A Teacher's Guide to

Interactive Writing

Grades PreK–2

MATT HALPERN

HEINEMANN ❋ **PORTSMOUTH, NH**

Heinemann
145 Maplewood Avenue, Suite 300
Portsmouth, NH 03801
www.heinemann.com

Offices and agents throughout the world

© 2023 by Matt Halpern

*Heinemann's authors have devoted their entire careers to developing the unique content in their works,
and their written expression is protected by copyright law. We respectfully ask that you do not adapt,
reuse, or copy anything on third-party (whether for-profit or not-for-profit) lesson-sharing websites.*

—Heinemann Publishers

"Dedicated to Teachers" is a trademark of Greenwood Publishing Group, LLC.

Book Map

Sample Pages

Video Contents

Sample pages

Section Three

To access the videos for *A Teacher's Guide to Interactive Writing*:

1. **Go to http://hein.pub/Interactive-login.**

2. **Log in with your username and password. If you do not already have an account with Heinemann, you will need to create an account.**

3. **On the Welcome page, choose "Click here to register an Online Resource."**

4. **Register your product by entering the code ###### (be sure to read and check the acknowledgment box under the keycode).**

5. **Once you have registered your product, it will appear alphabetically in your account list of My Online Resources.**

Note: When returning to Heinemann.com to access your previously registered products, simply log in to your Heinemann account and click on "View my registered Online Resources."

> **TIP!**
>
> *Whole-group interactive writing usually takes place on the carpet in the regular meeting area. Every child should be able to see the piece being composed, and there should be room for students to stand near the easel to write. Try to position yourself next to the easel. If possible, either kneel on the floor or sit in a chair. Body language is powerful. Whenever possible, remaining on approximately the same level as your students sends a message.*

Principles of Interactive Writing

As teaching tools go, interactive writing is fairly simple and straightforward, but the more you understand about the principles behind the practice, the more effectively you can use the tool to support your students. Let's think now about some key principles. Interactive writing:

- ✺ is a *community experience*
- ✺ gives writers a safe place to explore *risk-taking*
- ✺ provides children *scaffolding* in the writing process
- ✺ is *differentiated*
- ✺ is *flexible* and *responsive*
- ✺ *happens often*.

Interactive Writing Is a Community Experience

When students walk into my classroom on the first day of school, it is a sparse place. Not much is up on the walls in the way of decorations or displays. There aren't giant colorful exhibitions of welcome that took me weeks to create. And contrary to what you might think, the children don't seem to mind. *We are starting kindergarten! We are simply excited to be at school!*

The mostly empty classroom sends an important message: "This space is ours and it is ready for us to make it our own—not only with our bodies and minds, but with our important work. I've been waiting . . . and you are finally here! Now the exciting work of building our community begins!"

Over the next few weeks, the walls begin to fill with the artifacts of our learning, and many of them we create during interactive writing. Children learn quickly through the routines of interactive writing that it is a community process, a time when we all work *together* to create and then use text. And in addition to the rich teaching of content taking place during interactive writing, children come to understand the power of working together toward a common goal and how our voices together are stronger than alone.

A Teacher's Guide to Interactive Writing

Now you may be wondering—if only one child is working at the easel with the teacher at a time, how is this a *community* activity? What are the rest of the students doing? Good questions! You may have noticed in the opening scene that I continually and explicitly invite the other children to help the student and me as we're writing. My main goal is to have their *thinking* engaged as we work together, but I also often invite them to *physically* engage by doing things such as:

There is a difference between decoration and display. For generations, teachers have "decorated" classrooms, using seasonal materials and other colorful items to make the space look pleasant and inviting. But we have learned that it is more important to fill the walls with work that is created by the children themselves.
(McCarrier, Fountas, and Pinnell 2000)

Writing in the Air

Writing on the Floor with a Finger

Writing in Their Hand

Writing on the Back of the Child in Front of Them

Writing on a Whiteboard with a Marker

Writing on Paper on a Clipboard with a Pencil

A Teacher's Guide to Interactive Writing

In addition to anchor charts, you can use interactive writing to document all kinds of things. The list below is certainly not exhaustive—the sky's the limit!

