



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

LITERACY MINIGUIDE

Topic: Writing

Date: March 2008



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
A. What is Writing?	4
B. Letter Formation and Penmanship.....	5
B.1 Tips to improve penmanship	5
C. Creative Writing	7
C.1 The Writing Process	7
C.2 Generating Ideas for Writing.....	11
C.3 Writing Strategies	13
D. Analysing Children’s Writing	15
D.1 Areas to concentrate on.....	15
D.2 Analysing an essay.....	16
E. Sample Lessons for Generating Ideas for Creative Writing	18
E.1 <i>Amanda Bean’s Amazing Dream</i>	19
E.2 Birthday party story.....	21



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

Introduction

Dear Teacher,

This unit was developed for teachers at Grades 1-4 in the Expanding Educational Horizons (EEH) schools. It was developed in response to teachers' request for support material in the development of literacy skills, particularly in the area of writing. Writing instruction should begin in Grade One or even before. This unit focuses on strategies and suggestions that will help you promote writing for both teaching and improving penmanship as well as for the generation of creative ideas for writing. You will get the opportunity to share your experiences using the strategies with your colleagues and also to analyse and observe the growth of your students in these areas.

Objectives:

By the end of the unit you should be able to:

- Identify challenges in writing that your students face;
- Identify strategies to promote student writing;
- Modify the strategies to suit your classroom context;
- Assist students to reflect on their writing;
- Provide useful feedback to students about their writing.

We hope that you will find the strategies in this unit helpful in assisting your students to become creative and independent writers.

Yours truly,

Paulette Roberts, Literacy Specialist, EEH

Maureen Byfield, Literacy Specialist, EEH



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

A. What is Writing?

In the primary school, writing involves first the mastery of penmanship, followed by using that skill to practice writing in many forms and for multiple purposes, referred to here as generating ideas.

Penmanship, which is regarded as the art of writing legibly and quickly, involves letter formation, the use of upper and lower case, directionality and the use of space. It is a physical activity that includes posture, balance, visual motor coordination, fine motor skills as well as knowing how particular letters are made and connected. Penmanship instruction is necessary because it promotes legibility in handwriting in order for us to communicate with others as well as ourselves.

After learning the mechanics of writing, students in primary school must be exposed to the different reasons for writing as well as the forms that writing may take. Writing, for example, can be used to persuade, inform, transact business, record, and even to heal (for therapeutic purposes). As shown in the table below, there are multiple forms it may take.

Letters	Summaries and reports
Stories	Essays
Poetry	Plays
Comics	Newspaper Headlines
Observations	Journals and Diaries
Invitations	Posters
Notes and Memos	Lists
Recipes	Posters and Advertisement
Riddles	Autobiographies

Table 1: Forms of writing in primary school

This project is a joint initiative between the Governments of Jamaica and the United States of America through their monitoring agencies the Ministry of Education and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

B. Letter Formation and Penmanship

There are some letters that pose challenges to writers in the early stages. When working with writers in the early stage, you might want to pay attention to the following letters: **b, d, e, f, p, q, r, s, w, y, and z.**

Sit with students and give them individual instructions on how to form these letters. Also have students identify these letters in their names, the classroom environment and other places.

Remember that it is important to provide a print-rich environment for the students.

B.1 Tips to improve penmanship

Here are some important tips to help you in teaching penmanship. They include suggestions about the mechanics of writing as well as helping the students analyze their own writing.

1. Talk through with children helps them to understand some writing conventions and to pay attention to details. A probing question that you might want to ask your students in order to focus their attention is: Where do you begin and end a particular letter? Focus on those letters that:
 - (a) Go above and or below lines, for example, **g, f, t, h, g, y;**
 - (b) Sit on the line for example, **b, d, k, l,** and
 - (c) Remain within the boundaries of the line, for example, **a, s, c, e.**
2. Because of their similar appearance, some groups of letters are confusing to learners. Pay special attention to those letters, which are shown below.

t, f, l; b, d, a, p, q; w, m, n.
3. Point out the following aspects of letter formation:
 - (a) The differences between upper and lower case letters, for example,
R r, F f, J j, K k, Q q
 - (b) Consistency in slants when writing cursive
 - (c) Consistency in size, as in **a, s, m; b, h, k; M, B, R....**
4. Make sure students hold pencils/pens firmly and properly in relation to paper and hand position.



