

Small Moments: Writing with Focus, Detail, and Dialogue (Book 1)
September/October

This first unit is designed to help your students work with independence, confidence, and stamina. Children are encouraged to write about small moments, and this level of focus enables them to write with more detail, including showing a character's small actions, dialogue, and internal thinking. Children produce lots and lots of Small Moment stories and move with independence through the writing process: choosing an idea, planning their writing by sketching stories across 3-5 page booklets, and storytelling repeatedly until the story feels just right.

In the final bends of this unit, children will engage in the vitally important process of revision. Children will study author's craft by engaging in deep analysis of mentor texts. Simultaneously, they will use checklists and learning progressions to help them set goals for improving their own writing. Because so much of the work of this unit requires the habits of revision and reflection, it is necessary to establish writing partnerships immediately. Peer partnerships will support goal setting, providing feedback, and celebrating successes throughout the writing process. It also sets the expectation that authors write with their audience in mind.

The most important thing to remember about writing workshop in first grade is this--don't wait! It is tempting to think that children need to be socialized into the rhythms of the school day before you start this teaching. IT IS NOT SO! You can start on day one. Take the brave step of gathering children on the first day of school and inviting them to live like writers.

Session	Title	Teaching Point
Bend I: Writing Small Moments with Independence		
Session 1 (p. 2-10)	Lives Are Full of Stories to Tell	Today I want to teach you that when authors write a Small Moment story, they think of an idea. We do this by: 1. Thinking of something you do or something that happened to you. 2. Planning it out. 3. Then they write the story across the pages of a book.
Session 2	Planning for	Today I want to teach you that writers plan their writing.

(p. 11-20)	Writing: Writing Touch and Tell, Sketch, Then Write	<p>We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Touching and telling what will happen on each page. 2. Quickly sketching the picture across each page of the book. 3. Then writing the words.
Session 3: (p. 21-29)	Using Pictures to Add On	<p>Today I want to teach you that writers have a saying, “When you’re done you’ve just begun.” Writers finish a piece and then go back and revise by adding more.</p> <p>We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making a picture in our mind to remember the event. 2. Adding on to the picture by asking Who? Where? When? What? How? 3. Revising their picture to answer some of these questions.
Session 4: (p. 30-39)	Stretching Words to Spell Them: Hearing and Recording All Sounds	<p>Today I want to teach you that when you want to write a word you don’t “just know” you’ve got to work hard to hear and write all the sounds.</p> <p>We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Saying the word while you slide your finger slowly across the page, hear the first sound and write that sound down. 2. Read what you’ve written, sliding your fingers under the letters. 3. Hear the next sound, write it, and reread, sliding your finger. 4. Do that until there are no more sounds.
Session 5: (p. 40-46)	Zooming in on Small Moments	<p>Today I want to teach you that instead of writing about big (watermelon) topics, writers write about teeny tiny (seed) stories--little ones inside the big topic. And the cool thing is that inside a watermelon topic there are a zillion teeny tiny seed stories.</p> <p>We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thinking about a topic and asking, “Is this a watermelon idea or a seed idea?” 2. If it is a watermelon idea (and has too many details as you tell it), ask “Which detail do I want to tell more about out of all these seeds?” 3. Practicing telling, sketching, and writing across my pages.
Session 6: (p. 47-55)	Partnerships and Storytelling	<p>Today I want to teach you that writers have partners who help them with their writing. One way they help each other is by helping each other plan how their stories will go. They do this by:</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Telling each other their stories, using the exact stories they will write. 2. Retelling the story again, this time using even more details.
Session 7: (p. 56-67)	Reading Our Writing Like We Read Our Books	<p>Writers, today I want to teach you that writers go from being a writer to being the reader. And when readers reread their own books, they read just as if they were reading a published book. We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writers reread their books slowly and carefully. 2. They listen carefully for mess-up/oops moments. 3. They fix the parts, and reread them to check that they sound right.
Bend II: Bringing Small Moment Stories to Life		
Session 8: (p. 68-77)	Unfreezing Our Characters and Our Writing	<p>Today I want to teach you that just like published writers, you can make your stories come to life. You can “unfreeze” the people in your stories by making them move. We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rereading a section of our writing, asking ourselves, “Did I include movement AND talking?” 2. Retelling and acting out that part, working hard to show exactly how the characters moved, what their faces looked like, and what they said. 3. Revising our writing.
Session 9: (p. 78-87)	Telling Stories in Itsy-Bitsy Steps	<p>Today I want to teach you that when writers want to write stories that come to life on the page, they tell their stories in small steps, bit by bit. We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thinking about the main thing my characters did. 2. Telling exactly what happened , slowly and step by step.
Session 10: (p. 88-96)	Bringing What's Inside Out: Making Characters Think and Feel	<p>Today I want to teach you that one way writers bring their stories to life is by including what their characters feel. We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noticing how the character is feeling. 2. Showing how the character is feeling by describing thoughts and actions that match that feeling.
Session 11 (p. 97-99)	Using Drama to Bring Stories to	<p>Today I want to teach you that one way to bring a story to life is to act out what really happened, either with a partner or in your mind, noticing what you need</p>

