guided reading activities as well as interactive read-alouds. Look for children to use these strategies during guided practice and independent reading activities. If they struggle, reteach the strategies, making sure to name them, model their use, and think aloud and talk about their application.

Children apply what they're learning about phonics in their spelling, and they correctly spell many of the high-frequency words that they've learned to read. They know how to spell some high-frequency words and can locate others on word walls posted in the classroom. They learn to use capital letters to mark the beginnings of sentences and punctuation to mark the ends. Children are more adept at rereading their writing, both immediately afterward and days later, because they're able to read many of the words they've written.

Teachers plan activities for children at the beginning stage that range from modeled to independent reading and writing activities, but the emphasis is on interactive and guided activities. Through **interactive writing**, **choral reading**, and **guided reading**, teachers scaffold children as they read and write and use **minilessons** to provide strategy and skill instruction. For example, Ms. McCloskey's students were divided into small, homogeneous groups for guided reading lessons. The children met to read books at their reading levels, and Ms. McCloskey introduced new vocabulary words, taught reading strategies and skills, and assessed their comprehension.

Teachers introduce the writing process to beginning-stage writers once they develop a sense of audience and want to make their writing better so their classmates will like it. Children don't immediately begin writing rough drafts and final copies or doing both revising and editing: They often begin the writing process by rereading their compositions and adding a word or two, correcting a misspelled word, or capitalizing a lowercase letter. These changes are cosmetic, but the idea that the writing process doesn't end after the first draft is established. Next, children show interest in making a final copy that really looks good. They either recopy the composition by hand or use word processing and print out the final copy. Once children understand that writing involves a rough draft and a final copy, they're ready to learn more about revising and editing, and they usually reach this point at about the same time they become fluent writers.

Stage 3: Fluent Reading and Writing

The third stage marks children's move into fluent reading and writing. Fluent readers recognize hundreds and hundreds of words automatically and have the tools to identify unfamiliar words when reading. Fluent writers use the writing process to draft, revise, and publish their writing and participate in **revising groups**. They're familiar with a variety of genres and know how to organize their writing. They use conventional spelling and other written language conventions, including capital letters and punctuation marks.

Fluent readers and writers accomplish the following:

- ☛ Read fluently and with expression
- ☛ Recognize most one-syllable words automatically and can decode other words efficiently
- ☛ Use decoding and comprehension strategies effectively
- ☛ Write well-developed, multiparagraph compositions
- ☛ Use the writing process to draft and refine their writing
- ☛ Write stories, reports, letters, and other genres
- ☛ Spell most high-frequency and other one-syllable words correctly
- ☛ Use capital letters and punctuation marks correctly most of the time

Some second graders reach this stage, and all children should be fluent readers and writers by the end of third grade. Reaching this stage is an important milestone because it indicates that children are ready for the increased literacy demands of fourth grade, when they're expected to read longer chapter-book stories, use writing to respond to literature, read content-area textbooks, and write essays and reports.

Jazmen, an 8-year-old fluent reader and writer in Ms. McCloskey's classroom, is also profiled in the Differentiated Instruction feature.

The distinguishing characteristic of fluent readers is that they read words accurately, rapidly, and expressively. Fluent readers automatically recognize many words and can decode unfamiliar words efficiently. Their reading rate has increased to 100 words or more per minute; in addition, they can vary their speed according to the demands of the text they're reading.

Most fluent readers prefer to read silently because they can read more quickly than when they read orally. No longer do they point at words as they read. Children can read many books independently, actively making predictions, visualizing, monitoring their understanding, and making repairs when necessary. They have a range of strategies available and use them to enhance their comprehension.

Fluent readers' comprehension is stronger, and they think more deeply about their reading than emergent and beginning readers do. It's likely that children's comprehension improves at this stage because they have more cognitive energy available for comprehension now; in contrast, beginning readers use much more cognitive energy to decode words. So, as children become fluent, they use less energy for word identification and have more cognitive resources available for comprehending what they read.

During this stage, children read longer, more sophisticated picture books and chapter books, but they generally prefer chapter books because they enjoy really getting into a story or digging deeply in a nonfiction book. They learn more about the literary genres and their structural patterns, and literary devices, such as alliteration, personification, and symbolism. They participate in literature focus units featuring an author, genre, or book, in small-group literature circles where children read and discuss a book together, and in author studies where they read and compare several books by the same author and examine that author's writing style. They're able to explain why they liked a particular book and make recommendations to classmates.

Fluent writers understand that writing is a process, and they use the writing process stages—prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. They make plans for writing and write both rough drafts and final copies. They reread their rough drafts and make revisions and editing changes that reflect their understanding of writing forms and their purpose for writing. They increasingly share their rough drafts with classmates and turn to them for advice on how to make their writing better.

