

Writing Levels - Updated June 2019

Level PK:

- Holds pencils and crayons comfortably
- Draws and scribbles
- Can make basic shapes: circle, X, T, and a variety of lines
- Can write most letters in name
- Writes some words, although may not be completely legible
- Attempts to copy some shapes and words

Level K:

- Can write a variety of simple words such as “Mom” “Dad” etc...
- Attempts to write basic sentences “Mom loves me.” With invented spelling
- Can copy a sentence
- Can write all the letters
- Working on penmanship and full sentences
 - Focus on writing all letters and using basic phonics to sound things out, even if spelling isn't perfect (i.e. how do you think Kite is spelled? What makes a /k/ sound? C is one letter that makes a /k/ sound, what would come next?)
 - Penmanship

Level 1: (hands are not fully developed until age 6)

- Writes full sentences with 3-4 words
- Familiar words are spelled correctly (name, common words)
- Can use vocabulary words to create a sentence like “Planets are round”
- Shows perseverance
- Can put together a partial paragraph on one topic. 1-2 sentences on one topic
- Utilizes basic phonics to spell out words - i.e. might spell “bizee” for “busy”
- Needs work on punctuation and sentence structure
- Often difficult to understand and read due to errors
 - Focus on consonant blends such as SL, SP, TR, TH, CH, SH, etc...
 - Introduce vocabulary in science, social studies, and though books. Encourage kids to copy and use it (this will also help them with reading those words) Explain the phonics of the word when able.
 - Focus on mastering silent e words
 - Penmanship - might consider introducing cursive as cursive is thought to be easier

Level 2:

- Can write simple sentences correctly, with 4-5 words
- Needs work on complex sentences and use of comma
- Can put together simple paragraphs with few details (utilizes main idea with a few details. i.e. “I have a dog. His name is Mouse. He is large and yellow. He likes to chase a ball”)
- Paragraphs are mostly correct in that there are capitals and periods, 2-3 sentences on one topic
- Adds prepositional phrases to writing such as “yesterday,” “last week,” “next year” etc...
- Can use vocabulary from class to express basic ideas “Water rains down from the sky”

- Is beginning to spell 3-4 letter words correctly, focus on vowel blends such as OA, EE, EA, OU, maybe EI / IE, AY...
- Easy to understand
- Simple word choices and sentence structure

Level 3:

- Can write compound sentences correctly (i.e. "I have a dog and Mark has a cat" or "Last week I swam and saw a movie.") - Compound sentences use a conjunction like and, but, or
- Can write complex sentences (i.e. "I went swimming because it was hot.") - Complex sentences join a dependent clause using words such as "because," "that," "with," etc...
- Can add prepositional phrases easily ("after we went swimming, we saw a movie.")
- Comfortable with capitals, periods, and question marks.
- Needs work on dependent clauses and use of comma in these cases
- Can write paragraphs with 3-4 details per paragraph.
- Spelling is mostly correct for basic words
- Can write two paragraphs on the same topic
- Paragraphs are mostly correct
- Easy to read
- Makes a few changes at the suggestion of the teacher
- Simple to moderate word choices
- Can describe and identify what a noun is, what a verb is
- Begins to edit the work of others (like Daily Oral Language or something similar)
 - Have daily editing for kids to do, even if it's only a few sentences
 - superteacherworksheets.com has a bunch of these. Username: stacey@educationalharbor.com, password: stacey1282

Level 4:

- Can write most complex sentences correctly
- Needs work on incorporating new vocabulary and improving word choice - begin to use a thesaurus
- Working on formal vs. informal writing
- Comfortable with commas and exclamation marks. Uses them on purpose.
- Knows when to start a new paragraph. Adds details to paragraphs.
- Paragraphs are mostly correct, can be as long as 5-6 sentences all on one topic
- Can write 3-4 paragraphs on the same topic
- Edits and rewrites work
- Spelling is correct for basic words, working on spelling for science and history words
- Easy to read
- Understands audience and writes to a specific audience
- Makes intentional edits based on mini-lessons taught by teacher
- Recognizes some convention mistakes in the work of others
- Recognizes one or two places where more details can be added in the works of others
- can describe and identify adjectives and adverbs
- Intentionally uses certain words or phrases to engage the reader
- Begins to look up information and is learning to paraphrase

