STAGES IN WRITING DEVELOPMENT

EMERGENT STAGE

At the Emergent Stage, writers are learning what writing is about. They are learning the link between sound-symbol correspondence, understanding that writing is "talk" written down, learning concepts about print, and building a core of conventionally spelled high-frequency words.

Emergent writers employ approximations of letter formation and spelling as they develop. One of the greatest challenges for the beginning writer is learning how to communicate thoughts in written form while simultaneously mapping sounds into letters.

Emergent writers should have the following characteristics before moving to the next stage:

Form letters correctly
Use spaces between words
Articulate words slowly
Write high frequency words fluently
Analyze and record a few sounds in words
Use an alphabet chart to make connections with sounds and letters

The next step for this writer is to hear more sounds in sequence, attend to more visual features of words, develop a larger high-frequency word-writing vocabulary, use varied punctuation marks, learn to expand on the message, and develop ideas fully.
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EARLY STAGE

Early writers have a core set of conventionally spelled high-frequency words, have control over beginning letter sound combinations, and begin to analyze the placement of sounds in words (beginning/middle/end).

Early writers start to monitor their writing by noticing misspelled words and ideas that are not fully developed or parts that were left out. At this stage, children begin problem-solving words they are unsure of writing; they use what they know about spelling by analogy.

Early writers should have the following characteristics before moving to the next stage:

- Edit by crossing out words that do not look right
- Analyze sounds in sequence
- Self-correct misspelled words
- Apply knowledge of visual patterns to write new words

The next steps for this early writer are to increase the use of editing and revising techniques (noticing misspelled words and using proofreading marks), compose for various purposes and genres, reread for meaning, incorporate more varied punctuation, and spell words by analogy.
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TRANSITIONAL STAGE

At the Transitional Stage, writers hone their spelling skills. Though they have a large bank of words they can spell correctly, transitional writers continue to use a variety of different strategies to spell more difficult words. Because transitional writers are able to compose while quickly spelling, they can produce longer, more complex pieces that may include dialogue, graphics, strong leads, and conclusions. They have many opportunities to write in genres and learn how to develop ideas. Transitional writers use basic conventions of writing, such as capitalization and punctuation.

Transitional writers should have the following characteristics before moving to the next stage:

- Use analogies to write unknown words
- Record unknown words using syllables
- Include new and unusual words in writing vocabulary
- Compose longer messages with greater accuracy
- Initiate problem-solving on unknown words in various ways
- Use a variety of punctuation marks
- Edit writing for spelling and punctuation
- Demonstrate success in writing various genres
- Use a variety of resources, such as a dictionary and a thesaurus
- Incorporate graphic features into text

At the transitional stage, this writer uses visual patterns to write new words; constructs a longer, well-organized text; uses a variety of punctuation marks (including quotation marks and question marks); uses an expanded vocabulary; employs a variety of problem-solving strategies for spelling words (dividing and hyphenating hospital); uses dialogue; and employs good word choice.

The next steps for this writer include learning to write in a variety of genres, developing a stronger lead, and expanding the sequence of events in order to support and sustain ideas for the reader.
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FLUENT WRITERS

Fluent writers begin to develop strategies for the craft of writing. These strategies include elaborating (voice), critiquing their own writing and others’ writing, writing in different genres, using what they know about reading text to write, using the writing process, and developing a sense of audience. Fluent writers spell most words correctly and carefully edit their spelling while they write. They also have a wide vocabulary and know how to use a thesaurus and dictionary to expand their current vocabulary. Fluent writers understand text structures (compare and contrast, descriptive, procedural, problem/solution, and cause/effect), text functions (narrative, expressive, informative, and poetic), and tenses. They write on a wide variety of topics including personal experiences and nonfiction topics.

Fluent writers:

- Compose text using various genres
- Compose text according to purpose and audience
- Demonstrate success in conforming to expository text structures in informational writing (descriptive, problem/solution, time/order, compare/contrast, cause/effect, and procedural)
- Write independently for self and others
- Incorporate descriptive language into writing
- Gather information on a topic, sort it into categories, and use categories to write paragraphs
- Use graphic organizers to plan and organize writing independently
- Revise writing for content and clarity
- Edit writing for spelling
- Edit writing for correct use of capitalization, punctuation, and proper nouns
- Edit writing for standard grammar usage and subject/verb agreement
- Develop a writer’s “voice”
- Write for different audiences
- Use resources including dictionaries, thesaurus, spell check, and other text references
- Apply knowledge of writers' craft from the texts they have read to original writing
- Develop a topic and extend over many pages

Source: Benchmark Education