Children get ideas for writing from books they've read and from television programs and movies they've viewed. They organize their writing into paragraphs, indent paragraphs, and focus on a single idea in each paragraph. They develop ideas more completely and use more sophisticated vocabulary to express their ideas.

Fluent writers are aware of writing genres and organize their writing into stories, reports, letters, and poems. Their stories have a beginning, middle, and end, and the reports they write are structured using sequence, comparison, or cause-and-effect structures. Their letters reflect an understanding of the parts of a letter and how they're arranged on a page. Their poems incorporate alliteration, symbolism, rhyme, or other poetic devices to create vivid impressions.

Children's writing looks more conventional. They spell most of the 100 high-frequency words correctly and use phonics to spell other one-syllable words correctly. They add inflectional endings (e.g., *-s*, *-ed*, *-ing*) and experiment with spelling two-syllable and longer words. They've learned to capitalize the first word in sentences and names and to use punctuation marks correctly at the ends of sentences, although they're still experimenting with punctuation marks within sentences.

A list of instructional recommendations for each of the three stages of reading and writing development is presented in Figure 4-3.

FIGURE 4-3 *Instructional Recommendations*

STAGE	READING	WRITING
Emergent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use environmental print. ● Include literacy materials in play centers. ● Read aloud to children. ● Read big books and poems on charts using shared reading. ● Introduce the title and author of books before reading. ● Teach directionality and letter and word concepts using big books. ● Encourage children to make predictions and text-to-self connections. ● Have children retell and dramatize stories. ● Have children respond to literature through talk and drawing. ● Have children manipulate sounds using phonemic awareness activities. ● Use alphabet-learning routines. ● Take children's dictation using the Language Experience Approach. ● Teach 20–24 high-frequency words. ● Post words on a word wall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have children use crayons for drawing and pencils for writing. ● Encourage children to use scribble writing or write random letters if they can't do more conventional writing. ● Teach handwriting skills. ● Use interactive writing for whole-class and small-group writing projects. ● Have children write their names on sign-in sheets each day. ● Have children write their own names and names of classmates. ● Have children inventory or make lists of words they know how to write. ● Have children "write the classroom" by making lists of familiar words in the classroom. ● Have children use frames such as "I like _____" and "I see a _____" to write sentences. ● Encourage children to remember what they write so they can read it.
Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read charts of poems and songs using choral reading. ● Read leveled books using guided reading. ● Provide daily opportunities to read and reread books independently. ● Teach phonics concepts and rules. ● Teach children to cross-check using the cueing systems. ● Teach the 100 high-frequency words. ● Point out whether texts are stories, informational books, or poems. ● Teach predicting, connecting, cross-checking, and other strategies. ● Teach the elements of story structure, particularly beginning, middle, and end. ● Have children write in reading logs and participate in grand conversations. ● Have children take books home to read with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use interactive writing to teach concepts about print and spelling rules. ● Provide daily opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and using different genres. ● Introduce the writing process. ● Teach children to develop a single idea in their compositions. ● Teach children to proofread their compositions. ● Teach children to spell the 100 high-frequency words. ● Teach contractions. ● Teach capitalization and punctuation skills. ● Have children use computers to publish their writing. ● Have children share their writing from the author's chair.
Fluent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have children participate in literature circles. ● Have children participate in reading workshop. ● Teach about genres and literary features. ● Involve children in author studies. ● Teach children to make text-to-self, text-to-world, and text-to-text connections. ● Have children respond to literature through talk and writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have children participate in writing workshop. ● Teach children to use the writing process. ● Teach children to revise and edit their writing. ● Teach paragraphing skills. ● Teach spelling rules. ● Teach homophones. ● Teach synonyms. ● Teach root words and affixes. ● Teach children to use a dictionary and a thesaurus.

Instructional Practices

Teachers who work with young readers and writers use many of the same instructional practices used with older students, such as reading aloud, doing guided reading with leveled books, teaching from basal readers, and providing op-

portunities for independent reading and writing through reading and writing workshop. Teachers adapt these approaches to provide enough scaffolding so that young children are successful, but other instructional practices have been developed specifically for young children and other novice readers and writers. Use this Checklist to assess how effectively you teach young readers and writers.

Morning Message

Morning message is a daily literacy routine that teachers use to teach literacy concepts, strategies, and skills (Payne & Schulman, 1999). Before the children arrive, teachers write a brief message on chart paper, usually in the form of a friendly letter, about what will happen that day; then the message is read at the beginning of the school day. Afterward, children reread it and count the letters, words, and sentences in the message. They also pick out familiar letters and words, words following a particular phonics pattern, high-frequency words, or capital letters and punctuation marks, depending on children's level of literacy development.