Shared Experiences	Shared Needs
Field trips	Class rules
Assemblies	Daily schedule
Guest speakers	Calendar items
Content-specific inquiry	Expectations for work times
Bulletin boards	Word walls
Nature walks or city walks	Color words, number words, etc.
Unique happenings (a bird's nest found on the playground, a spider that won't leave the classroom, etc.)	Procedures for almost anything (arriving at school, using the bathroom, etc.)
	Helpful labels

VIDEO 1.4: *What Are the Rest of the Kids Doing? Engaging Kids Physically*

[C]hildren are moving from an idea in the mind to its expression as words on paper. But this is not one act; it is many acts. A beginning writer may not be able to focus on all of these at once. As the child's focus and effort shift, so can the adult's response, repeating the child's words—holding on to them so she doesn't forget them as she goes through the physical act of writing—nudging toward the forging of letter/sound connections, appreciating the child's product, and so on.

(Lindfors 2008)

Interactive Writing Gives Writers a Safe Space to Explore Risk-Taking

The relationships we build with children starting on those warm end-of-summer days help foster a community where they feel ready to do new and hard things. When our students know they are cared for and safe, they are more willing to trust us with challenges presented, and make no mistake about it, writing can feel like quite a challenge to a beginner.

Consider, for example, everything a beginning writer must do to write a simple sentence like the one below.
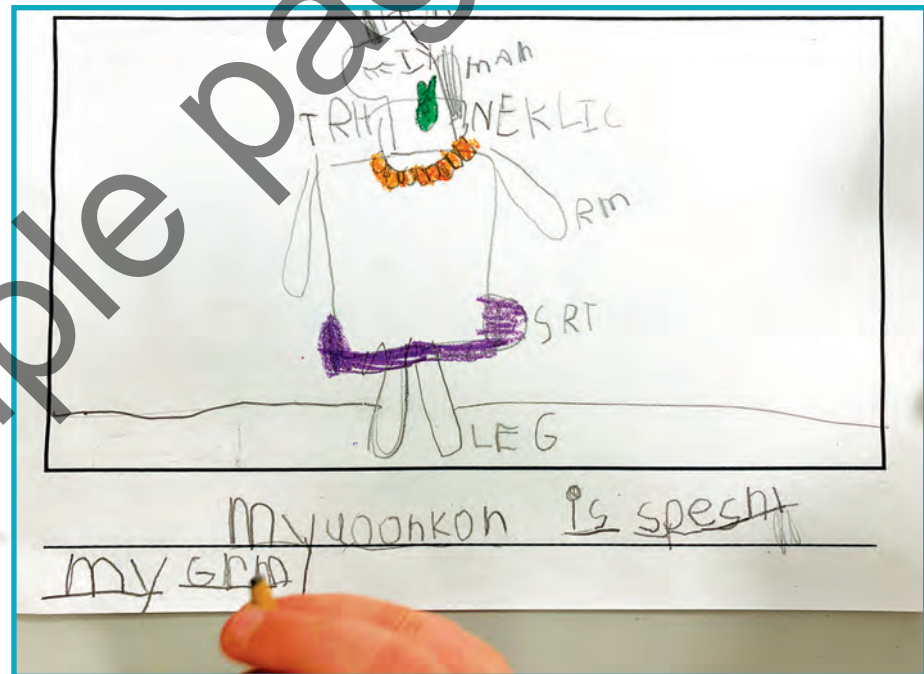
Instead of focusing on what the child doesn't yet know when you look at this sentence, think instead about what it would take to write this sentence independently. A writer would have to:

* have the idea in the flow of whatever they are writing
* think of the words for the idea—say them
* say them again to solidify, make sure they stay the same
* isolate the first word—requires one-to-one match
* say the word slowly
* isolate the first sound they hear
* identify which letter goes with the sound
* think about what that letter looks like and form it
* say the word slowly again
* if they hear another sound, identify which letter goes with it
* think about what that letter looks like and form it
* say the word again slowly . . . repeat until they think they have all the sounds
* say the sentence they wanted to write again
* isolate the next word
* remember to make a space
* say the word slowly
* isolate the first sound they hear
* identify which letter goes with that sound
* think about what that letter looks like and form it
* continue this process to capture every letter for every word—without forgetting what they were trying to write in the first place!

