

# **EXPERIMENTING** **WRITING**

T.E.K.S. (K.14) The student develops the foundations of writing.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

1. The student will write his/her own name and each letter of the alphabet.

Since students at this level are learning to write every letter of the alphabet, teach students to write their given name and their nickname. Be sure that students know the difference between their given name and their nickname.

Refer to Emergent Writing E-3 for specific strategies dealing with letter formation and placement on lines of paper.

1. Provide a model of a student's name as a reference for the student by putting it so that it is easily seen by the student. Give direct instruction on letter formation and sequence as well as many opportunities for the student to practice writing his/her name, such as:
  - Labeling personal supplies;
  - Putting his/her name on worksheets;
  - Checking out books from the library;
  - Signing cards;
  - Signing in each morning;
  - Signing up for special jobs or activities;
  - Voting by writing his/her name.
2. Create special art activities that will incorporate a student's name into the project.
  - Make a print of letters in the name when it is written with paint.
  - Decorate a T-shirt.
  - Make an autograph book.
  - Decorate each letter in his/her name.
  - Decorate a book bag using fabric paint.
  - Write his/her name on cookies.
  - Decorate a placemat.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Writing materials  
Various art activities

**Adaptations:**

- Students may use a computer or portable word processor in place of writing tools.
- If students are unable to use a standard keyboard, an alternate keyboard, such as IntelliKeys (IntelliTools) may be used.
- OverlayMaker software (IntelliTools) may be used to create overlays with limited letter sets or other alternative letter arrangements for use with the IntelliKeys.

Experimenting E-1



Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines: The student develops the early elements and foundations of writing.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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2. The student will group random letters together, using spacing to indicate “words.”
1. The teacher will supply each student with manila paper that is 9 inches by 12 inches. Fold the bottom up and staple the sides to make a pocket. Have each student draw a picture about a topic that is current in the classroom. After the student has completed the picture, ask him/her to dictate one sentence about the picture. Write the sentence on the portion of the paper that has been folded up. Ask the student to locate specific words in the sentence. Supply the student with strips of paper that will fit into the pocket. Ask the student to copy the words on the pocket and write them on the strips of paper. These can be stored inside the pocket.

VARIATION: a) As students become familiar with this activity, put the pictures with a sentence describing each and the strips for copying words in the classroom’s writing center. b) Create a group pocket story by encouraging students to collaborate on a group mural and dictating a short story about it. The teacher can fold up a pocket at the bottom and have students create word cards for matching.

2. Assist students in writing customized stories which feature cloze sentences. Each story should contain blanks to fill in information such as names, interests, addresses, places, etc. Provide a word bank for students and allow them to copy words to fill in blanks.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Customized stories  
Manila paper  
Drawing tools  
Word cards

**Adaptations:**

- Provide computers and/or alternate keyboards to allow students with physical difficulties a way to write.
- OverlayMaker (IntelliTools) may be used to create overlays with word banks or limited letter sets to reduce frustration and facilitate success.

Experimenting E-2



Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines: The student develops the basic elements and foundations of writing.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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| <p>3. The student will attempt to connect the sounds in a word with its letterforms.</p> | <p>1. Using a pocket chart, flannel board, card holder, etc., give each student a limited set of letters such as h, b, f, g, s, w and a rime (word ending) such as -at. Ask the student to make a specific word using the rime (word ending) and supplying the initial sound from the bank of letters. For example, using the set and rime above, the student would be asked to make a word for something to wear on your head. The student would use the -at and add the (h) to make hat. When the student has made the word hat, he/she writes the word hat. If needed to conceptualize the meaning of the word, a picture can be supplied a place for the student to write the word beside the picture.</p> <p>2. From a current topic of study, choose several words related to the topic that are used frequently. Using a series of cloze sentences, have the student fill in the initial consonant to form the designated word as each sentence is read. For example, students may visit the local mall on Community Based Instruction.</p> |
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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

