



WRITE NOW

RIGHT NOW

August—September
2018
Newsletter

*"The first step is you have to say you can."
Will Smith*

One of the wonderful things about summer is extended time to do the things you love to do. I appreciate the free time to go to the gym, hike and ride my bicycle. These choices are often a bit difficult the first time I attempt them in the summer, as winter muscles have lost some of their zip and strength.

As I've taken part in these activities this summer, I've reflected on how many technologies we use today to encourage ourselves in active pursuits. A fitbit diligently logs each step taken during the day. When the magic 10,000th step is taken, my watch informs me, complete with vibrations and fireworks on the screen. On a bicycle, the trip odometer calculates every mile, the RPM of my pedaling and the miles per hour I've been traveling. Watching the miles tick by is a constant encouragement on long rides.

While hiking, I use the *Map My Walk* app. The lady on my phone informs me of every mile completed, including the average time it has taken. I find myself eagerly looking forward to hearing her voice from my backpack. I've been known to be frustrated with her if I feel it's taken her too long to inform me another mile is complete.

Group classes at the gym provide a personal encourager. I choose instructors who are positive and encouraging, helping me improve my form while telling me that I've got this!

As another school year begins, I am considering again the importance of encouragement. None of the "encouragers" I've used this summer have expected me to accomplish something all at once, but rather have given me feedback on every step of the way. This encouragement has made difficult challenges both attainable and enjoyable.

The need for encouragement is strong in our students. How might I encourage them on every step of their learning, as they journey towards understanding a larger concept? In what ways can I honor the accomplishments they have made, before the entire task is accomplished. As I work with students this year, I will be looking for ways to be an encourager to help all children take that first step toward success!



Back to School Books for Teachers



The First Six Weeks of School by Responsive Classrooms

This book provides teachers with ideas and structures to start a positive school year. From first day ideas to ways to encourage positive discipline, this book is a must-read for new and veteran teachers alike.

amazon.com/First-Six-Weeks-School/dp/1892989816/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1532992476&sr=8-1&keywords=first+six+weeks+of+school

The Daily Five 2nd edition by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser

The second edition is out! The Daily 5 provides teachers a structure which allows them to spend less time on classroom management and more time teaching. This is a great resource for anyone desiring to run small groups in their classroom.

amazon.com/s/?ie=UTF8&keywords=daily+five+2nd+edition&tag=googhydr-20&index=aps&hvadid=241630141330&hvpos=1t1&hvnw=g&hvrnd=10577994903978612778&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvmmt=b&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9029027&hvtargid=kwd-96680388770&ref=pd_sl_59h479r71i_b

The Morning Meeting Book by Roxann Kriet and Carol Davis

This is a must-have for teachers wanting to build a positive classroom culture in their classrooms. A morning meeting is just what it sounds like it is—a time for children and teachers to purposely gather and learn about each other. The book explains how to set up a morning meeting, provides activities to do to encourage student sharing, and demonstrates ways to create morning messages. Supplemental books providing additional activities are also available.

amazon.com/Morning-Meeting-Book-Roxann-Kriete/dp/1892989603/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1532993476&sr=1-1&keywords=the+morning+meeting+book

First Day Jitters by Julie Danneberg and Judy Love

"Sarah, dear, get out of bed. You don't want to miss your first day at your new school, do you?" Sarah has a problem with which we can all relate—it's time to start a brand new school year. This classic story is the perfect first day of school read-aloud!

amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_i_1_9?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=first+day+jitters&srefix=first+day%2Cstripbooks%2C193&crid=3F60OGBBWKHO2

Myths of Writing Instruction

Sighs, rolled eyes, hands raised to go to the bathroom . . . These are all signs of students who do not want to participate! Both children and adults avoid learning engagements / tasks they do not believe they can accomplish. The following "myths" of writing instruction lead to reluctant writers.

"If you just keep practicing, you'll get better."

Unfortunately, practice does not make perfect. Practicing incorrect skills leads to entrenched bad habits. Teaching students specific skills and allowing them plenty of time to practice these skills leads to successful students.

"Add more details."

How many times have we all written that on a student's paper or received it on writing of our own? Students need specific instructions on writing fluent, detailed sentences. Allowing students to write (and rewrite) one detailed sentence allows them to see what detailed writing looks like and feel confident that they can achieve that goal.

"Grading students' writing overwhelms me as a teacher."

We have all had that stack of students' writing that goes from school to home and back again without ever being graded. As the papers weigh down our school bag, we dread assigning another piece of writing. We need to remember that writing can be assessed in pieces and completed while students are working! If students are working on a variety of topic sentences, the grading can be finished while they write. Students can highlight the sentence they find most interesting and you can assess it on the spot.

"All writing must be taken through the publishing phase."

Writing is a process, not a product. Give yourself and your students the freedom to focus on the process. You may spend a few days gathering and sorting ideas. Creating a writing plan is an essential skill and worthy of students practicing. Editing is invaluable and needs to be thoughtfully and sequentially taught to students. Each of these steps in the writing process can be assessed and used as part of your body of evidence in student writing!

Book Nook

Children's Literature is a time-proven way to instill children with an "I Can Do This" attitude. The following is a list of some of our favorite books to start the year.

She Persisted by Chelsea Clinton

This picture book is geared towards girls, but provides valuable examples for everyone! The book celebrates 13 women who helped shape history by their persistence in the face of adversity. Beginning with Helen Keller and ending with Sonia Sotomayor, the book details women whose lives positively impact the world.