(See Matt Glover's video on YouTube about supporting spelling at home [Glover 2020].)

VIDEO 1.5: *Creating a Safety Net*

EXAMPLES OF SELF-TALK FOR BEGINNING WRITERS

✳ *This is tricky, but I can do it!*

✳ *I'm not sure how to spell this word. Let me say it again slowly and write the sounds I hear.*

✳ *What tools can I use to help me?*

✳ *I made a mistake. Mistakes help me learn! I'll fix it and move on.*

What a challenge! We ask children to take a lot of *new* information—letter names, sounds, writing pathways, conventions of writing—and orchestrate it all into a piece of text. For many, simply getting started putting pencil to paper is tricky. They worry about making it "right"—did I spell this correctly? Does this say *I love you Mom*? Left unchecked, the worries can overtake the writing. Part of our job as teachers is to help children understand that writing is a process—a messy one—that *all* writers partake in. The first step is getting started.

Interactive writing allows us to introduce children to the process of writing and all its intricacies in a safe, structured, manner. We effectively create a safety net for students to participate in the writing process. We guide them, sometimes literally by taking their hand, through the beginning steps of taking pen to paper and creating text. The goal is for the scaffolds we offer in this daily routine to transfer to children's independent writing, where the risks may feel even greater.

The Risk	How Interactive Writing Helps
What to write?	Through talking and planning, we decide on words and sentence structure. We plan how the words will look and fit on the page. We think through ways to come up with ideas.
What letters/sounds make up those words?	We work on being brave spellers together, saying words over and over slowly, stretching out words and sounds. We analyze letters, sounds, blends, digraphs, and all the skills we learn in phonics and how we can use them to make our words come alive on paper.
How do I form those letters?	We practice letter pathways together. We use hand-over-hand, tracing, and looking at direct models.
Spaces, punctuation, and capitalization, oh my! (All the conventions of writing)	We come up with many ways to leave spaces. We talk about all the different types of punctuation and how we decide to use them. We think out loud about when we need (and don't need) capital letters. We do all this together because we know it will make our writing easier to read.
What if I make a mistake?	We make mistakes. Lots of mistakes. We learn how to quickly cross off a mistake, fix it the best we can, and move on. We practice self-talk so mistakes don't cause our writing to stop.

How Interactive Writing Supports Risk-Taking

THREE WAYS TO UTILIZE INTERACTIVE WRITING

WHOLE GROUP

As we gather on the carpet, much like we do for a story or traditional lesson, the class is excited to help create an anchor chart or display. While only one child will come up at a time, we work together to help with all we know about letters, sounds, and words. When we collaborate, we are smarter, and our work shows it. What each child does when they come up looks different, as I tailor the experience to each child's skills and needs.

SMALL GROUP

Interactive writing is also a powerful tool to use with a small group of writers. While the whole group session will vary greatly depending on which writers are called up, in a small group the skills and strategies can be more focused and targeted toward the needs of the group. With fewer children to manage, we move quickly, allowing children to do more of the writing.

ONE-ON-ONE

With only one child, I can offer scaffolding and instruction right where it's needed most. Often with reluctant writers, this is a quick way to build confidence and get them writing. Many times, I will begin working with a child using interactive writing and, once the ball is rolling, leave them to work independently. "Look at all the writing we did together! Now you try it on your own! You can do it!"

VIDEO 1.6: *Interactive Writing in Small Groups*

Interactive Writing Provides Children with Scaffolding for the Writing Process

We've already thought about how challenging writing is for beginners, but as adults who've been writing for a long time, it can be easy to forget what this process is like. Sitting at my computer, my fingers must know which keys to hit to string letters together to form words, and when I write on paper, my hand "remembers" how to hold the pen and the pathways to form each letter. So many of the complexities involved in the transcription process of writing (getting the words down) become second nature to us the more we do it. Like riding a bike, once we know how to do it, we can simply hop on and our body seemingly takes over.