	Life	<p>to add.</p> <p>We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choosing a part with a lot of strong feelings, and using my face and body to act out the part. 2. My partner gives me advice about how to add more feelings and gestures. 3. We work together to revise my writing...and then switch roles.
Session 12 (p. 100-108)	Using Familiar Words to Spell New Words	<p>Writers, today I want to teach you that when you write a word you don't know how to spell, it helps to find a word you already know that sounds like it.</p> <p>We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finding a word I know with a part that sounds the same as the word I want to spell, and writing that part. <p>Using all I know about letters and sounds to spell the new parts of the hard word.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Rereading the word to check (and maybe edit) my spelling.
Session 13 (p. 109-115) :	Editing: Capital Letters and End Marks Help Readers	<p>Today I want to teach you that writers use lots of marks on the page to help readers read their stories more easily.</p> <p>Writers use many different marks in their writings, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exclamation marks for very important stops. 2. Periods for full, calm stops. 3. Question marks when they want to ask a question. 4. Commas for small breaks inside a sentence.
Bend III: Studying Other Writers' Craft		
Session 14: (p. 116-123)	Studying a Story to Learn the Ways the Author Makes it Special	<p>Authors, today I want to teach you that writers read books by other authors and say, "Oh my goodness! This author did something special in this book that I want to try in my own writing! And then we try it.</p> <p>We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noticing a part of a mentor text to try and asking, "What craft move did the author do/use that I can use I can try in my own writing (such as unique punctuation)?" 2. Thinking about why s/he did this (a feeling, to create action, etc.). 3. Trying it in my own writing.

Session 15: (p. 124-131)	Trying Out a Craft Move from a Mentor Text: Writing with Exact Actions	<p>Today I want to teach you that when writers want their readers to get a clear picture of what is happening in their story--to create a movie in their reader's mind--they can study craft moves they've learned from mentor authors.</p> <p>We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acting out the action parts of our own writing. 2. Thinking about the exact actions--or verbs-- we can use to describe that event. 3. Revising our verbs to make them more exact.
Session 16: (p. 132-138)	Trying Out a Craft Move from a Mentor Text: Writing with Pop-Out Words	<p>Today I am going to remind you that writers don't just notice craft moves other writer's use. they try them!.</p> <p>We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rereading a chunk of my story, to look for important words that I should pop out. 2. Making those words darker and/or write them in capital letters. 3. Rereading that chunk of text to see if my story sounds right when reading those words in a strong voice.
Session 17: (p. 139-143)	Turning to Other Mentor Texts	<p>Today I want to teach you that writers study the books they love to find new tricks or craft moves for writing well.</p> <p>We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asking, "What does this special author do in his or her writing that I could try?" 2. Using post-its to mark features in the text that stand out, such as feelings or specific craft moves the author uses. 3. Setting goals for what craft move(s) to try today.
Bend IV: Fixing and Fancying Up Our Best Work		
Session 18: (p. 144-150)	Using All We Know to Revise	<p>Today I want to teach you that writers get ready to publish a story by first choosing one that they want to share with the world. Then they revise it using all they know.</p> <p>I choose a writing for publication by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading over all of the writings I created during this unit. 2. Asking, "Of all these stories, which one is really, really important to me?" I pay attention to the ones that show off all the craft moves I have learned.

		3. Putting a star sticker on the writing to publish.
Session 19: (p. 151-157)	Editing with a Checklist	<p>Today I am going to teach you that when writers are ready to publish, they make sure their writing is easy to read. One way they do this is to use an editing checklist that reminds them of all that they know about helping readers read their stories.</p> <p>We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading one line/indicator on the checklist and, very slowly and carefully, rereading to check if I did this in my writing. 2. If I did this many times in my writing, I can check it off as complete. 3. I repeat this with every line of the checklist.
Session 20: (p. 158-164)	Making Books Ready for the Library	<p>Today I want to teach you that writers put a lot of finishing touches on their books so that they are ready to go in the library for others to read.</p> <p>We do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noticing that the title page includes an interesting picture from the body of the book. 2. Creating a title that tells what every single page of the story is about and will make your reader want to read your book. 3. Including illustrations with color and tiny details that are revealed in the words.
Session 21	CELEBRATION :	<p>You learned to catch the Small Moments from your lives and to write about them. You took these Small Moments and stretched them long in your writing. You wrote so many details that any reader can get a crystal-clear picture of the story. You made your stories come to life. Congratulations!</p> <p>We celebrate our writing by sharing our work in author circles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We take turns reading the writing to the group. 2. Members of the group compliment the author. 3. The author shares their accomplishments/moments of pride with their group. 4. All groups come together, as each member of the class places their published book in a new bin in the classroom library ("Student Authors", "Small Moment Stories," are some possible titles.)