



*"Being organized leaves more room for spontaneity."  
- Kimberly Pappas*

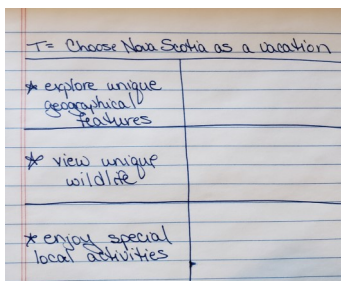
I was recently writing a set of reading passages to use with students while learning how to take notes on a text. The shared topic of the text was going to be "Places to Visit." In order to learn something new myself, I decided to re-search and write about three locations on my travel bucket list - Iceland, Nova Scotia and the Galapagos Islands.

Using Trip Advisor as a starting point, I began to research Nova Scotia. The amount of available information was overwhelming. Who knew there were so many places to visit and activities to do in this Canadian province? My notes soon covered two pieces of paper, filled with fascinating facts about this destination. I repeated the same process for Iceland and the Galapagos Islands, jotting down whatever information caught my attention.

Now it was time to write. I wanted the passages to be used together, in order for students to gather similar information from each article. Unfortunately, my random notetaking did not help me organize my thoughts. As I began a rough draft, my writing took on a familiar shape I often see in students' work. Instead of my writing flowing, the information I had researched was presented as a list of facts.

As my frustration grew, I remembered a phrase my parents often used, "Practice what you preach or change your speech." How many times had I worked with students, teaching them to organize their thoughts into a plan before writing? It would be impossible for me to write all the reasons a person might want to visit one of these locations. What did I want to focus upon?

What areas of interest could my writing address?

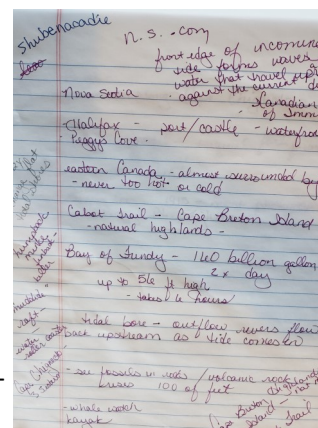


I quickly sketched a t-chart plan and determined what three aspects of each place I would research. Deciding to research the physical aspects of the area, the animals that lived there, and unique activities found in the area, I filled in the left side of my chart. I now had an organizational plan and a place to put all the fascinating facts I had learned.

The experience reminded me of two important truths of writing. First, writing is easier with an organizational structure. By simply determining my writing's focus and then

grouping the ideas together based on that focus, my writing became easier for me to complete. It was also much easier for my reader to comprehend. The second truth was that the organizational structure provided me the opportunity to think about fluency and word choice while writing. Having a structure in place gave me the freedom to improve the way I presented the content to my readers.

The experience was rather humbling. I had blithely ignored a fundamental rule in my classroom and hadn't planned before writing. It was also good for me to experience the learning frustrations my students face. The reminder had been clear — "practice what I preach!"



## Teaching Organization

- Provide a definition and example of what the term **organized** means.

### Primary Students:

Show students a bin filled with markers, crayons, pencils, chalk and paint. Discuss with students ways that the items could be *sorted* or *organized*. What would be some advantages of organizing the bin?

Provide students pattern blocks. Ask students to organize these blocks any way they choose. For example, they might sort the blocks by color, shape, size, or number of sides. Discuss how each organization system would be helpful.

### Intermediate Students:

Show students a disorganized notebook. In pairs, have students determine ways to organize the notebook. What might be some advantages of the newly organized notebook?

In pairs, students will brainstorm items they organize in their daily lives. Examples might be: clothes in a dresser, sports equipment, food in the pantry, etc.

- Provide opportunities to practice using a t-chart to organize ideas across the curriculum

### Primary Students:

Student Sharing t-charts: Primary students love to share. Primary students can be introduced to a t-chart long before they are able to complete one on their own. As students share, fill out a group t-chart based on their information. For example:

T = Student of the Week—Juanita

* Family	- two brothers
* Pets	- hamster
* Hobbies	- play piano

When completed, students can practice writing complete sentences based on the information recorded on the chart.

## Teaching Organization, continued

### Primary Students:

During a unit on Community Helpers, you will collect information on various service occupations. As you study each community helper, collect information on a t-chart. For example:

**T = Firefighter's Tools**

* Ax	
* Helmet	
* Hose	

**T = Police Officers' Responsibilities**

* Control Traffic	
* Protect People	
* Organize Crowds	

### Intermediate Students:

Teach the use of a t-chart to take notes. For example, during a space unit, students will take notes on the planets or the goals of space travel using t-charts.

**T = Mars**

* Appearance	
* Climate	
* Orbit	

**T = Goals of Space Travel**

* Explore new worlds	
* Develop new technology	
* Create new industries	

## Poetry Corner



### **"This is Halloween" by Dorothy Brown Thompson**

This poem creatively lists items which are found during the Halloween season. Along with enjoying the rhyming pattern, the poem provides opportunities to introduce prepositions. Students may also use this poem as a mentor text for writing their own poems on a topic of their choice. For example, students may write about *This Is Saturday*, *This is the Weekend*, *This is Thanksgiving*.

