

Young Scribes
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OVERVIEW

‘Scribe’ is a Latin word that refers to a person who copies or writes manuscripts. In medieval time a scribe would copy the law or edit the bible. Young Scribes is my way of implementing The Art of Teaching Writing, by Lucy McCormick Calkins to young children who begin to construct words in kindergarten. Many students come to school with a vision, believing they can write. So writing comes naturally for the beginning student and research has shown that children experiment with different ways to form letters before they enter formal education.

The skill of writing begins with uncontrolled strokes. While this type of writing is called scribbling, the student in this stage can write a scribbled paragraph with so much meaning and excitement. This scribbling is the beginning of an adventure only the very young can explore and explain. The next stage would be random letters and then to invented spelling, spacing of words and then the construction of words. These stages show how natural it is to become a writer. It is amazing what the vision can be from each of the writers as well. The vision that most people have is from their own experiences and maybe something they would like to experience. Writing can be a very enjoyable skill and a way to release our feelings. I plan to make it just that, an enjoyable release for my students.

My curriculum will explore this vision through the making of Young Scribes. It will explore the concept of writing using writing as an enjoyable way of communicating a message. The message that the students will be communicating will be part of a self-reflective journal. The journal will consist of dictated work, invented spelling and words as the progression of the unit takes place. The objective is to promote writing in a positive non- intrusive manner, letting the writing skills be as much fun as painting a picture. Another objective is to have students write for a variety of purposes including to narrate, inform and persuade.

I will look at the writing systems and how they developed into a form of communicating and how they will relate to creating natural creative writers. This will basically assist in explaining the rationale and the beliefs. I tend to look at writing in a holistic view. I will be using the developmental and creative approach. While students normally learn writing through meticulous practice and structured strokes this unit will not be addressing writing formation. I will reinforce this skill verbally. Writing formation will make neat writers but often at the expense of building the creative skills used in the students' writings. I want my students to want to write.

The purpose of this curriculum is to be used as enrichment for the Language Arts component of my students' reading time. I want to build an attitude toward writing in which the student conveys meaning through illustrations and letters as well as orally. Representing ideas through drawings and writings, students will be able to use conventional words. These conventional words may have been learned in their vocabulary components and help them become excellent language organizers through their understanding that print conveys a message. This will also help them with copying words captions and labeling; students will enjoy doing and participating in writing adventures through prompts and simple communication games. The Young Scribes will approach different writing activities that the students can initiate at times.

Current research about making good writers emphasizes having an environment that is rich in language and print. Letting the student experiment with surfaces from posters with markers and paint to an easel or chalkboard is important. I will be able to model good writing habits for my students by making lists and notes and having a shared journal. I intend to be a facilitator as well, guiding and defining roles and methods, letting the students take control of discovering their writing and where it will go and learning that writing has its own rewards. I plan to evaluate this curriculum through observations and student participation.

The students that I will be working with are kindergarten students in an urban school district. These students appear to be willing to write as soon as they come to school. The class size will be 15-20 students including both genders. I will take into consideration any inclusive students (Students who are part of special education through learning or emotional disability) and I will adapt my curriculum accordingly. The students in this group need focused literacy in written communication. They also will need help with writing words and sentences. Some of my focus will also be on making them prolific writer and using the invented words method through phonemic awareness. The stages this grade level goes through are letter and symbol relationship, invented and standard spelling. This curriculum will use this development to build lessons and activities that will promote growth in these areas. I will use the normal development of the

students that mutually support theories in an interactive way. Some of the other skills in making students good writers, that I have become aware of through taking this seminar, is looking at different ideas from other participants and looking deeper at the book The Art of Teaching Writing. I already can see the difference this class will make on my unit. I will use some of the ideas from the book and some of the readings.

RATIONALE

It is suggested that children learn how to write through actively engaging with their environment. In all the writing the students will do in any class, they will be using some form of system. Let's discuss in limited detail the systems in which writing originated. Writing is a method of human intercommunication by means of markings forming a system.

The first system is considered to be limited and is usually used for keeping accounts and putting down facts quickly. There is usually not a mandated way of doing this system. It could be a graphic organizer, pictograph or objects that would remind you of something. This can be seen in Native American picture writing. The Egyptian hieroglyphs were the first form of writing.

