

Introducing Booklets



GIVING CAREFUL ATTENTION to our students' work and observing them at work lets us know when they're ready to move beyond a single-page story. The signs are there: on the pages of their Drawing & Writing Books, in their flowing talk during conferences, in the confidence they exude as they make decisions about what to write and how to write it. They show us when they're heading toward more complex, fuller writing, and when we see the signs, we respond by inviting them to write whole stories with many parts in a booklet.

By *booklet* we mean pages of copy paper stapled together with a color cover. It's a format that makes sense for young writers for the following reasons:

It is familiar. It has a cover on which to write a title and their name, and pages inside on which to draw pictures and write words; thus it looks like the picture books they've been reading at school if not well before.

It invites playfulness. If we were to put a group of five-year-olds, some paper, a container of colored pencils, and a stapler in a room together, it wouldn't be long before we'd see pages stapled together

and covered in exquisite, colorful markings, and the children who made them eager to read their stories. Children naturally, playfully, put pages together when given the chance and the tools, so it seems logical to use this affinity for homegrown books to usher them into the world of reading and writing. In *About the Authors: Writing Workshop with Our Youngest Writers* (2004), Katie Wood Ray and Lisa Cleveland suggest that it is this developmentally appropriate act of creating books that gives the work meaning. “Over time and with experience,” they tell us, “we have come to believe that it is the energy of making stuff in a daily writing workshop that drives all our teaching with our youngest writers” (6).

It has a built-in expectation that you have a lot to say on this topic.

Booklets are made up of many pages and therefore show children that stories build, one part upon the next. When we introduce booklets, we begin with five pages, for good reason: fewer than three just isn't booklike; three gives the message stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and although that is true, we want children to see that the middle is much fuller than either of the ends and therefore needs to be filled out; and four pages is too symmetrical. Two end parts with two middle parts just doesn't have the right rhythm. So we start out with a beginning page, an ending page, and three pages for the middle, which gives the story room to build.

Some teachers are concerned at first that five is too many, that some students will be overwhelmed by the number of pages, but we don't find that. Maybe it's because we expect that they have a lot to say and then show them that they do. We get some students telling their stories so all the others can see, and we turn one page for each part as they tell it, just as we do during storytelling sessions. They see that they do have one part to tell on each page, and when they sit down to write, they have a plan for what to do. Some children may not use all five pages, whereas others may choose to add a few more. Either way is okay. Over time, they will decide how many pages they need and staple the booklets together themselves. What is most important is that the format of the booklet says, You have a lot to say about this. Built into the structure of the booklet is an expectation for fullness of information.

It offers a logical structure for teaching elements of craft. The booklet provides a concrete way to address story structure (beginning, middle, middle, middle, end, for example), telling one part on each page, making sure the illustrations and the text go together, and other aspects of craft that have to do with organizing and ordering a cohesive story. They learn that writers make decisions about what to include, what to leave out, and how to put the information on each page so readers will understand and want to keep reading. The booklet allows us to address more sophisticated elements of craft as well. By looking closely at and imitating what other writers and illustrators do, these young writers use elements

of foreshadowing, suspense, and integrity before they ever learn the literary terms. When they use these elements in their writing, we show them what they have done and explain why it makes the piece of writing effective. Having that information will allow them to use it intentionally in another piece of work at another time.

It makes revision easy. Part of crafting a piece of writing means rereading what you've done and making changes so it makes sense. For five- and six-year-olds, revision means adding to or reshaping the picture, crossing out unwanted or indecipherable letters or words, using a caret to insert a missing word, drawing arrows to redirect the reader, or changing whole parts: adding a page or taking a page out. These young writers remove staples when they need to rearrange pages and staple their booklets back together in the order they want them, sometimes with new pages added or pages removed. Moving parts of a story around would be difficult for them if the entire story was written on one single page, but the booklet allows them to manipulate the parts without having to actually “cut” or “rewrite.” The format makes revision doable, logical, and playful.

It lends itself to writing sentences and paragraphs. This may be a by-product of working in booklets, but when children tell one part of a story on each page, they almost always write a complete thought. Teachers often worry about how to teach young children to write in full sentences, yet in these booklets, most children naturally write one sentence per page. Eventually, as they extend the thinking on each page, their simple sentences become elaborated thoughts about one particular idea, and instead of a sentence per page, they're writing a paragraph per page.

As with the Drawing & Writing Book, we have information that we want our students to know about using booklets: where they're kept, how to get them and return them to their places when writing time is finished, how to take them apart and put them together when necessary, and how to do high-quality work on the pages. Since they already do most of these things in their Drawing & Writing Books, we just work this new medium—booklets—into the system that's in place. It is our hope that as children move into booklets, they use what they've acquired through telling one part well to tell many parts of a single story well.

Different Ways to Introduce Booklets

In the following three lessons we model different approaches for introducing booklets to children. In the first, we introduce booklets to the whole class at once. In the second, we model how we might introduce booklets to children individually. Third, we model introducing booklets using our own writing, which will be familiar

because it parallels the way we introduced storytelling using our own stories first.



Lesson Introducing Booklets to the Whole Class: Telling Many Parts of a Story

What's going on in the classroom

- Children are working in their Drawing & Writing Books.
- Some write fluidly and with ease, using drawings and sound spellings.
- Some children are continuing to tell other parts of their stories on subsequent pages, indicating that they have more to say on the topic.

What's next

- They need to know that they have a choice of forms for writing: the Drawing & Writing Book, where they work in depth on one part, or a booklet, where they extend one story, telling many parts.

Materials needed

- sample Drawing & Writing Book with a detailed illustration
- sample booklets, one with unlined pages and one with two lines per page
- *My Dog Rosie*, by Isabelle Harper, illustrated by Barry Moser

This is what I noticed . . .

“Boys and girls, remember the other day when Osvaldo told us that story about how he and his mom drove in her black van to pick up his brother at the mall? He told us that his brother was working at a sports store where they sell sneakers, basketball shirts, footballs, and things, and he and his mom went into his brother’s store and got to see him work for a while. Then, while they were waiting for his brother to finish work, they walked around the mall, they shopped in the stores, and that’s when they saw the big fountain with a lot of pennies on the bottom from people making wishes. Remember that? Then, when his brother finished work, they went food shopping on the way home.

“And here, in your Drawing & Writing Book, Osvaldo, we see you drew and wrote about that story. Here you are at the big fountain and we can see the water coming down the wall—part of the fountain—and then over here, the pool, with all those pennies on the bottom! You even wrote something here. Will you read it to us?” (See Figure 7.1.)

Osvaldo touches each letter—*I T T P P M B*—and reads, “I went to pick up my brother.”

“In the illustration, you show the escalator. Remember that big word Osvaldo used for the moving stairs they have at the mall?”

“And these are the lights,” he says, pointing to the colorful spheres hanging from the ceiling.

“And this is . . .” I point to the larger person and wait for him to finish.

“My mom,” he says, then points to the smaller person. “And this is me.”

“Is this when you’re throwing the pennies into the fountain?”

FIGURE 7.1 Osvaldo: *I went to pick up my brother.*



Osvaldo nods.