Teachers usually follow a predictable pattern in their messages each day to make it easier for children to read, as these two morning messages show:

CHECKLIST How Do You Support Young Children's Literacy Development?

- Do you foster young children's interest in literacy by reading books aloud?
- Do you demonstrate the purposes of written language?
- Do you teach concepts about print using environmental print and other activities?
- Do you provide opportunities for children to experiment with reading and writing?
- Do you teach literacy terms, such as *word*, *letter*, and *sound*, through children's active participation in literacy activities?
- Do you teach concepts about words using literacy play centers and other activities?
- Do you develop children's knowledge about the alphabet through meaningful literacy activities and routines?
- Do you teach children handwriting skills, including how to form upper- and lowercase manuscript letters?
- Do you assess children to determine their stage of literacy development?
- Do you plan instruction based on children's developmental stage?

*Dear Kindergartners,
Today is Monday.
We will plant seeds.
We will make books
about plants.
Love,
Ms. Thao*

*Dear Kindergartners,
Today is Thursday.
We will measure the plants.
We will write about how
plants grow.
Love,
Ms. Thao*

The morning messages that teachers write for first and second graders become gradually more complex, as this second grade teacher's message demonstrates:

Good Morning!

Today is Monday, February 6, 2012. New literature circles begin on Wednesday. I'll tell you about the new book choices this morning, and then you can sign up for your favorite book. Who remembers what a synonym is? Can you give an example?

Love,

Ms. Salazar

Teachers usually choose children to take the messages home to share with their families, either day by day or at the end of each week.

Teachers have adapted the morning message routine in a variety of ways to support their literacy programs.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK MORNING MESSAGE. The teacher writes the morning message, omitting some words for children to fill in. The teacher reads the entire message once, and then during the second reading, children identify the missing words and write them in the blanks. Sometimes teachers write the missing words on cards and display them in a pocket chart to simplify the activity. Here's a first grade class's morning message:

Mr. Diaz's Morning Message

Today is _____, October 17, 2012. It is the _____ day of

school. We love to _____ The Cat in the Hat by Dr. _____.

We can read words that rhyme with cat: _____, _____, and

_____.

The missing words are *Wednesday, 37th, read, Seuss, bat, bat, and rat*. After completing the chart, the children reread the message, count the sentences, circle high-frequency words they've learned, and think of additional rhyming words.

ONE CHILD DICTATES A MESSAGE TO SHARE WITH CLASSMATES. The children take turns creating a message to share personal news with classmates. The teacher writes the child's dictation on chart paper. Children usually read their own messages aloud to classmates, pointing to each word as they read, just like their teacher does. In this example, Ivan shares some big news:

Ivan's News

I have a new baby sister. Her name is Ava. She sleeps all the time, and I have to be very quiet so I won't wake her up.

After reading and rereading the message and examining individual words and punctuation marks, the children decide to write a welcome message to Ivan's sister at the bottom of the chart paper. They dictate it for the teacher to record and sign their names; then Ivan takes the chart paper home to share with his family.

CHILDREN CREATE A MESSAGE COLLABORATIVELY. Some teachers write class news at the end of the school day instead of morning messages. They discuss the day's activities and decide together what to write. Teachers use interactive writing so that children can do most of the writing. Here's an example of a first grade class's news:

Room 3 News

We are studying insects. Today we read Diary of a Fly by Doreen Cronin. It's a totally hilarious book! We learned that flies walk on walls, and they eat regurgitated food. That's so yucky!

Through these adaptations, children learn about the format of friendly letters and other writing genres and the relationships between reading and writing. The writing is authentic, and children learn how to use writing to share information with others.



New LITERACIES

Interactive Books

Young children use interactive books to learn concepts about print, read high-frequency words, develop reading fluency, expand vocabulary knowledge, and practice comprehension strategies. These electronic books have text and illustrations similar to traditional picture books but incorporate computer technology to enhance children's reading experience (Lefever-Davis & Pearman, 2005): They provide audio renditions of the entire text as children read along, pronunciations of individual words when children highlight them, and hotspots that children click to produce sound effects and graphic animations where characters talk and settings spring to life.

