

Types of Writing Conferences

Type of Conference	Prompts	Goal
<p>Writerly Life</p> <p>Focusing on the social aspects of writing, the real life habits inside and (more importantly) outside of school.</p>	<p><u>Enjoyment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Tell me about a time when writing was good for you.” • “Is there someone in your life that you like to write with?” • “When are you most excited about writing?” • “What about writing is hardest for you?” <p><u>Plans</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What are you planning on writing next?” “And after that?” <p><u>Talk -</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Who do you talk with about your writing?” • “When do you find yourself talking to others about your writing (unpacking in the morning, as we gather on the carpet, during independent time, etc.)?” • “Are you ever <i>dying</i> to talk with someone during independent writing? What makes you want to talk about what you read?” <p><u>Connections</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Does this writing remind you of other writing?” • “Would you want a friend to read it?” <p><u>Habits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Where do you write?” • “Is that where you get your best writing done?” • “When do you get your best writing done?” • “Do you write at home?” 	
<p>Topic Choice</p> <p>Conversations around topic (writing) choices. These conversations with individuals should be accompanied (or preceded) by group talks and mini-lessons on topic choice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with a description of the difference between very general topics and more focused topics. For example, if a student was to write about a day spent with his or her grandfather, that could include many different things. But if the topic is about making biscuits with his or her grandfather on Sunday morning, then the writing is going to be about that one specific moment or event. • Explain that this kind of focused writing is often stronger than general writing and includes more details about the topic. • Provide students with a model by selecting a topic from your own life and creating a timeline on a chart, narrowing down the general topic into several specific events. (You may want to choose only a few events for younger writers). Model for students how you are thinking through and selecting these moments and placing them on the timeline. 	

<p>Content</p> <p>Content Conferences are interested conversations about the content of the writing. *A student should leave the conference with a goal.</p> <p>*A student learns to anticipate readers' questions.</p>	<p>When there isn't enough information in the piece:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I don't understand this part..." • "Tell me more about..." • "What else do you know about this?" • "How could you find out more?" • "This part is so great, but I really want to know...I think you might add it in." • "There is so much more you could tell me about this. Talk to me about..." • "I would love for you to add that." <p>When there is too much information in a piece:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Is all this information really important to a reader?" • "What parts don't you need?" • "You have told me so much about... I can tell it is important to you. Let me help you make it more clear by making it shorter." <p>When the piece isn't focused and covers several different times, events, or ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Do you have more than one story here?" • "What's the most important part you want to tell me about?" • "What's your favorite part? Let's talk about it." • "Let me help you. Let's get blank paper and separate your stories." <p>When the piece is a list of events and includes little of the writer's reflections or thoughts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "How did you feel when this happened?" • "What do you think about this?" • "What were you thinking when this happened?" • "Why is this part important to you?" <p>When a conclusion is missing or unclear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What do you want the reader to know or feel at the end of your piece? Does your conclusion do that?" • "Where does your piece really end? How would I know?" • "How did you feel when all that was over?" Or "Why do you remember this so clearly?" • "If you added that to the end, a reader would really know your writing was finished." 	
<p>Mechanics</p>	<p>Look at spelling, punctuation, clarity, and language used, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comment on something the student does well. - Look for error patterns and address those first. - Address only one aspect in any single conference. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on only one editing correction at a time 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Circle all the words you think are misspelled.” • “Let’s re-read your piece for words you left out.” • “What are you supposed to do with the first letter of a new sentence?” • “Go try and spell your circled words in a different way. Cross them out and write above them.” • “Let’s check the words you tried to re-spell.” • “What do we put at the end of our sentences?” 	
<p>Process</p>	<p>Involve noticing how students go about writing and talking to them about their strategies. Students teach us what they do when they write. What parts of the writing process are easy for them? What parts seem hard?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On the spot conferencing – Teachers visit briefly with students at their desks to monitor their progress. ○ Prewriting conferences – Teacher and student make plans together for writing, discuss topics, and how to gather and organize information ○ Drafting conferences – Students bring rough drafts to talk with teacher. ○ Revising conference – Small group of students meet with teacher for revision purposes. ○ Editing conference – Individuals and small groups meet to correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, etc. ○ Instructional “Mini-lesson” conference – Short session with individuals to provide special instruction ○ Assessment conference – Teachers ask students to reflect on their writing competencies and plan for their next piece 	