“Usually, boys and girls, when you work in your Drawing & Writing Book, you do what Osvaldo did—you tell about one part of a story. And when you tell one part of a story, you can tell a lot about that part. Look at what Osvaldo told about this part of his story where he threw pennies into the fountain. But when you work in your Drawing & Writing Book and tell one part, that means you have to leave parts out. In this picture we don’t see Osvaldo in the sports store watching his brother work. We don’t see Osvaldo and his mom shopping in the stores. We don’t see them at the grocery store and finally at home. There are many parts to that story, but because he had only one page, he told about only one part.

“Sometimes, though, authors want to tell more than just one part. The story is so special, they want to tell many parts. It’s like what Isabelle Harper and Barry Moser do in their book *My Dog Rosie*.”

Let me show you what I mean . . .

“They could have told just about one part, like giving Rosie a bath. But no, they wanted to tell a lot of parts. So they wrote the story in a book with lots of pages, and they put one part on each page: on this page they told the part about feeding Rosie his breakfast, on this page they told the part about giving him a bath, on this page, the part about playing catch, on this page, the part about reading him a story . . . One part on each page, and they tell the whole story.

“Now here’s what I’m wondering. Who thinks they have a story and might want to tell many parts, like Isabelle Harper did—in a book like this?”

I show a booklet. Children raise their hands. Osvaldo is one of them, as I was hoping he would be. (Actually, I was pretty sure he’d volunteer because he was so proud of his story.) I ask him to come up.

“Osvaldo, I’m wondering if you’re going to tell that story about going to the mall to get your brother, or if you have another story in mind.”

I ask him because I am hoping he will want to write about the mall. I want to model how to go from telling about one part in the Drawing & Writing Book to telling all the parts of that same story in a booklet. Since he already told that story and the children are familiar with it, we won’t have to take the time to hear a new story first. However, if he says he wants to write a different story, I am prepared to have him tell it to us. Then I will model how it might sound in a booklet as I turn one page at a time, telling back each part. But I don’t have to do that.

“The mall,” he says.

“Now, I have another question for you. Do you think you’ll want to tell this story on paper with no lines so you can decide where to put the pictures and the words, like this?” I show a sample of blank paper. “Or do you think you’ll want to tell your story on paper that has a space for a picture and space for words, like this?” I show a sample of paper with a few lines.

Osvaldo chooses no lines, and I take one page at a time from the pile as I say each part of the story as he previously told it:

“This first page will be about when you and your mom drove to the mall in your black van to pick up your brother from work. This next page will be about when you went into the sports store where he sells sneakers and footballs and sports stuff and you watched him work. Then the part where you walked around the mall and shopped in the stores while you were waiting for him—and that’s when you saw the fountain. Then this page, the one you wrote about in your Drawing & Writing Book when you threw pennies into the fountain. Then you went back and got your brother, and you stopped at the grocery store on your way home.”

I ask him to select a cover from the three color choices (I want him to have choice but I keep them few so as not to overwhelm him) and, together, we staple the five pages into a book, just three staples, one in the middle and one near either end. I talk about how not to slam the stapler down, but to press down hard and listen for the *buum-buum*-like sound of the stapler fastening. The children are enchanted as they watch the making of a book and listen closely for the *buum-buum*. I retell his story once more, using his words as I turn each blank page.

“It seems like you’re ready to write that whole story, Osvaldo,” I say. “I know you probably will get started on only one page today; it takes a while to write a whole story in a book like that, especially when you work hard to make your illustrations the best they can be and think hard about what you write. If you don’t want to put the title on yet, that’s okay, because sometimes writers just don’t know the title until they’re finished. But remember to write your name on the cover. Okay, you may get started.”

Osvaldo takes his booklet and goes to a table to work.

“Who else thinks they will need one of these booklets today?” I ask. I walk one more child through the telling of his story as I did with Osvaldo.

So, today, as you write . . .

“Boys and girls, today during writing time you have a choice. You can continue in your Drawing & Writing Books telling a part of your story on one page, or you may tell your story in a booklet like this, where you tell many parts. And as you think about your story, remember what Isabelle Harper and Barry Moser did: on each page, they drew and wrote about a different part.

“Who thinks they’re going to work in their Drawing & Writing Book today?”

Some children raise their hands.

“Okay, you may get started,” I say, and about half of them go off to work.

“So it seems like you boys and girls are planning to write in a booklet,” I say to those remaining at the rug.

Because I don’t plan to staple a booklet for every child the way I did for Osvaldo, I ask them to turn toward the writing center. “Okay, let me show you where we’ll keep the booklets.”

Procedure for Getting Booklets

I walk past them to the shelves that house the writing materials, to where the booklets are already made, five pages in each with two different choices of paper—lined and unlined—and three color choices of covers. They are stacked neatly on plastic trays, two high and two wide. (See Figure 7.2.) I ask a child who plans to write a booklet to come up.

“What kind of paper do you want in your booklet, Liliana?” I ask, pointing to the loose paper on the trays. “This kind, with no lines, or this kind, with some lines for writing and some space for drawing?”

She points to the stack of unlined paper on top of one row of trays.

“So Liliana wants a booklet with this kind of paper,” I say, taking a piece of unlined paper from the tray so they all can see, then putting it back. “That means she’ll choose a booklet from this pile.” I point to the stack tray right next to the pile of unlined paper. “Since the paper in this

FIGURE 7.2 The writing center has premade booklets of two kinds of paper.



pile is unlined, that means the booklets in this tray right next to it will have unlined pages. So now," I say in an I'll-bet-you-can-figure-this-one-out voice while taking a piece of paper from the tray below, "since the paper in this pile looks like this"—I hold up the piece—"with two lines for writing and most of the space for drawing, what kind of paper do you think will be in these booklets right next to it?"

"That kind!" they say, pointing to the paper I'm holding.

"This kind of paper. All you have to do is look at the paper in the trays on *this* side"—I point to the stack trays on the right—"and that will help you know what kind of paper is inside the booklets in the trays on *this* side."

By now, most of the children who went back to work at their tables have stopped working and are watching—and that is a good thing. They'll know the procedure when they make the decision to write in a booklet.

"So Liliana, what color cover do you want on your booklet?"

"Red," she says.

"Now, boys and girls, Liliana wants a red cover for her booklet, but when we look at this pile of booklets with unlined pages, green is on top. Do you see one with a red cover, Liliana?"

She nods and points to one, way down in the pile.

"Now, I know that if I was about to start a story in a booklet today and I really wanted a red cover, I would want to take the one way down there with the red cover, so here's what you need to remember. You may take the color cover you want, but you have a responsibility to make sure that you leave the pile nice and neat for the next person." I look at Liliana. "Do you think you can do that?"

She reaches right in to get the red-covered booklet, and as she does, I say what I see, just as I did when I introduced the Drawing & Writing Books:

"Look at how carefully she's sliding that booklet out and holding the other books with her other hand so they don't fall on the floor," and "Do you see how she put her booklet down on the shelf and she's straightening the pile for the next person?"

"So, boys and girls, when I call your name, you may come over and get a booklet. I know you'll do just what Liliana did, take the booklet out carefully and make sure the pile is nice and neat for the next person.

