

Introduction

What is *Daily Writing Fundamentals* ?

Daily Writing Fundamentals is a series designed to enhance your current writing curriculum. Comprised of four books for grades 5–6, 7–8, 9–10, and 11–12, each volume includes student grade-level writing examples, as well as selections from well-known authors. The student examples have been gathered from over 30 years of teaching, and have been edited and revised throughout the years.

Developed by a group of five experienced language arts teachers, trainers, and literacy specialists, these brief daily writing activities can fit into any classroom schedule.

Daily Writing Fundamentals is best practice!

Writing is a task that can be challenging for students to master. Other than grammar and mechanics, it is a skill closely connected to reading and critical thinking. Writing difficulties can be overcome through a variety of engaging activities such as making writing a collaborative experience. Most students enjoy reading and discussing other students' writing; it provides them with a sense of security, and may allow a greater sense of ease when analyzing and sharing their own writing.

Try the following best practices in your classroom:

- Study, evaluate, and discuss models of good writing with students.
- Provide students with opportunities to reflect on what good writing is and how writing can be improved.
- Encourage students to spend sufficient time on a piece of writing to learn from it.
- Have students write often and in every class.

Daily Writing Fundamentals is designed around these practices to provide helpful models that will encourage your students to think about writing, to improve their own writing, and to make the art of writing part of their own lifelong learning goals.

(continued)

Using *Daily Writing Fundamentals*

The 32 weekly units are very flexible. Units can be adapted, questions can be combined, and you should feel free to add questions of your own. You may want to write the daily question on the board or on an overhead, or you can copy the five weekly questions and distribute them to students. Ample space has been provided throughout the book for you and your students to make notes.

The majority of the activities will only take your students a few minutes to complete. Some selections may take longer. Consider assigning these as homework.

The selections are numbered but don't have to be used in sequence. To focus on particular skill areas, use the convenient skill chart to find which selections address your students' needs.

Note: It is important to review each selection before use with your class. Because the student examples have been gathered from real-life experiences, some students may be sensitive to the content.

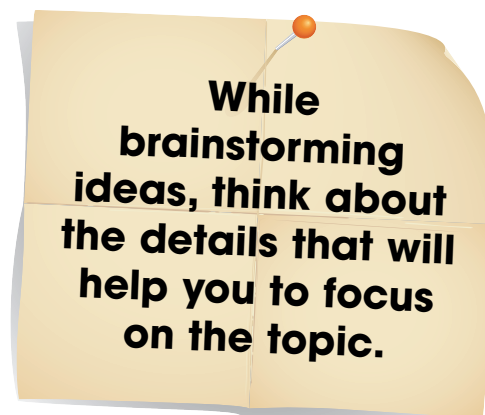
Selection 3

My teacher says write about a true-life experience. Well, I can tell you, my life is so dull NOBODY would want to hear about it. I guess I could write about the jokes I play on my little sister, but then she would be wise to my pranks. Or I might even write an advice letter listing surefire ways to get out of taking out the garbage, but that would surely put dad in an angry spin.

Some of my friends actually like to write about everyday stuff. Why would anyone like to know how far I can skip a rock? Hold my breath? Tricks I can do on my bike? How many times I've fallen on my skateboard? Boring! Boring! It would really be neat to write about touching a corpse, if I ever had.

The closer the due date, the grumpier my mom gets with me. She thinks that I just need to work harder and not get distracted as often. Mom also thinks I should put more detail into my work. She even expects me to check the spelling of every word! Dad is pretty cool about it, until report card time, then he wants to know *why* I have a failing grade in English. He doesn't believe the writer's block syndrome excuse for one minute. I always promise to start my paper sooner the next quarter. I never do.