For our youngest writers, the challenge of transcription can feel insurmountable. In interactive writing, we provide instructional scaffolds (Vygotsky 1978) as we walk children through these tricky tasks, little by little showing them how to orchestrate all the skills into a piece of writing—something they'll then go do on their own, as best they can, from the very first days of school. And just like the scaffolding erected around buildings during construction, the support of interactive writing is meant to be temporary—a tool to help with the job. We don't want or intend to leave it up forever.

Interactive writing is chock full of scaffolds to help make the difficult task of writing more accessible for children. For example, just consider all the different scaffolds I might use to help children make a chart about their experience carving a pumpkin.

TIP!

Promote transfer and independence by being transparent with children about the scaffolds you use. For example, you might say something like, "These lines help us as we're learning to remember the words in our sentences and to leave spaces, but we won't always use them. They're like the training wheels on your bike—eventually, you want to stop using them."

[I]t involves a kind of "scaffolding" process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts.

(Wood, Brunner, and Ross 1976)

SCAFFOLDING THE WRITING PROCESS

Skill/Idea

What words will convey the ideas?

Scaffold
- ✳ Student conversation with teacher guidance to support particular skills
- ✳ Partner conversations

What it Might Sound Like

"What was the first thing we did before carving? Turn and talk to your partner. The first thing we did was . . ."

Skill/Idea

Print carries meaning, goes from left to right, and then return sweeps.

Scaffold

Together we think of an idea, choose the words, and record those words on paper.

What it Might Sound Like

"Watch me write 'How to Carve a Pumpkin' across the top of our paper. When I get to the end of the line, I move my marker down and start at the beginning of the next line."

Skill/Idea

Knowing certain words can help us read and write many others.

Scaffold
- ✳ Teacher voices over word-family power. ("If I know 'in', I can write 'fin'.")
- ✳ Teacher models how to use the word wall.

What it Might Sound Like

"Yes, the word 'in' is on our word wall. How do you spell 'in'?"
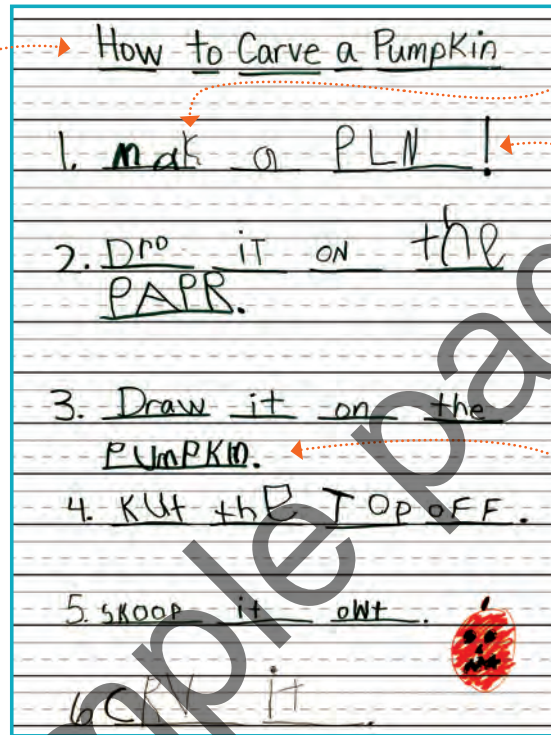
Skill/Idea

Which letter/sound do we record?

Scaffold
- ✳ Name a letter and its associated sound(s).
- ✳ Model how to use the alphabet chart as a tool.

What it Might Sound Like

"The word 'make' has three sounds: /m/ /a/ /k/. Let's start with /m/. What do you hear? Yes, the letter M makes the /m/ sound—write it!"

Skill/Idea

What punctuation is needed at the end of a sentence?

Scaffold
- ✳ Teach punctuation marks explicitly.
- ✳ Record the punctuation when pre-planning a sentence with lines for words.

What it Might Sound Like

"'Plan' is the last word in the sentence, and we're really excited about making a plan. Let's put an exclamation point here so the reader knows."

How to Carve a Pumpkin

1. mak a PLN!

2. Dro it on the PAPR.

3. Draw it on the PUmPKID.

4. KUt thE TOp oFF.

5. SKOOP it oWt.

6. CRv it

Sample pages

Skill/Idea
Words need spaces between them.

