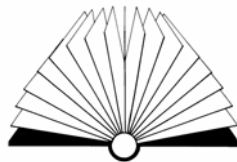


# How to Kit



## Writing Ideas



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## Other *How to Kits* & Literacy Activities

This *How to Kit* was developed to help organizations celebrate NWT Literacy Week. This is one in a series of *How to Kits* available to download on the NWT Literacy Council website at [www.nwt.literacy.ca](http://www.nwt.literacy.ca).

### *How to Kits* developed to date:

- 1-2-3 Rhyme With Me
- Book Making
- Books in the Home
- Community Book Swap
- Culture and Traditions
- Election
- Environmental Print Games
- Facilitating a Workshop
- Family Literacy Activities Night
- Family Reading Party
- Games Night
- “Get Caught Reading” and other literacy promotion ideas
- Involving Families in Children’s Learning
- Literacy Activities for Holidays – Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Easter, Birthdays
- Literacy Games for Adults
- Literacy Treasure Hunt
- Puppet Making
- Pyjamas and Book Party
- Readers Theatre
- Reading Circles and Story Extenders
- Scattergories
- Storytime on the Radio
- Talking Books
- Writing Contest
- Love You Forever
- Picture and Word Bingos
- Literacy Games
- Read for 15 Community Activities

### Other activities:

- Literacy Bingos
  - Reading Bingo
  - Picture Bingo
  - Word Bingo
  - Plain Language Bingo
- Memory Game
- Learning Activities Cards
- Baby Book Project
- My Family Booklet
- On the Right Track

Please feel free to photocopy and use these activities in your programs and adapt them to meet your needs.



## Writing Ideas

The NWT Literacy Council sponsored the NWT Writing Contest for 10 years. We've received many wonderful stories from Northerners of all ages that have been published in our annual book, *Northern Writes*. We would like to encourage communities and people to continue writing their stories, poetry and autobiographies. Communities can hold writing workshops, writing and poetry contests and produce booklets with community members' writing.

This *How to Kit* can be used by teachers and adult educators, or can be used for a writing workshop for community members to encourage writing of all ages in your community.

In this kit you will find:

- Prewriting ideas
- Writing techniques and ideas
- Writing contest tips and ideas
- Publishing your winning stories

We hope you will continue to promote and celebrate northern writing as part of literacy activities in your community.



## Prewriting Activities

Prewriting is the first step in the writing process. It helps the writer choose a topic or, when a topic is already assigned, helps the writer decide what they will say about the topic. It also gives the writer a chance to organize his or her thoughts. The idea is to generate as many ideas as possible, some of which will be eliminated during the next step in the writing process. It is best to do a prewriting activity before you actually begin writing your story or essay.

Prewriting activities give learners a place to start and make them aware of places to get ideas from in the future. Learners who have a place to start will be more motivated to continue developing their ideas and their own writing voices.<sup>1</sup> This section has eight activities and five handouts that instructors can use with learners in a classroom, or a workshop with adult learners..

**We use these symbols for:**

Activities



Handouts



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<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/mla/write.html>





# Learning Activities

## Prewriting

### 5 Handouts

#### Activity 1 – Why Write?

Discuss with learners the different kinds of writing that they can do for the writing contest. Ask them to look at Handout 1 and guess and match the description to each kind of writing. Ask learners what the purpose of each writing is and who the audience is.

Handout 2 lists a bunch of audiences and purposes and learners write down what kind of writing fits for each one. There may be more than one answer for each list item.

#### Activity 2 – Brainstorming

**Brainstorm:** As a group choose a topic and jot down all the possible terms that emerge from the general topic you are thinking about. All learners can generate ideas, with one person acting as scribe. Don't worry about editing or throwing out what might not be a good idea. Simply write down a lot of possibilities.

**Group:** Put the items that you have listed into groups that make sense.

**Label:** Give each group a label. Now you have a topic with possible points of development.

**Write sentences:** Write a sentence about each label. Now you have a beginning sentence for each group of terms.

#### Activity 3 – Clustering

Put the subject in the center of a page. Circle or underline it. As you think of other ideas, link the new ideas to the central circle with lines. As you think of ideas that relate to the new ideas, add to those in the same way. The result will look like a web on your page. Locate clusters of interest to you, and use the terms you attached to the key ideas as starting points for your paper. Use Handout 3 as a guideline for clustering.



### **Activity 4 – Free-writing**

Ask learners to free-write on a general topic for 5-10 minutes non-stop. Tell learners to keep on writing even if nothing specific comes to mind. Generating ideas is what is important, not the grammar or the spelling.

After learners have finished free-writing, ask them to read over what they have written and highlight the most prominent and interesting ideas. Learners can use these ideas for their writing. Refer to Handout 4 for a list of ideas for free-writing. Get learners to do this many times before they actually start writing their draft.

### **Activity 5 – Journalist Questions**

Who, What, When, When, Why and How can be used to generate information about a topic. This is a great way to begin a writing assignment. Review the questions guide with learners on Handout 5 before they start to write.

### **Activity 6 – Generating Ideas for Writing**

Ask learners to draw a rough sketch/map of their community or a neighborhood where they once lived or live now. Ask them to draw the map, label particular objects where things happened. For example: here's where I first fell off my bike...here's the house where my best friend lived...here's the rock I fell off and broke my arm. Ask learners to show the map to the class and explain your map; describe the neighborhood and what went on. Ask them to pick a story from their map that they would like to write about. Handout 6 provides instructions and an example sketch/map.

### **Activity 7 – Prewriting Activity <sup>2</sup>**

- Give each learner any book or magazine to use. The instructor should have a selection also, in order to model the process.
- Ask them to open their book or magazine at any page and choose a word at random--the first word that jumps off the page at them--and record this as Word #1; close the book. Continue this until each learner has four words recorded.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/mla/write.html>



## Writing Ideas

- Learners then focus for about one minute on each word separately, and list all their thoughts, ideas and associations that the word generates.
- Learners then begin to make connections among the four words and their lists of personal associations by writing phrases, sentences, and ideas that demonstrate a relationship among the words.
- Learners now have some ideas for writing.

### Activity 8 – Another Prewriting Activity <sup>3</sup>

Ask learners to bring pictures of people, or you can supply them (photographs or pictures clipped from magazines). Each picture should show several people in sufficient detail to reveal size, facial expression, dress, and other characteristics. Ask learners to examine their pictures closely, and explain that they will need to use their imagination for the activity. Some questions the instructor might ask are:

- Who is the main character in the picture?
- What is an appropriate name for this character?
- How old is this character?
- What emotions is this character showing in the picture? Describe the evidence that you have for this (e.g., facial expression, gestures).
- What kind of work might the character do for a living? Give reasons to support your decision.
- What might the person be thinking or saying? What makes you imagine this?
- What other characteristics are revealed by the character's dress and stance?
- What might have happened before the picture was taken? What might happen next?
- How are the other characters in the picture related to the main character? What evidence makes you think so?
- What is the attitude of the main character to the other characters? What is the attitude of the other characters to the main character? What are some possible reasons for these attitudes?
- What might it be like to be the main character or one of the other characters?

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<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/mla/write.html>



## Celebrate Literacy in the NWT

- Instruct learners to record ideas briefly, using phrases and words rather than sentences.
- Learners then may take the opportunity to develop their ideas further.