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

5. Have daily practice in writing those letters that may be confusing. Provide opportunities for students to trace letters, e.g. on laminated cards, sand boxes, in the air, on the desks and on the backs of their friends. These activities, which are kinesthetic in nature, help them to get a feel of how the letters are formed.
6. Model good handwriting, showing proper use of lines and spaces.
7. Display alphabet chart and make regular reference to it.
8. Help children to move from pre-cursive to cursive stage.
9. Help students to write letters, not only in isolation, but in context e.g. in a word, a sentence and a paragraph.
10. Identify the students that have physical challenges and refer them to the specialist for attention.
11. Finally, help students to assess their own handwriting by using checklists, like the one shown below:

Criteria	Yes	No	Comments
1. Did I write my name?			
2. Did I write the date?			
3. Did I start with a capital letter?			
4. Did I end with the correct stop sign?			
5. Can my writing be read?			
6. Are the letters correctly formed?			
7. Is there a space between each word?			
8. Am I proud of my work?			

Table 2: Handwriting Checklist for Students



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

C. Creative Writing

Creative writing is any writing, fiction or non fiction, which does not include academic, journalistic and technical forms of writing (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/creative_writing). Some examples of forms of creative writing are on page 4.

C.1 The writing process

Good writers go through a process in order to produce a good piece of writing. Think about how you approach writing and complete the activity below before you read about the writing process.

TASK 1:

Have you ever written a story? List the process that you actually went through before you were satisfied with the final draft.

Do you think that students need to go through this process?

Write down **3** ways in which you have helped them to go through the writing process.

Five stages can be identified in the writing process: prewriting, composing, revising, editing, and publishing. In the section that follows, we will discuss each stage.



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

1. Prewriting: This phase consists of all the activities that the writer engages in to prepare for writing. These include

(a) Selection of the topic. It is best if students help to select the topic. Why do you think this is so?

Teachers should help inexperienced writers to select topics by modeling the process for them. They can do this by preparing a list of topics and discussing them with students before they select a topic. Students' reading may also generate ideas for topic selection. Students are then given the choice of which topic they prefer.

(b) Planning: Before writing, students gather and organize information to support the topic. There are many ways to do this.

- If the writing is based on students' drawings, a discussion beforehand will help translate their artwork into words.
- A semantic map or pre-planning sheet helps students organize their thoughts.
- One word or topic can act as a stimulus for generating ideas for writing. For example, the word *happy* may generate a discussion about *a party, a family reunion, success in an examination*. Model the process for the students and encourage the class to listen to each other.

(c) Rehearsal: Give the students ideas about writing assignments ahead of time so that they have time to think about them and how they might develop them.

(d) Audience: Consider your audience as an important part of planning. Discuss the concept of audience with students before they start writing. You may do so by asking questions such as:

- For whom am I writing?
- Who will read my work?
- What do I need to tell my readers so that they understand?

Encourage students to write pieces for several types of audiences.



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

2. Composing: At this stage, the students engage in writing. The aim, especially when working with slow writers, is to focus primarily on content rather than mechanics. You may concentrate on spelling, punctuation, grammar, capitalization, and neatness later.

It is important that the teacher model the composing process for students. Work with them through some of their rough drafts and allow them to use the word processor to make changes to their composition. The students may have writing conferences with you or their peers to get additional information to enhance their writing. In these conferences, students receive encouragement about their work. Teachers or students can ask questions that will clarify what they plan to do and discuss ways to get their work completed.

