

## Writing Skills Checklist

**Directions:** Use this checklist to inventory students' foundation writing skills. Any writing skill that is marked 'N[o]' should be targeted for intervention.

| Problem?                                      | Writing Competency   | Sample Intervention Ideas  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Physical Production of Writing</b>         |  |  |
| __Y __N                                       | <i>Writing Speed.</i> Writes words on the page at a rate equal or nearly equal to that of classmates   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach keyboarding skills</li> <li>• Allow student to dictate ideas into a tape-recorder and have a volunteer (e.g., classmate, parent, school personnel) transcribe them</li> </ul>   |
| __Y __N                                       | <i>Handwriting.</i> Handwriting is legible to most readers   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training in handwriting</li> <li>• Teach keyboarding skills</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Mechanics &amp; Conventions of Writing</b> |  |  |
| __Y __N                                       | <i>Grammar &amp; Syntax.</i> Knowledge of grammar (rules governing use of language) and syntax (grammatical arrangement of words in sentences) is appropriate for age and/or grade placement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach rules of grammar, syntax</li> <li>• Have students compile individualized checklists of their own common grammar/syntax mistakes; direct students to use the checklist to review work for errors before turning in</li> </ul>  |
| __Y __N                                       | <i>Spelling.</i> Spelling skills are appropriate for age and/or grade placement  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have student collect list of own common misspellings; assign words from list to study; quiz student on list items</li> <li>• Have student type assignments and use spell-check</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Writing Content</b>                        |  |  |
| __Y __N                                       | <i>Vocabulary.</i> Vocabulary in written work is age/grade appropriate   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compile list of key vocabulary and related definitions for subject area; assign words from list to study; quiz student on definitions of list items</li> <li>• Introduce new vocabulary items regularly to class; set up cooperative learning activities for students to review vocabulary</li> </ul> |
| __Y __N                                       | <i>Word Choice.</i> Distinguishes word-choices that are appropriate for informal (colloquial, slang) written discourse vs. formal discourse  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present examples to the class of formal vs. informal word choices</li> <li>• Have students check work for appropriate word choice as part of writing revision process</li> </ul>  |
| __Y __N                                       | <i>Audience.</i> Identifies targeted audience for writing assignments and alters written content to match needs of projected audience  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct students to write a 'targeted audience profile' as a formal (early) step in the writing process; have students evaluate the final writing product to needs of targeted audience during the revision process</li> </ul>   |
| __Y __N                                       | <i>Plagiarism.</i> Identifies when to credit authors for use of excerpts quoted verbatim or unique ideas taken from other written works  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define plagiarism for students. Use plentiful examples to show students acceptable vs. unacceptable incorporation of others' words or ideas into written compositions</li> </ul>  |

| Writing Preparation           |   |  |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| ___Y ___N                     | <i>Topic Selection.</i> Independently selects appropriate topics for writing assignments  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have student generate list of general topics that that interest him or her; sit with the student to brainstorm ideas for writing topics that relate to the student's own areas of interest</li> </ul>   |
| ___Y ___N                     | <i>Writing Plan.</i> Creates writing plan by breaking larger writing assignments into sub-tasks (e.g., select topic, collect source documents, take notes from source documents, write outline, etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create generic pre-formatted work plans for writing assignments that break specific types of larger assignments (e.g., research paper) into constituent parts. Have students use these plan outlines as a starting point to making up their own detailed writing plans.</li> </ul>  |
| ___Y ___N                     | <i>Note-Taking.</i> Researches topics by writing notes that capture key ideas from source material  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach note-taking skills; have students review note-cards with the teacher as quality check.</li> </ul>   |
| Writing Production & Revision |   |  |
| ___Y ___N                     | <i>Adequate 'Seat Time'.</i> Allocates realistic amount of time to the act of writing to ensure a quality final product   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use teacher's experience and information from proficient student writers to develop estimates of minimum writing 'seat time' needed to produce quality products for 'typical' writing assignments (e.g., 5-paragraph opinion essay; 10-page term paper). Share with students.</li> <li>Have students keep a writing diary to record amount of time spent in act of writing for each assignment. Require that this information be submitted along with the students' assignment. (Additional idea: Consider asking parents to monitor and record their child's writing time.)</li> </ul> |
| ___Y ___N                     | <i>Oral vs. Written Work.</i> Student's dictated and written passages are equivalent in complexity and quality  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow student to dictate ideas into a tape-recorder and have a volunteer (e.g., classmate, parent, school personnel) transcribe them</li> <li>Permit the student to use speech-to-text software (e.g., Dragon Naturally Speaking) to dictate first drafts of writing assignments.</li> </ul>  |
| ___Y ___N                     | <i>Revision Process.</i> Revises initial written draft before turning in for a grade or evaluation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a rubric containing the elements of writing that students should review during the revision process; teach this rubric to the class; link a portion of the grade on writing assignments to students' use of the revision rubric.</li> </ul>  |
| ___Y ___N                     | <i>Timely Submission.</i> Turns in written assignments (class work, homework) on time   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide student incentives for turning work in on time.</li> <li>Work with parents to develop home-based plans for work completion and submission.</li> <li>Institute school-home communication to let parents know immediately when important assignments are late or missing.</li> </ul>  |