Level 5:

- Can write a variety of different sentences correctly and completely
- Working on formal vs. informal writing
- Comfortable with quotation marks, colon and semi-colon. Uses them on purpose.
- Any errors tend to stem from spelling complex words or trying new verb tenses
- Can put together an essay or story on one topic and paragraphs are organized correctly
- Paragraphs are correct. Can write 4-5 paragraphs per topic
- Easy to read
- Clearly puts together a complete essay without too much filler
- Intentionally uses a variety of sentence structures to engage the reader (short and long sentences)
- Edits work based on constructive criticism from teacher and peers (or parent)
- Can offer constructive criticism to other students
- Using figurative language
- Beginning to write different types of text: How-to, persuasive, narrative, informational
- Can look up information and paraphrase
- Keeps track of sources in some way

Level 6: Focus on Quality, not length

- Can write a variety of sentences on purpose that are clear and easy to read
- Can identify types of sentences
- Intentionally adds dependent clauses in order to add details to sentences
- Comfortable with all basic punctuation and capitalization.
- Learning use of colon
- Errors tend to stem from misspellings of technical or “school” words, and only on rough drafts
- Essays are readily added to, including new information
- Starts to recognize where more details should be added
- Starts to offer criticism of adult authors (word choice, sentence structure, etc...)
- Paragraphs are correct and easy to read 4-5 paragraphs
- Intentionally uses a variety of methods to engage the reader including word choice, voice, sentence fluency, and more.
- Is fluent in information essays and narratives, at least a page long
- Clearly puts together a complete essay without too much filler
- Intentionally uses a variety of sentence structures to engage the reader (short and long sentences)
- Edits work based on constructive criticism from teacher and peers (or parent)
- Understands and uses passive and active voice
- Beginning logic and learning about types of arguments
- A list of websites and books used is included in research work

Level 7: Focus on Quality, not length

- Uses arguments to write opinion and persuasive texts with a two-three sources

- Intentionally uses a variety of methods to engage the reader including word choice, voice, sentence fluency, and more.
- Learning to use semicolon
- Can effectively choose sources according to validity and reliability
- Can write a variety of genres including essays, narrative, persuasive, how-to
- Can explain different types of arguments and starts to use them in writing
- Effectively switches between formal and informal writing
- Resource list includes the author, book, and/or website

Level 8: Focus on Quality, not length, except near end of the course

- Intentionally slows down or speeds up action within a narrative
- Can fill out an application
- Can utilize short scholarly articles and write summaries or arguments with them up to one page in length
- Can quote articles or published works and explain them
- Intentionally draws attention to and explains possible unknown concepts in essays
- Edits and rewrites work to improve
- Can effectively choose sources according to validity and reliability
- Can write an essay pointing out his or her own strengths and areas of improvement (5-6 paragraphs)
- Can meet a minimum requirement of 250 words (one page, double spaced)

Level 9:

- Can fill out an application
- Can effectively edit their own writing or the writing of others
- Reads and uses scholarly articles to write a persuasive argument
- Uses scholarly articles to write a persuasive essay
- Can write a page and a half on one topic
- Can point out flaws in other's arguments
- Typed
- No spelling errors
- Can meet the word length of 500 words (two pages double spaced, MLA format)

Level 10: Focus on adding length when required.

- Ready for college as assessed by a college professor
- Can explain the difference between formal and informal writing and the need for formal writing in a professional setting
- Writes a resume
- Evaluates sources for reliability
- Reads and analyzes scholarly articles for use in an essay
- Can write up to 3 pages on one topic using sources in MLA format
- Uses a college structure to cite sources (MLA format)
- No spelling errors
- Typed
- Can meet the word requirement of 1000 words (4 pages double spaced, MLA format).