3. Revising: Both students and teachers should be involved in the revision process. The focus of revision is not on mechanical problems but to get students to question and evaluate their writing in order to improve it. This process involves making sure that the information is clear, interesting, informative and convincing

The students review their work and make changes to the content and expression. Teachers should encourage the students to ask themselves such questions as:

- What am I trying to say and have I said what I wanted to say?
- Have I said all that I wanted to say?
- Is my writing clear? Will readers get the message I am trying to convey?

It is important to remember that the writing process is not linear and so the writer can go back to any stage, at any time.

It is important for the teacher to start the revision process by first pointing out what the student did well. After that the teacher should:

- Model the process by showing students how to delete, change words, rewrite sentences and move information around. On another level, this modeling can also include demonstrating to the students how to develop a character, a paragraph, etc.
- Do not introduce too many revision strategies at the same time. Introduce one or two and when students have mastered those, introduce others.
- Show students how to use the icons on the computer to make changes to their document.



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

- Help the students to decide whether they are satisfied with their work by having them assume the role of the listener. Have them either read their own work aloud or listen to their work being read by someone else. As a student evaluates his work he may ask himself questions such as: Do I understand what is being read? Is enough said? What else could I have said?
- Encourage students to reread their work. They may also have other students read their work and make comments.
- Encourage the students to use the following questions to guide them when revising their work:
 1. Can I read my work out loud without stumbling?
 2. Are the events in logical order?
 3. Do the events relate?
 4. Did I make my work interesting by using vivid descriptive words to describe characters and or events?
 5. Does my introduction appeal to the reader?
 6. Is my story interesting so that my readers will want to read to the end?
 7. Are all sentences complete/
 8. Did I make sure that I did not use a word or phrase over and over?
 9. Am I proud of my work?

4. Editing: Once the student has revised the work he needs to edit it. In the editing phase, the focus is placed on mechanical errors such as spelling, punctuation, grammar (sentence structure, subject/verb agreement), word usage and capitalization. Start by discussing students' errors and error patterns in the class. Concentrate first on correcting one or two of the most significant errors. If you note that the error is something that the entire class encounters, then you may have whole-group instruction. At other times it may require group or individual instruction.

Instruction in the areas of deficits should be done only when ~~needed~~ needed and in context. As in revision, provide a checklist to help the students while they are editing. Below are ~~some questions~~ some questions that could help

This project is a joint initiative between the Governments of Jamaica and the United States of America through their monitoring agencies the Ministry of Education and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

- Did I use words that are appropriate and effective?
- Is there agreement between the verb and the subject?
- Are the words correctly spelled?
- Are the sentences clear and complete?
- Are there sentences that could be combined to improve my writing?
- Are the correct punctuation marks in place?

5. Publishing: Students must be encouraged to write for real audiences and for real purposes--to their friends, parents, and community members. Publishing the students' work may take **many forms**, such as reading it to the class or others, sending it off to a real audience and encouraging a response, pinning it to the wall, and entering it into a competition. When students publish their writing it can create an opportunity for them to get feedback to see which part of their writing was good and which part needs improvement. It can also motivate them to continue to write.

C.2 Generating ideas for creative writing

Once the students have the literacy and penmanship skills, it is important to have them experience many forms of writing. A common problem for teachers is generating interesting ideas for creative writing that spark students' interest.

Some of the ideas reflected below were demonstrated in the field and yielded success.

You might want to use some of them.

- 1. Reading Writing Connection.** When children read, or are read to, provisions should be made for them to react in writing to the information. Ask them to make connections by relating their own experiences to what's been read; empathizing with characters, writing why they liked or disliked them; using the book information to create new information; and incorporating the language of the text in their writing.
- 2. Personal Experiences.** Teachers should work with children to talk and write about their personal experiences. For example, their interests, places they have visited, home and community events in which they have participated and their feelings about various issues.