**Prewriting**

Handout 1

**Different Kinds of Writing**

Match the definition with the correct piece of writing

|  |  |                     |
|--|--|---------------------|
| Something that you write in everyday. Your personal thoughts and ideas.  |  | Functional Writing  |
| Uses lots of adjectives and paints a vivid picture in your mind.   |  | Research Report     |
| Writing that you have to do in your daily life, like filling out forms, writing a note or grocery list   |  | Journals            |
| Meant to inform the reader about something. It can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tell</b> what happened when . .</li> <li>• <b>Write a report</b> on ...</li> <li>• <b>Explain</b> how to ...</li> <li>• <b>Describe how to ...</b></li> <li>• <b>Explain how to ....</b></li> </ul> |  | Expository Writing  |
| Must research information and tell about a specific topic.   |  | Narrative Writing   |
| Tells a story, has a plot, characters, setting and theme.  |  | Descriptive Writing |





## Prewriting Handout 2

# Why Write?

What kind of writing would fit for each statement? Use the information about the different kinds of writing on Handout 1 to answer the questions. There may be more than one answer.

## Audience

- A boss or supervisor
- A communications expert
- The general public
- Family members, friends, strangers
- Older and younger people
- People with disabilities and able-bodied people
- Women and men
- People from different cultures
- People with different literacy skills

*functional writing*

## Purpose

- Enable the audience to do something after they read the document
- Prevent or achieve something
- Change the audience's behavior
- Give the audience information
- Gather information about the audience
- Gather information from the audience about other things
- Respond or understand something
- Tell a story
- Persuade people to do something or think a certain way
- Give direction
- Explain how to do something

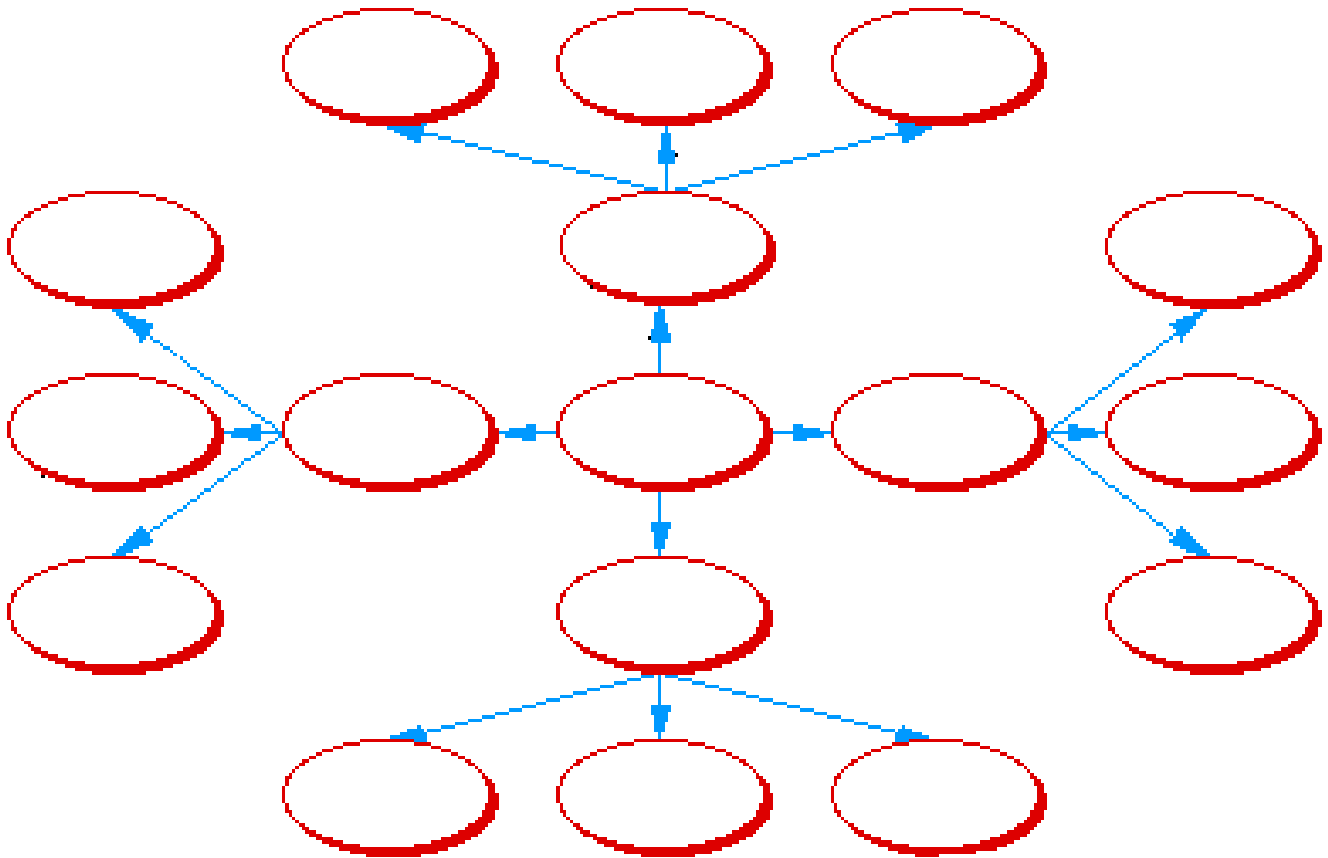




**Prewriting**  
Handout 3

# Clustering

Clustering is a nonlinear activity that generates ideas, images and feelings around a stimulus word. Start with a topic in the center. Think about words that describe the topic. Then think about more words that describe those words. Use the map below as a guideline to constructing your own cluster map.

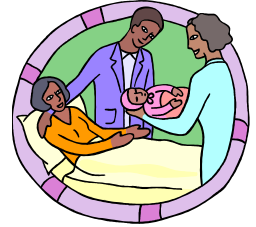




**Prewriting**  
Handout 4

## Free Writing Ideas

- I like being a parent because ...
- I find parenting hard because ...
- The night my son/daughter was born ...
- My first pregnancy was ....
- I am very good at ...
- The world would be a better place if everyone ...
- I like being with people who ...
- One thing that I could teach someone else is ...
- One thing that I would like to really learn about ...
- A person, I learn a lot from is ...
- If I were not here today ...
- My first camping trip ...
- The most exciting thing that ever happened to me was ...
- The scariest thing that ever happened to me was...
- The perfect parent would be ...
- A story an Elder told me once was ...
- I enjoy going out on the land because ...
- My mother taught me how to ...
- The thing I enjoy most is ...
- The thing I enjoy least is ...
- If I won a million dollars I would ...
- If I could do anything it would be ...
- If I could be an animal it would be ...
- If I were not here tonight or today I would be ...



## Writing Ideas

- I enjoy this session because...
- I would like to work on ...
- Some changes I am going to make are ...
- The things that I do well are ...
- If I could go anywhere it would be





## Prewriting Handout 5

# Journalist Questions

Use these questions to generate ideas for your writing.

- **Who?** Who are the learners? Who is affected? Who are the primary actors? Who are the secondary actors?
- **What?** What is the topic? What is the significance of the topic? What is the basic problem? What are the issues?
- **Where?** Where does the activity take place? Where does the problem or issue have its source? At what place is the cause or effect of the problem most visible?
- **When?** When is the issue most apparent (past, present, future)? When did the issue or problem develop? What historical forces helped shape the problem or issue and at what point in time will the problem or issue culminate in a crisis? When is action needed to address the issue or problem?
- **Why?** Why did the issue or problem arise? Why is your topic an issue or problem at all? Why did the issue or problem develop in the way that it did?
- **How?** How is the issue or problem significant? How can it be addressed? How does it affect the learners? How can the issue or problem be resolved?





## Prewriting

### Handout 6

# Generating Ideas for Writing

Draw a rough sketch/map of your community or a neighborhood where you once lived or live now and label particular places where things happened. For example: *here's where I first fell off my bike...here's the house where my best friend lived...here's the rock I fell off and broke my arm.*

Show your map to others in the class and explain your map; describe the neighborhood and what went on. Pick a story from your map to write about.

**Example:**

The map shows several locations with associated memories:

- Park:** In the summer we played baseball all night long. I broke my leg on 3<sup>rd</sup> base one year.
- School:** Each week we go to family literacy nights at the school.
- Home:** My family lived in a small 2 bedroom house. There were 5 children and my mom and dad.
- Church:** We went to church every Sunday. Father John baptized me when I was 8 years old.

