



WRITING PROGRAM



Montfort Learning’s writing programs include **writing, building vocabulary** and **grammar** as part of each session, as all the three components are tightly connected. As children become more skilled in vocabulary and grammar, they also improve in their writing skills. The opposite is also true – writing contributes to growth in phonics, spelling, word recognition, memory, and reading comprehension. Keeping a reading journal together is one way to encourage writing.

Many children enjoy writing their own books. They might make up a completely new story or follow the same pattern as used in a favorite book. For example, a child might make up a story about going on a tiger hunt instead of a bear hunt or put herself in the story instead of the main character.

Helping children become engaged writers

Montfort Learning’s teachers adapt the writing workshop approach used by many teachers in the primary grades. This approach allows a child to experience writing as a process that evolves over time. Parents can serve as the audience for their child’s writing. The writing workshop includes the following steps:

Choosing a topic

The students can decide what they want to write about or get a writing prompt from the teacher. Students can also write based on their own experiences or books they have read.



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Drafting

The child is likely to write several drafts of the same piece. Writing evolves over time so first drafts differ greatly from final ones. During the drafting step, young children may talk and draw as much as they write. Many times their first drafts are quite short. First drafts are likely to have grammatical, spelling, and punctuation mistakes. At this point in the writing process, under teacher's guidance the child will correct these mistakes as she revises, rewrites, and edits subsequent drafts. Teachers support the child by responding to the content of her drafts and asking questions to help her focus on how to express her ideas clearly.



Revising

The child might decide she is no longer interested in the topic she chose or she might decide to expand it. Younger children are likely to make their stories longer. More experienced writers might add to descriptions, move sections, or rewrite sentences or paragraphs. Teachers continue to offer guidance by answering questions, making suggestions, and responding to the child's ideas.

Conferencing

In classroom writing workshops, children discuss their drafts and get encouragement and feedback from teachers and peers. The team assumes a new role by listening, asking questions, and making comments that guide the child to improve writing drafts.

Sharing

This helps children understand how their audience responds to their writing. They learn what the audience understood and what they did not. This helps children make their messages as clear as possible. The teachers and students serve as the audience for a child's writing and encourage the child's family to do the same.

Editing

Older children finalize their drafts by reviewing and correcting errors in punctuation, grammar, and spelling. We ask the child to circle the words she thinks are misspelled. Many children have a visual memory that lets them know that a word is not written conventionally, even if they don't know how to spell it. Teachers encourage the child use a dictionary to look up correct spellings.

Publishing

This step lets the child make the writing available to others. Montfort Learning's program accomplishes this through a newsletter and collection of children's finished work. A child might bind her work with a cover and illustrations and share it with her family and teacher.

When basic writing skills become relatively effortless for students, they can focus less on these basic writing skills and more on developing and communicating their ideas. However, younger writers must typically devote considerable attention to acquiring and polishing these skills before they become proficient. Spelling skills can affect the words students choose because they may be less likely to use words they cannot spell. We also train students to generate strong, interesting sentences that vary in length and complexity in order to convey their intended meaning and engage readers.