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

3. **Use of Realia.** Teachers may use real objects such as trees, fruits, people, places, boxes, bags, brochures to stimulate ideas for writing. Teachers may combine several of these different types of realia to make writing more interesting. Use of realia is especially helpful in poetry writing.
4. **Field Trips.** Have students write reports on field trips and excursions they take. Teachers should identify the purpose of the excursion beforehand and assign tasks to various groups. For example, who will be the photographer, the recorder, and the interviewer? Students should plan what questions to be asked, what things to observe and how the written report is to be presented.
5. **Stories, Poem and Plays.** Stories, poems and plays facilitate the development of an appreciation for the language, vocabulary, and style of writing. After reading a story, poem or play, students may use the pattern to compose their own production, react to characters, settings and plots and do their illustrations.
6. **Picture Discussion.** There are many interesting and colourful pictures that can stimulate ideas for writing. Teachers may also help students to use the digital camera to capture photographs of interesting scenes, people and places. Have a class discussion about the characters in the photos, the setting, the theme, and the sequence of events. Help students to put their ideas on paper.
7. **Sensory Imagery** Teachers can help children to create pictures in their minds and write about them. Present scenarios for children to use all their senses to describe the pictures in their minds. Probe the **look, feel, taste, smell**, and the **sound** of the objects in the mental picture. For example in a story about *A visit to a nearby stream or to the sea* students may use words such as *gushing, flowing, meandering, still, splashing, gurgling* to describe the water. These words respond to the **look** and **sound** of the water and add descriptive details to enrich the setting of the story.
8. **Word Stimuli.** Children can use a group of words to develop a story, song or poem, for example: *fire, church, community; number, hospital, money; country, girl, work*



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

Children will decide on the setting, plot and events, using the given words. For example, the children might write a story like the one below, using the words *fire*, *church*, and *community*.

One day there was an early morning fire in the community of Ridgee. The fire quickly spread to the church nearby. The building was completely burned. Nearly everyone in the community came to see what was happening and decided to contribute in different ways to the rebuilding of the little church they loved so well.

- 9. Music and Art Work.** Children listen to music and or view art work from different periods, and genres. They talk and write about how the messages conveyed affect them. They can use the information from the discussion to generate their written piece.
- 10. Interviews.** Have students interview members of their family and community as well as their classmates. Teachers can help students to compose questions, carry out the interviews and write up a report on what they learned from the interview.

C.3 Writing strategies

Here are some strategies you may use to help the learner to write.

- 1. Guided Writing:** In guided writing, students are grouped according to their writing levels and needs, which are evaluated by analyzing the students' writing. You then meet with the group or individual and guide the writing process or teach a writing strategy. For example, you may teach students how to choose interesting topics, write a captivating beginning sentence or how to develop a topic sentence. As you model the strategy or process, think aloud so that students can have some knowledge of your process. Provide several opportunities for the students to practice what they were taught so that they can have independent mastery of the strategy.
- 2. Writing Workshop:** In the workshop, the teacher meets with individuals or small groups to help students use the strategies that were taught in the whole class setting or in the guided writing sessions. During this activity, students get the opportunity to write, meet with their peers and or teacher to have a writing conference, and to share what they have written with the whole class. It also is an opportunity to give encouragement and positive suggestions to



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

their classmates and to ask questions to clarify what was not clear. Having such workshops daily help the students to keep connected to their writing.

The teacher should make sure that adequate writing materials such as pens and pencils, paper, pictures, storybooks and objects are available to stimulate thinking and writing.

3. Written Conversation: In this strategy, you encourage your students to put their conversations on paper. As you sit beside the students, you may pose a question to them to generate a ~~conversation~~, conversation, which they then record. As the students mature in their writing, they can also have written conversations with their peers in order to practise the skill.

4. Journal Writing: This is a daily record of events, ideas, and feelings. It helps students to write freely as the focus is not so much on mechanics but on the message being conveyed. Encourage students to write their reactions to a story that has been read, a movie viewed, a topic discussed, or a game played. They will also see that they have ideas worth writing about, thus serving a therapeutic function. In addition, daily writing promotes writing fluency.