**Great Bear Lake**



## Writing Techniques and Ideas

To write, learners need to generate, organize, and communicate ideas. Often learners would rather not plan before writing. These learners would prefer to "jump in" and just start writing. For some learners, it is important that they go slowly and take time to think about what they want to say before writing. In general, learners should be taught that writing is not an emergency event and that the processes of planning, thinking, and organizing are just as important as the final product.

Learners' ability to generate and organize their ideas can impact the richness of their final piece of writing. In order to generate and organize ideas well, learners must be able to get started and concentrate on the task and monitor the quality of their work. Depending on the type of writing task, learners also may need to be able to present their perspective and think creatively to come up with new ideas. For example, learners may need to decide what to write about, develop a topic, research a topic, produce original thoughts, elaborate on ideas, use prior knowledge, think critically, and apply new and learned concepts. All of these skills can help a learner with generating organizing their ideas when writing.

Here is a simple guideline to follow when helping learners with writing:

1. **Begin** with a topic the learners are interested in.
2. **Talk** over what they want to write. Help the learner write ideas or words they may need.
3. **Write** a rough draft. Explain to the learners that all writers use a rough draft.
4. **Encourage** learners to proofread their work. Underline words they are not sure of. This is a good time to practice dictionary skills.
5. **Read** over the piece of writing together. A piece of writing can always be changed, or you can add more information.

This section has 10 activities and 14 handouts that instructors can use with learners.





## Writing Ideas

We use these symbols for:

Activities



Handouts





# Learning Activities

## Writing Techniques and Ideas

### 14 Handouts

#### Activity 1 – Writing Process Guidelines

Review Handout 1 together and discuss the writing process. Tell learners that you are going to go through the process together as a group and then they will have a chance to write about something they are interested in.

#### Activity 2 – Writing Warm-up

I like..... because is a really fun writing warm-up you can do with learners. This activity works for a range of learners. Ask each person to fill out Handout 2. Each person writes down what they like and why. For example

- I like eating apples .....because they are juicy and tasty.
- I like going out on the land .....because it gives me meaning and purpose.

Cut the sheet of paper in half so you have all the 'I likes' in one pile and the 'because' in another pile. Mix up each pile and then read them out. You will get really silly sentences like *"I like eating apples because it gives me meaning and purpose."* The more people you have for this activity the better.

#### Activity 3 – Planning and Organizing

After learners have generated some ideas, they must decide what they will say about their chosen topic. When learners develop an initial plan for their writing they must consider the purpose, audience, point of view, and format. These elements have implications for both the planning and the drafting of the written product.

#### To develop an initial plan for drafting:

Using such structures as outlines, story frames, maps, diagrams, charts, and concept webs, learners organize the information they have generated during pre-writing. Refer to Handouts 3, 4 and 5 to review examples of categorizing ideas, an outline, and mind map.



### **Activity 4 – Draft**

Tell learners to use the information on their graphic organizer to start their writing. Tell them to:

- Not worry about spelling and punctuation
- Think about the audience and purpose
- Write the main idea in the first sentence of the paragraph
- Write sentences that related to the topic
- Write a concluding sentence

Handout 6 provides learners with information on purpose, audience, point of view, information needed and format.

### **Activity 5 – Share and Revise**

Learners are not always willing to share their writing. Conferencing is a skill that needs to be modeled and reinforced often. Talk about the purpose for revising. Reinforce that ‘messiness’ (crossing out, underlining, writing between the lines, numbering to reorganize, cutting and pasting) is okay and shows thinking.

Model conferencing to learners first and then ask them to do it with a partner. Handout 7 and 8 provide guidelines to conferencing and a checklist.

### **Activity 6 – Edit**

Peer editing is a great way for learners to practice their editing skills and sometimes it is hard to notice your own mistakes. Handout 9 provides a checklist for editing and Handout 10 provides tips for editing.

### **Activity 7 – Descriptive Writing**

To teach descriptive writing:

- Bring in old magazines or old calendars (anything with colourful photos or drawings) and have learners choose a picture to describe. Then have learners mount the pictures along with their descriptions in the class.
- Focus on the five senses. Think about a season and brainstorm words for taste, touch, smell, sight and sound.



## Celebrate Literacy in the NWT

- Ask learners to bring in something that is important to them. Ask learners to write a description of the object. Then ask them to write about why the object is important. Ask them to read their stories aloud.
- Help learners describe a place that is special to them. Guide them through an imagery activity to help them recall details. You might say something like: “I want you all to imagine a place that is special to you in some way. You are in that place now. What can you see around you? Are there any other people there? Are there animals? Buildings? Furniture? Trees? Plants? What does the air feel like on your skin? Warm? Cool? Hot? Humid? Dry? What sounds can you hear? What can you smell? Can you taste anything? What are you doing there?” While the details are fresh, have them jot down words and phrases about their special place. Then, they can use these ideas in a paragraph.
- Handout 11 provides learners with an extensive list of descriptive words. Learners are also asked to write a descriptive paragraph about:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The day your child was born</li><li>• A family trip</li><li>• Your favourite birthday party</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your favourite food</li><li>• A bad day</li><li>• A good day</li></ul> |
|---|--|

### Activity 8 – Narrative Writing

A narrative tells a story. Ask learners to sit in a circle and tell a story. Start the story with “If I won a million dollars.....” or “Once when I went out on the land....” Ask everyone to contribute something to the story.

Next give each student a story starter. Some story starters are on Handout 12. Ask them to start the story and then pass it to the next person until everyone has had a chance to contribute to each story. Read back the stories to the class. Ask learners to pick out the 5 Ws in their stories. Tell learners that using the 5 Ws can help with writing a narrative.

Ask learners to read Handout 13 and then write a narrative paragraph using one of the writing prompts.



### Activity 9 – Other Ideas for Writing

- Learners write from a given last line. Examples:
  - You can bet I never did that again.
  - It disappeared into the murky depths of Great Bear Lake.
  - The survivors would never be the same again.
- Pretend you are an object such as a hamburger, an old shoe, a light switch. Write about your complaints. You are the pilot of a plane that has just taken off from the airport. A passenger crashed through the door. Write about what you would do. You are trapped in an elevator. Describe how you feel and how you would handle the situation.
- Select five (or more) unconnected words and write a story in which you manage to use all of the words in a way that connects them.
- *Up Here*, a northern magazine, has asked you to write a feature story on living in the North. Your job is to write the article and write the captions for the two photographs that will accompany the article.
- Take a series of photos and ask learners to describe what is happening in the photo or use the photo as a prompt to create a story around it.
- Put a picture on the overhead. Explore the meaning of the picture by asking the 5Ws. Ask learners to respond in writing.
- Give learners a digital camera or Polaroid camera and ask them to take pictures in the community. Ask them to write a story about the pictures they have taken. They can take pictures of:
  - Interesting people, buildings or sites
  - Their children
  - Elders
  - Traditional activities

### Activity 10 – Helpful Writing Techniques for Stories

Handout 14 provides learners with an overview of helpful writing techniques for writing a story.





## Writing Techniques and Ideas

### Handout 1

# Writing Process Guidelines

The writing process guide describes eight basic steps:

- 1) Plan** Think about what you want to write. Read. Talk to others. Brainstorm. Collect your ideas. Make a topic list. Choose a topic.
- 2) Organize** Make an outline, a mind map, or a web. What ideas go together? What order makes sense?
- 3) Draft** Write your thoughts down. Don't worry too much about spelling or punctuation. Take your time. Read over what you've written to help you write more. Talk to someone if you get stuck.
- 4) Share** Read your writing out loud to someone. Ask for feedback: "How does this part sound?" or, "Which sounds better, this or this?" Talk to other students about grammar, spelling, etc. Take notes about any feedback you get. Give polite feedback to others.
- 5) Revise** Does the story make sense? Do the parts fit together? Are the transition words clear? Move parts of the text around. Add words or sentences. Take words out of sentences. Try different words.
- 6) Edit** Check grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- 7) Prepare final copy** Proofread and make changes.
- 8) Print** Use a word processor to make a final hard copy. Where possible, use a word processor to compose, revise, and publish.



