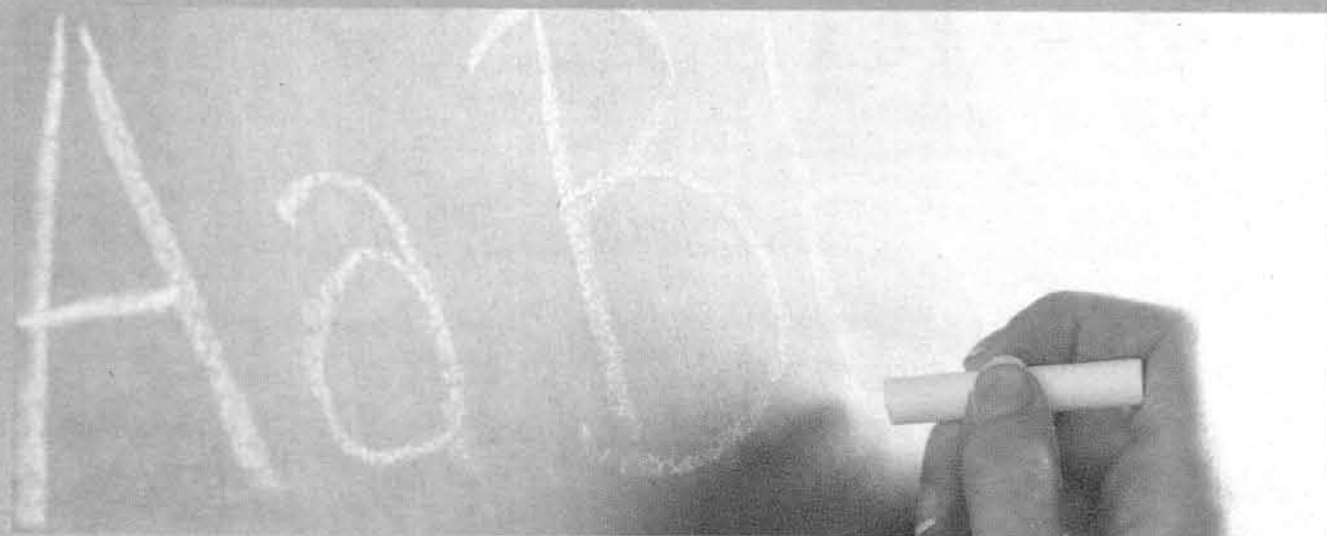


Life & Learning

SIERRA SUN



THE ABCs OF WRITING



VICKI ISACOWITZ
On the Chalkboard

Guided self-discovery leads to amazing results. Half a dozen middle school aged girls spend their Wednesday afternoons exploring the writing process and its different elements within a workshop format. After months of exposure, each determines separate aspects that unlock the door to successful writing.

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Students give their thoughts on successful writing

Nicole Ramm, 13 years old, thesis

In elementary school, we called it a topic sentence, but now it has been officially named a thesis. A strong thesis is the key to writing. It states exactly what will be proved in the writing. Without a thesis, writing would fall apart, like bread without flour. Without a hook, writing is less interesting and without a conclusion, writing would never end. However, without a thesis, writing would not be an argument. It would be many random facts/opinions about something. The thesis makes sure your essay never rambles off subject, and a thesis will be all anyone needs to understand what the writer thinks about the subject they are writing about. For example, if you wanted to know what someone thought about a character in the book they read, you would not need to read their whole essay, you could easily look at their thesis statement and it would summarize the whole essay into one simple opinionated sentence.

Mariah Cushman, 13 years old, voice

Just like how a key unlocks a house, voice unlocks the keys to writing. It is your attitude that portrays through your work. Many things add to and complete your voice, from word choice to sentence fluency. Voice is hard to learn, but it is easy once you know it. It just comes naturally. The unique thing about voice is that everyone's is different. This is what separates each person's writing. If everyone had the same voice, writing would help you show and tell what you may have experienced or seen or imagined. Without voice, you cannot feel or see how the writer experienced, saw, or imagined.

Emma Sloan, 13 years old, organizing and using details

Before I came to this class, my writing was a mess. It had no hook, no juicy details, nothing. It was as dry as a desert, had no formula to it. I learned that you need to follow a certain schedule in your writing. I learned where to add things to make my writing juicier. Now, I'm not saying my writing is perfect, but learning to organize my writing definitely make it easier to follow and understand, and that's why I think that learning to organize my writing is the most important thing that I learned.

Kristen Larsen, 14 years old, Inspiration and Will

On your marks, get set, write! Whether it is a timed writing or a free write, writers are alike. What makes a good writer are the inspiration and the will to write. Writers are people who like to write, and like to just sit down and start writing. People who love to write will write any time of day. For example, some people will just start writing after they watch a movie, or get inspired by something. Some people also write in diaries to keep themselves occupied or they want to remember something so they just write away. Some writers are more into writing essays or stories. The writers who like writing essays are most likely the people who are given a topic and they can just start writing. The writers who like writing stories like to let their imagination loose and write about new lands and many other fascinating creatures. Writing an essay or story is like trying to unlock the door to a new and fascinating place. The key to that door is the writer's inspiration, imagination, and the will to write.

Kelsey Porter, 12 years old, planning

Did you know that the California state tests were surveyed on results, and that the tests that have more planning and writing on scratch paper scored better? Well, it is true that if you plan, write, think or do anything else to get your thoughts out before you write, you will write better.

Think before you write and your thoughts will explode from your brain! The key to good writing is to plan what you are going to write. But how? You might ask. There is no wrong way to plan just anything that helps you get your thoughts on paper. Take my advice and think before you write. It is the easiest and most successful key to writing a good paper, no matter its size or type.

Parker Dalmau-Jones, 13 years old, elaboration

The main key to writing is elaboration, whether the author is able to describe how he or she is feeling after they state the topic. I believe that elaboration is most important in a written essay than anything else because it goes deep into the writer's mind. It explains their thoughts of the topic after stating and explaining it. I believe that it is much better when reading an essay to see that not only the writer has stated their emotions, but they have explained and elaborated on their emotions also. Elaboration is one thing that I have improved on because I have discovered that the reader not only wants to know what I feel or think, but how and why.