Let's Write

Version 1.4
For the WwATC
August 2026

GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN DIFFERENT GROUPS

These guidelines are provided to assist people to think about how to write with students in different groups on the Writing with All Tools Continuum. They are simply designed to be a guideline. We recognise that they cannot be definitive or prescriptive as there are a lot of variables involved - but we hope they are helpful.

Supporting writers who are at A.1 to A.3 on the Writing with All Tools Continuum

Students at A1 to A3 are still developing an understanding that they are a writer and/or they don't understand that there is a difference between print and picture. They need an opportunity to scribble with print and have us attribute meaning and assume competence - which then teaches them that print has meaning, that text is a code for speech and that we believe they are a writer. We also give them lots of positive reinforcement because they need to develop a strong self-image of themselves as a writer. Students at this level are also often receptive communicators and are gradually building engagement with the writing process.
Suggested guidelines are:

1. Select a topic for writing - use the activity or game that the student is currently engaged with or introduce one.
2. Get the student to use a writing tool (e.g., sensory pencil or flip chart) to select letters; record or write down the letters as they choose them.
3. Use the student's AAC system to attribute meaning - follow up any indications they might make in attributing meaning themselves.
4. Write the attributed meaning under their writing and point out any similarities/celebrations. Give them lots of positive encouragement for writing.

A demonstration video is available at https://youtu.be/4G9SVwyXFds

Supporting writers who are at A.4 to A.6 & B.1 on the Writing with All Tools Continuum

Once students know: that they are a writer; they can identify in a book "which side do I read"; and, they know that we write with letters, then we start to support their writing process in a different way. We still give them an opportunity to scribble with print - and we make sure that we model and talk about spaces. We ensure that they have access to a space key in their writing. We continue to give them lots of positive reinforcement as they develop. Students at this level are also often beginning to use AAC or speech and should be starting to attribute their own meaning to their writing.
Suggested guidelines are:

1. Establish topic/purpose e.g photo of student doing something or engage them with an activity. Student should choose from a few options. Use AAC to talk about their selection with them.
2. Invite the student to say something about the photo/activity using AAC (or speech if student is fully verbal). If they don't say something, model something you might say, and then ask them if they have something to say again. Agree on something they are writing with the student - if needed co-construct to more than one word to give you the opportunity to model using spaces. If you don't get any language selected or generated then move onto the next step. Don't over-prompt students!
3. Get the student to use a flip chart, or other writing tool, to select letters. Make sure their tool has a "space" button. Record or write down the letters as they choose them.
4. Write their target language (or the meaning you are attributing) under their writing and point out any correlations, using a phrase like "now let me show you how I would write it..."
5. Use the student's writing tool yourself at least once per week to model the use of it for writing outside of their daily writing. Make sure you model using spaces when you are writing.

A demonstration video for this level is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wfmg_IKJUOk

Supporting writers who are at B.2 and B.3 on the Writing with All Tools Continuum

Once students know that we write with letters and spaces, they move up to Group B on the scale and our modelling shifts focus to include an emphasis on initial sounds in words.

Suggested guidelines are:

1. Establish topic/purpose e.g photo of student doing something, curriculum topic, activity they engage with, writing about book of the week. Student should choose the topic from a few options.
2. Invite the student to say something about the photo/activity using AAC (or speech if student is fully verbal). If they don't say something, model something you might say, and then ask them if they have something to say again. Agree on something they are writing with the student. If needed you can co-construct to generate a sentence fragment or complete sentence.
3. Get the student to use a writing tool to select or generate letters. Students at this level who know most of the letters of the alphabet, most of the time should be using a QWERTY keyboard. Record or write down the letters as they choose them.
4. Write their target language under their writing and point out any correlations, using a phrase like "now let me show you how I would write it..."
5. Use their writing tool yourself at least once per week to model the use of it for writing outside of this writing task. Make sure you model thinking of initial sounds in words.

Supporting writers who are in Group C on the Writing with All Tools Continuum

Students at Group C are often still learning to write on topics other than their favourite topics - even when they have chosen the topic themselves. This can be for a range of reasons - but we need to model writing on topic to show them that it can be done.

Suggested guidelines are:

1. Establish topic/purpose e.g photo of student doing something, curriculum topic, activity they engage with, writing about book of the week. Student should choose the topic from a few options.
2. Invite the student to say something about the photo/activity using AAC (or speech if student is fully verbal). If they don't say something, model something you might say, and then ask them if they have something to say again. Agree on something they are writing with the student. If needed you can co-construct to generate a sentence fragment or complete sentence.
3. Get the student to use a writing tool to select or generate letters. If the student starts typing words off the selected topic, remind them of the topic.
4. When they have finished writing, type their originally selected language or the language you suggested and talk about how it relates to the picture. Find something to celebrate in their writing.
5. Use their writing tool yourself at least once per week to model the use of it for writing outside of their daily writing.

WRITING WITH ALL TOOLS CONTINUUM

Let's Write (cont.)

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GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN DIFFERENT GROUPS

Supporting writers who are in Groups D, E and F on the Writing with All Tools Continuum

Once students are writing with one or more intelligible words in their writing or they are writing phonetically, they need to focus on learning to write one simple sentence of 3 to 6 words. Spaces may stop being used at these levels as students put more focus onto spelling and other pieces of the form of writing.