Develop sentences which include words such as (m)all, (b)us, (s)it, (g)o, (m)an, (b)aby, (s)ocks, (g)um, etc. Give each student the consonants b, m, s, g, w, p.. As each sentence is read and picture symbols are supplied, the student will fill in the letter at the beginning of each designated word.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Pocket charts  
Card holders  
Flannel board  
Letter cards  
Rime cards  
Writing tools and paper

**Adaptations:**

- OverlayMaker (IntelliTools) may be used to create a word-making overlay to allow students to build words using common rimes. See Emergent Literacy Success (Mussellwhite and King-DeBaun, 1997, pg 333).



Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines: The student experiments with composing or retelling stories.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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| <p>4. The student will begin to dictate phrases and sentences to an adult recording on paper (e.g., “letter writing,” “story writing”).</p> | <p>1. The teacher will assist students in sending greeting cards to a variety of people. Cards may be purchased or made by the students. If students are unable to dictate original messages, a variety of message choices may be provided (e.g. “I love you,” “Happy Birthday to you,” etc.).</p> <p>2. Following a cooking, art, or other hands-on activity where photographs were taken, the teacher will assist the students in arranging the photographs in sequence. Students should then dictate a sentence about each photograph while the teacher records the ideas on paper. The photographs and associated text are then written as an experience story on chart paper or in book format.</p> <p>3. Create a class bulletin board to encourage classroom participation. Label the bulletin board with a caption such “Count on Us to Make It a Great Year.” Display a photograph of each student with his/her name. After discussing with the students ways to get along with each other, ask each student to dictate one way that he/she will contribute to classroom cooperation. Put the student’s idea beside or underneath his/her photograph.</p> |
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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

4. Provide a small stuffed bear or other stuffed animal for students to take home for a specified length of time (overnight, etc.). To make it easy for the students to take the bear home, put it in a gift bag or backpack. Include a spiral notebook or pocket folder with paper. Provide instructions for the parents, asking each family to include the bear in one family activity. When it is time to return the bear to school, the student dictates a short story to a family member about the bear's visit with his/her family. The student reads his/her story to the class when the bear comes back to school. Compile them in a book so that the entire class can enjoy the bear's adventures during the year.

Additional activity: If appropriate, allow parents to include a photograph of the student and the bear enjoying the family activity together.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Photographs from classroom activity  
Chart paper  
Greeting cards  
Bulletin board  
Student photos  
Small stuffed animal

**Adaptations:**

- A multi-location voice output device may be used to program greeting card messages, experience story ideas, etc.
- Program a multi-location or sequencing voice output device with the lines from the student-generated story in Activity 4.



T.E.K.S. (1.17) The student develops the foundations of writing.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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5. The student will improve writing skills so that writing becomes more legible.

1. Send a literacy suitcase home with individual students. The literacy suitcase is a take-home version of a classroom-writing center. The literacy suitcase include a variety of sizes and types of paper, a pencil, name cards with the name of each student in the class, and a sample of letters in the alphabet.

Include a letter to parents briefly explaining how a child progresses through the stages of writing, cautioning parents not to pressure the child to write and not to correct the child's errors (but to assist, as needed). Give a date for returning the suitcase. Additional materials (such as a board or paperback book, blank books, word cards and fill-in-the-blank papers) can be added to the suitcase.

Teachers should avoid including art supplies such as glue and scissors in the literacy suitcase since these may encourage the students to focus on art activities rather than writing activities. Materials in the suitcase can be modified to fit the needs and age of the individual students. A small plastic school supply box, a lunch box, an empty craft box or an old briefcase will serve as a good container for the literacy suitcase.



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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

Since the literacy suitcase will go home with the student several times during the year, develop a variety of themes. Themes for early in the year include an “Apple Literacy Suitcase,” and “Autumn Literacy Suitcase.” As the year progresses themes such as “Mitten Literacy Suitcase,” a “Valentine Literacy Suitcase,” etc. can be developed. When students return the literacy suitcase with writing samples, choose samples to include in the student’s portfolio.