Many interactive books, based on high-quality books of children's literature, are available on CD-ROM. Here are some of the best:

- Dr. Seuss's rhyming stories *The Cat in the Hat* and *Green Eggs and Ham*, from The Learning Company
- H. A. Rey's Curious George stories about a hilarious little monkey, from Simon & Schuster
- Norman Bridwell's Clifford stories about a big red dog named Clifford, from Scholastic
- Stan and Jan Berenstain's adventures about a bear family, from Broderbund
- Marc Brown's series about an aardvark named Arthur, from The Learning Company
- Janell Cannon's *Stellaluna*, a charming story about a bat named Stellaluna, from Living Books
- Mercer Mayer's *Just Grandma and Me*, a story about a little critter who takes a trip to the beach, from The Learning Company

Other interactive books for K–5 students are available from Leap-Frog SchoolHouse: The Leveled Reading Series provides interactive books for independent reading practice, and the Language First! Program includes books for English learners at four levels of English proficiency with native-language audio support in Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Haitian Creole, and Hmong.

In addition to interactive books on CD-ROM, others are available at these websites:

Dora the Explorer (<http://www.nickjr.com>). These interactive stories feature Dora the Explorer, from her Nickelodeon cable series.

PBS Kids (<http://pbskids.org>). These interactive books are from the Between the Lions series on PBS.

Storyline Online (<http://www.storylineonline.net>). These streaming video programs feature Screen Actors Guild members reading aloud books, including Mem Fox's *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*.

Storytime Online (<http://www.kennedy-center.org>). Search for Storytime Online on the homepage to locate information about streaming media presentations, including Judith Viorst's *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* and other stories.

Children appreciate the control they have in choosing how much support the interactive book provides while they're reading, and researchers have documented that children's word knowledge and comprehension are enhanced by these reading experiences (Lefever-Davis & Pearman, 2005). There's a potential drawback, however: Children can become dependent on the electronic support that interactive books provide.

FIGURE 4-4 *How Shared Reading Fits Into the Reading Process***1. Prereading**

- Activate or build background knowledge on a topic related to the book.
- Show the cover of the book and read the title.
- Talk about the author and the illustrator.
- Have students make predictions.

2. Reading

- Use a big book or text printed on a chart.
- Use a pointer to track during reading.
- Read expressively, with very few stops during the first reading.
- Highlight vocabulary and repetitive patterns.
- Reread the book once or twice, and encourage students to join in the reading.

3. Responding

- Discuss the book in a grand conversation.
- Ask inferential and higher level questions, such as "What would happen if . . .?" and "What did this book make you think of?"
- Share the pen to write a sentence interactively about the book.
- Have students draw and write in reading logs.

4. Exploring

- Reread the book using small books.
- Add important words to the word wall.
- Teach minilessons on strategies and skills.
- Present more information about the author and the illustrator.
- Provide a text set with other books by the author or on the same topic.

5. Applying

- Have students write a collaborative book to retell the story.
- Have students write an innovation imitating the pattern used in the book.

Shared Reading

Teachers use **shared reading** to read aloud books that are appropriate for children's interest level but too difficult for them to read for themselves (Parkes, 2000). Teachers use the five stages of the reading process in shared reading, as Ms. McCloskey did in the vignette at the beginning of the chapter. The steps in shared reading are presented in Figure 4-4, showing how the activities fit into the five stages of the reading process. Through the reading process, teachers model what fluent readers do as they involve children in enjoyable reading activities (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). After the text is read several times, teachers use it to teach phonics and high-frequency words. Children also read small versions of the book with partners or independently, and the pattern or structure found in the text can be used for writing activities.

The books chosen for shared reading are available as big books and are close to children's reading level, but still beyond their ability to read independently. As an instructional strategy, shared reading differs from **interactive read-alouds** because children see the text as the teacher reads. Also, they often join in the reading of predictable refrains and rhyming words, and after listening to the teacher read the text several times, children often remember enough of the text to read along with the

teacher. Through shared reading, teachers also demonstrate how print works, provide opportunities for children to make predictions, and increase children's confidence in their ability to read.

Big books are greatly enlarged picture books that teachers use in shared reading, most commonly with primary grade students. In this technique, developed in New Zealand, teachers place an enlarged picture book on an easel or chart stand where all children can see it. They read it aloud, pointing to every word. Before long, children join in the reading, especially in repeating the refrain. Then teachers reread the book, inviting children to help with the reading. The next time the book is read, teachers read to the point that the text becomes predictable, such as the beginning of a refrain, and children supply the missing text; having them supply the missing words is important because it leads to independent reading. Once children are familiar with the text, they're invited to read the big book independently (Parkes, 2000).

PREDICTABLE BOOKS. The stories and other books that teachers use for shared reading with young children often have repeated sentences, rhyme, or other patterns; books that incorporate these patterns are called *predictable books*. These are the four most common patterns:

Repetition. Authors repeat sentences to create a predictable pattern in many picture books. In *Barnyard Banter* (Fleming, 1997), for example, a white goose chases an elusive butterfly around a farm as the cows, roosters, and other animals call out their greetings using a predictable pattern.