The full writing system is capable of expressing any idea or concept that can be formed through language. It is characterized by a fixed correspondence between signs of writing systems and elements of language the writing represents. It can be words, syllables or phonemes (sound). Prior knowledge of the language written is required for it to convey a meaning.

The word writing systems have logograms, which represent complete words. The logos are used as signs. They represent signs used to put things into a category. This is the element of language such as verbs, nouns etc.

The next system is the syllabic system: This is when words are written by sound. The first system of writing was this system. It was combined with the word writing system. This system is seen when grouping words with similar meanings. The basic style of this is consonant vowel, consonant sounds.

Then the alphabetic system in which you see letters and vowels being used; each letter represents a phoneme (sound), each word is spelled out phonetically; every system is part of history and the development of writing. I would like to mention also that they all appear to overlap at times. The earliest form of writing using consonants and vowels was dated as far back as 800 B.C. through the Greek

population, (Microsoft Encarta Reference Library, 2003. Ignace Jay Gelb, R. M. Whiting.) The alphabetic format will be what we will be using.

Developmentally writing comes from the language domain. There are several stages a student will go through to get to the formal writing stage; letting the student gracefully go through these stages will make his or her writing experience stronger.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for this curriculum are many. I will state all of them in this section, which also includes identifying the standards. This curriculum will promote writing in a creative genre. This will be seen through writing games and brain storming activities. The students will also be able to express an idea through phonetic sounding of words for completion of writings. They will also be able to use literature to generate a writing topic. They will have the opportunity to experiment with different surfaces for writing using paper, chalkboards etc. We will also use invented spelling to produce a smooth writing environment. This will assist the students get their skills in spelling reinforced. The students will be able to identify story elements such as characters and settings. They will be able to properly use writing tools and spacing of words and their position. They will be able to relate a message, use language concepts to apply to written and printed activities, and participate in oral presentations and write predictable material such as charts when doing some of the lessons. They will be able to illustrate an idea through drawings. They will also explore basic sentence structure through using environmental print. We will do group writing activities. They will be self-directed and self motivated. Also as scribes we will be doing copying of words, captions and labels as well as writing from dictation.

There are standards that will be addressed: Communication 3 and 4

All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational text and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.

All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform and persuade in all subject areas.

Citizenship 7 and 8

All students demonstrate their skills of communicating, negotiating and cooperating with others.

All students demonstrate that they can work effectively with others. All of these objectives will be met throughout the curriculum and the standards will be specifically addressed.

STRATEGIES

When using this curriculum keep in mind that the students are writing in their own voices and all writing comes from either the writer's voice or a make-believe voice. Since students will pull from their own experiences unless an idea is generated, the limitations for their writing will be based on the information given or that they already have experienced. This will be an opportunity to provide reading games and promote creativity.

In this section of this curriculum I will be looking at three different aspects throughout the curriculum. The first is the **environment**.

The environment should be rich with print, such as everything labeled with print for recognition of words and their meaning. Material for writing posters, paper, crayons, markers, dry erase boards, notebooks, rubberstamps, stationary and envelopes. The environment should model good writing habits such as making to do list, writing letters to the class, morning news and at the end of the year a diary with a lock on it. This will actually make their writing special and instill a desire to learn to write. Always encourage sound and letter recognition from the beginning. This will help with their spelling skills and reading. Let students make and use invented spelling. This will assist with the previously mentioned skills. The students also should have a library of books available for them to read. There should be a writing center where the students can go and write. Display here a list of words that the students can refer to when writing, such as commonly used words by them. This center should be seen as the writing place. The teacher should also have an expectation that all of his or her students are good writers and no matter what level of writing they are on.

The second is **time**.

Let the student have a specific time to write. This will cultivate good writing skills and give the student the opportunity to write. Getting in the habit of writing everyday will convince a student that it is a good thing to do. In this block of time several things should occur. The student should have conference time and sharing time with the class. This sharing time does not have to be structured. Also give the student opportunity to write at any given time. The student should have the opportunity to go through the process of writing which I will discuss about next. Make sure there is time to monitor and assess what the student is doing. You

shouldn't let the students write without an objective. This objective can be yours or theirs. This will always give the writing piece a purpose and makes it more meaningful. The purpose will give information and tell the reader something. Each Scribe lesson will take two sessions of twenty minutes each which normally will equal to one period. Lucy McCormick Calkins states, "setting a predictable time for writing is important."