For transitional and conventional writers, we always make sure that we activate some background knowledge and that we model writing before asking the students to write. Evidence shows that modelling good writing helps students to become better writers. We can also model different strategies during these mini-lessons - we might model “thinking out loud” or “writing down the sounds we can hear" or using little words, or other features of writing. We don't teach spelling during writing and at this level we don't focus on capital letters or punctuation - but we do continue to have a focus on spaces as needed. Make sure you focus on items in your modelling that a student needs to learn - for example, many students need to learn to use first person pronouns when writing about themselves.

Suggested guidelines are:

1. Always begin with a mini-lesson, modelling writing yourself about a similar writing task to the students’. Use this as an opportunity to model different skills across time e.g. thinking of ideas, using word wall, sounding words out, writing more, etc. Make sure you remove your modelled writing so students can't copy it.
2. Give the student an appropriate writing stimulus e.g. photo, video, activity.
3. Ask the student to write. (Students at this level should be using a keyboard most or all of the time, with handwriting optional depending on their motor skills.)
4. For students who struggle with ideas and language, conference with them before they write. Use AAC to support them in this area. If needed you can co-construct to generate a sentence fragment or complete sentence.
5. If needed, provide scaffolds to help support them in the writing process e.g. lines for the words they are writing or recording the sentence as an audio file so that they can play it back.
6. f students do not know how to spell a word, encourage them to write down every sound they can hear or use the word wall. Do not correct spelling or work on capitals or end punctuation, etc.
7. Follow with a short conference about their writing, providing lots of positive feedback, particularly around the area focused on in the mini lesson, and (if needed) writing a “translation” on the back of their work or on a post-it note as appropriate. The only piece of form you would focus on is spaces.
8. At this level, students should get frequent opportunities to share their writing with their peers and other audiences as appropriate.

A demonstration video for this level is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlwvzjFxNdk

Supporting writers who are in Groups G and H on the Writing with All Tools Continuum

For conventional writers, we continue to make sure that we activate some background knowledge and that we model writing before asking the students to write. At this level, we are teaching students to write more by adding more information. We can also model different strategies during these mini-lessons- we might model “using the word wall” or “sounding it out” or other features of writing. We don't teach spelling during writing and at this level we encourage students to use the 5Ws questions themselves to write with more information. Make sure you focus on the skills your students need to learn in your writing mini-lessons.

Suggested guidelines are:

1. Always begin with a mini-lesson, modelling writing yourself about a similar writing task to the students’. Use this as an opportunity to model different skills across time e.g. thinking of ideas, using word wall, sounding words out, using conjunctions, etc. Make sure you remove your modelled writing so students can't copy it.
2. Provide the student with an appropriate writing stimulus e.g. photo, video, activity, or ask them to choose.
3. Ask the student to write. Students at these levels are learning to write more with coherence and cohesion.
4. As students are writing, move around and conference with the students. For students who struggle with ideas and language, move to them first. Use AAC to support them in this area. All language generation should be done independently by the student(s) at these levels.
5. If needed provide scaffolds to help support them in the writing process e.g. visuals for the 5Ws or a map to build information about a topic.
6. Continue to move around and support students with writing. If students do not know how to spell a word, encourage them to write down every sound they can hear or use the word wall.
7. Finish up with a short conference about their writing, providing lots of positive feedback, particularly around the area focused on in the mini lesson, and (if needed) writing a “translation” on the back of their work or on a post-it note as appropriate.
8. At this level, students should get frequent opportunities to share their writing with their peers. Not every student, every day - but by building in a daily opportunity to share writing, each student should be able to participate regularly in this activity.

Supporting writers who are in Groups I and J on the Writing with All Tools Continuum

Conventional writers at this level are learning to write more - again by adding information. They are learning to write with coherence and cohesion about an overall topic - and organising their writing into sub-topics.

Suggested guidelines are:

1. Always begin with a mini-lesson, modelling writing yourself about a similar writing task to the students’. Use this as an opportunity to model different skills across time e.g. thinking of ideas, using word wall, sounding words out, using conjunctions, etc. Make sure you remove your modelled writing so students can't copy it. You may also need to prepare the writing for your mini-lesson ahead of time at this level.
2. Provide the student with an appropriate writing stimulus e.g. photo, video, activity, or ask them to choose.
3. Ask the student to write. Students at these levels are learning to write more with coherence and cohesion.
4. As students are writing, move around and conference with the students. For students who struggle with ideas and language, move to them first. Use AAC to support them in this area. All language generation should be done independently by the student(s) at these levels.
5. If needed provide scaffolds to help support them in the writing process e.g. visuals for the 5Ws or a map to build information about a topic.
6. Continue to move around and support students with writing. If students do not know how to spell a word, encourage them to write down every sound they can hear or use the word wall.
7. Finish up with a short conference about their writing, providing lots of positive feedback, particularly around the area focused on in the mini lesson, and (if needed) writing a “translation” on the back of their work or on a post-it note as appropriate. Students at these levels may be writing across several days including self-editing.
8. At this level, students should get frequent opportunities to share their writing with their peers. Not every student, every day - but by building in a daily opportunity to share writing, each student should be able to participate regularly in this activity.

The Writing with All Tools Continuum is available at https://www.comprehensiveliteracy.com/writing-with-all-tools-continuum.html