"Don't forget, as soon as you get to your place to work, put your name on the cover of your book, because all authors' names are on the covers of the books they write."

Why we chose this book

My Dog Rosie illustrates the idea of one part on each page simply and clearly. Also, the children know the book well, so we didn't have to read it during the lesson.

Suggested other books

- *Ginger*, by Charlotte Voake
- *Matthew and Tilly*, by Rebecca C. Jones, illustrated by Beth Peck
- *My Cats Nick and Nora*, by Isabelle Harper, illustrated by Barry Moser

When we decided to introduce this lesson, all the children were working (happily) in their Drawing & Writing Books. Because one of our goals is to help children move from telling one part to writing full stories with many parts, and because we noticed that some children were doing this naturally, we decided to introduce the option of telling their stories in booklets. This lesson worked fine.

What we prefer, however, is to introduce booklets to individual children when we see they're ready. By *ready* we mean a combination of these things: they're beginning to tell multipart stories in their Drawing & Writing Books, they have a lot to say about a particular topic during a conference, and they write and draw independently and with confidence. Introducing booklets gradually makes sense because it allows us to meet children where they are and helps them see the purpose for this format.

Typically, when we introduce booklets to the whole class, many children want one. They want to try the new booklet whether or not they have a story that needs to be told on many pages, and why wouldn't they—the booklets are beautiful! But when individual children ease their way into booklets because their writing would be best told in that medium soon, the whole class learns that the booklets are yet another choice they'll make as writers. We offer the option of a booklet to another child, and to another, and another, and by the time we talk about them to the whole class, they're already familiar with what the booklet is and why they might want to use one. We have also found that when we introduce booklets this way, children tend to move back and forth freely between the two options—the Drawing & Writing Book and the booklet—choosing the medium that best suits the work they plan to do that day. For the most part, we don't see a frenzied whipping their way through booklets and competing to see who has the most.

Introducing a Booklet to an Individual Student During a Conference

We said earlier that we prefer to introduce booklets gradually, when a child's energy for the topic is so overflowing during a conference that it causes us to say something like, "Boy, you sure have a lot to say about ——. It seems you could write a whole book about that." At those moments I get up and go to the writing center to get some paper, a color cover, and the stapler and bring them back to the child's table:

"I'm just imagining this story as a book, where, instead of telling one part as you're doing here in your Drawing & Writing Book, you could tell all the parts," I say, laying the colored paper cover on top of the pages, unstapled. "It would sound something like this."

I clasp my hand around the edge of the pages where the staples would go, and as I turn each page, I retell the child's story, one page

for each part, the way the child has told it to me. Kids nearby look up and pay attention.

“You know, all the boys and girls are going to have a chance to write stories in books like these,” I say, “but I’m thinking that if you wanted to try writing your story in a booklet now, you could. Actually you could use this plain paper just like the Drawing & Writing Book, or you could tell it on paper like this, that has a space for drawing and some lines for the words. And we could staple it here so it would open like this. What do you think?”

Sometimes children are so eager, they can’t wait to get their hands on the booklet and get started; other times they’re unsure about this new idea. In that case I place the pages off to the side and say, “I’m going to leave these pages here in case you decide you want to write a booklet.”

Other times, a child who is totally happy in her Drawing & Writing Book might dig her heels in when you try to move her on to a new place. Cynthia did that. She was a confident writer, drawing pictures that had full stories around them and writing letters and words with ease. So after she told me her story, I said, “Now, I understand this part about the birthday party when you’re singing ‘Happy Birthday’ to your cousin, and I also understand that you have many other parts to that story. It seems like you could write a book about your cousin’s party!” She looked at me, determined. I knew that her teacher had suggested that she write a story in a booklet a couple of times, but Cynthia wasn’t interested. I got up and went to the writing center and got a booklet—one without lines to keep the pages similar to the type of page she is used to working on (even though I thought she could and, I believe, *should* have been writing on lines!) because I didn’t want to overwhelm her by introducing too many different things at once.

Sitting down next to her I placed the booklet between us and started right in. “I can imagine there would be a title here—something about the birthday party or your cousin or this special day,” I said, and I quickly turned the cover to the first page. “Then let’s see, what did you tell me first? Oh yes, it was about how you drove to your cousin’s house.” I turned the page. “Then you all went outside to play—all the cousins were there.” I turned the page. “Then you came in and opened the presents”—I turned the page—she was watching me with trepidation—“and then you sang ‘Happy Birthday’ and she blew out the candles and you had cake.” I gave back her words so she could see how her whole story might look, but I had no intention of pushing this. I just wanted to make it sound so good that she’d find it irresistible. “What a story!” I said. “That may be one you decide to write someday.” Then I took the book and said, “I’m going to put this booklet back on the shelf in the writing center. That way, you’ll know just where they are if you need one.”

It was important not to push Cynthia into putting her Drawing & Writing Book aside and writing a booklet. She wasn’t willing to give it up right then, and I sensed that. There may come a time

where a child is so reluctant or adamant that we have to say, “Today I want you to try this,” but that wasn’t the case here. I know that, as long as I keep modeling how a story might look in this extended format, and as long as their classmates are writing in booklets, they’ll eventually make that choice themselves. Cynthia did the following day!

On the other hand, Christopher was one who was eager to get started. It was December when he began his first story in a booklet, and he returned to it with gusto when school resumed after the break. In early January, I used Christopher’s booklet-in-process to talk to the others about writing booklets.



Lesson Introducing Booklets to the Whole Class After They’ve Gradually Been Introduced

What’s going on in the classroom

- Children are writing in Drawing & Writing Books.
- Some children have begun to tell stories in booklets.

What’s next

- All the children need to know that they can tell their stories in the Drawing & Writing Books or in booklets.

Materials needed

- one child’s Drawing & Writing Book opened to a page where the child has drawn a detailed picture and written some words to tell about the picture
- one child’s booklet where he has told many parts, one part on each page
- visible access to the Writing Center where materials are kept

This is what I noticed . . .

“Boys and girls, I noticed, when I was looking at Taleaha’s Drawing & Writing Book, that she has this story about when she first met Ms. McArdle.”

I hold up her book, open to the page. (See Figure 7.3.)

“Here I see Ms. McArdle and Taleaha sitting at the kidney-shaped table, that table right there in this classroom. It looks so real in this picture. And here I see the pillow in the listening center. And over here I see Ms. McArdle’s chair on wheels. All that information in the picture helps readers know just what it looked like in this classroom when you were sitting down with your teacher, Taleaha. It does look like this classroom, doesn’t it?”

“And here she wrote some words,” I say, pointing to the text. “Taleaha, would you read those to us?”

Taleaha comes up and touches the words she wrote as she reads her story: “Me and Ms. McArdle was reading together.” (*Me Nad Ms. McArdle WaZ Red together.*)

“So you and Ms. McArdle were reading together! And here you are, Taleaha,” I say, pointing to the figure I’m guessing is Taleaha, “and here’s Ms. McArdle. I can tell you apart by your hair!”

FIGURE 7.3 Taleaha: *Me and Ms. McArdle was reading together.*



“Boys and girls, Taleaha told about that one part about coming to kindergarten and about meeting Ms. McArdle, and I’ll bet it was because that was special to her. Was it, Taleaha?”