2. Provide multiple opportunities for students to write or copy various texts including their name, classmates names, other personal information, color words, shopping lists, etc. Provide models for students to copy, if necessary.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Adaptations:

Literacy suitcase

- Variety of paper
- Pencils
- Student name cards
- Alphabet sample

- A computer may be used if the student is not able to use a pencil.
- IntelliKeys (IntelliTools) may be used as alternate access to the computer.
- Adapted letter stamps may be added to the “literacy suitcase.”



T.E.K.S. (1.18) The student writes for a variety of audiences and purposes in a variety of forms.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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6. The student will attempt to construct a variety of forms of writing (e.g., lists, messages, stories, etc.).

1. Create a message board as part of the classroom environment to encourage students to write a short message to each other and to the teacher. The message board can be made using a library pocket with each student's name (and a photograph, if desired) attached to a large piece of poster board or on a bulletin board.

At a specified time each day, encourage students to check for messages. During the day, provide an opportunity and assistance, if requested by the student, for writing a brief message to another student or teacher. Use comments and/or questions to extend a student's thinking or to provide ideas. If students ask for assistance with spelling or with writing the sentence, help him/her by encouraging the student to write known words and listening to sounds in new words.

2. Read and review the book Mary Wore Her Red Dress several times to the class. For the first reading of the story write the text on chart paper so that the entire class can read the story together. Next make a booklet of the story for each child with one line of text on each page.



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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

Leave a blank space at the beginning and end of each line with content words written in the middle of the sentence (i.e., \_\_\_\_\_ wore a red \_\_\_\_\_.) With students, make a list of clothing items that could be red. Include a list of student's names. Assist students in using the lists to select names and clothing items to write into the blanks on each page. Be sure to include a page at the end of each book for students to list the person to whom they read the book. Provide opportunities for students to read their books to others, reminding them to utilize the share-and-sign page at the end of the book.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Classroom message board  
Mary Wore Her Red Dress (Peek)

Adaptations:

- Messages may be typed on the computer.
- The student-written book in Activity 2 may be made into an electronic book by using software such as PowerPoint, KidPix, BuildAbility. Students may enter text using an alternate keyboard such as IntelliKeys (IntelliTools).



T.E.K.S. (K.14) The student develops the foundations of writing.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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1. The student will write his/her own name and each letter of the alphabet.

1. Refer to Experimenting Writing E-1. The activities listed there are appropriate for students who are at middle school/junior high school levels.

2. Assign a permanent location (bulletin board, chart, etc.) for an ongoing writing activity. This area should have a specific title so that students know where to look each day for the activity. The activity should target writing individual letters or student names.

- Regularly provide a survey for the students to complete. For example the survey might ask students to sign under each type of pizza (pepperoni pizza, sausage pizza, veggie pizza, etc.) they like to order. Another survey may ask students to sign if they have brown eyes, if they are a boy or a girl, if they have a pet, if they like broccoli, etc. Each survey should change on a regular basis and, should encourage students to sign his/her name.
- For variety provide an activity that allows students to break a code to solve a mystery word. One resource for the code can be found at a teacher's supply store or in commercially produced children's activity books.

Experimenting M-1



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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

On a regular basis display a familiar word written in code. At the end of the day allow students to solve the code for a prize.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

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Writing materials  
Various art activities  
On-going writing activity

Adaptations:

- Students may use a computer or portable word processor in place of writing tools.
- If students are unable to use a standard keyboard, an alternate keyboard such as IntelliKeys (IntelliTools) may be used.
- OverlayMaker software (IntelliTools) may be used to create overlays with limited letter sets or alternate letter arrangements for use with the IntelliKeys.
- Name/letter stamps

Experimenting M-1



Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines: The student develops the early elements and foundations of writing.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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2. The student will group random letters together, using spacing to indicate “words.”