[amazon.com/She-Persisted-American-Women-Changed/dp/1524741728](https://www.amazon.com/She-Persisted-American-Women-Changed/dp/1524741728)

The Most Magnificent Thing by Ashley Spires

This picture book will appeal to both children and adults. The main character has an idea for an invention and a picture in her mind of just how it will work! Unfortunately, her vision does not work out the way she had it planned. Her frustration builds and builds until she explodes. The story is a delightful tale of what it takes to make the most magnificent thing, the value of persistence, and how the answer may be right in front of us! The story provides an important lesson in perspective.

[amazon.com/Most-Magnificent-Thing-Ashley-Spires-ebook/dp/B00IZH626G/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1533511566&sr=1-1&keywords=the+most+magnificent+thing+book](https://www.amazon.com/Most-Magnificent-Thing-Ashley-Spires-ebook/dp/B00IZH626G/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1533511566&sr=1-1&keywords=the+most+magnificent+thing+book)

The Little Engine That Could by Watty Piper

This classic children's book tells the story of a little blue train asked to take the toys over the tall mountain. In spite of her small size, the little engine vows to do her best, repeating the mantra, "I think I can, I think I can . . ." The book provides students a lifelong lesson in the importance of believing they can do hard things!

[amazon.com/Little-Engine-Could-Original-Classic/dp/0448405202/ref=pd_lpo_sbs_14_img_0?encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=62TBEP1XAHAGS81SMP8Z](https://www.amazon.com/Little-Engine-Could-Original-Classic/dp/0448405202/ref=pd_lpo_sbs_14_img_0?encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=62TBEP1XAHAGS81SMP8Z)



Poetry Corner

Poetry is an excellent way to inspire student conversations at the beginning of the year. The following poems can be used as conversation starters and writing prompts as you work with students on responding to text in complete sentences, both orally and in writing.

"Introducing A New Me" by Kalli Dakos

This poem can be used to start the year and then brought back for New Year's Resolutions. The poem is a great conversation starter with children. What can we do when we struggle breaking old habits? Does every habit need to be broken? Are there times when a certain habit is appropriate and, also, inappropriate?

kallidakos.com/docs/backtoschool-2014.pdf

"Don't Tell Me That I Talk Too Much" by Arnold Spilka

"Don't tell me that I talk too much! Don't say it, don't you dare?" The author of this poem humorously writes what others see as his biggest fault. This poem works well to practice choral reading with the class. Students can then write a sentence about either something they do, or don't do, that other's believe they should change.

edu.pe.ca/vrcs/resources/poetry/text/poems/relating/dont.html

"Halfway Down" by A. A. Milne

This delightful classic tells of a child's favorite place—a spot on the stairs. The spot is neither at the top or the bottom of the stairs, but is rather exactly in the middle. This poem is a wonderful springboard to focus on perspective. What is special in our students' lives that may not be significant to anyone else?

The poem easily lends itself to a getting-to-know you activity. Each student may draw a picture of their favorite spot and write a sentence describing why it is special. Young students may dictate the sentence that describes their pictures.

familyfriendpoems.com/poem/halfway-down-by-a-a-milne

Writing In Complete Sentences

The building block of all writing, from kindergarten through adulthood, is the ability to write in a complete sentences. The *Write Now—Right Now Writing Program* introduces and reinforces complete sentence writing through a game called *Team Complete*.

The game, outlined in the program, requires students to speak and write in complete sentences in order to join the team. A sentence must meet these 5 requirements.

A Complete Sentence

- Contains a subject—who or what the sentence is about
- Contains a verb—what the subject is doing or being
 - A capital letter at the beginning
 - A punctuation mark at the end
 - Must make sense

Provide students ample time to practice speaking and writing in complete sentences. Our youngest students can learn to respond to questions in complete sentences. Some practice ideas include the following:

- Write complete sentences on sentence strips and then cut them in half, with the subject on one side and the verb on the other. Have students either match the two sides or write their own ideas of the missing part.
- Provide students with a picture and ask them to write one good *Team Complete* sentence to describe the picture.
- Orally practice responding in complete sentences on any topic at *Morning Meeting*. Make the questions silly and imaginative.

We do not want our students to remain stagnant in responding with a basic sentence. *Team Complete* sentences are divided into categories— *PeeWee Team Complete*, *Junior Varsity Team Complete*, and *Varsity Team Complete*.

Math Is Coming

Today's students are not asked to simply solve math equations correctly. Rather, a good math student must correctly solve a math problem and then present their solution and thinking using good writing techniques. This genre of writing requires a specific skill set.

Write Now—Right Now is excited to announce a new program—*Writing in Response to Math*. This easy to follow math program provides the teacher with step-by-step lesson plans to use with their students, along with samples of math problems addressing different strands.

Teachers In Texas

We are excited to announce that the *Write Now—Right Now Writing Program Grades K—6* is now available aligned with the Texas standards—TEKS. Just let us know you are from Texas when you order, and we will send you the appropriate program.



We love to talk writing! If we can ever be of service or you'd like to chat, please email us at darlene-and-terry@writenow-rightnow.com

Additional ideas and activities can be found in the *Write Now - Right Now Writing Program*.

To view grade level samples, locate additional newsletters and read blog posts, visit:
<http://www.writenow-rightnow.com>.

The *Write Now—Right Now Writing Program* is now being used in 48 states and four Canadian provinces. How can we be of help to you in your classroom?