## TOWER - Writing Process

The TOWER writing process describes 5 steps.

- Think** Choose your topic.  
Brainstorm points and/or gather information about your topic.  
Jot down any ideas and information that might be useful. Do this in note form or use a web.
- Organize** Read over your notes or web. Decide if you have included enough details. Decide if you need to leave anything out.
- Write** Write your first draft. Don't spend too much time on spelling or punctuation at this stage. Double-space so that it is easier to make corrections.
- Edit** Make corrections in a different colour.  
Read your writing. Does it say what you want? Did you leave anything out? Is there any unnecessary information?  
Read your writing out loud to someone else or let someone else read your writing.  
If you have a lot of changes to make, write a second draft.  
Check for spelling, run on sentences, sentence fragments, grammar and punctuation.
- Rewrite** Rewrite in pen or type.  
Include a title, your name and date.  
Read it over carefully.  
Share your writing with others.





## Writing Techniques and Ideas

Handout 2

### I like .... because .....

**I like**

---

---



---

**because**

---

---



---







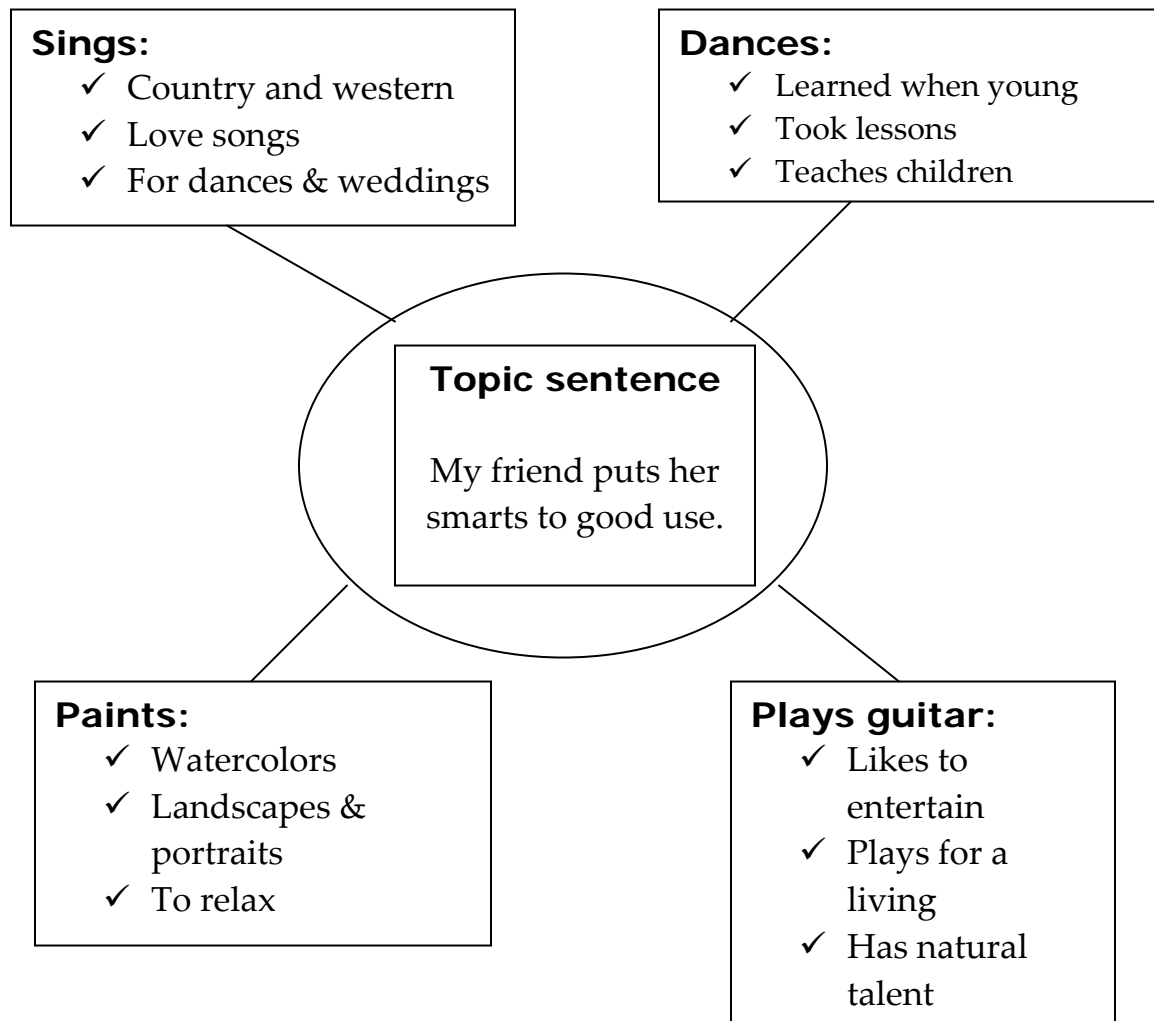
## Writing Techniques and Ideas

### Handout 3

# Categorizing Ideas

The learners decided to write about someone who has lots of smarts. This person sings, dances, paints pictures, and plays guitar.

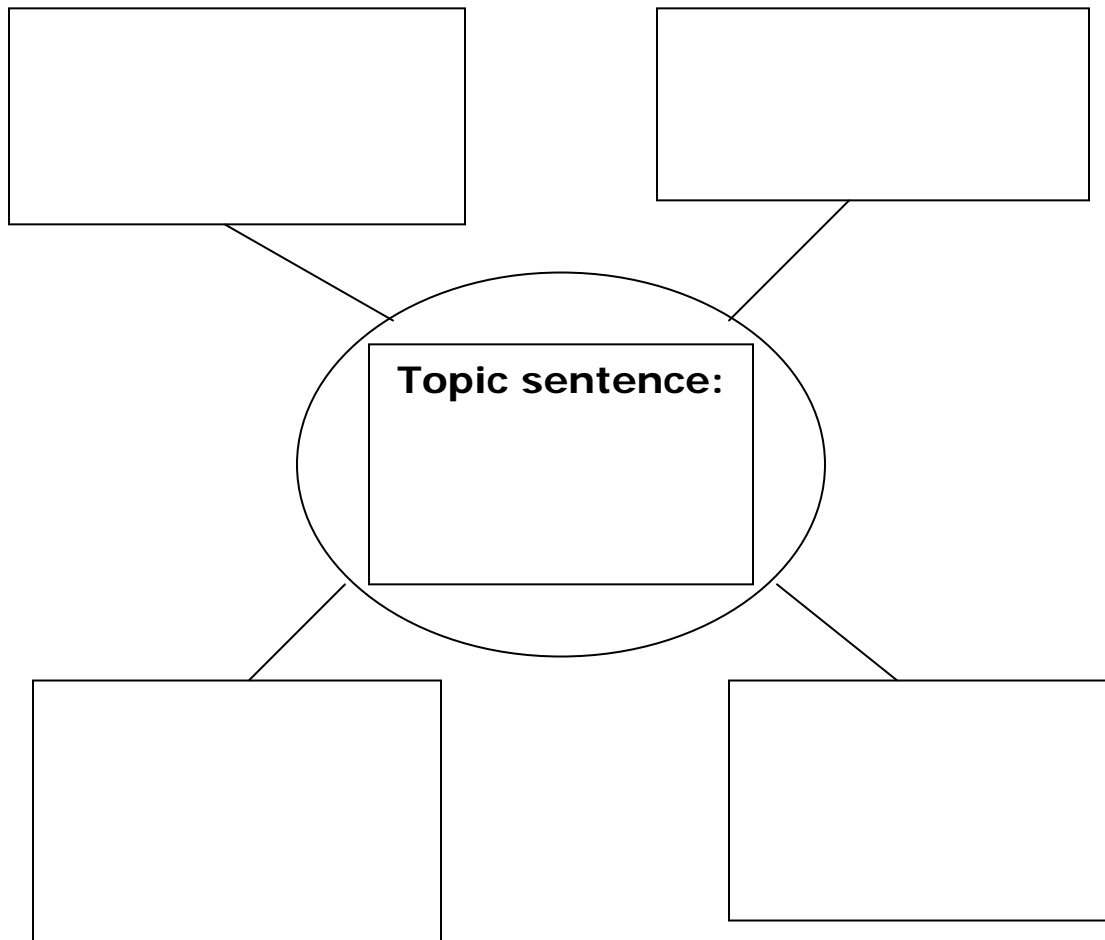
Look at this sample web/ map.