Task 2:

Think of other writing strategies that you have used and share with your colleagues.

As you find ways to help your students to become better writers, evaluate yourself by asking questions like those below.

Have I:

- Provided examples of good writing and different forms of writing?
- Modeled the writing task using ‘Think Aloud’ where appropriate?
- Used varied stimuli to generate ideas for writing?
- Provided direct writing instructions to students?
- Engaged students in daily writing tasks?



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

- Created opportunities for students to practice areas in which they are weak?
- Encouraged students to use a writing checklist?
- Engaged students in shared writing activities?
- Had writing conferences with students to discuss strengths and weaknesses?
- Given useful and on-time feedback to students?
- Celebrated children's production, for example, by sharing their work with significant others?

D. Analysing Children's Writing

As teachers, often our first reaction when children write is to award them with a letter or number grade. There is nothing wrong with grading students' writing, but it is much more important that students recognize strengths and weaknesses in their writing. In short, teachers need to analyse their students writing rather than just assess it.

In the section that follows, you will first be given a list of areas to concentrate on when reviewing and analysing your students' writing. You will then be asked to analyse a student's essay. Finally, you will be given a model for analysing writing and another activity.

D.1 Areas to concentrate on

Letter Knowledge:

- (a) Use of upper and lower case letters,
- (b) Letter confusion, e.g. *b/d, f/t*,
- (c) Directionality, i.e. left to right and top to bottom orientation, return sweep, (moving from one line of the page to the next line),
- (d) Use of line and space, e.g. space between words.

Word Knowledge:

- (a) Words/ number confusion, e.g. *one* and *1, for* and *4, three* and *tree*.
- (b) Letters/ word confusion, e.g. *r* for *are, u* for *you*.
- (c) Vocabulary--phrases, parts of speech, figures of speech, and idioms.

Sentence Knowledge:

- (a) Use of paragraphs,
- (b) Evidence of main ideas and supporting details,

This project is a joint initiative between the Governments of Jamaica and the United States of America through their monitoring agencies the Ministry of Education and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

- (c) Sequencing of ideas, use of link words/ utility words,
- (d) Literary elements, e.g. characters, setting, plot.

Appeal to audience:

- (a) Organization of thought,
- (b) Genre, e.g. poetry, letter, recipe, report,
- (c) Choice of words, e.g. descriptive words, figurative expressions,
- (d) Clarity of thought.

Mechanics:

- (a) Use of punctuation marks,
- (b) Tense and number, e.g. present and past, singular and plural.

D.2 Analysing an essay

TASK 3:

Read Taneisha's essay below, and then answer the questions that follow. Use the information in Section D, (Analysing Children's Writing) to help you. Later in the text, the correct answers will be discussed.

Topic: A Day at the Beach

Grade 4 February 2, 2007.

One day mommy, daddy, my baby brother and I go to the beach. The beach was clean and the sand was white. "Look mommy," I shout when I see the huge ship on the sea. Mommy laugh and said, "one day I will take you on the ship."

We put on our bathing suit and go into the water. The water feel nice on our bodies. I swim far out in the water but my baby brother play at the edge of the water.

We have burger and soda for lunch. We see some people

Questions:

1. What would you say are Taneisha's strengths?

This project is a joint initiative between the Governments of Jamaica and the United States of America through their monitoring agencies the Ministry of Education and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

2. What are her weaknesses?
3. What is the general impression you have of Taneisha's writing abilities?
4. How could you help Taneisha to improve her essay?

A Model Analysis

Taneisha's strengths:

1. Use of sentences, paragraph, punctuation marks, link words,
2. Organization of thoughts--sequencing of ideas, knowledge about parts of essay (beginning, middle, and end),
3. Clarity of thought.