Scaffold
✷ **Make lines for words with spaces between them.**
✷ **Use fingers to create a space between words.**

What it Might Sound Like
"Let's put a finger up each time we say a word. Yes, five words, so I'll draw five lines with a space in between each one."

Skill/Idea
How do we write/form letters?

Scaffold
✷ **Models and voice-letter pathways**
✷ **Hand-over-hand**
✷ **Trace with yellow marker/highlighter**

What it Might Sound Like
"M starts with a big line down, then another big line down, up, and finally one last big line down."

Skill/Idea
What is the difference between letters and words?

Scaffold
Discuss letters/sounds and show how they come together to create words.

What it Might Sound Like
"'Cut' is the first word. Let's say it slowly. There are three sounds—/c/ /u/ /t/—and three letters in the word 'cut.' What's first?"

Skill/Idea
Knowing the letters/sounds in a word

Scaffold
Say the word slowly, repeating until all sounds heard are recorded.

What it Might Sound Like
"'Paper'—what do you hear at the beginning? Yes, /p/. Write it! Now say the word again, slowly, with me—paaaper. What's next?"

Skill/Idea
Letters can work together in different ways.

Scaffold
Explicit instruction about digraphs/blends, voicing over and modeling how to use them

What it Might Sound Like
"'Scoop'—what do you hear at the beginning? Yes, S, and a /c/ sound right after. Those two sounds together sound like /sk/. What will you write?"

VIDEO 1.7: *Differentiation in Interactive Writing*

Scaffolds depend on understanding a child's Zone of Proximal Development, "It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers."

(Vygotsky 1978)

Interactive Writing Is Differentiated

While we may decide to focus on a particular skill during an interactive writing session, there is a wide range of skills and strategies we can cover to meet the needs of diverse learners in a single setting. Students with IEPs or emergent bilinguals—all children can feel successful when we help them access writing at their instructional levels.

Interactive writing provides multiple levels of scaffolding and asks students to take agency for what level they need right now. Generally speaking, with our youngest writers in pre-K, we'll provide the highest levels of scaffolding and then slowly taper it as our students learn and grow. We ask children to think about the question "What do I need right now to help me do this?" and then we offer them that support. When this question becomes a habit of mind, it helps children take responsibility for their learning and transfer the content to independent writing.

On page 23, you'll see two skills—spaces between words and what letter do I write. We might be working on them as a whole class, but the teaching can be differentiated for each student who is asked to come up and share the pen.

Interactive writing allows us to tailor our instruction to the individual child we call up to share the pen while the rest of the class listens, observes, and participates from the rug as we voice over other options or offer thinking at various levels. If we teach children to respect different learning styles and speeds, they almost always will honor their classmates. We also keep them engaged by empowering them to be teachers and helpers to their classmates.

SKILL ◀┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈┈ DIFFERENTIATED SCAFFOLDS: SCAFFOLDING FROM HIGH TO LOW ┈┈┈┈┈▶

SPACES BETWEEN WORDS

Teacher draws lines for words.

Student draws lines for words.

Student uses finger after each word to create space.

Student slides or jumps hand after each word.

WHAT LETTER DO I WRITE?

Teacher makes the sound and helps child identify corresponding letter on alphabet chart.

Teacher makes sound, child replicates sound, and they work together to identify corresponding letter on alphabet chart.

Child makes sound and works with teacher or classmates to identify corresponding letter on alphabet chart.

Child makes sound and identifies letter independently.

TIP!

TIPS FOR PRE-K :
THE REASONS TO START INTERACTIVE WRITING IN PRESCHOOL ABOUND

✳ It allows your students to see themselves as writers.

✳ It invites them into the writing process.

✳ It is engaging and FUN.

✳ It is a community experience.

1

Teacher led—Many teachers feel that students need to be doing all of the writing when we invite them up. NOT SO! Interactive writing means we write **together.** For most preschool interactive writing, the children will only be writing a single letter. I'd start with inviting no more than three to four children up per session. You will be writing most of the text.