1. Provide students an opportunity to copy labels from familiar items, such as cereal, toothpaste, macaroni and cheese, etc. Encourage students to group letters together to form words.

As students’ abilities to copy single words expand, provide students the opportunity to copy lists of ingredients, grocery lists or other lists.

As skills continue to develop, encourage students to copy steps of simple recipes.

2. Fill-in-the-blank stories, such as those found in Stories About Me, can be used to allow a word to be written with letters grouped together.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Stories About Me (Richman, 1989)  
Labels from familiar items  
Writing materials  
Various lists  
Simple recipes

**Adaptations:**

- Students may use a computer or portable word processor instead of handwriting.
- An alternate keyboard such as IntelliKeys may be used in place of a standard keyboard
- Tracing paper or a light table may be used as an adaptation for copying activities.

Experimenting M-2



Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines: The student develops the basic elements and foundations of writing.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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| <p>3. The student will attempt to connect the sounds in a word with its letterforms.</p> | <p>1. Develop a word wall using current vocabulary words and student names. The word wall can be organized in a variety of formats, such as on a bulletin board, and be displayed so that all students have easy access to the word wall. As new words are introduced, students participate in placing the words on the word wall and reading the words on the word wall.</p> <p>2. Make a surprise box to be used by all students in the classroom. Use a box large enough to hold objects from the word wall. After placing an item (such as a “ball”) in the box, wrap the box in heavy brown or white paper. Allow students to take turns during the day holding or shaking the surprise box. When the student is ready to “guess” the contents of the box, the student writes the word on the box with his/her name. The student who correctly identifies the contents of the box should receive a prize. Clues may be given to assist students in identifying the contents of the box, such as “The item in the box begins with the /b/ sound”. Only items from the word wall should be included in the surprise box. Call attention to the beginning sounds of the words written on the surprise box.</p> |
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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

**Adaptations:**

Word wall  
Word cards  
Surprise box  
Objects from word wall

- Word walls may be made portable by making them on file folders, in 3-ring binders, etc. Word walls may also be created on high-end communication devices that allow dynamic display options.
- The computer and an alternate keyboard such as IntelliKeys may be used as an alternative writing tool. IntelliKeys may also be programmed to offer a limited letter set.



Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines: The student experiments with composing or retelling stories.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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4. The student will begin to dictate phrases and sentences to an adult recording on paper (e.g., “letter writing,” “story writing”).

1. As students study various units or go on Community Based Instruction, take photographs of each activity. Allow students to be responsible for taking some of the photographs. After photos are printed (digital camera) or developed (conventional camera), have students choose the best photographs and sequence those photographs. After photographs are sequenced, allow students to dictate a short sentence to describe the activity in each photograph. When all photos have been described, an adult or student can type the sentences (one per page). Add photos, laminate and bind into individual books that can be placed in the classroom library.

VARIATION: Create a PowerPoint presentation of the unit of study or the Community Based Instruction. Place photographs of the activity into PowerPoint frames and add descriptive sentences. Sequencing the activity can be easily done by moving slides into correct order.



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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

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2. In the Author's Center (located in the classroom) have students create individual books that can be shared with friends and taken home. Assign a specific topic for the book and provide colorful paper with graphics around the border to encourage student participation. Some topics for the books might include fall leaves, winter greetings, spring things, the four seasons, colors, buttons, my home, clothing for specific weather, rain, friends, school days, bugs, favorite things, my family, etc. (See Resources section for lists of unit words.) The adult in the Author's Center will write one sentence per page, allowing students to illustrate with drawings or magazine pictures. After the student has shared the book at school, he/she can take the book home. Encourage parents to provide a special place to keep student books and to listen to the student read his/her book. Include a page at the end of the book for individuals to sign after the student has read the book to them. It is helpful to send a letter to parents at the beginning of the year explaining the importance of students being successful in attempts to read what they have dictated and explaining various stages of reading development (student enjoys the story, can memorize parts or all of the story, can retell the story, can recognize words in the story, can read some or all of the words with accuracy).