Cumulative Sequence. Sentences are repeated and expanded in each episode in these books. For example, in *The Gingerbread Boy* (Galdone, 2008), the cookie repeats and expands his boast as he meets each character on his run away from the Little Old Man and the Little Old Woman.

Rhyme and Rhythm. Rhyme and rhythm are two poetic devices that authors use to add a musical quality to their writing. Many of the popular Dr. Seuss books, such as *Fox in Socks* (1965), use rhyme and rhythm. The sentences have a strong beat, and rhyme is used at the end of lines. Other books that incorporate rhyme and rhythm include familiar songs, such as *Shoo Fly!* (Trapani, 2000), and book-long verses, such as *Pattern Fish* (Harris, 2000).

Sequential Patterns. Some authors use a familiar sequence—such as the months of the year, days of the week, numbers 1 to 10, or letters of the alphabet—to structure their books. For example, in *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 2002), the author uses number and day-of-the-week sequences as the caterpillar eats through an amazing array of foods.

The Booklist on the next page presents predictable books representing each category. These books are valuable for emergent readers because the repeated sentences, patterns, and sequences make it easier for children to predict the next sentence or episode (Tompkins & Webeler, 1983).

Language Experience Approach

The **Language Experience Approach** (LEA) is based on children's language and experiences (Ashton-Warner, 1986). In this approach, teachers do shared writing: Children dictate words and sentences about their experiences, and the teacher writes





Booklist

Predictable Books

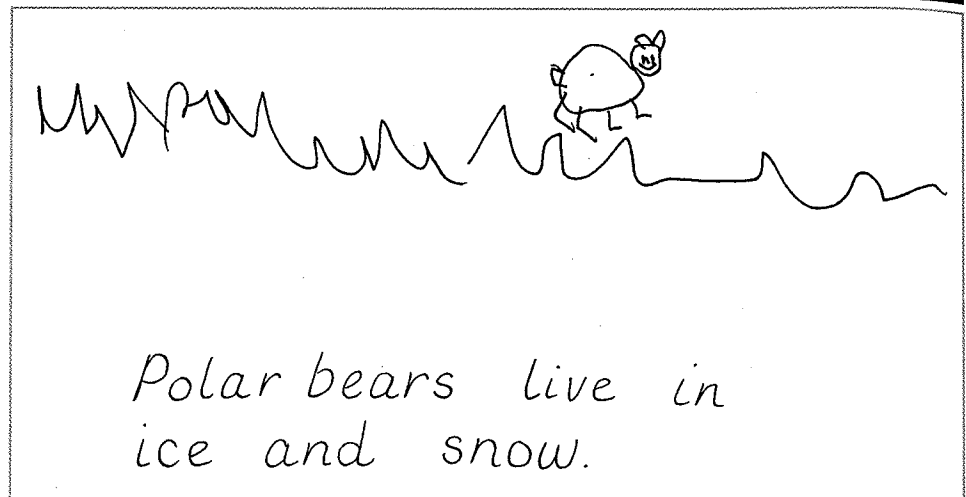
TYPE	BOOKS
Repetition	<p>Carle, E. (1997). <i>Have you seen my cat?</i> New York: Aladdin Books.</p> <p>Guarino, D. (2004). <i>Is your mama a llama?</i> New York: Scholastic.</p> <p>Martin, B., Jr. (2007). <i>Baby bear, baby bear, what do you see?</i> New York: Henry Holt.</p> <p>Rathmann, P. (2000). <i>Good night, gorilla.</i> New York: Puffin Books.</p> <p>Rosen, M. (2004). <i>We're going on a bear hunt.</i> New York: Candlewick Press.</p>
Cumulative Sequence	<p>Aylesworth, J. (1996). <i>The gingerbread man.</i> New York: Scholastic.</p> <p>Fleming, D. (2006). <i>The cow who clucked.</i> New York: Henry Holt.</p> <p>Pinkney, J. (2006). <i>The little red hen.</i> New York: Dial Books.</p> <p>Taback, S. (2004). <i>The house that Jack built.</i> New York: Puffin Books.</p> <p>Wood, A. (2007). <i>Silly Sally.</i> San Diego: Harcourt.</p>
Rhyme and Rhythm	<p>Fleming, D. (1995). <i>In the tall, tall grass.</i> New York: Henry Holt.</p> <p>Hoberman, M. A. (2003). <i>Miss Mary Mack: A hand-clapping rhyme.</i> Boston: Little, Brown.</p> <p>Hoberman, M. A. (2004). <i>The eensy-weensy spider.</i> Boston: Little, Brown.</p> <p>Martin, B., Jr., & Archambault, J. (2009). <i>Chicka chicka boom boom.</i> New York: Beach Lane Books.</p> <p>Shaw, N. (2006). <i>Sheep in a jeep.</i> Boston: Houghton Mifflin.</p>
Sequential Patterns	<p>Baker, K. (2007). <i>Hickory dickory dock.</i> San Diego: Harcourt.</p> <p>Carle, E. (1997). <i>Today is Monday.</i> New York: Putnam.</p> <p>Carle, E. (2005). <i>A house for hermit crab.</i> New York: Aladdin Books.</p> <p>Christelow, E. (2006). <i>Five little monkeys jumping on the bed.</i> New York: Clarion Books.</p> <p>Wood, A. (2004). <i>Ten little fish.</i> New York: Blue Sky Press/Scholastic.</p>