## Celebrate Literacy in the NWT

Now you try! Brainstorm for a topic sentence. Put it in the circle.

- In the squares, write your ideas about a person you admire. You may want to write about an animal you like.
- Write what your person or thing can do. Then write some ideas how and why they do it.
- Then write a sentence about each.





## Writing Techniques and Ideas

### Handout 4

# Outline

Making an outline is a good way to plan for your writing. Follow these steps.

1. Write your topic.
2. Write your outline, using key questions for your main idea. For example:  
What traditional medicines did First Nations People use? What did they use them for?
3. Use the Roman numerals for main ideas.
4. Use the capital letters for supporting details.

For example:

**Topic:**

---

I. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

II. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

III. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_





## Writing Techniques and Ideas Handout 5

### How to Mind Map<sup>4</sup>



A **mind map** is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks or other items linked to a central key word or idea. It is used to generate, visualize, structure and classify ideas, and as an aid in study, organization, problem solving, and decision making.

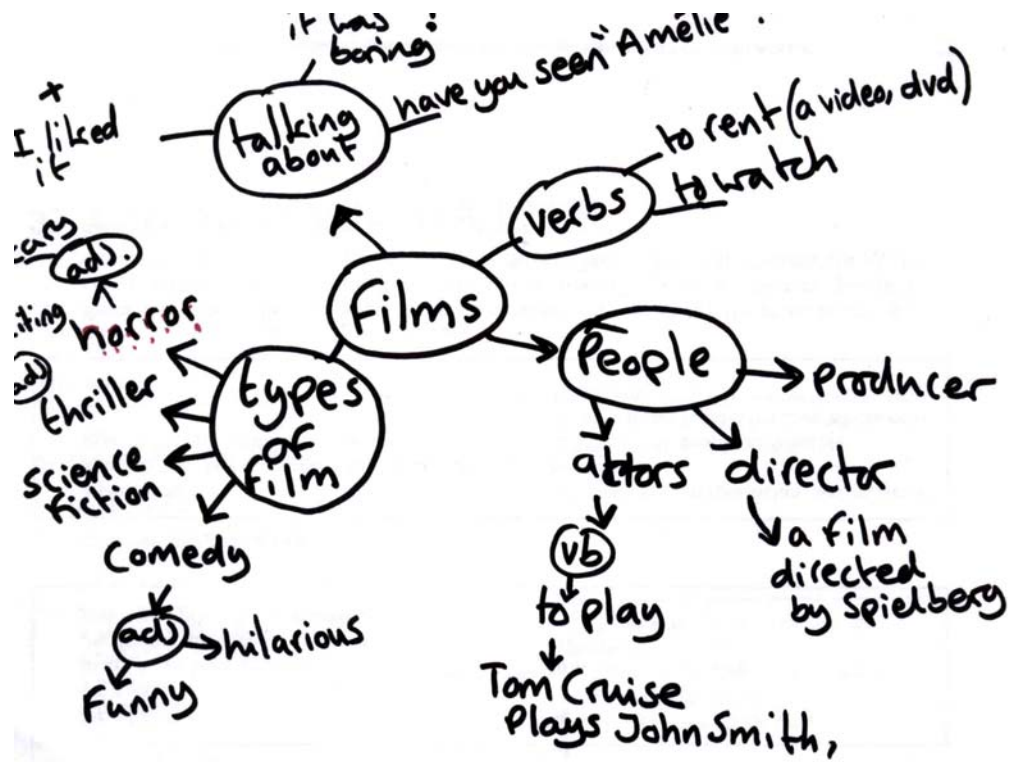
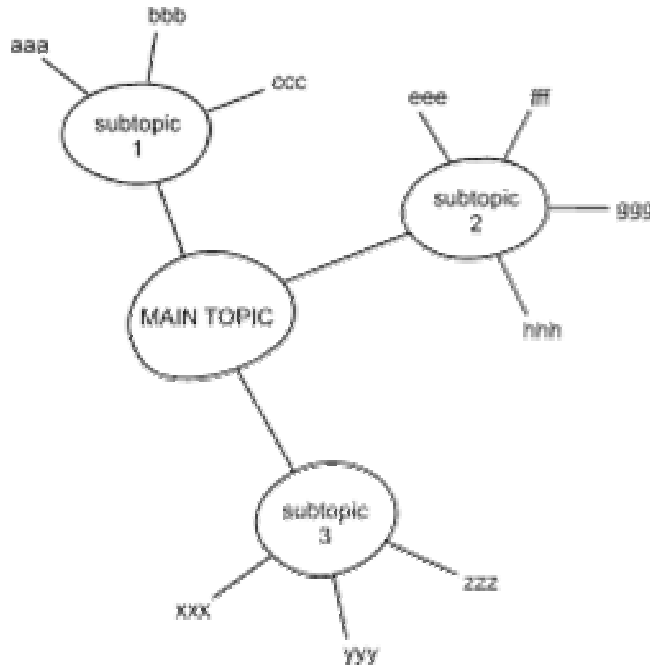
- Use key words, and/or pictures.
- Start from the center of the page and work out.
- Make the center a clear and strong visual image that depicts the general theme of the map.
- Create sub-centers for sub-themes.
- Put key words **on** lines. This reinforces structure of notes.
- Print rather than write in script.
- Use color to depict themes, associations and to make things stand out.
- Anything that **stands out** on the page will stand out in your mind.
- Use arrows, icons or other visual aids to show links between different elements.
- Don't get stuck in one area. If you dry up in one area go to another branch.
- Put ideas down as they occur, wherever they fit. Don't judge or hold back.
- Break boundaries. If you run out of space, don't start a new sheet; paste more paper onto the map. (Break the 8x11 mentality.)
- Be creative. Creativity aids memory.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: <http://www.peterussell.com/MindMaps/HowTo.html>



Examples<sup>5 6</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Source: [http://www.education-world.com/a\\_curr/columnists/images/jones\\_pd4\\_MindMaps.gif](http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/columnists/images/jones_pd4_MindMaps.gif)

<sup>6</sup> Source: [http://www.geocities.com/jonathan\\_marseille/movies.jpg](http://www.geocities.com/jonathan_marseille/movies.jpg)





## Writing Techniques and Ideas

### Handout 6

# Planning<sup>7</sup>

When planning your writing you need to consider purpose, audience, point of view, how you will gather information and the format.