Her weaknesses:

1. Ideas not fully developed and lack supporting details.
2. She reports using mainly present tense
3. Limited use of descriptive words (adjectives, adverbs, and figurative expressions).

General Comments:

Taneisha is a good writer who has mastered most of the conventions of writing. However, she will need to work on tenses and to make her story more appealing to the audience.

Ways to help Taneisha improve her essay:

One of the lessons for Taneisha is to help her make the story more appealing. Through individualized writing conferences with Taneisha, the teacher would probe to help her to extend her sentences and paragraphs and to use descriptive words to appeal to her audience.

Examples:

1. In the sentence, "*The beach was clean and the sand was white,*" Taneisha could be asked *to think about who else was on the beach, whether or not the beach was crowded and to compare the whiteness of the sand to something that is white.* It is expected that the sentence would read, "*The crowded and noisy beach was very clean and the sand was as white as snow.*"



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

2. In the sentence, *“Look mommy,” I shout when I see the huge ship on the sea,*” Taneisha could be asked to say whether or not the ship was far out into the sea or near the shore, to describe the sound of the horn, to say how the ship was moving and to describe what the ship looks like. The original sentence may, therefore, be extended to read, *I heard a loud frightening sound far out into the sea. Look mommy, I shout when I see the huge blue and white ship far out in the sea. It looked like a big house with many rooms moving slowly towards us.*

Remember that students may be confused if you attempt to address too many errors at one time. For this reason, we have not attended to Taneisha’s problem with tense because our aim at this time is to help her to extend her sentences. Also, remember that it is important to have daily discussions and probing so as to expose students to a wide vocabulary that will enhance their writing.

TASK 4:

Choose another sentence from Taneisha’s work and think of some questions that you would ask her to extend her work and to make it more interesting.

E. Sample Lessons for Generating Ideas for Writing

The suggestions that follow for teaching a lesson using *“Amanda Beans Amazing Dreams”* story and the *“Birthday Party”* may be adapted and used with other story books and topics to promote creative writing.

This project is a joint initiative between the Governments of Jamaica and the United States of America through their monitoring agencies the Ministry of Education and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

E.1 *Amanda Bean's Amazing Dream (Source: Marilyn Burns Collection)*

- Discuss with students the pictures and title of the story and write the details of the discussion on the board. Use the pictures to help students make decisions about what to include in the story retelling and also to make changes to the title.
- Have the class read the story and record details such as plot, characters, setting, theme, descriptive/colourful words and phrases. Discuss these elements and get students to talk about changes that they would make. For example, students may change the setting, the characters, how the story begins, develops, and ends.
- Help students to organize the ideas discussed, using the Semantic Map. Ideas that could be put on the map include characters, settings, things counted, and emotional reactions on the faces. Students may be asked to choose one element and develop it. For example, in response to the emotional reaction on faces, students may use words such as *amazement*, *excitement*, *happiness*, *disbelief*, and *fright*. Students could be asked to match the words they give to their pictures.
- Direct students to note how the story is organized. Have students take note of sequencing, conversations, story beginnings and endings, and signal words. Students might use these examples to inform their writing. The story of Amanda Bean uses conversations and exclamations. Amanda engages in self-talk and reflection. She relates personal experiences, hence she uses the word “I” often. Students might use the same format when writing or change it if they wish.
- Have students read the story and retell all or part of the story orally and then in written form. Initially, do not focus too much attention on correctness of spelling and grammar, but on expression and meaning. Get students to share with you and the class what they have written.
- Get students to react to the story verbally, then in writing, giving reasons for their responses. Use questions to prompt a response. For example, how has this story helped



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

you to understand the concept of counting? What other things Amanda could have counted?