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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

3. Read several books from the Hank the Cowdog series (John Erickson). After the students are familiar with the characters in each book, ask them to dictate a letter to Hank. Students work in small groups or individually with an adult. Provide a prompt for the project using one of characters from a specific book, such as Faded Love(1999):

- Write a letter to Hank the Cowdog. Tell him about a love potion that you have invented. Tell him why it is perfect for him. Other prompts can be tailored for problems facing other characters.

To prepare students for Halloween, read a simplified version of Frankenstein (Mary Shelley, 1818) to the students. After reading and discussing the book, have students write a letter to Frankenstein, working in a small group with an adult, or individually with an adult.

- Write a letter to Frankenstein. Tell him about a sale at a popular clothing store. Describe the clothes that he can buy and why they would look good on him.



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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

Extend the activity to include other simplified versions of classic books or series of books enjoyed by the students. Design a writing prompt that will allow students to be creative as they dictate letters to an adult.

- Adventures of Huck Fin (Mark Twain, 1885). Write a letter to Huck. Tell him about plans for a raft. Explain how it will look and what special features it will have.
- Black Beauty (Anna Sewell, 1877). Write a letter to Black Beauty. Tell her about a new saddle that you have invented. Ask her if she would like to order one.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

PowerPoint software  
Individual student books  
Hank the Cowdog series (John Erickson)  
Black Beauty (Anna Sewell, 1877)  
Huck Finn (Mark Twain, 1885)  
Frankenstein (Mary Shelby, 1818)

Adaptations:

- Provide opportunities for students who have physical limitations and/or who are unable to speak to make choices about which photo or picture they want to use in the above activities. Provide possible sentences or messages from which they can choose to describe a specific photo/page.
- Simplified and adapted books are available from Don Johnston, Inc. (Start-to-Finish series).



Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines: The student develops the foundations of writing.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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| <p>5. The student will improve writing skills so that writing becomes more legible.</p> | <p>1. In the Author's Center (located in the classroom) provide fancy pencils, colored pencils, paper in a variety of shapes and colors, etc. Make a name card on a section of sentence strip for the name of each student and adult in the class. Put these in the Author's Center along with the writing materials. Encourage students to practice writing their names, giving attention to formation of each letter and its placement on the page. As the year progresses, add cards, with information such as telephone numbers, school name, names of other adults in the school, items that appear on shopping lists, signs that are seen on a regular basis, etc.</p> <p>2. As students plan activities for the day and the week as they gather around the calendar, have students take turns writing the name of the day and the date on the chalkboard or a laminated strip. All students should complete an individual calendar with the day's date and other information that needs to be added to the calendar.</p> |
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Experimenting M-5



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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

3. Allow students to practice writing their whole name and any additional statements in an autograph book made by the class. Students may want to include their address and telephone number so that they can contact each other during holidays and/or summer breaks.
4. As students become proficient at writing their personal information, provide blank envelopes and a variety of stamps with colored ink pads at the Author's Center. Lines can be added to the envelope to assist students with alignment and spacing. See "Adaptation" for other writing guides that can be used as needed and as appropriate.

Allow students to periodically send a note or card to their parents or to themselves to reinforce the importance of writing their name and address legibly and to give a reason for learning how to address an envelope.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Envelopes  
Colored pens or pencils  
Laminated sentence strips  
Dry erase markers  
Heavy clear tape  
Teacher-made or class made autograph books  
List of students' whole names, addresses and phone numbers  
Class calendar  
Individual calendars

Adaptations:

- Envelope writing guide- [www.independentliving.com](http://www.independentliving.com)
- Use of the computer may be beneficial for some students.
- Alternate keyboards such as IntelliKeys (IntelliTools) may assist students who are not able to use the standard keyboard.