down what the children say; the text they develop becomes the reading material. Because the language comes from the children themselves and because the content is based on their experiences, they're usually able to read the text easily. Reading and writing are connected, because children are actively involved in reading what they've written.

Using this approach, children create individual booklets. They draw pictures on each page or cut pictures from magazines to glue on each page, and then they dictate the text that the teacher writes beside each illustration. Children can also make **collaborative books**, where each child creates one page to be added to a class book. For example, as part of a unit on "The Three Bears," a kindergarten class made a collaborative book on bears. Children each chose a fact about bears for their page; they drew an illustration and dictated the text for their teacher to record. One page from this class book is shown in Figure 4-5. The teacher took the children's dictation rather than having them write the book themselves because she wanted it to be written in conventional spelling so everyone in the classroom could read and reread the book.

When taking dictation, it's a great temptation to change the child's language to the teacher's own, in either word choice or grammar, but editing should be kept to a

FIGURE 4-5 A Page From a Class Book



minimum so that children don't get the impression that their language is inferior or inadequate. Also, as children become familiar with dictating to the teacher, they learn to pace their dictation to the teacher's writing speed. At first, children dictate as they think of ideas, but with experience, they watch as the teacher writes and supply the text word by word. This change also provides evidence of children's developing concepts about print.



This video clip shows how a teacher uses interactive writing to involve all students in a writing activity. Think about what the students learn through this activity.

Interactive Writing

Children and the teacher create a text together during **interactive writing**, "sharing the pen" as they write the text on chart paper (Button, Johnson, & Furgerson, 1996; McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000). The children compose the message together, and then the teacher guides them as they write it word by word on chart paper. Children take turns writing known letters and familiar words, adding punctuation marks, and leaving spaces between words. All children participate in creating and writing the text on chart paper, and they also write the text on small whiteboards or on paper as it's written on the chart paper. Afterward, children read and reread the text together with classmates and on their own.

Children use interactive writing to write class news, predictions before reading, retellings of stories, thank-you letters, reports, math story problems, and many other types of group writings (Tompkins & Collom, 2004). Figure 4-6 presents a math story problem written by a first grade class using interactive writing; children took turns writing entire words. The boxes drawn around some of the letters and words represent correction tape that was used to correct misspellings or poorly formed letters. After writing this story problem, children wrote other subtraction problems individually.

Through interactive writing, children learn concepts about print, letter-sound relationships and spelling patterns, handwriting concepts, and capitalization and punctuation skills. Teachers model correct spelling and use of conventions of print, and children practice segmenting the sounds in words and spelling familiar words.

Teachers help children spell all words conventionally. They teach high-frequency words such as *the* and *of*, assist children in segmenting sounds and syllables in other words, point out unusual spelling patterns such as *pieces* and *germs*, and teach other

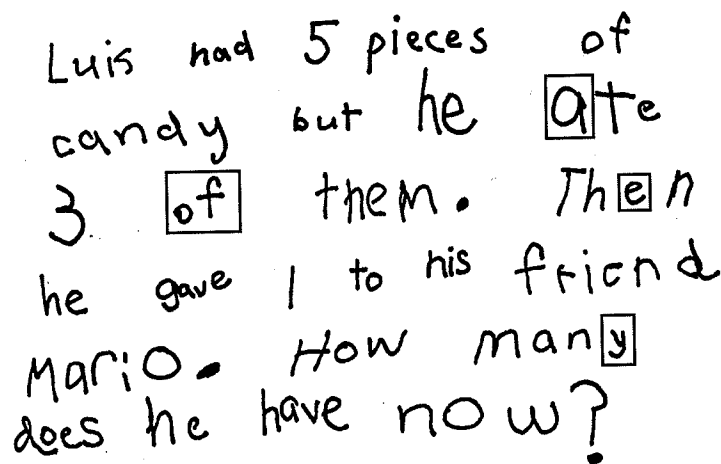
conventions of print. Whenever children misspell a word or form a letter incorrectly, teachers use correction tape to cover the mistake and help them make the correction. For example, when a child wrote the numeral 8 to spell *ate* in Figure 4-6, the teacher explained the *eight-ate* homophones, covered the numeral with correction tape, and helped the child spell the word, including the silent *e*. Teachers emphasize the importance of using conventional spelling as a courtesy to readers, not that a child made a mistake. In contrast to the emphasis on conventional spelling in interactive writing, children are encouraged to use invented spelling and other spelling strategies when writing independently. They learn to look for familiar words posted on classroom **word walls** or in books they've read, think about spelling patterns, or ask a classmate for help. Teachers also talk about purpose and explain that in personal writing and rough drafts, children do use invented spelling. Increasingly, however, children want to use conventional spelling and even ask to use the correction tape to fix errors they make as they write.

