



# Shared Writing

by REGIE ROUTMAN



Shared writing experiences are a powerful way to connect reading and writing, and to teach and enhance both reading and writing processes. In shared writing, the teacher holds the pen and does the transcribing, while soliciting, encouraging, guiding, and shaping responses from students—providing the scaffolding and language learners need to independently write with confidence. Giving students many opportunities to first express their ideas orally—without fear of failure—helps set up students for writing success. Shared writing texts can take the form of narratives, charts, lists, poems, newsletters, and so on; they become texts for shared, guided, and independent reading—as well as word work.

## Tips for Meaningful Shared Writing Across the Curriculum

- **Take all ideas that make sense and incorporate them into the shared writing.** This practice honors every student’s thinking. The shared writing draft can be revised later.
- **Don’t hesitate to put the language that students may be struggling to express “into their ears.”** This gentle effort is part of our role in helping shape and guide the writing, and is especially crucial for English language learners.
- **To ensure hearing all the voices and to evaluate all students’ thinking and efforts, word-process the whole group’s shared writing draft.** Then, put students into smaller heterogeneous groups and have each group revise the draft. Come together as a whole group and guide the final revisions.
- **If shared writing is going to be displayed publically, such as in a hallway, be sure that the purpose of the writing is clear for the audience.** Compose a paragraph with students to explain the purpose and content of the displayed writing, and post all at eye level.
- **Instead of your regular newsletter to families, once in a while, write that newsletter with students.** Students will grasp the importance of making ideas clear for readers, narrowing a topic, rereading the writing, revising for meaning, and editing for accuracy, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- **Instead of your regular newsletter to families, once in a while, write that newsletter with the students.** Students will grasp the importance of making ideas clear for readers, narrowing a topic, rereading the writing, revising for meaning, and editing for accuracy, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- **With students, write an appreciation letter to a member of your school community, such as custodian, administrative assistant, crossing guard, principal, librarian, and so on.** Thank him/her for making your school a better place; give specific examples of what the person has done.

Regie Routman, *Writing Essentials* (Heinemann). For many more ideas, see chapter 5, pp. 83–118.