She nods.

“That’s what you’ve been doing all year in your Drawing & Writing Books. You think of your story and you choose one part to write about on the page in your book. Now, sometimes boys and girls have longer stories to write, so they write in booklets.”

Let me show you what I mean . . .

“You know that Christopher has been working in a booklet,” I say as I hold his booklet up. “He’s writing this book about playing with his brother, and look . . . On the cover he has written his name. When we look at books, we usually see the author’s name on the cover, don’t we?” I point to books right there in the library as a way to align the writers in this class with published writers. “Christopher put his name on the cover of the book he’s writing. He also stamped the date on the cover. That way he will always know when he wrote this book.

“Inside, Christopher tells many things he and his brother did: On this page he tells about . . . On this page he tells about . . . On this page he tells about . . . I imagine Christopher decided to write in a booklet because he had so many parts of the story—he didn’t want to tell just one, he wanted to tell many. I also notice that each page is about one important part. He does just what authors do when they write a book: he tells many parts, but he puts only one part on each page. Then, when we read the story, we understand the whole thing because it has all the parts. Well, not all the parts, because Christopher decides which parts he wants to put in and he gets to decide which parts to leave out, too.

“Also, Christopher knows that when an author writes a book, he doesn’t do it in one day. Not even in two days. Look at this: Christopher

started this story on January 4. Today is January 7, so that means he’s been working on it for . . . let’s see,” I say, holding up one finger for each day, “January fourth, fifth, sixth, and now, today is the seventh—three days. Today will be the fourth! And he’s probably not going to finish today because there are still a few pages left. He is taking his time, working hard on the illustrations, and thinking carefully about what to write on each page, because he wants to make it the best it can be so that readers can understand and enjoy his story.”

So, today as you write . . .

“So, boys and girls, you might be thinking that you have a story with many parts and you don’t want to tell about just one part, you want to tell it all. Now you can. From now on, you have two ways you can tell your story during writing time: you can tell it in a booklet, with many parts, or you can tell it in your Drawing & Writing Book, choosing one part.

“I wonder what Taleaha will decide to do today. Maybe she’ll work on this page again today, putting in other things. Maybe she is finished with this page and she’ll turn to the next page and tell a part of a new story. Maybe she’ll say, ‘I have a story with many parts and I want to tell it in a booklet.’ And maybe sometime, Taleaha will decide she wants to tell the whole story about coming to kindergarten. Instead of telling this one part about sitting with Ms. McArdle like she did here, she may want to write a whole book about it where she tells all the parts. My goodness, there are so many choices.

“Taleaha, what do you plan to do today?” I ask, holding up the page in her Drawing & Writing Book. “Continue on this page, go on to the next page, or start a booklet?”

Taleaha says she wants to start a booklet. I am prepared with single sheets of the two choices of paper I plan to offer—one with two lines and one with no lines—and three different colors of paper for covers. I ask her to come up.

What will your story will be about?” I ask.

“Ballet,” she says without hesitation.

“Tell us about ballet,” I say eagerly, and she recounts going to ballet lessons and doing exercises with the teacher and with her friends. I tell it back, raising five fingers, one at a time for each part. She agrees that I understand the story, and I ask her which kind of paper she’d like, lined or unlined, and count out five pages. Then I ask her what color she’d like for a cover and employ her help as I model for the boys and girls how to staple the pages together (as described in the previous lesson).✉ I then “read” the blank pages of her story, turning one page as I retell each part. She’s itching to get her hands on it, and I remind her as she heads off, “Don’t forget to put your name on the cover!”

I look at the children on the rug. “Christopher, I’ll bet I know what you plan to do today!” I say next, and he comes up, takes his booklet from my hand, and goes off to a table.

“Today, boys and girls, as you start writing, here’s what I want you to ask yourself:

✉ Note to the Teacher
Although we showed Taleaha how to staple her booklet, we didn’t put the stapler out so the children could staple their own books that day.
Some children, of course, know how to use the stapler already, so we will most likely enlist their help as we model for all of them: how to use the stapler so it won’t jam, how to put only three staples in and where to put them, and where in the room they may do the stapling (these will be mini-lessons of their own). These “little things” are actually “big” things in the working of a classroom. <i>Nothing is too small to mention</i> has become our motto, and modeling and talking through how to use the stapler before we put it out for them to use independently is one of those small but big lessons that we don’t want to rush.

- “Do I have a story that is so important that I want to tell all the parts? If you do, you will probably decide to write a book, like Taleaha and Christopher.
- “Do I have a story where I want to work on one part? If so, then you will probably work in your Drawing & Writing Book.
- “Do I want to go back to a page in my Drawing & Writing Book that I was working on yesterday because I have more to do and I want to make it better?”
- “Do I want plan to continue in the booklet that I started?”

I then show them the procedure for getting booklets as described in the previous lesson, and dismiss them.

Again, as when we introduced the Drawing & Writing Books, this lesson seems long—and it is. The children barely have a chance to get started in their booklets because of all the procedural things we want to set in place, but that, we believe, is a good thing. It gives them a chance to just begin a story that they will continue, thus setting the stage for conversation about how to continue in a booklet.



Lesson Rereading Your Work: Helping Readers Understand Your Story

What's going on in the classroom

- The option of using a booklet has been introduced to the whole class.
- Some children continue to use the Drawing & Writing Book.
- Most children who chose booklets wrote one or two pages. One child filled all the pages. Some began working on the cover.

What's next

- Children need to know how to continue in the booklet, since the format is different from the Drawing & Writing Book. They need to be shown how to reread what they've done and consider what else they could do to help the reader understand, and then what to do as they go to the next page.

Materials needed

- student Drawing & Writing Book with a page carefully done, where the child may still have more to add
- student booklet, preferably one where the child has worked on only one page and has more to do on that page

This is what I noticed . . .

“Boys and girls, yesterday we talked about different ways you might choose to tell your story during writing time: in your Drawing & Writing Book, or in a booklet. Today, I want to talk about how you continue to work in a booklet if you started one yesterday.”

Let me show you what I mean . . .

“You already know how to continue in the Drawing & Writing Book. When you leave the rug and get your Drawing & Writing Book, you open to the page you were working on yesterday, look at that page, and ask yourself some questions:

- “What other information do I need to include so readers will understand my story?”
- “What do I need to add to the picture?”
- “What words do I want to write?”

“Then you put that information in the picture or you add words, so your story is the best it can be. When you’ve made it your best, you start a new page in your Drawing & Writing Book.

“Yesterday, Jazmine worked in her Drawing & Writing Book.” I show Jazmine’s page and ask her to come up. She points to the parts of the drawing and tells about going with her mom to Target.

“Now, Jazmine,” I say, “one thing a writer asks herself is, What else do I need on this page so readers will understand my story? So can you look at your page and read it and ask yourself, What else can I put on this page so that readers will understand my story?”

Jazmine looks at the page. “Put more in the picture?” she asks, as if searching for the answer she thinks I want.