4

What are the other children doing?—When you invite individual students up, you need the other children to be engaged. First, start by setting expectations. Let them know, "We all have to help Lily write this sound—let's make sure we help her!" This reinforces the community aspect of interactive writing. I always give the class a 'job' to do. With preschool aged children, it's typically writing the letter in the air with their finger. This promotes gross motor movement and also allows you to informally assess their grasp of writing the letter. You can also provide whiteboards and markers or paper and pencils on clipboards and ask them to write the letters.

2

Keep it short—When starting, keep it short. Like really short. Maybe a single sentence. And keep that sentence short! No more than four or five words to start. This way, you can count the words with children—put a finger up for each word. As you do this work, you're talking about concepts about print—words vs. letters—oh, and you're counting together too! Once your students are used to the routine and have some practice, you can write slightly longer sentences. Next, you'll move to two sentences. Build up slowly—this isn't a race! You can also invite children to help you create charts and labels for the classroom.

3

Hand-over-hand—If your students aren't writing any letters independently yet, invite them up anyway! With the child's consent, offering hand-over-hand, you can guide them, and they'll feel supported and confident. I typically start with the first letter in a child's name. Once they can write this, move on to other letters in their name. If we're writing the sentence "I like peanut butter," I will invite Lily, Paul, and Brian to write the L, P, and B. If there are no students whose names start with those letters, I'll look for other letters in their names.

5

Celebrate!—I always say my number one job as a writing teacher is being a cheerleader. Celebrate every effort. Celebrate every piece. Once you've worked together to write 'I like peanut butter,' let the children draw and color the paper during snack or choice time. Put it up. Make it a bulletin board. Snap a photo on your phone and share it with families.

Interactive Writing Is Flexible and Responsive

One of the aspects of interactive writing I love most (and what can make it so tricky) is how unpredictable it can be. Let's face it: working with small children, you never know what might happen. You can plan for days and days, but once that plan is in motion, you get what you get.

For this reason, I like to approach interactive writing with a "here's what I hope happens" mentality. By definition, a plan is a proposal for doing something and that's exactly my intent—an invitation to my class and the universe for things to go a certain way.

Figuring out "what the child is trying to do" at a given moment is not easy. Often, we get it wrong. But our chances of getting it right are never better than in one-on-one collaborative writing events. This child, this moment, this literate act: this supportive partnership.

(Lindfors 2008)

LANGUAGE THAT SUPPORTS A RANGE OF LEARNING STYLES AND SPEEDS

Evan, I know you know how to spell "because" so keep that in your brain and let Tim do his best thinking work—but pay attention because we may need your help!

Everyone say "walk." Now say it again slowly. Think, "What sounds do I hear?" Now keep those letters in your brain as Lucy writes the word with me. She may ask someone for help!

Hmm, /ing/—does anyone know how to spell /ing/? I feel like there are some friends who might know this.

Ultimately, regardless of how much thinking I do about an interactive writing session, what actually happens often surprises me. Sometimes it's a wonderful surprise, and sometimes not, but either way I have to be flexible and responsive in the teaching moment.

Here's an example. Writing came easily to Naomi. By January, she knew all her letter sounds and was writing long, complicated words using developmental spelling, but she wasn't leaving spaces between her words.

When I invited Naomi up to work on the chart, I did plan to teach into leaving spaces, but I wanted to be flexible and responsive to Naomi's intentions at the same time.

I'm voicing over the idea of making a plan. This is something we're all working on and so we need to be thinking about spaces before we even begin writing.

▶ **Me:** Naomi, let's make a plan for leaving spaces. Should we draw lines, or do you want to use your finger to leave room?

Naomi: Neither. I actually have a new way to leave spaces.

I'm being dramatic here for effect, but I am genuinely intrigued and curious.

▶ **Me:** What? A new way? What is it? Tell us!

▶ **Naomi:** After I write a word, I just slide my hand over.

This is the goal of all our spacing work—simply sliding your hand over after each word—something experienced writers don't even think about. Naomi has named it.

▶ **Me:** Ok, let's watch Naomi write "we" and then see how her hand slides over.