## Purpose

Ask yourself "What is my purpose for writing this piece?" Some purposes for writing are:

- To express personal feelings or viewpoints
- To imagine "What if ...?"
- To narrate
- To entertain and/or amuse
- To describe
- To inform or explain
- To persuade or convince
- To request
- To inquire or question
- To explore and experiment with ideas and formats
- To clarify thinking

## Audience

Ask yourself "Who is my intended audience?" Some possible audiences are:

- Familiar, known audiences: self, friends, peers, family, teachers
- Extended, known audiences: community, student body, local media
- Extended, unknown audiences: wider range of media and other publications

---

<sup>7</sup> Source: <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/mla/write.html>



## Writing Ideas

### Information Needed

You need to decide what information you need and how you will get it. Some ways of getting information:

- To conduct interviews
- Go on field trips to gather information
- Brainstorm and construct a list of questions
- Library and Internet research

### Format

Use audience and purpose to determine format. You will have the opportunity to write in a variety of narrative, descriptive, expository, and poetic formats such as:

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• advertisement</li><li>• article</li><li>• advice column</li><li>• autobiography</li><li>• biography</li><li>• ballad</li><li>• comic strip</li><li>• letter of complaint/request/inquiry</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• campaign speech</li><li>• diary/journal</li><li>• readers theatre/role play/monologue</li><li>• book review</li><li>• report/essay</li><li>• fable/fairy tale</li><li>• greeting card</li><li>• game rules</li><li>• directions</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• horoscope</li><li>• interview</li><li>• obituary/eulogy</li><li>• news article/editorial</li><li>• poem/song</li><li>• anecdote/personal experience story</li><li>• sports column</li><li>• short story</li><li>• research paper</li></ul> |
|--|---|--|





## Writing Techniques and Ideas Handout 7

# Peer Conference Guidelines

### Step One – Sharing

The author decides how his or her work will be shared. Will it be:

- Read silently by the conference partner(s)?
- Read aloud by the writer?
- Read aloud by the conference partner(s)?
- A combination of the above?

### Step Two – Focus of Conference

The writer identifies what aspects of the written work will be the focus of the conference (e.g., the beginning paragraph, figurative language).

### Step Three – Response

The conference partner states at least:

- One thing he/she considers that the writer has done well
- One thing he/she especially likes
- One suggestion which addresses the focus of the conference as identified by the writer

### Step Four – Changes

The writer retains the right to the written work and is responsible for making the final decision about any changes.







## Writing Techniques and Ideas

Handout 8

### Writing Conference Checklist

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Format: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Self Reflection

I read this piece: once \_\_\_\_ twice \_\_\_\_ several times \_\_\_\_ aloud to myself \_\_\_\_

Once change I decided to make is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I think this makes sense because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The part I like best is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Peer Conference

Conference Partner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Something you did well in this piece is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I especially like \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Something I suggest you consider is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Do you need an extended teacher conference?** Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, state at least two specific things you would like to discuss:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_





## Writing Techniques and Ideas

### Handout 9

# Editing/Proofreading Checklist

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

My purpose is \_\_\_\_\_

My audience is \_\_\_\_\_

The form of my writing is \_\_\_\_\_

Things that I like about this draft are: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Things I think need improving are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Editor** (circle one)      Self   Peer   Writing Group   Teacher

| Item  | Comment |
|---|---------|
| <p><b>Capitalization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the first word of each sentence capitalized?</li> <li>• Are all proper nouns capitalized?</li> </ul> |         |
| <p><b>Overall Appearance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the handwriting legible?</li> <li>• Is the word processing format consistent?</li> </ul>         |         |



## Writing Ideas

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Punctuation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is end punctuation (.?! ) correct?</li><li>• Is the internal punctuation (,;) correct?</li><li>• Are apostrophes, hyphens and dashes correct?</li></ul> <p>Are quotation marks used correctly.</p> |  |
| <p><b>Spelling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does it look right?</li><li>• Does it sound right?</li><li>• Did you use a dictionary or ask a peer or teacher for help?</li></ul>  |  |





## Writing Techniques and Ideas

### Handout 10

# Tips to a Successful Proofreading Conference

- **Sentences:** Do they end with full-stop punctuation? Is there noun-verb agreement? Are they varied in length and complexity? Are they interesting?
- **Paragraphs:** Is there a new paragraph for each new idea or for each new speaker? Are all new paragraphs clearly identified? Does one paragraph lead logically into the next paragraph?
- **Standard Usage and Grammar:** Read the piece aloud to yourself or a peer. Does the language sound correct? Check a language text or talk to a peer if you are uncertain.
- **Spelling:** When proofreading a piece, if a word looks misspelled, try to spell the word in different ways: sound it out, check the dictionary, or ask a peer. Then record the word on your Personal Spelling List for future reference.
- **Punctuation:** Read the piece aloud to decide if the punctuation creates pauses and stops that sound right. Check another piece of literature or a language text to determine appropriate punctuation.
- **Capitalization:** Check for capital letters at the beginnings of sentences and for proper nouns.

**Be honest and fair when conferencing!**

**Remember, it is your job to help your partner become a better writer.**





## Writing Techniques and Ideas

### Handout 11

# Descriptive Writing

Have you ever picked up a book, and been so caught up in the words that you felt like you were right there in the story? Have you ever read a book and felt like there was a movie playing in your head? If so, you have experienced good descriptive writing.

Descriptive writing, sometimes called "showing writing" is writing that describes a particular person, place or event in great detail. Descriptive writing uses a lot of flowery adjectives and adverbs to describe what is going on or how something appears. If you were going to describe biting into an apple, you would not simply say: "He bit into the apple and it tasted good". Descriptive writing would convey the same sentence as follows: "He slowly closed his teeth on the ripe, succulent, ruby colored apple. The crunch of his teeth piercing the apple's skin was deafening and the sweet juices of the apple ran down his chin. The taste of the meat was as sweet as candy and he felt euphoric."<sup>8</sup>

A good stock of descriptive words will help you with your writing. Here is a list of descriptive words you can use in your writing.<sup>9</sup>

### Ability - Condition

|               |            |             |             |              |
|---------------|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| able          | confident  | gentle      | lucky       | smooth       |
| adequate      | courageous | hardy       | manly       | spirited     |
| alive         | curious    | healthy     | mighty      | stable       |
| assured       | daring     | heavy       | modern      | steady       |
| authoritative | determined | heroic      | open        | stouthearted |
| bold          | durable    | important   | outstanding | strong       |
| brainy        | dynamic    | influential | powerful    | super        |
| brave         | eager      | innocent    | real        | sure         |
| busy          | easy       | intense     | relaxed     | tame         |
| careful       | effective  | inquisitive | rich        | tough        |

<sup>8</sup> Source: [http://library.thinkquest.org/J001156/forms%20of%20writing/em\\_descriptive.htm](http://library.thinkquest.org/J001156/forms%20of%20writing/em_descriptive.htm)

<sup>9</sup> Source: <http://www.remc11.k12.mi.us/riverval/newtroy/descriptivewords.htm>



## Celebrate Literacy in the NWT

|           |           |         |          |            |
|-----------|-----------|---------|----------|------------|
| capable   | energetic | jerky   | robust   | victorious |
| cautious  | fearless  | knotted | secure   | virile     |
| clever    | firm      | light   | sharp    | zealous    |
| competent | forceful  | lively  | shy      |            |
| concerned | gallant   | loose   | skillful |            |

### Anger - Hostility

|             |              |               |           |            |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|------------|
| agitated    | combative    | evil          | irritated | rude       |
| aggravated  | contrary     | fierce        | mad       | savage     |
| aggressive  | cool         | furiously     | mean      | severe     |
| angry       | cranky       | hard          | nasty     | spiteful   |
| annoyed     | creepy       | harsh         | obnoxious | tense      |
| arrogant    | cross        | hateful       | obstinate | terse      |
| belligerent | cruel        | hostile       | outraged  | vicious    |
| biting      | defiant      | impatient     | perturbed | vindictive |
| blunt       | disagreeable | inconsiderate | repulsive | violent    |
| bullying    | enraged      | insensitive   | resentful | wicked     |
| callous     | envious      | intolerant    | rough     | wrathful   |