The final strategy will be **process**.

The process includes planning, writing, conferring, revising, and rewriting, and then publishing. The plan is a generation of ideas about what students will be going to write about. This can be through reading a book, reciting a poem or looking at an illustration. This is also called the pre-writing part of the paper. The next is writing putting ideas onto paper and then conferring with the teacher. Now revising this is when the writer looks at his or her own writing and tries to improve it. The student rewrites again to only look at it again and revise. This is part of the proofreading stage. Then the student is ready to publish the writing. This is the best part because the student becomes the author of the paper making this experience important as well. During this process a rubric should be in place to assist with this process going smoothly. A sample rubric has been included in the Scribe lessons. The rubric should include all of the steps that are in the process and the proper writing of letters, spacing and the proper sounding of words. A journal writing entry should be done on a daily basis. Always model the process of how the paper should be written. The composition that will come from this process will have to meet the standard of the rubric. This lets your students know you have high expectations for their work thus making them give their best. This process should also include basic concepts such as writing a sentence or building a list. Proper grammar usage and spelling should be reinforced. Praise should be throughout every step of the process. Try to make it a habit to confer with each student at specific writing points. To get more information on conferring chapter fourteen in *The Art of Teaching Writing* discusses this process. The revision stage is the ideal time.

Keep in mind that a foundation of good habits should be formed before starting the writing process; that is why this curriculum is being introduced in the later part of the year. Some of these habits for example are writing skills, letter and sound recognition and proper holding of a pencil. Give the student enough time to practice in these basic skills at the beginning of the year. This process will also let the student know that this is expected. This is also an opportunity to ask questions of the students and answer them regarding their writing. The strategies will be very important to implement and monitor.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

SCRIBE LESSON I

Introducing the curriculum and writing areas. While you are doing your introduction state that when you write you are writing to an audience. The rules should be stated also for the writing centers. Pass out a special pencil for each student called the magic pencil. Tell the student a story called the Magic Pencil. This is a story I made up to motivate the students; when *I was young I had brought a pencil at the corner store. That pencil was special. It helped me put what I wanted to say down on paper.* I could copy words from my favorite books. So I was thinking we could have special pencils for our writing time. Pass pencils out to each student. Also buy enough for replenishing. Pass out writing paper and let students write free choice. (Take a picture preparing for Scribe Lesson III) Each lesson should take two 20-minute sessions. Include a daily journal writings on, what is writing to me?

SCRIBE LESSON II

The students should be familiar with what a rubric is. Discuss the different expectations related to the rubric. The rubric is written below. Also have a reflective sheet. This sheet is a self- reflective checklist. These two tools should be discussed carefully. This will give the student the opportunity to meet the expectations and make refinement. Daily journal writings on a self selected topic.

The Rubric:

4 Advanced	(A) Formal spelling writes using phonetic spellings including high frequency words. (B) Uses correct writing space, prints legibly and spaces letters words and sentences appropriately. (C) Begins to use proper sentence structure, capitalization, and a period.
3 Proficient	(A) Writes phonetic spelling and some sentence structure (B) Prints legibly and spaces words and uses proper writing space
2 Basic	(A) Writes using phonetic spelling and evidence of an attempt to include sentence structure. (B) Writing is not neat or legible.
1 Below Basic	(A) Attempts to convey meaning using

	symbols and pre-phonetic spelling with random letters. (B) Scribbles and uses pictures to write a message.
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Self- Reflective

1- Do I have words I can read. (This should reflect the phonetic spelling and frequency words)	Yes or No
2--Do I have a capitalization and a period in my sentence structure (This should show proper sentence structure.)?	Yes or NO
3- Is my sentence logical.	Yes or No
4- Is my work neat.	Yes or No

SCRIBE LESSON III

Understanding the self- reflective checklist. The digital camera pictures were taken in Scribe Lesson I. Discuss what you most like about yourself. Let each of students tell something special about themselves. This should take the first 20-minute session. The next 20-minute session let students write as many invented spelling sentences about themselves as possible. The writing process should be evident in this lesson revising and conferring about the writing paper. Daily journal writings; self-selected topic on picking a career I like.