“Yes, a writer might add some more to the picture. What else will you add to the picture?” I press, and she says she will draw the lunch boxes and the boxes of pencils and the backpack with sparkles, the one she actually bought.

“And then a writer asks herself, What words might I add to the page? I say. What words will you write on this page?”

“Me and my mom went to Target,” she says moving her finger across the top of the page.

“So here, you will add some more things to the shelves so we know what you were looking at,” I say, giving back what she has just told us, “and up here, you’ll put the words?”

She nods.

“You know how to do that, don’t you, boys and girls?” I say, turning to the children on the rug. “You know how to go back and look at what you worked on yesterday and ask yourself those questions that writers ask. And you know what? If you are working in a booklet, you do the same thing. If you started a booklet yesterday, this is what you do when you sit down to write.

“Open your booklet to the first page of the story and ask yourself, What other information do I need to include so readers will understand my story?”

“Look at your picture and ask, What do I need to add to the picture?”

“If you wrote words, look at the words and ask, What other words do I want to write?”

“Then add that information to your picture or write words so your story makes sense and it’s your best. Or maybe you want to change something in your picture or change the words you wrote. Then you turn the page. If there is anything on that page, you do the same thing: What do I need to add to the picture or what do I need to change? What words do I want to write or change?”

“If there’s nothing on that next page, ask yourself, And then what happened? and tell what happened in the next part of your story.”

“For example, Taleaha started her booklet yesterday. Remember the story she told us she was going to write—about ballet? Taleaha, why don’t you come up here.” Taleaha comes and stands next to me.

“When Taleaha goes to her place to work today, she’ll first look at the cover of her booklet to make sure her name is on it.” I point to her name on the cover. “Then, she’ll open it and look at what she did yesterday. She’ll look at the picture”—I point—“and she’ll read the words she wrote, ‘Me and Tai was exercising,’ [*menadTAiwazaciZ*] and she’ll ask herself, What do I need to do so readers will understand my story?”

“She’ll look at that picture carefully and ask herself, Do I have all the information I need in this picture? What do you need to do to this picture, Taleaha, so readers will understand your story?”

“The floor,” she says, pointing to the space underneath the ballerina.

“Then she’ll read the words and ask, What else do I need to add to the words, or what words do I need to change so readers will understand? What do you need to do to the words, Taleaha?”

Taleaha looks carefully at the words. I sense she may be confused, maybe thinking about what she should add because she thinks I want her to add something. I don’t, necessarily. My goal is to teach her to ask that question of herself as she rereads her words from the previous day. I try to put her at ease.

“Why don’t you read what you wrote,” I say.

“Me and Tai was exercising,” she says, pointing to the words.

“Do you want to change any of that?”

She shakes her head.

“So once Taleaha has added the floor and anything else she decides to put in this picture,” I say to the children sitting on the rug, “she’ll turn the page and do the same thing.”

I turn the page. “There’s nothing on the next page, so she’ll ask herself, And then what happened? and she’ll draw and write the next part.”

So, today as you write . . .

“So, today, boys and girls, whether you are working in your Drawing & Writing Book or a booklet, you do the same thing. When you sit down to write, open your book, read the page or pages you worked on yesterday, and think about those questions that writers ask: What other information do I need to include so readers will understand my story? What do I need to add to the pictures so readers will understand? What words do I need to add so readers will understand? And when you’ve made them your best, you move on to the next page.”

Introducing Booklets Using Our Own Writing

Another way we’ve introduced booklets is to use our own writing as a model. We start by telling a story, “one we like so much that we

want to tell many parts,” then begin to draw in an enlarged booklet as we think out loud, right there at the easel. Just as we modeled putting our story down on the first page of the Drawing & Writing Book, our students hear our idea for a booklet, listen as we tell the story, watch as we plan out the parts we’ll put on each page, and see us get started with the drawing on the first page. Even though we didn’t include this entire lesson here, we mention it for two reasons: one, because we think it is an important lesson to present during the early days of booklet introductions (if not the first day), as it provides yet another opportunity for our students to see us as writers, and two, when we refer to our booklet later in this chapter, it is based on having presented this lesson.

When presenting our own story, we use an enlarged booklet so they all can see, keep the topic ordinary and everyday, and keep the information on each page simple. “Alexandra and Jessica came to my house for an overnight / We played on the hammock / We played hide-and-go seek / We made cookies / We read stories in bed . . .” is a topic that they can all relate to and one for which the illustrations and words can be simple on each page.

Over time, we’ve introduced booklets in each of the ways presented here (and then some) with different groups of children, and each one worked. In other words, there is no one right way. We expect that the decisions teachers make about how and when to introduce booklets are based on what they know and see and understand about their students at that point.

Then, once the booklets are presented, we need to think about where they will be kept and how children will get them. At first, as children began working in booklets, they’d slip the booklet inside their Drawing & Writing Book at the end of writing time. This was a choice Caitlin McArdle and Megan Sinclair made because they didn’t want to create a division among the writers—those with folders, those without folders—during this transition into booklets. But we knew that as they finished a second and then a third booklet, slipping them inside the Drawing & Writing Book wasn’t going to work. They would need an official place to keep them, and the folders were prepared and ready to go. In four colors—red, blue, green, and yellow—the folders matched the color of the name strip on each child’s Drawing & Writing Book as well as the plastic file that housed them. It was a matter of adding the folders to a system that was already in place.

As we’ve noted throughout this book, we give students messages all the time about how we value them and their work. The systems we set up for where children will keep their work is a consistent message. They know that we care about their writing when we provide beautiful folders where the writing will stay neat and organized and containers in which to place those folders so that they are easily accessible to both student and teacher.



Lesson Writing Folder: A Place to Keep Your Writing

What's going on in the classroom

- Some children have begun writing stories in booklets, and until now, they've slipped their booklet inside their Drawing & Writing Book at the end of writing time.

What's next

- They need a specific place to hold the stories they write in booklets.

Materials needed

- two-pocket folders with gusset (fasteners in the center), in four colors, the colors divided evenly among the students
- folder inserts (samples of these are in Figures 7.4a-7.4d and Appendix G)

This is what I noticed . . .

“Writers have places where they keep their work so they’ll always know where it is. You writers in this classroom have a place where we keep your Drawing & Writing Books, right here on these shelves, in these colorful files. And you know that if your Drawing & Writing Book has a red label with your name, you keep it in the red file, and if your Drawing & Writing Book has a blue label, you keep it in the blue file, and the same for green and yellow. We do that so when it is time to write, you know where to get your book quickly and can get to work.

My Finished Writing	
1	2
3	4
5	6

FIGURE 7.4A Using pictures and/or words, children record the titles of their finished pieces of writing in the boxes.


My Ideas for Writing 	
1	2
3	4
5	6

FIGURE 7.4B Using pictures and/or words, children record their ideas for writing.

“Also, some of you have been telling your stories in booklets, and you’ve been keeping your booklets inside your Drawing & Writing Book. That has been a good idea so far, but as you write more and more, your booklets will be spilling out of that Drawing & Writing Book—it will be a mess! So you’ll need a special place to put your booklets where they’ll be nice and neat and in order so you’ll be able to find them easily. Today I’m going to give you a writing folder and show you some things about this special place for your stories.”