▶ **Me:** Wait, did you see it? Thumbs up if you saw it. Now, did you hear it? I actually heard Naomi's hand slide across the paper as she left space! Did you? Thumbs up if you could hear it. Naomi is going to write the next word. Now let's watch and listen for "the slide."

She writes we as the class watches intently, and in the silence as they stare, we can actually hear her hand slide across the paper.

Naomi surprised me. She had been drawing lines for her words until right before she explained her new strategy in front of the whole class, so I wasn't expecting this development. In the midst of my teaching, I had to listen, be responsive, and pivot when Naomi told me she had a new idea. In the next chapter, I'll share some essential teaching moves you can use to help you respond to common scenarios you'll likely encounter during interactive writing.
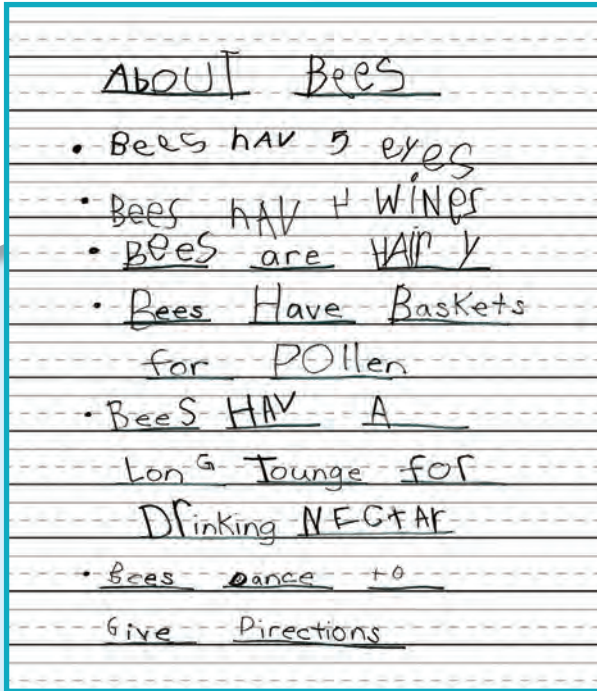
I name her move 'the slide' and it becomes part of our repertoire of strategies for leaving a space. Children are intrigued and excited about a new strategy and many try it both when they come up for interactive writing and during independent writing.

A Teacher's Guide to Interactive Writing

Armadillos

Body

- As Big As A Cat
- SmaLL Hep
- LoNG snout
- Carapace - thick outer skin

Food/Prey

- Omnivor mostly eat
- beetLes
- ants, termites, spiders, berries, roots

Habitat

- THex DiG BVRRows.
- Can Live in Logs
- gPASS and nDs AnD foRests

Predators

- JaGuars
- snakes
- coyotes
- BeARs

Facts

- nocturnaL
- hold their breath for 6 minutes
- sixty insects at once
- the BABes ARe cold PVPs
- 21 types
- z roll into a ball

Most writers go through a developmental stage where they are learning to space, and it's something I often teach into during interactive writing—drawing lines for words to emphasize spacing and/or using our fingers to leave a space after each word. This chart about armadillos shows a variety of ways writers, including Naomi, planned for spacing.

ABOUT Bees

- Bees hAv 5 eyes
- Bees HAV 4 WiNes
- Bees are HAiry
- Bees Have Baskets for POllen
- Bees HAV A LonG Tounge foR Drinking NECtAr
- Bees Dance to Give Directions

After spotting several bees on the playground (and having various reactions to them), we decided to go to the library and check out some nonfiction books about bees. As we studied them, we took notes to document and share our learning.

Interactive Writing *Happens Often*

Like anything we want children to internalize, we have to provide thoughtful and frequent practice. At the beginning of the school year, it helps to look at your schedule and think about small chunks of time when you can gather children for interactive writing. Sometimes before specials such as Art, Music, or Library, or when you return from recess, or when you've got a few minutes before packing up to go home, you can write together. Then as you move through the year, think about the content you're teaching and how you can utilize interactive writing to enhance your lessons. When you make interactive writing a priority, it happens often.

You will also find lots of opportunities for interactive writing if you simply listen to your students not only during lessons but when they arrive and when they are eating snack or playing at recess. Get to know their interests and what they're curious about and look for opportunities to invite them up to write with you. When you create an environment rich in student writing, children will ask to write and create text together.