<https://www.dennydavis.net/poemfiles/hallownp.htm>

### **"What's That" by Florence Parry Heide**

What's the bump I hear in the night? This poem humorously describes a monster climbing up the stairs. This delightful poem is an excellent resource for practicing fluent reading, as students will easily provide emotion to these words.

"What's That?" also provides examples of alliteration as the author describes the monster's appearance.

<http://meribeths.blogspot.com/2016/10/whats-that-monday-poem.html>

### **"Feelings About Words" by Mary O'Neill**

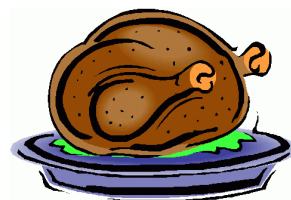
In this delightful poem, the author describes the power of words. Using an easy to follow rhyme pattern, O'Neill explains the feelings that readers may experience when they hear words. After reading the poem, students may choose one word they especially enjoy and write it in the middle of a page. Students may draw illustrations around the word, providing examples of the meaning of the chosen word.

<https://sockfairies.blogspot.com/2015/02/mary-o-neill.html>

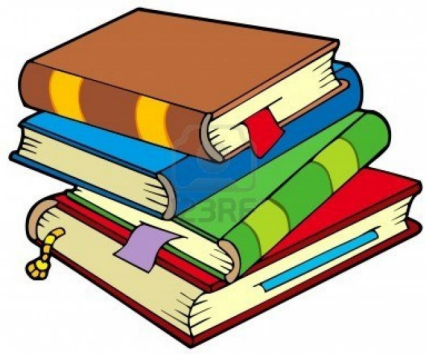
### **"King for a Day" by Jo McNally**

Learning point-of-view is an essential skill for students of all ages. This humorous Thanksgiving poem is written from the turkey's point-of-view. Students will enjoy reading this poem as the turkey comes to realize the humans may not be his friends.

<https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/king-for-a-day>



## Book Nook



### **I Wish You More** by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld

This gentle book expresses the deepest hopes we have for our students, our children, and every significant person in our lives. It is the picture book you will wish you had written! Read the book to learn what the authors wish more of for the people in their lives. What is your wish?

[barnesandnoble.com/p/i-wish-you-more-amy-krouse-rosenthal/1119943019/2661668352689?st=PLA&sid=BNB\\_ADL+Marketplace+Generic+New+Books+-+Desktop+Medium&sourceId=PLAGoNA&dpid=tdtve346c&2sid=Google\\_c&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4sXljYD55AIVk6\\_sCh0GHw0JEAQYASABEgJRa\\_D\\_BwE](https://www.barnesandnoble.com/p/i-wish-you-more-amy-krouse-rosenthal/1119943019/2661668352689?st=PLA&sid=BNB_ADL+Marketplace+Generic+New+Books+-+Desktop+Medium&sourceId=PLAGoNA&dpid=tdtve346c&2sid=Google_c&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4sXljYD55AIVk6_sCh0GHw0JEAQYASABEgJRa_D_BwE)



### **Rump—the True Story of Rumpelstiltskin** by Leisl Shurtliff

Rumpelstiltskin is a very misunderstood fairy-tale character. Born into a kingdom where your name is your destiny, Rump searches for his true calling. When he finds an old spinning wheel, he discovers his unknown talent. Ignoring warnings about the dangers of magic, Rump begins an adventure which will change his life.

[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0307977935/ref=x\\_gr\\_w\\_bb\\_glide\\_sout?ie=UTF8&tag=x\\_gr\\_w\\_bb\\_glide\\_sout-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0307977935&SubscriptionId=1MGPYB6YW3HWWK55XCGG2](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0307977935/ref=x_gr_w_bb_glide_sout?ie=UTF8&tag=x_gr_w_bb_glide_sout-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0307977935&SubscriptionId=1MGPYB6YW3HWWK55XCGG2)

### **Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library** by Chris Grabenstein

Do you love games? Luigi Lumencello, a world famous game maker, has designed a new library and is sponsoring an opening night lock-in. The twist comes when the guests realize that the game planned for the evening is trying to escape from the library. Following elaborate clues and puzzles, the children use their gaming skills to find a way out of the library!

[https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00AUSCOQK/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?\\_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00AUSCOQK/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1)

### Writing in Response to Math

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 thinking and solution 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 program provides the teacher with step-by-step lesson plans to use with their students as they teach children how to sequentially explain their math thinking. Each program includes samples of grade-appropriate math problems addressing the different strands. By following these simple steps, students are able to clearly explain each step they took while solving a math word problem. Now available for 3rd, 4th and 5th grades.

**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](mailto: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:**

**[writenow-rightnow.com](http://writenow-rightnow.com)**

**The Write Now—Right Now Writing Program is now being used in 50 states and four Canadian provinces. How can we be of help to you in your classroom?**