Let me show you what I mean . . .

I show the folder. “Your folder will be the same color as your Drawing & Writing Book. So if your name is in yellow on your Drawing & Writing Book, you’ll have a yellow folder, and if your name is in green, your folder will be green. The same for blue and red.”

I open the folder and explain:

- “The folder has two pockets and some pages in the center, which we’ll talk about at another time.
- “In this front pocket you’ll keep the story you’re working on on.
- “When you finish, you’ll put your story in the back pocket.
- “Then, what do you think you’ll do?”

The children respond, “Get another book!”

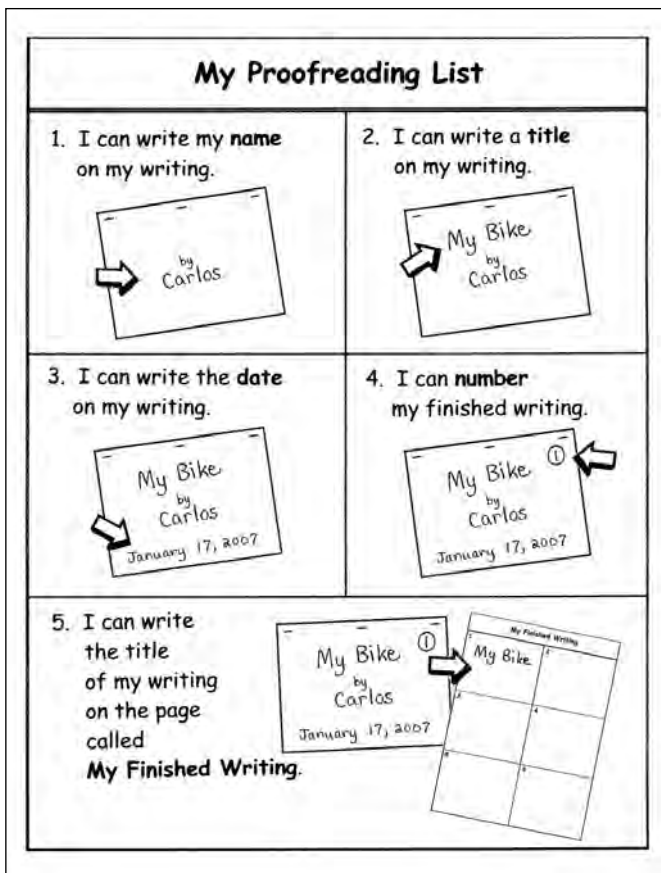


FIGURE 7.4C When a piece of writing is finished, children read each item on the list and check to make sure they have done each item.

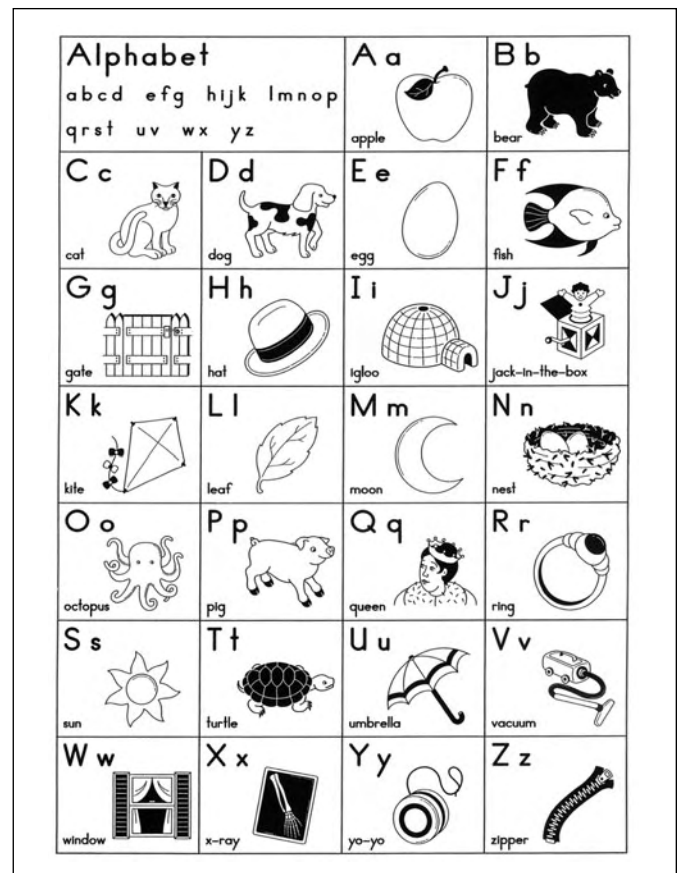



FIGURE 7.4D Children use this alphabet linking chart as a resource when writing words independently. They learn how to use it during interactive writing lessons.

 Note to the Teacher
<p>In this lesson the children's names were not on the folders when we gave them out. That is because the teacher had planned to meet with children at other times during the day to show them how to write their names beautifully on the covers so they could see them easily. Whether teachers write the children's names on the folders themselves or have the children do it doesn't matter. What matters is that each child's name is visible from the files where they are kept, so children can find them easily.</p>

"Yes, you get another book and begin your next story. And that new book you're working on will go right here, in the front pocket.

"Let me tell you one thing about these pages in the center. These are to help you keep track of your stories and all of the things you know how to do as a writer. As you keep writing and doing new things, I will show you why these pages are in the folder. For now, don't worry about them, and don't write on them yet.✉

"So now, when it's writing time, you will come to the writing center just as you usually do and get your Drawing & Writing Book. Your new folder will be here, too, but if you're working in your Drawing & Writing Book, you won't need the folder yet. Just take the Drawing & Writing Book to your workplace, as you usually do, and get started.

"Boys and girls who are working in a booklet will do something different. When you go to the writing center, you are going to take your Drawing & Writing Book *and* your new folder. This is where you'll be keeping your booklets from now on. When you get to your workplace, open your Drawing & Writing Book and take the booklets out. If you have finished a story, put it in the back pocket of the writing folder. Then close the folder and put it on your table, next to where you're working. Then put your Drawing & Writing Book back in the proper file. When you get back to your seat, just continue work in your booklet and do your best. When you hear the music that lets you know writing time is over, you'll put the booklet you're working on in the *front* pocket, put your folder in the container that matches the color of your folder, then come to the rug."

I ask a child who has begun writing in booklets to come up and model how to take her stories out, return the Drawing & Writing Book to the file, put her finished story (or stories) in the back pocket, and leave out the one she is working on.

"Now you will always know where your writing is, which pieces you have finished, and which one you are working on. And, in this beautiful, new folder, they will stay nice and neat."

So, today as you write . . .

"So if you are working in a booklet and you keep your writing in a red file, get your Drawing & Writing Book and take your new folder—it's right in the file—and when you get to your workplace, organize your booklets the way we just talked about and then continue with your work. If you keep your work in a blue file . . . green . . . yellow . . . you may go. If you're working in your Drawing & Writing Book, you know what to do."

Teaching the procedure for keeping booklets in folders and how to get and return the folders is crucial, and is made much easier because students already have a system in place for getting and returning their Drawing & Writing Books.

