

Scheduling a Balanced Literacy Program

Monday and Wednesday - Writing Workshop

1. **Daily Edit** - an editing, grammar, vocabulary, and word study exercise. A five-minute entry task.
2. **Mini-lesson** - writing prompts, grammar exercises, revision strategies, editing help, etc. based on the needs of my students. May vary from class to class. Also a time to address formal writing in preparation for FCAT/FL Writes.
3. **Writing Workshop** - a 20 to 25 minute block of time (increased to 35 to 40 minutes as the year progresses) for students to work on their writing (kept in a writing folder or portfolio in the classroom) or help others revise and/or edit their work.
4. **Whole Group/Small Group Share** - an opportunity for students to read their work aloud for feedback, comments, and suggestions from small groups or to the entire class as part of an author share once a piece is completed.

Notes: On Mondays, I assign the week's SDT topic (after the Daily Edit) and students are given a few minutes to get started writing or planning what they will write. SDT's are due on Wednesday. On Wednesday, I assign the week's Sentence Combining homework. At the beginning of the year, I use the mini-lesson time to "model" how to write SDT's and how to do Sentence Combining. By the second semester, students have reached an independent level with these activities.

At the beginning of the year, most of my mini-lessons are geared toward generating writing topics and getting students "started writing". I use a wide range of literature to model certain literary genres, writing styles and techniques (e.g. voice, foreshadowing, dialogue, etc.). To model, I use excerpts from novels, short stories, picture books, poems as well as my own writings and student samples from previous years. As the year progresses, mini-lessons become shorter and more specific (usually grammar related based on common errors detected in my students' writing) and writing workshop time is increased.

Tuesday and Thursday - Reading Workshop

1. **Dialogue Partners/Response Journals** - students write responses to what they are reading (alternates among shared reading and literature groups). I may supply the “prompt” for them to respond to, or they simply write reactions to the text or their own experiences with the reading. I model this activity throughout the year and their responses are discussed in class. This is not a diary activity.
2. **Mini-lesson** - usually a comprehension strategy (Venn diagram, Think-Pair-Share, Jig Saw or other CRISS activity) in which students discuss their readings, and I check comprehension. I may use this time to do a “comprehension check” (short quiz).
3. **Shared Reading/Guided Reading/Literature Circles** - 25 to 30 block of time spent with either a shared reading text (whole class follows along as I read aloud) or with either a guided reading exercise or in literature circles. This activity alternates throughout the year. See definitions of guided reading and literature circles for details.
4. **Word Wall/Study** - time for students to contribute “vocabulary words” to the class word wall or to their writer’s notebook or their weekly vocabulary lists. I may use this time to have students re-read or discuss a particularly difficult part of the text. Also a time for other text-related activities.

Friday –Student Choice Independent Reading/Catch Up

1. **Teacher-Student Dialogue Journal** - students write to me about the book they are reading (one journal per class - students must have at least two entries per nine weeks)
2. **DEAR** (Drop Everything and Read) - a 30 to 40 minute block of time in which students (and teacher) read from independently chosen text. Students are required to bring something to read every Friday and read from that text. Specific reading requirements are given for the grading period.
3. **Response Journals** - students write their reactions in their own journals to the text they’ve read that day. Journals are dated, the title of the text, the author, and the number of pages is recorded. Students are given a list of response strategies at the beginning of the year to model their responses. Teacher shares own responses throughout the year to reinforce critical thinking, metacognition, and predicting strategies, not summary writing. Also a time for students to fill out reader response forms on the books they have finished reading.
4. **Vocabulary** - students write down words (with definition, context, and source) from their own reading. Students must submit vocabulary from independent reading every other week.

Note: Students may also opt to use this time to work on one of the following activities: Reader Response Forms, Writing Conferences, Book Projects, Peer Editing/Revision, Publication (e.g. typing a Polished Paper.