SCRIBE LESSON IV

A copying lesson. Read the book Eating the Alphabet Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z by Lois Ehlert. Review the components of making a list. Have a title and words up under each other as you add them. Then have the students come up with a list of food for a Scribe Feast. Scribe Feast will be the title for this list. As you are writing this information down describe to the student each action. Discuss what a feast is and let the students tell when they thought they were having a feast at home or somewhere else. A good example of this could be one of the holiday dinners or a buffet restaurant. After your discussion with food let the students know that they will be making a list of foods. At this point the students should be familiar with what a list is. You continue to review any important skills such as capitalization, space between words and neat penmanship. Then give each student the opportunity to one at a time, add a food to the list. Then prepare a note to go

home at the end of the unit or now use your time to your advantage for the parents to contribute what their student had written for food. Invite the parent to join the lunch- time Scribe Feast. This will foster parental involvement. You may want to invite others such as the administrator.
Daily writing journal self- selected entry.

SCRIBE LESSON V

Writing prompts. This is when you provide a small amount of information about a topic and let the student elaborate on it. This will also be done in lesson X and XV. The prompt for this lesson is-What would you do if you were given a pet? The first part of this lesson should involve brainstorming ideas. Make a list of those ideas so the students may want to use the sentences in their papers. Provide the students with a word bank. This and the other two lessons will give you and the students the opportunity to use the principles in the writing process spoken of earlier. The process will not be that extensive. During this lesson introduce peer conferring. Before the first revision pair the students and let them talk to their peer about what they have written. Keep in mind that the noise level will be busy talk. At this time make contact for the field trip to a newspaper facility. Pass out the permission slip at this time an example is written in lesson eleven.
Daily writing journal; make a list of pets.

SCRIBE LESSON VI

Incorporating Social Studies. Start a discussion about your country. Most classes do the Pledge of Allegiance and have a flag in their room. Read the story What A Wonderful World by George David Weiss and Bob Thiele or This is the Way We Go to School- A Book About Children Around the World by Edith Baer.

After doing the reading let the students pick from a sentence frame.

1. I like my country because-----.

2.The American flag is -----.

Let the students use invented spelling to complete this lesson. Also provide them with a word bank. The word bank can be words my, can, like, me, go, country, flag, and any words you may be using in the classroom. When you are in the conferring stage of the writing process assist the students with spelling and provide a resource of books that are decodable for them. Continue to remind the students that they will be writing to an audience. If there is a student that has a different lifestyle this lesson can be modified. Daily journal entry; write about the story in the lesson.

SCRIBE LESSON VII

Writing a Thank You Letter. First generate some ideas through a group discussion about what you are thankful for. Next as the teacher tell a story of something someone did for you and write a letter to him or her on chart paper. Explain all of the components of the letter. It should have an introduction, body and closing. Provide a space for the students to draw a picture relating to the letter so you may want to fold an 8 by 10 paper in half and let the letter be inside like a card or you may want to use a sheet of paper unfolded. Let the students choose from a word bank and limit their writing minimum to two sentences and their maximum to four sentences. You will need to make a word bank for the students and from what is generated during the student's discussion of what they would like to write. Daily journal entry; self-selected topic related to letter.

Write-Thank You Note

TEACHER'S DRAFT

Dear -----,

I would like you to know that when you helped me with my papers yesterday I was really happy you did it. So I am writing this letter to say thank you. I really had too much to carry.

Thanks, Ms. Johnson

SCRIBE LESSON VIII

Drawing and writing a caption lesson with an illustration. A caption is one or two words that tell about something. The word should be very interesting. In this lesson you will need to discuss a verb-word that describe an action. Let the students pick one of the words or come up with one of their own. Introduce the word "illustration" and have some examples of books with action in them. The paper that the students will use should have a space at the top for their caption. The rest of the paper should be for their illustration. The illustration should describe the caption. Daily journal writing; self-selected topic with an illustration related to entry.