Manuscript Handwriting

Children enter kindergarten with different backgrounds of handwriting experience. Some 5-year-olds have never held a pencil, but many others have written cursivelike scribbles or manuscript letterlike lines and circles. Some have learned to print their names and even a few other letters. Handwriting instruction in kindergarten typically includes developing children's ability to hold pencils, refining their fine-motor control, and focusing on letter formation. Some people might argue that kindergartners are too young to learn handwriting skills, but young children should be encouraged to write from the first day of school. They write letters and words on labels, draw and write stories, keep journals, and write other types of messages. The more they write, the greater their need becomes for instruction in handwriting. Instruction is necessary so that children don't learn bad habits that later must be broken.

To teach children how to form letters, many kindergarten and first grade teachers create brief directions for forming letters that they sing to a familiar tune; for

FIGURE 4-6 A Math Story Problem



Luis had 5 pieces of
candy but he ate
3 of them. Then
he gave 1 to his friend
Mario. How many
does he have now?

example, to form a lowercase letter *a*, try “All around and make a tail” sung to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” As teachers sing the directions, they model the formation of the letter in the air or on the chalkboard using large arm motions. Then children sing along and practice forming the letter in the air. Later, they practice writing letters using sponge paintbrushes dipped in water at the chalkboard or pens on whiteboards as well as in authentic paper-and-pencil writing activities.

Handwriting research indicates that moving models are much more effective than still models, which suggests that worksheets on the letters aren’t very useful because children often don’t form the letters correctly. Researchers recommend that children watch teachers to see how letters are formed and then practice forming them themselves. Also, teachers supervise children as they write so that they can correct those who form letters incorrectly. It’s important that children write circles counterclockwise, starting from 1:00, and form most lines from top to bottom and left to right across the page. When children follow these guidelines, they’re less likely to tear the paper they’re writing on, and they’ll have an easier transition to cursive handwriting.

Writing Centers

Writing centers are set up in kindergarten and first grade classrooms so that children have a special place where they can go to write. The center should be located at a table with chairs, and a box of supplies, including pencils, crayons, a date stamp, different kinds of paper, journal notebooks, a stapler, blank books, notepaper, and envelopes, should be stored nearby. The alphabet, printed in upper- and lowercase letters, should be available on the table for children to refer to as they write. In addition, there should be a crate where children can file their work. When children come to the writing center, they draw and write in journals, compile books, and write messages to classmates (Tunks & Giles, 2007). Teachers assist children and provide information about letters, words, and sentences as needed, or aides, parent-volunteers, or older students can assist. Figure 4-7 presents a reading log entry; it shows a kindergartner’s response to *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (Numeroff, 2000). The child’s writing says, “I love chocolate chip cookies.”