### Depression - Sadness - Gloom

|           |             |            |            |           |
|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| abandoned | depressed   | forsaken   | low        | ruined    |
| alien     | desolate    | gloomy     | miserable  | rundown   |
| alienated | despairing  | glum       | mishandled | sad       |
| alone     | despised    | grim       | mistreated | scornful  |
| awful     | despondent  | hated      | moody      | sore      |
| battered  | destroyed   | homeless   | mournful   | stranded  |
| blue      | discarded   | hopeless   | obsolete   | tearful   |
| bored     | discouraged | horrible   | ostracized | terrible  |
| burned    | dismal      | humiliated | overlooked | tired     |
| cheapened | downcast    | hurt       | pathetic   | unhappy   |
| crushed   | downhearted | jilted     | pitiful    | unloved   |
| debased   | downtrodden | kaput      | rebuked    | whipped   |
| defeated  | dreadful    | loathed    | regretful  | worthless |



## Writing Ideas

|            |           |          |             |         |
|------------|-----------|----------|-------------|---------|
| degraded   | estranged | lonely   | rejected    | wrecked |
| dejected   | excluded  | lonesome | reprimanded |         |
| demolished | forlorn   | lousy    | rotten      |         |

### **Distress**

|             |              |            |            |             |
|-------------|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| affected    | displeased   | hindered   | puzzled    | tormented   |
| anguished   | dissatisfied | impaired   | ridiculous | touchy      |
| awkward     | distrustful  | impatient  | sickened   | troubled    |
| baffled     | disturbed    | imprisoned | silly      | ungainly    |
| bewildered  | doubtful     | lost       | skeptical  | unlucky     |
| clumsy      | foolish      | nauseated  | speechless | unpopular   |
| confused    | futile       | offended   | strained   | unsatisfied |
| constrained | grief        | pained     | suspicious | unsure      |
| disgusted   | helpless     | perplexed  | swamped    | weary       |
| disliked    |              |            |            |             |

### **Fear - Anxiety**

|              |             |             |             |               |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| afraid       | dreading    | insecure    | overwhelmed | tense         |
| agitated     | eerie       | intimidated | panicky     | terrified     |
| alarmed      | embarrassed | jealous     | restless    | timid         |
| anxious      | fearful     | jittery     | scared      | uncomfortable |
| apprehensive | frantic     | jumpy       | shaky       | uneasy        |
| bashful      | frightened  | nervous     | shy         | upset         |
| dangerous    | hesitant    | on edge     | strained    | worrying      |
| desperate    | horrified   |             |             |               |

### **Inability - Inadequacy**

|           |           |             |              |             |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| anemic    | disabled  | incapable   | powerless    | unable      |
| ashamed   | exhausted | incompetent | puny         | uncertain   |
| broken    | exposed   | ineffective | shaken       | unfit       |
| catatonic | fragile   | inept       | shaky        | unimportant |
| cowardly  | frail     | inferior    | shivering    | unqualified |
| crippled  | harmless  | insecure    | sickly       | unsound     |
| defeated  | helpless  | meeek       | small        | useless     |
| defective | impotent  | mummified   | strengthless | vulnerable  |



## Celebrate Literacy in the NWT

deficient      inadequate      naughty      trivial      weak  
demoralized

### Joy - Elation

amused      enchanted      good      jubilant      smiling  
blissful      enthusiastic      grand      magnificent      splendid  
brilliant      exalted      gratified      majestic      superb  
calm      excellent      great      marvelous      terrific  
cheerful      excited      happy      overjoyed      thrilled  
comical      exuberant      hilarious      pleasant      tremendous  
contented      fantastic      humorous      pleased      triumphant  
delighted      fit      inspired      proud      vivacious  
ecstatic      funny      jolly      relieved      witty  
elated      glad      jovial      satisfied      wonderful  
elevated      glorious      joyful

### Love - Affection - Concern

admired      conscientious      giving      mellow      reliable  
adorable      considerate      good      mild      respectful  
affectionate      cooperative      helpful      moral      sensitive  
agreeable      cordial      honest      neighborly      sweet  
altruistic      courteous      honorable      nice      sympathetic  
amiable      dedicated      hospitable      obliging      tender  
benevolent      devoted      humane      open      thoughtful  
benign      empathetic      interested      optimistic      tolerant  
brotherly      fair      just      patient      trustworthy  
caring      faithful      kind      peaceful      truthful  
charming      forgiving      kindly      pleasant      understanding  
charitable      friendly      lenient      polite      unselfish  
comforting      generous      lovable      reasonable      warm  
congenial      genuine      loving      receptive      worthy

### Movement

amble      flow      pad      skim      toddle





## Writing Ideas

|          |          |         |          |          |
|----------|----------|---------|----------|----------|
| blunder  | fly      | parade  | skip     | topple   |
| bolt     | frolic   | pivot   | slide    | track    |
| bounce   | gallop   | plod    | slink    | traipse  |
| bound    | glide    | plunge  | slither  | tramp    |
| canter   | hasten   | ply     | slump    | travel   |
| catapult | hike     | pounce  | sneak    | tread    |
| charge   | hobble   | prance  | speed    | trek     |
| clatter  | hop      | prowl   | sprawl   | trip     |
| clump    | hurdle   | race    | spring   | tromp    |
| coast    | hurtle   | ramble  | sprint   | trot     |
| crawl    | hurry    | range   | stagger  | trudge   |
| creep    | hustle   | roam    | stalk    | tumble   |
| cruise   | jog      | roll    | stampede | turn     |
| dance    | jump     | romp    | step     | twirl    |
| dart     | lead     | rove    | stomp    | twist    |
| dash     | leap     | rush    | straggle | undulate |
| dawdle   | linger   | sail    | stretch  | vault    |
| dive     | limp     | sashay  | stride   | waddle   |
| dodge    | loaf     | saunter | stroll   | wade     |
| drag     | lumber   | scamper | stumble  | walk     |
| drift    | lunge    | scoot   | struggle | wallow   |
| duel     | lurch    | scuff   | strut    | waltz    |
| file     | lurk     | scurry  | swagger  | wander   |
| flee     | march    | shake   | sway     | wend     |
| flip     | meander  | shimmy  | swept    | wiggle   |
| flit     | mosey    | shuffle | swerve   | wobble   |
| float    | navigate | skate   | swing    | zip      |
| flounder | pace     | skid    | tip toe  | zoom     |

### Quantity

|            |         |        |           |          |
|------------|---------|--------|-----------|----------|
| ample      | few     | lots   | paucity   | scarcity |
| abundant   | heavy   | many   | plentiful | skimpy   |
| chock-full | lavish  | meager | plenty    | sparing  |
| copious    | liberal | much   | profuse   | sparse   |



## Celebrate Literacy in the NWT

|        |       |          |       |              |
|--------|-------|----------|-------|--------------|
| dearth | light | numerous | scads | sufficient   |
| empty  | loads | oodles   | scant | well-stocked |

### Sight - Appearance

|           |             |            |         |           |
|-----------|-------------|------------|---------|-----------|
| adorable  | crooked     | fuzzy      | muddy   | skinny    |
| alert     | crowded     | glamorous  | murky   | smoggy    |
| beautiful | crystalline | gleaming   | nappy   | sparkling |
| blinding  | curved      | glistening | narrow  | spotless  |
| bright    | cute        | glowing    | obtuse  | square    |
| brilliant | dark        | graceful   | round   | steep     |
| broad     | deep        | grotesque  | rotund  | stormy    |
| blonde    | dim         | hazy       | pale    | straight  |
| blushing  | distinct    | high       | poised  | strange   |
| chubby    | dull        | hollow     | quaint  | ugly      |
| clean     | elegant     | homely     | shadowy | unsightly |
| clear     | fancy       | light      | shady   | unusual   |
| cloudy    | filthy      | lithe      | sheer   | weird     |
| colorful  | flat        | low        | shiny   | wide      |
| contoured | fluffy      | misty      | shallow | wizened   |
| crinkled  | foggy       | motionless |         |           |