T.E.K.S. (1.18) The student writes for a variety of audiences and purposes in a variety of forms.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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6. The student will attempt to construct a variety of forms of writing (e.g., lists, messages, stories, etc.).
1. The teacher will provide a “grocery ad” page from a local grocery store or newspaper. Students select 5 items to include on their list. The list can be divided into various categories, such as meat items and vegetable items. Students may cut out pictures of the items on their list.
2. Incorporate a message board into the classroom to encourage students to communicate in writing with the teacher and with each other. Using a library pocket for each student, write the student’s name on the library pocket and laminate the pocket. Display pockets on a bulletin board or on a poster board. The teacher can encourage written communication by providing time in the daily schedule for reading messages and for writing in response to messages.

Students can also be encouraged to write messages to remind the teacher about something that needs to be done, something that the student would like to do, or suggesting that they write a request to another student. As students attempt to read and write requests, adults in the classroom should be available to help according to the student’s individual needs.

VARIATION: The e-mail portion of KidDesk software (Edmark) may be used to allow students to send and receive messages.



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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

VARIATION 2: Inter\_Comm is an e-mail program (Mayer Johnson) that allows a user to receive and read e-mails using symbols and photos. Inter\_Comm requires the Writing with Symbols 2000 program, (Mayer Johnson).

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Grocery advertisement page from newspaper  
Classroom message board  
KidDesk software (Edmark)  
Inter\_Comm software (Mayer-Johnson)

Adaptations:

- Pictures and text from the grocery store advertisements may be cut out and placed on a communication board display, an eye-gaze display, or a dial scan display. The Dial Scan (Crestwood, Co., and Enabling Devices) is a low-tech communication device that has a flat face for attaching picture symbols. The dial scan operates by using a switch to move a pointer clockwise. The switch is released to stop the pointer on the desired picture.



T.E.K.S. (K.14) The student develops the foundations of writing.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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1. The student will write his/her own name and each letter of the alphabet.

NOTE: There is an underlying assumption in this section that a model is given for students to copy. By providing a model students practice correct letter formation rather than learn to form letters incorrectly.

1. Refer to activities in Experimenting Writing E-1 and M-1. These can be adapted for students who are in high school.
2. Take advantage of every opportunity that allows students to write/copy their name and other words. Activities that naturally occur might include signing yearbooks, signing checks, writing personal information, addressing envelopes, writing the date, etc.
3. To provide many opportunities for students to practice the formation of upper and lowercase letters, make a variety of alphabet books for the classroom, taking care to keep the topics appropriate for high school students. When creating an alphabet book, choose a topic for the class to brainstorm together. An example of a good brainstorming topic is the grocery store. Have students generate items seen in a grocery store, choosing one item for each letter of the alphabet.

Experimenting H-1



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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

For example, students would see apples for A, bananas for B, cake for C, etc. As a group students can compile the book by writing the letter and the object. Illustrations from a magazine or a photograph taken at the grocery store can be added to each page. By utilizing many topics and a variety of locations, students will have many opportunities to write the alphabet and to practice letter formation.

4. Create a class crossword puzzle on the bulletin board using student names to fill in the spaces. At intervals during the year display the crossword puzzle and give clues that can be answered with only one name. When the student described in the clue is identified by the group, ask him/her to fill in the spaces in the crossword puzzle with his/her name.
5. Create individual books for students to practice their signature. Make one page per student, giving a clue on each page. For example, the clue on one page might be, "If you like chocolate, write your name."



Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

Create this type of book for students to practice their signatures as different topics, activities or holidays provide a focus of study or interest.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Various writing tools/materials  
Age-appropriate alphabet books  
Class crossword puzzles  
Individual signature books

Adaptations:

- IntelliKeys, OverlayMaker, and IntelliTalk (IntelliTools) may be used to make overlays with limited letter sets, adapted layouts, etc. for writing purposes.
- A computer may be used as an alternative to pencil/paper.
- Alphabet books may be created as electronic books using authoring software such as IntelliPics (IntelliTools), BuildAbility (Don Johnston), PowerPoint (Microsoft), and Clicker 4(Crick).