FIGURE 4-7 A Reading Log Entry

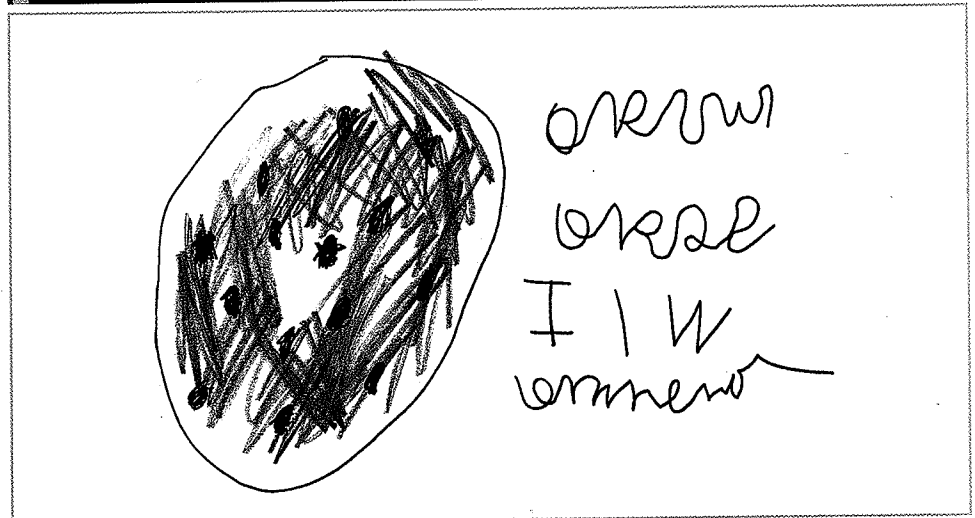
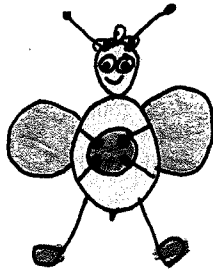
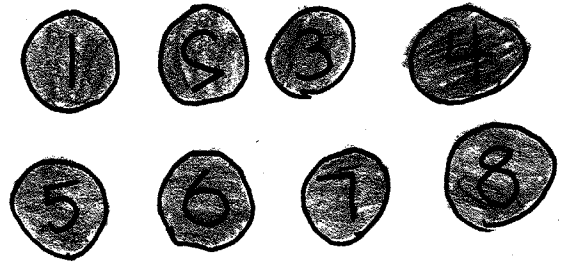


FIGURE 4-8 A First Grader's Innovation

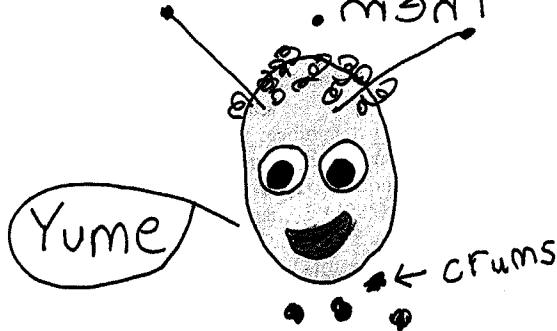
If You Give Bumble a
sixtooo



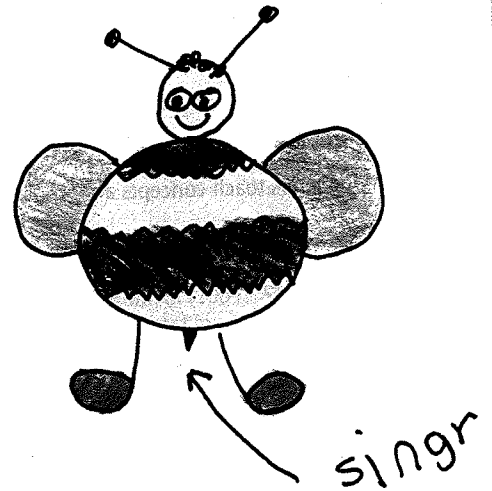
He wat 8 big
COOKIES.



Bumble at all of
ment



Now he is fat.



Young children also make books at the writing center based on the books they've read. For example, they can use the same patterns as in *Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What Do You See?* (Martin, 2007), *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (Numeroff, 2000), and *Lunch* (Fleming, 1996) to create innovations, or new versions of familiar stories. A first grader's four-page book about a bee named Bumble, written after reading *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, is shown in Figure 4-8. In these writing projects, children often use invented spelling, but they're encouraged to spell familiar words and words from the story correctly.

Children also write notes and letters to classmates at the writing center. They learn about the format of friendly letters and how to phrase the greeting and the closing. Then they apply what they're learning as they write to classmates to say hello, offer a compliment, share news, trade telephone numbers, and offer birthday wishes. As they write messages, the children practice writing their names, their classmates' names, and the words they're learning to read and spell. The classmates who receive the messages also gain practice reading them. Teachers participate, too, by regularly writing brief messages to children. Through these activities, they model how to write messages and how to read and respond to the messages they receive. To facilitate the sharing of these messages, teachers often set up a message bulletin board or individual mailboxes made from milk cartons or shoe boxes. This activity is especially valuable because children discover the social purposes of reading and writing as they write and receive notes and letters.

REVIEW



Accountability Check!

Supporting the Youngest Readers and Writers

Effective teachers understand that students move through three stages of reading and writing development—emergent, beginning, and fluent—during the primary grades, and they demonstrate their commitment to ensuring that their students are successful by organizing instruction according to children's level development, as presented in this chapter, these points in particular:

- ▶ Teachers foster young children's interest in literacy.
- ▶ Teachers teach concepts about written language.
- ▶ Teachers determine their students' stage of literacy development.
- ▶ Teachers match instructional activities to children's stage of reading and writing development.
- ▶ Teachers monitor children's literacy development to ensure that they're moving through the three stages.

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