SCRIBE LESSON IX

Composing a word study activity. Using the letters of the alphabet let the students write a word that begins with each letter. To start make a list of the alphabet with a line next to each letter. Demonstrate to the students how to make this word study by having the students do it as a group on chart paper with you writing in the words so they may see it. They can do CVC words that are consonant vowel consonant words. For an older group of students you may do consonant blends. In this lesson discuss ABC order and introduce a dictionary at this time to give an example of that order and how to find information. The paper should look like this.

A _____
B _____
C _____
D _____
E _____
F _____
G _____

until you get to the last letter in the alphabet. Let the students invent their own words to go with each letter. This will assist with thinking skills and help the students build a vocabulary.

Daily journal entry; self-selected topic use at least ten of your words.

SCRIBE LESSON X

This will be another writing prompt lesson. This is the second one in this curriculum. The prompt is what would I do after a rainfall when the sun came out and a rainbow appeared? Tell the students they will be using different pencils for this paper. Give each a box of colored pencils. Let them use the pencils as this will be like using the colors of a rainbow. Prior to the students' writing begin with a discussion about the weather. Ask the students, "How do you feel when it rains?" "Have you ever seen a rainbow?" Discuss the different colors that are in a rainbow and how it would make you feel if you saw one. This should be a motivational lesson to keep the students interested in writing. They can write as much as they would like but for those students who need direction let them write a prepared list of words or the labels that are in the room.

Daily journal entry; use colored pencils in writing self-selected topic.

SCRIBE LESSON XI

Preparing a newspaper. A newspaper's main function is to report news. Discuss what a newspaper is. Introduce different types of newspapers. Make sure that several of them are classroom newspapers and show them your community newspaper. Let the class know that we are going to make a newspaper of our own. Tell them that we are going to start with some of the important steps first. There are four sections we will think about including in our paper.

1. Title- "Scribe Gazette" or let the students come up with a name and have a vote.
2. Article-What are we going to write about? Will it be about current events in the school or test that may be coming up? A field trip that may be planned for that month. Put a list of the students of the month. Write about anything that may be going on in the classroom. Weather and the number of days in school, the season and its holidays that will be celebrated. Talk about the class with a classroom photo. Also discuss what is going on in other subjects taught in the classroom. Each article should be two sentences long.
3. Entertainment Section- This includes the cartoon section (bubble writing) and the puzzle section (CVC words –consonant vowel consonant). Keep this section simple and put your invented spelling writers or word writers in this section.
4. Advertisement Illustrators- In this section the students will be doing drawings concerning an up coming event. You should have a minimum of two illustrations in your paper.

After discussing all four of the components of the paper, talk about publishing and what a publisher does. The publisher is the person who prints the paper and does the editing. The teacher will be the publisher. The rubric should be used for this paper as well. Let them know that they will be put into four groups to work on the paper. The four groups are Articles writers, Entertainment writers, Advertisement Illustrators and Publishing Assistants. Discuss working with a team and the rules for working together. You can keep them simple.



Permission Slip -

Dear Parents,

We will be visiting a newspaper to explore the writing and different positions that are involved in publishing a newspaper. If your child has permission to attend please sign. _____.

Ms. Johnson

SCRIBE LESSON XII

Field trip to a Newspaper facility. It can be to a large Newspaper or small one. Prepare your field trip form. Contact should have been made during Scribe V and preparation made for transportation. If this is not possible have an editor, writer or publisher visit the classroom. Have a set of rules for a field trip for the students. Check your permission slips that were passed out in Scribe lesson V.

SCRIBE LESSON XIII and SCRIBE LESSON XIV

Getting the newspaper started. First let's choose a name for our paper. Then break the classroom into the four groups as discussed in Scribe XI. Establish rules for the working groups. Show the newspaper template and give each student a blank copy that they can see. Have work for each student printed out so that the guidance is set. You can also work this as you would work your flexible groups. The students can work in their groups. Monitoring each group will be needed. This will be two lessons and may take up to three lessons. This will give the students the time to make mistakes change their minds and confer with you as the teacher about what they are doing.

SCRIBE LESSON XV

Revising and publishing. Spend this time revising and editing as a group and discussing what we should put into the newspaper. Publishing the newspaper is the responsibility of the teacher and her assistant publishers. Let students look at the final paper and discuss it and distribute to your class and school.

