

WHY GUIDED WRITING?

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The basic purpose of writing is to replace speech. It is writing that conveys a personal 'colouring' and feeling that makes others sense and feel and react in a way that the writer wishes them to do. Like reading, writing means two things at once. A person writing a letter is thinking out something and writing it down at the same time. Writing is a service activity, consolidating work as well as reinforcing an exercise. When pupils write, they read more, they become more involved in language. Composition is the act of writing one or more sentences appropriate to a given situation. The problems of composition are problems of selecting and ordering of words. This is the main problem of our students today. They have to think of too many things at once; they have to think of what to say and how to say it. Often they become discouraged and many will give up trying to do a good piece of work. To help the students, five stages that lead to free writing have been suggested:

Copying: By beginning with copying he would be able to do the ground work so that he would be able to write the language confidently. Some activities to take away the boredom of copying:—

- (a) The student can make his own Reading Book.
- (b) He can copy sentences and then illustrate the sentences to make a picture.
- (c) He can copy and illustrate poems and songs.
- (d) He can copy recipes.
- (e) He can copy and illustrate the directions to do things.

2. Reproduction: The student will attempt to write without originality. He will be asked to reproduce with a copy only the sentences and phrases which he has memorized as they are dictated to him.

3. Recombination: Here the child reproduces learned work with minor adaptations. He will do his writing practice in a number of ways: making substitutions of words and phrases, transforming sentences, expanding sentences to include further information within limits of learned phrases, contracting them by substituting pronouns for nouns or single words for groups of words. At this stage the child should be able to fill mid-sentence blanks with obvious key words that have already been used, and about which the context leaves no doubt. He can also fill sentence blanks with a word or phrase from a multiple-choice array or from an inner array of his own. He could also be taught to join sentences first using conjunctions and reflexive pronouns. Again, the teacher should begin with the simple and lead on to the difficult.

Guided Writing: Here the student is given some freedom in the selection of lexical items and structural patterns for his written exercise but within a framework. This framework restrains him from attempting to compose at a level beyond his state of knowledge. Here the pupil can fill unfinished sentences with his own choice of single words, phrases or clauses. The pupil can write an indefinite number of sentences in a large space left for his written response to a very open ended invitation to tell something. Guided Composition can also be in the form of picture composition, question composition, illustration of a process and simple description.

5. Free Composition: The final stage of composition involves individual selection of vocabulary and structures for the expression of personal meaning. Here teachers can begin with very simple activities and progress slowly, such as identifying sounds. In this exercise have each child listen carefully to sounds of the outdoors. Then have him write in his own words the best phrase or short description that will convey to others what each sound is like to him and the impression it makes on him. Here the teacher should strive to increase not only his awareness of sound but his power of communicating and interpreting or conveying a feeling or a mood as he describes the sound. Examples of sounds made by twigs breaking underfoot, the scurrying of small animals, a frog in a pond, the movement of leaves in the wind, the whistling of a kettle, the honking of cars, provide opportunity for this type of practice. Next children can be made to write one-sentence descriptions of simple things that they observe. Teachers could then get children to write short paragraphs describing objects. From description, children can be guided to narration. However, teachers should remember that before children can write free composition, a lot of pre-writing activities have to be done.