Experimenting H-1



Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines: The student develops the early elements and foundations of writing.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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2. The student will group random letters together, using spacing to indicate “words.”

1. Assist students in making a collage featuring students in the class. The collage can be made on poster board, on a bulletin board, etc. Place student pictures randomly on the chosen background. Allow students to write or cut out, (from a magazine), descriptive words for each student’s picture. For example, a girl who has a particularly cheery disposition might have a caption such as “HEY, SUNSHINE” or “HAPPY GO LUCKY.” Any personality trait or positive physical feature can be chosen as a topic for the collage.

VARIATION: a) Design a spirit banner featuring athletes. b) Design posters featuring student election candidates. c) Design a poster that features teacher baby pictures and a caption for each. d) Assist with captions for the school yearbook or newspaper.

Encourage students to practice grouping letters to form words whenever the opportunity arises. Some activities that will allow students to copy information, grouping letters together include: Names for place cards, names used on greeting cards, or addresses for envelopes, individual shopping lists, party menus or lunch menus for guests.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Student made collage  
Poster board, paper for banners  
Student photos  
Writing tools/materials

**Adaptations:**

- Use switch adapted, battery-operated scissors (AbleNet) which are to allow students who cannot use scissors a way to cut out words from magazines.
- Use computer and alternate keyboard for “writing” words.

Experimenting H-2



Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines: The student develops the basic elements and foundations of writing.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

3. The student will attempt to connect the sounds in a word with its letterforms.

1. Using the newsletter News-2-You, have students answer a series of questions about the topic for the week. Using vocabulary from the article, create a word wall or word bank for students to generate answers to each question.
2. Encourage students to write for a variety of purposes in order to attempt to connect sounds with letter forms. Examples of activities might include writing lists, taking messages, writing greetings, writing student's names for voting/attendance, writing to indicate choices when voting, etc.
3. Provide students with a bank of words to use as they fill in blanks in sentences about a current experience, recipe or holiday. Read the sentence to the students. Encourage the students to say the answer to themselves and to choose the correct word in the word bank to fill in the blank.

VARIATION: Using a book similar to Stories About Me, choose a topic appropriate to an occasion. Provide a word bank for the students. Have students fill in each blank on the worksheet, utilizing the word bank as often as needed.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

News-2-You newspaper (Clark, 1996)  
Writing tools/materials  
Writing activities with cloze sentences  
Stories About Me (Richman, 1989)  
Word banks

**Adaptations:**

- A computer and adapted keyboard maybe used instead of paper/pencil.
- OverlayMaker and IntelliKeys (IntelliTools) may be used to make a writing overlay with a limited set of letters in order to offer a smaller number of letter choices.
- If students are not able to identify all the sounds in a word, ask them to indicate only the beginning or ending sound

Experimenting H-3



Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines: The student experiments with composing or retelling stories.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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| <p>4. The student will begin to dictate phrases and sentences to an adult recording on paper (e.g., “letter writing,” “story writing”).</p> | <p>1. Create a multi-page greeting card to be given to students on their birthday. Make a page for each student to illustrate and dictate a birthday wish or greeting for the teacher to write. Allow students to sign the page they have created. Bind pages together. Make similar cards for other special occasions.</p> <p>2. In a study of different job roles, visit either a pet store, a kennel or a veterinarian’s office. Interview the employer or the veterinarian about the job responsibilities of an assistant who provides pet care. Develop questions and assign them to students. Assist students in taking notes about the visit and taking photographs of the visit. After returning to school develop a book about the responsibilities of being employed where pets receive care. Add this to the classroom library.</p> <p>3. Encourage each student to apply for an e-mail pen-pal in another classroom or in another school. Assist students in reading e-mail messages from the pen-pal. When students reply to the pen-pal, allow the student to dictate the reply and then type it into the e-mail reply.</p> |
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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

For a low-tech version of the student penpal, refer to the message board at Experimenting Writing M-6.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Birthday greeting book  
Pet care book  
Classroom message board  
E-mail program

Adaptations:

- Program a choice of birthday greetings into a multi-location voice output device.
- Use stamps for making illustrations.
- Use drawing software for making illustrations.
- Provide possible e-mail messages or greetings in picture-symbol form or programmed into a multi-location voice output device so that students can make choices about messages they wish to communicate.