We've learned as we've watched students use this new medium that they don't always understand how the booklet is different from the Drawing & Writing Book. We did the following lesson because we thought children needed to see that booklets are for telling a lot of information about one thing.



Lesson A Story Is About One Thing

What's going on in the classroom

- About half of the children are working in Drawing & Writing Books.
- The others are working in booklets.
- Some who have chosen a booklet write about something different on each page (which is what they were doing in the Drawing & Writing Book).

What's next

- They need to know that a story is about one thing. They need a vision for what that means.

Materials needed

- teacher's enlarged Drawing & Writing Book
- teacher's enlarged booklet with several pages finished and the last page needing some work
- colored pencils for drawing

This is what I noticed . . .

"You've been making choices about how you want to tell your story, in the Drawing & Writing Book or in a booklet. When you write in your Drawing & Writing Book, you tell about one part, like Luis did yesterday. He's telling the part about jumping on the bed with his brother. Everything on that page is about that one thing: here's the bed, he's jumping on it with his brother next to him, and since it's in his bedroom, here's his nightstand and a picture on the wall.

"If you write in a booklet, the way Samantha did yesterday, you tell a part of the story on each page but the whole story is about one thing. Each page in Samantha's story tells something about when she and her mom went to the store.

"Remember yesterday, how I started to write my book about taking care of my nieces? Well, yesterday when I went home I worked on it."

Let me show you what I mean . . .

I read my story to them, page by page, pointing out things in the drawing that I want them to notice and touching the words as I read them. When I get to the fourth page, I add something little to the drawing, then say the words slowly, modeling how I'm listening for the sounds as I write the last three words of the sentence I had begun.

"Now, I ask myself as I turn the page, And then what happened?"

I explain what I plan to do next, using my hand to show them where different parts of the drawing will go, and begin drawing. I don't do the whole drawing—I don't even do most of it—and I don't write the words, although I tell them what I think the words will be. I leave my thoughts tentative, modeling that there is always room for rethinking when I'm in the process of getting my story down. I'm also letting them know that this isn't something I do quickly.

"You know, boys and girls, it takes a long time to write a story like this and to make sure that it's about just one thing. I sure didn't do it quickly. I worked on it after school and again after supper, then right before I went to bed, and again this morning when I was eating breakfast. Each time I went back to it, I had to make sure I kept telling all

about taking care of my nieces. And it's not even finished. Now, you won't be working on your story after school and at home because you don't take your stories home; you work on them here at school. So each day you'll have to go back and look carefully to be sure your whole story is about one thing."

So, today in your writing . . .

"Today, you'll be making a choice about what you're going to do. If you're working in a booklet, like Samantha, you will go back and read what you wrote, like I did with my story, and ask yourself, Now, what else do I need to put in here so readers will understand this one story I'm trying to tell? And as you're working in a booklet, you want to make sure that all the pages tell parts of the same story."

Booklets were introduced to the class in the belief that children had stories with many parts and that they had strategies for drawing pictures with details and writing words using sound spellings so readers could understand their stories. But not all children choose booklets for our reasons. With all those pages and the beautiful color covers, booklets can be enticing, and children can get caught up in that, as Hector helped us to see.

Moving Freely Between the Booklets and the Drawing & Writing Books

In the early days of our work with kindergarten teachers in Boston, Hector (and others) taught us that it is through the Drawing & Writing Book that children gain confidence and acquire the tools they need to write stories in books. In January 2000 when we began, we had no such thing as a Drawing & Writing Book. We moved from oral storytelling right into five-page booklets and quickly found that the booklet wasn't working for some children.

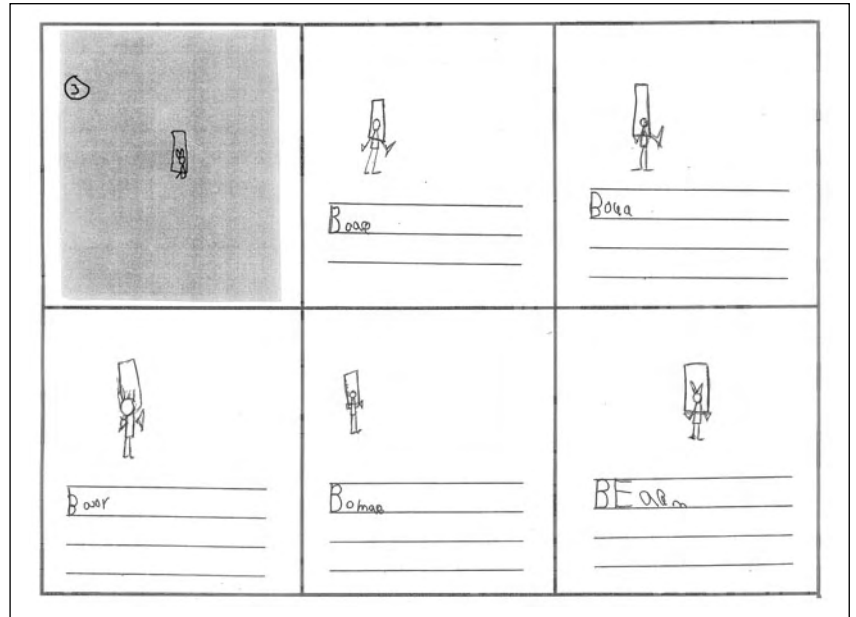
Hector was one of them. He chose a booklet on the day we introduced them, and two weeks later he was putting finishing touches on his story that looked like Figure 7.5.

It's not uncommon to see this type of thing once children have begun work in booklets, and Hector had a folder full of them. There was the book called "Fish," and on every page was the same sketch of the same tiny fish with the word *fish* underneath, everything done in the same color crayon. There was the book called "Car" and the book called "Truck." On this particular day it was book number ten: "Bear."

"Done!" he exclaimed as he scratched his last *baer* onto the page and closed the booklet. He stuffed it in the back pocket of his folder and announced to everyone at his table, "I'm on eleven!"

What Hector was doing was delightfully five-year-old: modeling each story after the previous one, whipping through one story after the next, and acquiring as many books as he could. But he was also instructing us in what we needed to pay attention to. Did he lack a

FIGURE 7.5 Hector: *Bear, bear, bear, bear, bear.*



sense of story? Did he not have an understanding of how to tell his story so that it continued on each page? Was the idea of drawing *and* writing just too overwhelming? In thinking about how to give him the support he needed, we named what he could do as a writer. Hector

- could draw about what he knows (he had done it previously);
- knew a handful of letters and the sounds they represented; and
- was attempting some sound spelling on his own.

What he needed, we thought, was to know how to draw stories with detailed information and include letters and words independently.

So we conferred with him, trying to find out what he knew—about fish, about bears—and we watched to see what influence our conferences had on his writing. We conferred with children working near him, knowing that sometimes the information that children overhear from another conference makes a difference in their work. And we watched to see if his writing was at all changed after he had listened to stories that other children shared. These attempts didn't seem to have much influence. Yes, he was being playful with the booklets, and we let him be that way for a while, yet at the same time, we wanted to be sure he knew how to find and represent his own stories in ways that revealed him, his interests, his expertise. We wanted him, and others who listened to his stories, to hear his voice and take his writing seriously.