SCRIBE LESSON XVI

Writing a prompt for this lesson will enable the students to talk about their own experiences. The paper will be titled A Personal Narrative. The prompt will be, "If I were a stuffed animal what would I be and why." The student can bring in his or her own stuffed animal from home. Let the student use invented spelling and during the conferring stage. The teacher will assist them in rewriting what they have written and let them rewrite it again.

SCRIBE LESSON XVII

The final lesson in the curriculum. Introduce a diary and give a definition of what it is. Tell students a small story about how to use one and if you had one your experience with it. Tell the students that the diary is a gift to them for being wonderful Scribes.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

- 1 Digital Camera
- 100 Decorative Pencils for writing size primary
- 12 Packs of primary writing paper with headline, midline and baseline present
- 20 Packs of 8 colored pencils for each student
- 1 Packs of Xerox paper
- 25 Diaries with a key for end of the year
- 20 Sheets of Chart paper for writing

- 40 Oak-tag paper for illustration
- 10 Packs of magic marker this can be used for illustration and writing
- 20 Water paint
- 4 Packs of multi colored and white construction paper
- 20 Pieces of poster board this can be used for writing prompts and free exploration
- 20 Journal books primary
- 10 Packs of colored chalk
- 2 Date stamps To document date on written material
- 1 Newspaper template or copy

Bibliography

.Alonso, Melissa and Susan Nations. (2001). Primary Literacy Centers Making Reading and Writing Stick. Florida. Maurphin House Publishing.

This book is about different activities involving centers for students.

Calkins-McCormick, Lucy. (1994). The Art of Teaching Writing. Canada. Irwin Publishing.

This book is about teaching writing and how to apply it to any grade level.

Delossa, Carson and Hall, Dorothy. (2001). Predictable Charts Shared Writings for Kindergarten and First Grade.

This book is about using chart paper to create writing activities.

Edwards, A. Sharon and Malloy, W. Robert. (1992). Kids Have the Right Stuff Inspiring Your Children to put Pencil to Paper. New York. Penguin Books.

This book is about motivating students to write.

Leuenberger, Constance. (2003). The New Kindergarten Teaching Reading Writing and More. New York. Scholastic.

This book will assist you with activities in the classroom.

Weiner, S. Harvey. Any Child Can Write. (1990). New York. Oxford University Press.

This book is about looking at each child as a great writer and applying certain skills.

CONTENT STANDARDS

The content standards are listed under the objectives. In this area I will list the Pennsylvania Academic Standards that apply

1.4.3.A – Write a narrative

1.5.3 E -Revise writing in order to organize and improve detail.

1.5.3.F – Edit writing

1.6.3. A – Listen to others

1.6.3. D Contribute to discussion

1.5.8.A – Write with a distinct focus

1.6.3.C- Speak using appropriate skills

WEB SITES

www.abcteach.com - This is a site that has lessons and resources for teachers.

www.parentcenter.com - This will assist you with communicating with parents and a place for parents to use.

www.e-bus.com - This site has information on the stages of writing through the development of a student.

www.proteach.com - This site has resources in Language Arts.

www.teacher.com - This site will assist you with all of your teaching concerns. It has information on writing.

www.eduref.org - Teaches different ways to look at educating students.

All of the web sites can be used as a tool or reference for any lesson you may want to include and that you didn't see in this curriculum.

APPENDIX

A- OATH-The Scribes Oath- I believe that I can be the best writer in the world and everything I write is important.



The title 'Scribe Oath' is written in a large, bold, yellow font with a black outline and a drop shadow. The letters are blocky and have a slightly irregular, hand-drawn appearance. The 'S' and 'O' are particularly large and prominent.

B- Newsletter – An example of a newspaper template is at the end of this unit.

C- Reading Books- Scribe Lesson VI and IX

Eating the Alphabet Fruits & Vegetables from A to Z, Lois Ehlert.
Voyager Books, Harcourt Inc. California. 1989 (Scribe Lesson IX)

This is the Way We Go to School A Book About Children Around the World, Edith Baer. Scholastic, New York.1990

What a Wonderful World illustrated by Ashley Bryan, George David Weiss and Bob Thiele. Scholastic, New York.2000