

Writing Program Guidelines: A Quick Guide for Teachers

What About Writing?

Writing is one of the most complex and demanding cognitive tasks because it requires learners to simultaneously manage ideas, language, organization and mechanics as well as pay attention to executive functioning skills, such as attention, working memory and time management. These demands are also what makes writing a powerful medium of learning.

Writing is not only the ability to communicate effectively, but it's also an essential tool for constructing learning and making meaning. Writing requires students to clarify thinking, make connections between ideas and synthesize information. Learning occurs when one wrestles with ideas or thinking. Writing deepens students' comprehension and understanding.

Evidence concludes that writing develops stronger language, reading and critical thinking skills. While it may seem logical to "double up" on writing instruction with separate instructional time and resources, the evidence is clear: Reading and writing draw on the same knowledge and skills; therefore, integrated reading and writing instruction across the disciplines strengthens student outcomes. Explicit reading instruction supports strong writing skills, and explicit writing instruction grows stronger readers.

What guidance supports standards-aligned writing instruction?

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) [Writing Program Guidelines](#) serve to support educators in implementing their district-wide writing program with coherent criteria. This will allow students to experience:

- Reading and writing daily as reciprocal skills and processes in integrated rather than in separate learning experiences;
- Text-based and evidence-based writing that are directly connected to what students are reading and to the topics studied;
- Engagement in the three modes of writing: writing to learn, writing to demonstrate learning and writing for publication; and



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- Writing as a common practice within the content studied in all grades and curriculum areas to include:
 - Opinion (elementary)/argumentative (secondary) writing to support claims;
 - Informative/explanatory writing; and
 - Narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events (integrated in other modes of writing in grades 8-12).

Additionally, students should receive:

- Consistent and timely feedback throughout the writing process to guide and improve writing skills and
- Writing experiences over extended and shorter time frames for a variety of tasks, purposes and audiences.

Educators should implement evidence-based literacy practices focusing on close reading as well as foundational writing skills and composition standards. When supporting Composition Standards such as C.1, C.2 and C.3, recommendations include using coherent language aligned with [KAS for Reading and Writing rubrics](#) for targeted feedback on:

- Strong claims;
- Effective evidence; and
- Logical reasoning.

Additionally, teachers should consider using [KDE's Conferencing Guides](#) and multiple levels of scaffolding—such as modeling, shared writing, group writing and paired writing—to bridge direct instruction to independent written composition.

How is writing instruction connected to my High-Quality Instructional Resource (HQIR)?

When teachers intellectually prepare for instruction using their HQIR, they leverage the embedded writing tasks around the types of writing the KAS specifies. Using the text-based writing tasks in your HQIR supports the reciprocal processes of reading and writing in a text-centered instructional model. These authentic writing opportunities strategically support readers and writers and provide coherence for learners.