T.E.K.S. (1.17) The student develops the foundations of writing.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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5. The student will improve writing skills so that writing becomes more legible.

1. Set aside time each day for students to practice writing for the purpose of improving legibility. This time can be scheduled during center time with a small group of students working with classroom assistant. Provide each student a folder with paper entitled "A Daily Handwriting Book." As part of the assignment everyday, have students write:

- Today is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Tomorrow will be \_\_\_\_\_.
- Yesterday was \_\_\_\_\_.
- The month is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The holiday this month is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The season is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The weather outside is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The students who are present today include \_\_\_\_\_.
- The students who are absent today include \_\_\_\_\_.

Other topics can be added as special activities are planned. To encourage students to concentrate on improving handwriting, regularly have them choose a sample of their best handwriting to put in their Student Portfolio of Progress.

2. Refer to Experimenting Writing M-5 for additional ideas.
3. To provide practice with handwriting to improve legibility, put a transparency with an enlarged blank personal check on it and a transparency marker in the student's handwriting folder. Include a sample of correct letter formation along with instructions for the student to

Experimenting H-5



Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

complete the check by writing the date, the name of the store, the amount of the purchase (both with numerals and number words), and a signature. When the student has completed the check on the transparency, provide several copies of personal checks for the student to complete.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

Daily handwriting books  
Writing tools  
Transparency of blank personal check  
Paper copies of blank personal checks  
Transparency markers

Adaptations:

- Raised line paper may provide students tactual and visual cues for appropriate height and spacing when writing.
- If students are unable to write, provide paper/pencil alternatives such as a portable word processor, computer, alternate keyboard, etc.

Experimenting H-5



T.E.K.S. (1.18) The student writes for a variety of audiences and purposes and in a variety of forms.

Area: Experimenting Writing

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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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6. The student will attempt to construct a variety of forms of writing (e.g., lists, messages, stories, etc.).

1. Encourage students to use e-mail independently by using an e-mail program designed for people with limited literacy skills. Inter\_Comm. and Writing With Symbols (Mayer Johnson) are software programs that work together to allow the user to address, write, send, receive, and read e-mails, using symbols and photos.

Other software programs which are designed for people with limited literacy skills include: I Can E-mail ([www.rjcooper.com](http://www.rjcooper.com)) Web Trek Connect ([www.ablelinktech.com](http://www.ablelinktech.com))

2. As a class, make posters advertising class fundraisers, school events, special projects, etc.
3. To encourage students to recognize the abilities and positive qualities of others, brainstorm descriptive words. As words are identified, form a word bank. Words such as funny, careful, graceful, kind, are a few words that may appear in the word bank. Make cards with each student's name and seasonal or other appropriate graphics to decorate them. Each week have students choose a card and complete the statement using a word from the word bank.

Experimenting H-6



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**OBJECTIVE**

**TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

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(Continued)

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I think <u>Chuck</u> is <u>funny</u> because...
By: _____
Date: _____

After students have completed the basic form on the card, allow him/her to dictate to an adult in the classroom why the student who was chosen exhibits the specific quality. Cards can be displayed in the classroom or bound to make a personal book of compliments.

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**RESOURCES/MATERIALS**

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Adapted e-mail programs  
Poster board  
Paint, markers  
Chart paper  
Note cards

Adaptations:

- Use alternate access devices such as adapted keyboards and mouse if students are unable to use a standard computer.
- Paint/drawing software may be use to allow students to make illustrations for posters.
- OverlayMaker, IntelliTalk, and IntelliKeys (IntelliTools) may be used as a way for students to write descriptive words in Activity #3.