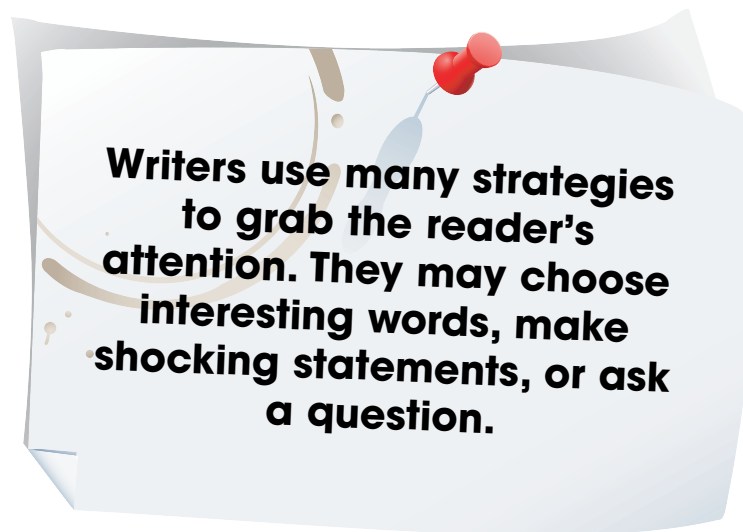
What is wrong with me? Am I normal? Let me hear from some other students out there. I need help. Please!



Selection 8

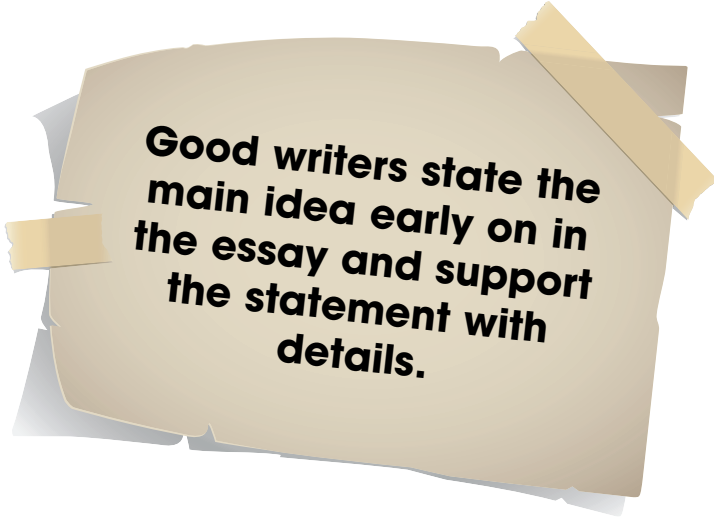
¹ From the outside you could see the smoke rising. ² From the inside you could feel the blazing flames. ³ All the family. ⁴ Sat motionless nearby. ⁵ They didn't run from the sight or hurry to call the fire department. ⁶ In fact, they quite enjoyed the sight. ⁷ They also enjoyed the warmth of the flames on this cold night. ⁸ The children were warned not to get too close to the fire. ⁹ They sipped from the mugs filled with a rich, hot drink that was their special treat. ¹⁰ On this snowy night.

¹¹ Soon the smoke disappeared and the flames ceased, leaving only ashes behind. ¹² The children yawned, their eyelids drooped, and they reluctantly climbed into their beds shortly after the flames were extinguished. ¹³ They drifted off to sleep smiling ear-to-ear knowing that there would be no school for them tomorrow. ¹⁴ It would be the first "Snow Day" of the season!



Selection 20

¹ The thing I am best at is science. ² And the way I learned it is through hard work, concentration, studying, and the ability to think hard. ³ It takes a lot of research and observation to truly make it stay in your mind. ⁴ You also have to be patient for this kind of activity, because no one gets an experiment right on the first time. ⁵ So that means test after test until you get it right. ⁶ When you get into science you have got to keep the bad things in mind such as: all the stress, taking your job home, the sleepless nights, and the chances of dying from your own experiments. ⁷ I think that science is the best job field to get into, because it is high paying, interesting, and filled with entertainment. ⁸ In this job field there is always something new to do. ⁹ One day I'll be in the science field, and I'll be famous.



Good writers state the main idea early on in the essay and support the statement with details.