- Relate the story to other stories with talking animal characters. One such story is the Wizard of Oz. This story might be particularly relevant if the objective is to help students to write a fable.
- Have students enact the story through dramatization. Before they dramatize, you may help them to make connections to the story through their senses. Ask them to say what they can see, hear, feel, smell, and taste. Students may dramatize the section where the grandmas helped Amanda to understand the connection between counting and multiplication. As students engage in talk you will get the opportunity to see if they understand the concept being promoted.
- Allow students to give their responses to the story through drawing then by writing. Get them to draw their favourite part of the story, talk about it, and then write to explain their drawing and why they selected that part.
- Get students to select one part of the story or a picture in the story that appeals to them and have them talk about it and then write about it. They could also assume the role of a character and in a journal make entries as that person. You may assist the students by posing questions such as:

What is the name of the character? Describe the character.

What are the things that the character likes/dislikes?

Name some of the places that the character goes.

What are some of the activities that the character engages in?

Other students and the teacher may make their comments/responses to the students' writing. Later, students could develop this piece into a larger writing project.

- Have students participate in peer discussion about the story and afterwards get them to write either individually or as a group. Use questions or story prompts to guide the discussion and writing. For example:

What did you like/not like about the story? Why, Why not?



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

The part that I like best is _____. I like it because_____.

The character/story reminds me of_____. The story teaches me that_____.

- Engage the whole class in a rewriting the story on the board/chart. Students could take turns writing sentences on the board. You should guide the writing activity by asking students questions about the story, in a sequential and organized manner. For example:

Who was the dreamer?

What was she dreaming about?

What are some of the things she was counting in her dreams?

What lesson did she learn from the dream?

How did the story end?

- Encourage students to compose stories, songs, poems, jingles, letters, as they respond to the text. Also help them to change the beginning and ending of the story and to create their versions of the story.

E.2. A Birthday Party

1. Read a story about a birthday party. The story has the name of the person whose party it is, names of some invitees, date, place, time of party, food served, some presents received, entertainment package such as games, music, story telling

2. Pose a set of questions related to the story. Students' responses may be written on chalkboard. Use the following examples to guide the questions.

(a) Who?

Whose party it was?

Who were the invitees? (e.g. school mates, children in the community, godparent, teacher)

(b) What?

What were the foods served?

What were the games played?

What were the presents received?

What were the songs sung?



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

(c) Where?

Where did the party take place? (e.g., at home in Spanish Town, in the living room)

(d) When?

When did the story take place? (e.g., on a windy Saturday, May 10, 2006, at 6 p.m)

3. Use sensory imagery to extend the story. Use probing questions, such as those below, to get students to use their senses to extend their writing. You could use a **Semantic Map** to organize their ideas.

(a) What can you **hear** at the party? (e.g., loud music, children singing and talking loudly and happily)

(b) What can you **see**? (e.g., red and white birthday cake, pizza, decoration, rice and peas, presents wrapped in coloured paper, people dancing)

(c) What can you **smell**? (e.g., spicy jerked chicken, juicy curried goat)

(d) What can you **taste**? (e.g., sweet cake, mouth-watering chicken, delicious, hot and peppery curried goat, cheesy pizza, cool and refreshing lemonade)

(e) What can you **feel**? (e.g., excitement, happiness, warmth because many people are in the room)

Finally, encourage children to write their stories using ideas generated from activating the use of sensory imagery. This can be an individual, group, paired or whole class activity.

We hope this mini-guide has expanded your understanding of the writing process, given you tools to better analyze your students' writing, offered you new teaching techniques and strategies, and helped you help your student to improve their own writing. As you use the ideas that we have suggested and also improve on them, we are confident that you will see great improvement in your students' writing. Finally, we encourage you to share these ideas with other teachers and stakeholders.

References:

This project is a joint initiative between the Governments of Jamaica and the United States of America through their monitoring agencies the Ministry of Education and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



Expanding Educational Horizons

Caenwood Centre, Grant Hall, 37 Arnold Road, Kingston 5
Tel: (876) 922-0783 or Fax: (876) 967-5192

Retrieved July 2, 2009, from: <http://www.angelfire.com/writingprocess>

Retrieved June 29, 2009 from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/creative_writing