So the day after Hector put his name on the cover of booklet number eleven, we presented a mini-lesson about how “writers need to use the kind of paper that will help them tell the best stories they can; for some it is a booklet, for others it might be something like this . . .,” and we showed them the spiral-bound book that we would come to call the Drawing & Writing Book. Hector (and four or five other children) seized the opportunity to work in one of those beautiful new spiral-bound books with pages of unlined paper where you

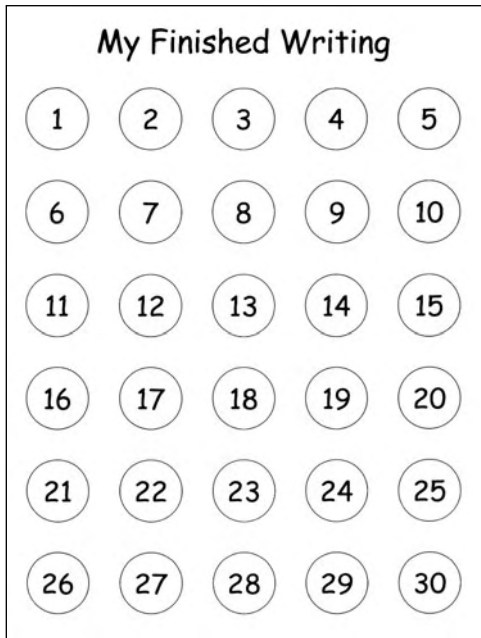


FIGURE 7.10 My Finished Writing: This page is attached to the inside cover of the Drawing & Writing Book. When the student finishes a page of the Drawing & Writing book, he or she colors in the numbered circle for that page. This requires that the pages in the Drawing & Writing Book are numbered.

Kindergarten Class List	
Albana	Marciana
David	Marisol
Devianna	Michael
Ezedequias	Mohammed
Gus	Niyara
I mani	Osvaldo
Jahaan	Samantha
Jazmine	Shammala
Jelyia	Taleaha
John	Tyriq
Lynasia	Yanniel

FIGURE 7.11 List of student names. The children use this list of classmates' names as a resource when writing words independently. They learn how to use it during interactive writing lessons.

draw part of a story on one page. Hector worked independently for the entire writing time that day and shared his page with the class during the share session. (See Figure 7.6 in the color insert.)

Through this illustration and the story he told around it, Hector showed us that he did, in fact, have an understanding of story and the ability to tell it with specific information. What he put on one page was very different from what he put on each page of his booklets. Most likely, it was because he had the chance to focus on one aspect—drawing—and the whole thing was contained on one page. Chances are, he didn't feel pressure to get to the next page and the next and the next. We noted that he didn't include any text as he worked independently, which seemed to indicate that he didn't have the same ease with text that he had with drawing. Over time as we continued to support him as a writer by acknowledging his oral stories and drawings along with helping him acquire strategies for hearing and recording sounds, he gained fluency in representing his story with letters, words, and sentences. This added instruction—aimed at meeting his particular needs—paid off. (See Figures 7.7, 7.8, and 7.9 in the color insert.)

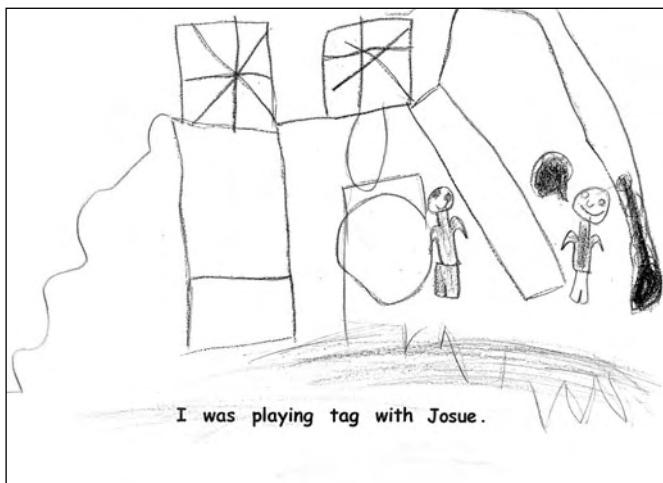
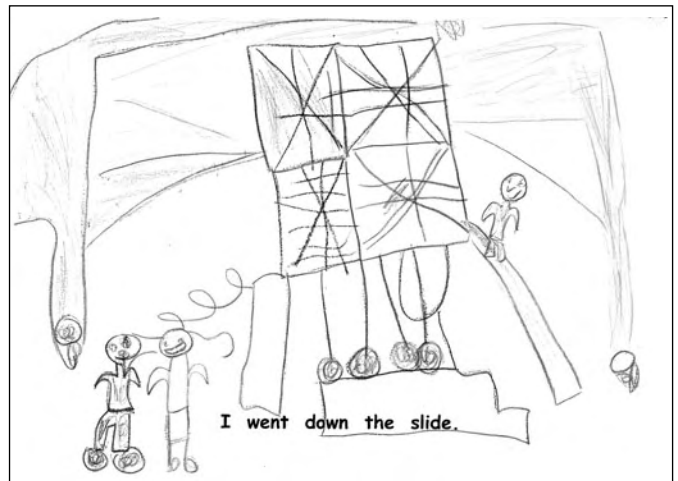
Although once we introduce booklets, we allow the children to choose the medium they want to work in, we find there are times when we need to usher some children away from them, to a medium in which they can do better-quality work.

For example, as we looked at Crystal's work, we saw random letters, and each time she told us the story, it had changed a bit. She didn't know letters and sounds in a way that she could represent them with ease, yet she wanted to write letters because she saw her peers writing letters on their pages. We knew she would be better off working in the Drawing & Writing Book, and we found the right moment to tell her so. "I want you to work in your Drawing & Writing Book for now because I think that on a page like this, you can do your best work" can be a relief to a child who is not clear about how letters and words and booklets work. In the language of Alfie Kohn (1998), we give a "working with" message, *I'm with you here and I want to make it possible for you to be successful*, rather than a "doing to" message, *I'm sending you back to the Drawing & Writing Book because you aren't able to work in a booklet*. They're not going back; they're using the medium that will allow them to do their best work as we help them build the foundation for fluid, crafted writing.

Teachers show their students that they continue to value the Drawing & Writing Book even as more and more children spend more and more time working in booklets by occasionally giving children a brand-new one, or changing some physical feature so it feels different. They may include a recording sheet on which to keep track of pages completed (see Figure 7.10); attach an alphabet linking chart (as in Figure 7.4d); or a list of classmates' names inside the back cover as references (see Figure 7.11); or provide a new clip to mark the page. These features make the second Drawing & Writing Book inviting, "grown-up," and compelling enough for them to want to continue to do good work on the pages inside.

With the time and space to strengthen what they know about letters, sounds, and words, and with the support to help them integrate that knowledge with their detailed drawings, we make it possible for children to be writers of stories that are personally meaningful and filled with voice as Hector's was, when, at the end of that kindergarten year, he found his way back into a booklets and eventually published (see Figure 7.12).

FIGURE 7.12 The published piece: "The Park," by Hector.



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