In my classroom, most whole-group interactive writing sessions last ten to fifteen minutes. When planning, it helps to remember that children do best when we ask them to sit for only the number of minutes equivalent to their age, so asking five-, six-, and seven-year-olds to sit much longer than ten minutes is an exercise in frustration for everyone. Also, I find that writing in smaller amounts of time helps build my students' stamina and makes it likely I will fit interactive writing in more often.
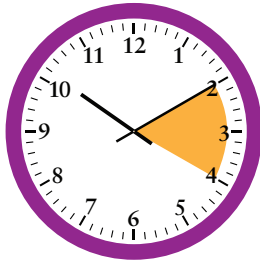
VIDEO 1.8: *Opportunities for Interactive Writing*
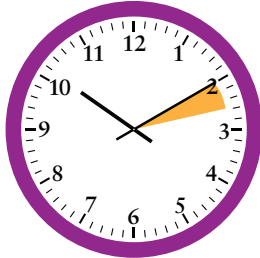
Typical Timing for an Interactive Writing Session
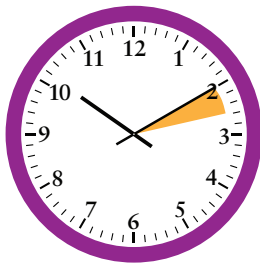
2–3 minutes
Teacher sets the purpose for the interactive writing and basic planning takes place.

8–10 minutes
Teacher and students compose and write the piece together.

2–3 minutes
Teacher leads students in reviewing/ revising/reading piece together.

Math choices
1. SNAP cubes
2. Pattern Blocks
3. Match Game
4. TOP IT
5. Fr Ekl
6. Starfall
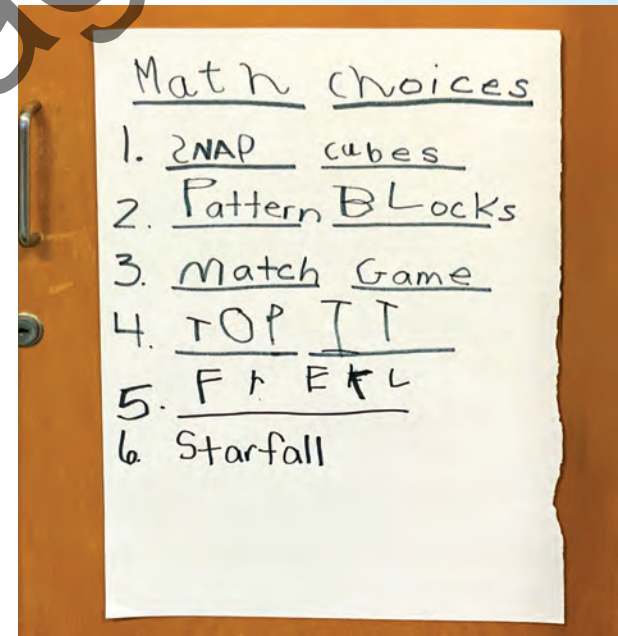
A few students asked if we could create a chart of math choices for them. Working in a small group, we created this list to display.

Simple charts can be completed in a single session, but often we work over the course of a few days to a week to complete more complicated charts, stories, or letters. When interactive writing stretches over several days, it helps children understand that the writing process isn't something that often happens in one sitting—on the contrary, that rarely happens! And, of course, working on writing over time is a process we'll ask students to replicate during their independent writing. To help children understand the temporal nature of process, I might use language that sounds like the examples below at the beginning and end of several interactive writing sessions where we are working on a single text.

LANGUAGE TO ENCOURAGE PROCESS

Day/Session 1

Beginning

End

"Today we'll start writing a piece."

"Tomorrow/later today we'll continue working on this."

Day/Session 2

Beginning

End

"Yesterday we started working on . . . Let's review what we wrote and keep going!"

"We're still not finished but look at all we've done! Let's read it together and plan what we'll work on next time."

Day/Session 3

Beginning

End

"Wow, look at how hard we've worked so far. First we . . . Next we . . . "

"Let's finish our piece together!"

Sample pages