

# Building a Classroom of Writers

Create a blueprint for writing success with these easy-to-use ideas!

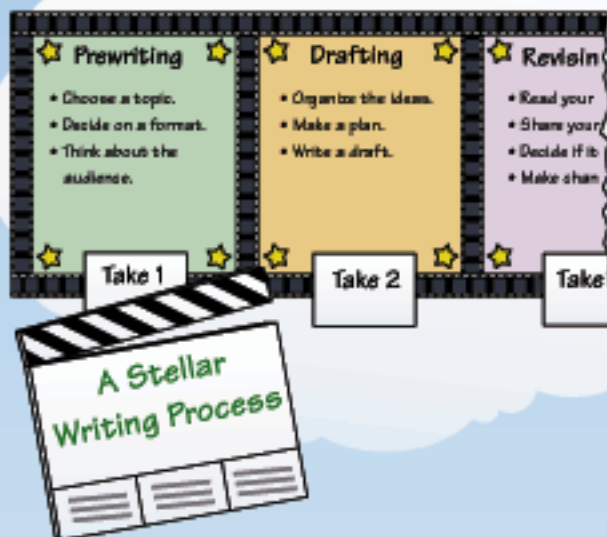
## Lay the Foundation

Choose from the suggestions on pages 10–12 to establish a class writing routine complete with helpful tools for your young authors!

## Lights, Camera, Writing!

Give the writing process a starring role! Title a separate poster-size sheet of paper for each stage of the writing process used in your classroom. Add brief explanations of the stages and then embellish the posters with star cutouts. Display the posters side by side in consecutive order. Then outline the posters with a film-like border, and add “Take” labels and a titled director’s board as shown. Explain to students that moviemaking involves many takes, with a director making decisions and changes at each stage in the process. Point out that many authors use a similar process when they write. Direct students’ attention to the display and review the steps it outlines. Encourage youngsters to use the display as a writing guide. Student writing that earns rave reviews is sure to be the result!

Pam Sanderson—Gr. 2  
Davis Drive Elementary  
Apex, NC



## “Soup-er” Writing

Set the stage for first-rate writing with this literature-based idea! Read aloud Marc Brown’s *Arthur Writes a Story*. In this installment of the Arthur Adventure series, the beloved aardvark gains a new perspective about what makes a great story. At the conclusion of the book, prompt discussion about why Arthur’s pet story is better received than his more outlandish tale. Next, display a jumbo kettle-shaped cutout labeled “Soup-er” Writing.” Have students brainstorm qualities of excellent writing, such as vivid details or a beginning that hooks readers. Record their ideas on the cutout. To encourage further exploration of these qualities, place an empty recipe box and a supply of blank recipe cards near the poster. When a youngster reads a book that exemplifies one of the listed qualities, have her describe on a card how the quality was shown, write the book title, and then deposit the card in the recipe box. On a designated day each week, share any newly deposited cards with students. Then post the cards around the cutout. Not only will students become better writers, but they’ll also become more thoughtful readers!

Sonia Armstrong—Gr. 2, Thomas J. Lahey Elementary, Greenlawn, NY



## At a Glance

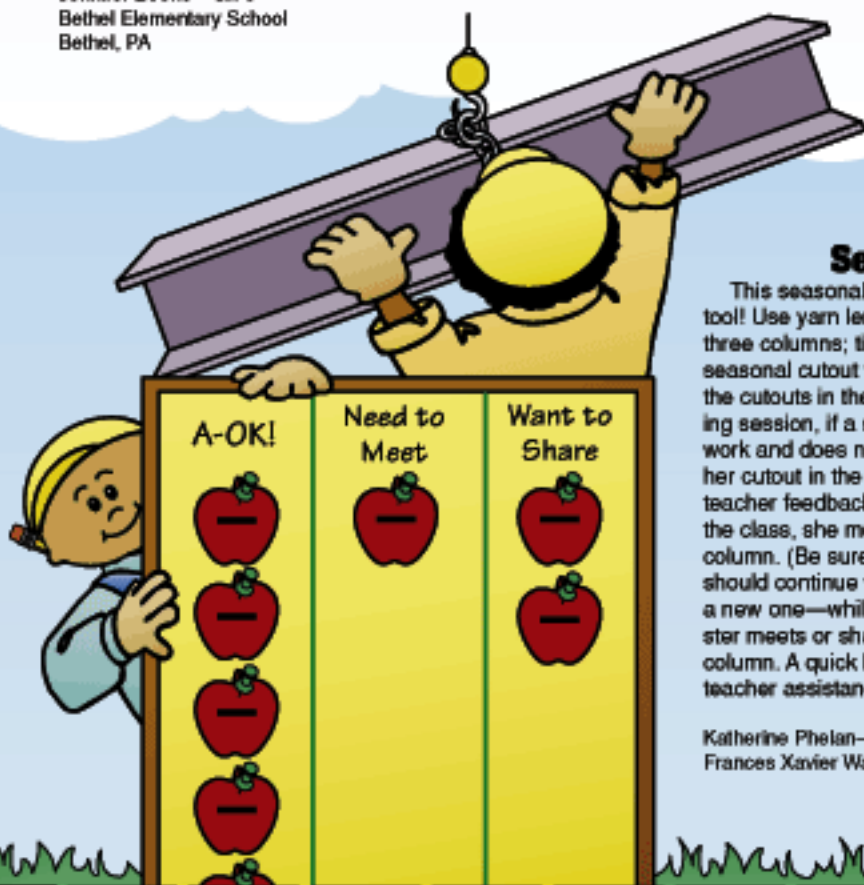
It's a snap to manage a writers' workshop with these two colorful displays!

**Pocket Chart:** Write each student's name on a separate 1" x 3" card. Arrange the cards behind the clear plastic pockets of a store-bought pocket chart so that every name is visible. Designate a different color for each stage of the writing process and then cut a class supply of 3" x 3" cards for each color. Store the cards as shown, placing a labeled card in the front of each stack to make a color key. Instruct each student to tuck a blank card of the appropriate color behind his name to indicate where he is in the writing process.

Kathleen Gillin—Gr. 2, Cold Spring Elementary, Doylestown, PA

**Clothespin Lineup:** For each stage of the writing process, label a colorful 4½" x 12" poster board rectangle and laminate it for durability. Also prepare a poster board rectangle labeled "I'm Stuck!" to use when students want teacher guidance. Attach the top of each rectangle to the edge of a shelf or another accessible location that allows for clothespins to be clipped along the bottom of the rectangles. Have each youngster clip a personalized clothespin on the rectangle that reflects his current stage in the writing process.

Jennifer Boone—Gr. 3  
Bethel Elementary School  
Bethel, PA



## Seasonal Signals

This seasonal display doubles as a management tool! Use yarn lengths to divide a bulletin board into three columns; title them as shown. Label a separate seasonal cutout for each student. Use pushpins to tack the cutouts in the first column. During a class writing session, if a student is making headway with her work and does not need teacher guidance, she leaves her cutout in the first column. If she wants to meet for teacher feedback or arrange to share her work with the class, she moves her cutout to the appropriate column. (Be sure the student understands that she should continue writing—either on the current piece or a new one—while she waits for a turn.) After a youngster meets or shares, she returns her cutout to the first column. A quick look at the board reveals who needs teacher assistance!

Katherine Phelan—Grs. 1–2  
Frances Xavier Warde School, Chicago, IL