

Authentic, cool writing

By Larissa Juliano



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This spring and summer...make a book!

For teachers and students, the months of April through June are packed with so many end of the year activities, summer holiday happenings, graduation ceremonies and final assessments. Despite being a busy month, the actual curriculum pace can slow down, and in many classrooms - students are also able to take this month to explore various forms of writing, free style, journaling and often creating their own books. Depending on the grade level, and the child's interest!, the process and product can be completely different.

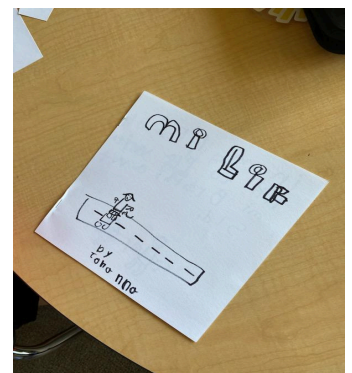


For this month's teaching toolbox column, I wanted to highlight some writing ideas that I have seen (and LOVED!) and also some tried and true experiences that will inspire your kids of any age, to get pencil to paper and let their imaginations run wild. I also encourage our readers to definitely check our StoryMonsters exclusive "Kids Can Publish" page. What an incredible opportunity to showcase your work, have it published, start a portfolio, and also a few bragging rights to friends and family.



Primary Elementary Writing Ideas

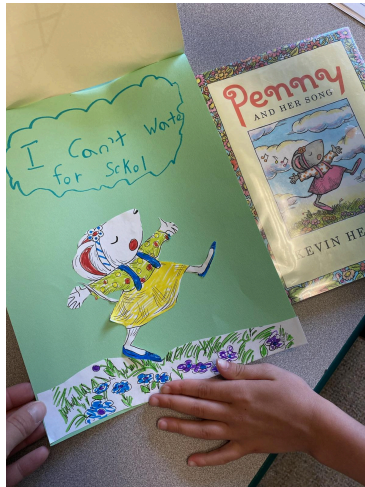
Paper, staples, colored pencils, and some post it notes are must haves when encouraging your students and children to write ideas down. Oftentimes, my kindergarten students will have so much fun actually creating, cutting and crafting their book- that it naturally inspires them to want to fill the pages with their ideas!



I like to take a little bag of stuffed animals and beanie babies for cuddles and cute ideas. Having the kinesthetic part of



holding the stuffed animal can get those brains excited to add personification and personality to these characters- whether it is just adding some pictures and a few speech bubbles- it's such a fun start!! Here is an adorable example ~(permission granted to share by author Leo Black!)



Those of you who have been reading this column for a few years know that I absolutely LOVE using literature as inspiration. Grab a few favorites and your child will surely get their OWN ideas for books- either using a similar story character, plot, making up a different ending, etc. Keep it simple and allow them to write/draw whatever ideas come to mind- keeping it fun and authentic.

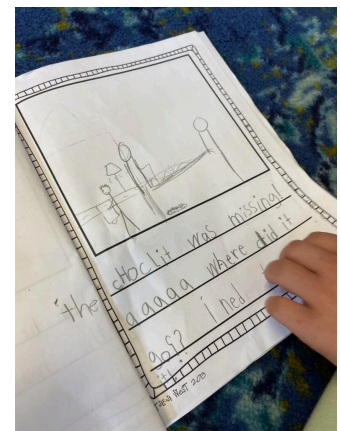
I really try to encourage labeling and speech bubbles when they are new writers to solidify the connection between those amazing ideas blooming in their mind and print on paper- one of the pillars of language and literacy development.

Little trick: A box of plain white labels at the dollar store can be fun to add to their pictures and accentuate where their words can go- my kids love peeling their sticky backs off and writing all over them!

Upper elementary:

Again, the materials can add a lot of excitement and inspiration for their writing. One teacher in my building decided to bring in “real world” informational materials and have students use these as a model for their own writing. The students loved using them so much that I decided to bring a few extra items! What did we use?

- Menus (so cute!)
- Travel Brochures
- Recreation camps and classes pamphlets
- Maps
- Flyers selling items
- Flyers sharing services offered



Students were able to choose some examples, and then we created templates for them to brainstorm their ideas. A particular favorite - one of my second graders created a sushi and dessert menu! Yes, you can have a california roll with hot bread and honey butter!



Other children put together sports skills lists,

water park/theme park maps (SO good for labeling), and summer landscape services \$ to their neighbors.



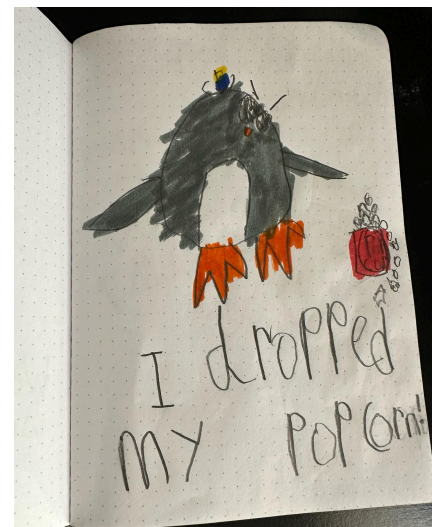
Note: My daughter's third grade teacher came up with the idea of writing and designing their own TINY homes. Writing, research, math, and architecture - a PERFECT STEAM package.

Future teaching column to showcase this awesome enrichment activity!

Celebrate

Finally, it is time to celebrate our writing projects! Whether the writing is still in the 'putting together' process, or it is finalized into a fancy, stapled book- invite some family members or other children to come see the hard work that was put into making their own writing projects.

So often, we do these very cool projects and share them on our social media or hang up in the hallway, but in person feedback is also empowering and exciting. Leo Black was able to add more pages to his book after we made a few funny jokes about popcorn- just a quick conversation and his ideas kept flowing! The author in me wanted to share his book with the world, and then it occurred to me that our StoryMonsters readers would be the perfect audience!



Tell us...

What can your children and students write about this year? Holidays? Non-fiction topics? Fun graphic novel style cartoons, or perhaps an adorable, and slightly angsty, narrative about a girl adjusting to school (my

daughter LOVES to write stories about kids, friendships and challenges, similar to a diary entry).

Share your ideas with us and be featured on our social media!

Be sure to tag @storymonstersink and @larissajulianoauthor

Check out www.larissajuliano.com for more Teaching Toolbox columns by Larissa, a cool spread of StoryMonsters Ink Magazine covers, Larissa's published books and latest poems, and other fun book ideas!