### Size

|            |          |              |            |            |
|------------|----------|--------------|------------|------------|
| ample      | elfin    | immense      | miniature  | stupendous |
| average    | enormous | large        | minute     | tall       |
| behemoth   | fat      | little       | petite     | tiny       |
| big        | giant    | long         | portly     | towering   |
| bulky      | gigantic | mammoth      | prodigious | vast       |
| colossal   | great    | massive      | puny       | voluminous |
| diminutive | huge     | microscopic  | short      | wee        |
| dwarfed    | hulking  | middle-sized | small      |            |

### Smell - Taste

|            |          |        |       |       |
|------------|----------|--------|-------|-------|
| acid       | fragrant | putrid | sour  | sweet |
| antiseptic | fresh    | ripe   | spicy | tangy |



## Writing Ideas

|           |           |        |        |           |
|-----------|-----------|--------|--------|-----------|
| bitter    | juicy     | rotten | stale  | tart      |
| choking   | medicinal | salty  | sticky | tasty     |
| clean     | nutty     | savory | strong | tasteless |
| delicious | peppery   | smoky  | stuffy |           |

### Sound

|                   |              |                |                       |            |
|-------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| babble            | coo / cooing | hoarse         | quack                 | thunderous |
| bang              | crack        | hoot           | quiet                 | tick       |
| bark              | crackle      | howl           | raspy                 | tinkle     |
| bawl              | crash        | hullabaloo     | resonant              | toll       |
| bay               | creak        | hum            | roar                  | toot       |
| beat              | croak        | hushed         | rumble                | tootle     |
| bellow            | crow         | husky          | scream /<br>screaming | trill      |
| blast             | crying       | jingle         | screech               | twang      |
| bleat             | deafening    | loud           | shriek                | twitter    |
| boom /<br>booming | drone        | melodic        | shrill                | voiceless  |
| bray              | drumming     | meow           | silent                | wail       |
| bubble            | faint        | mew            | sizzle                | warble     |
| buzz              | fanfare      | moan           | snap                  | wheeze     |
| cackle            | fizz         | mumble         | snarl                 | whine      |
| caw               | gibberish    | murmur         | snore                 | whir       |
| chant             | grating      | mute           | snort                 | whisper    |
| chatter           | groan        | mutter         | soft                  | whistle    |
| chime             | growl        | neigh          | splash                | yap        |
| chirp             | grumble      | noisy          | squall                | yell       |
| clangor           | grunt        | patter         | squeak                | yelp       |
| clank             | gurgle       | peal           | squeal                | zap        |
| clash             | harsh        | peep           | thrum                 | zip        |
| clatter           | high-pitched | pop            | thud                  |            |
| click             | hiss         | purr / purring | thump                 |            |



## Celebrate Literacy in the NWT

### Time

|           |              |               |          |           |
|-----------|--------------|---------------|----------|-----------|
| ancient   | daylight     | late          | outdated | sunrise   |
| annual    | decade       | lengthy       | periodic | sunset    |
| brief     | dusk         | long          | punctual | swift     |
| brisk     | early        | modern        | quick    | tardy     |
| centuries | eons         | moments       | rapid    | twilight  |
| continual | evening      | noon          | short    | whirlwind |
| crawling  | fast         | noonday       | slowly   | years     |
| dawn      | flash        | old           | speedy   | yearly    |
| daybreak  | intermittent | old-fashioned | sporadic | young     |

### Touch

|         |            |            |          |          |
|---------|------------|------------|----------|----------|
| boiling | dirty      | grubby     | shaggy   | stinging |
| breezy  | dry        | hard       | sharp    | tender   |
| bumpy   | dusty      | hot        | silky    | tight    |
| chilly  | filthy     | icy        | slick    | uneven   |
| cold    | fluffy     | loose      | slimy    | waxen    |
| cool    | flaky      | melted     | slippery | wet      |
| creepy  | fluttering | plastic    | slushy   | wooden   |
| crisp   | frosty     | prickly    | smooth   | yielding |
| cuddly  | fuzzy      | rainy      | soft     |          |
| curly   | gooey      | rough      | solid    |          |
| damp    | greasy     | sandpapery | sticky   |          |



## Your Task

Write a descriptive paragraph about:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A family trip</li> <li>• Your favourite birthday party</li> <li>• Going hunting or trapping</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your favourite food</li> <li>• A bad day</li> <li>• A good day</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

### Step One: Choose a topic

- Brainstorm descriptive words to describe the topic.

### Step Two: Find Synonyms

- Write down 10 descriptive words from your brainstorm.
- Think of synonyms for your words and write them in the second column.
- Use a thesaurus on-line to find different synonyms.
- Use a traditional thesaurus to find additional synonyms.

| My Chart of Synonyms |   |                                     |  |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| My descriptive words | A synonym that I thought of for my word | A synonym from an on-line thesaurus | A synonym from a traditional thesaurus |
|                      |   |                                     |  |
|                      |   |                                     |  |
|                      |   |                                     |  |
|                      |   |                                     |  |
|                      |   |                                     |  |
|                      |   |                                     |  |
|                      |   |                                     |  |
|                      |   |                                     |  |
|                      |   |                                     |  |
|                      |   |                                     |  |



## Celebrate Literacy in the NWT

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

### **Step Three: Write Your Paragraph**

**Write your paragraph using the descriptive words above.**

Topic Sentence

---

---

Supporting Sentences

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Closing Sentence

---


---



## Writing Techniques and Ideas

Handout 12

### Story Starters

 Cut these out and put them into a hat or jar. Ask each participant to pick one.

---

1. The most frightening thing ....
2. When I was young....
3. If I had a million dollars I would....
4. Life would be way more fun if....
5. My camping trip was....
6. Going out on the land....
7. When I looked up into the sky....
8. One night long ago....
9. There was once this guy named ....
10. My favourite thing to do is ....





## Writing Techniques and Ideas

### Handout 13

# Narrative Writing

#### Narrative writing:

- Tells a story. This is something we do everyday when we tell someone about what we did or what happened. It can be a story, event or experience from the past or something that happened recently.
- Has order. It has a beginning, middle and end. Narrative writing tells what happened first, then, next and finally.
- Answers the questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

For example:

I'll never forget the night we had roast duck at Buffalo Lake. We took the dog and our boat and kicker in the back of our truck. We stayed there for three weeks. There were lots of fish, but we got tired of fish. Later we took our boat across the lake to hunt chicken. We didn't get any chicken, so we got in the boat and started to go back to our camp. After we got out on the lake, the kicker wouldn't work. We floated on the water for a while. Just then some ducks flew over and landed on the water not far from us. At first, we laughed! Ducks! Then the men loaded their guns fast and shot five ducks. After that, we tried the kicker again. It started. There was just enough gas to get to the shore. That night we had roast duck to eat. So did the dog.

Who is in the story?

---

Where is it happening?

---

When is it happening?

---





## Writing Ideas

Why does it happen? \_\_\_\_\_

What happens? List below

Topic Sentence

\_\_\_\_\_

- Events
1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. \_\_\_\_\_
  6. \_\_\_\_\_

Closing Sentence

\_\_\_\_\_



## Your Turn!

Write a narrative using one of the writing prompts below. Make sure your paragraph has a beginning, middle and an ending that makes a point. Refer to your transition word handout to help you with transition words. Use the writing process for your paragraph.

**1. Childhood Event:** Choose a vivid time from your childhood -- you might think of the first time that you rode a school bus, of a time when you went to the principal's office, the first **A** you earned on a test or paper, earning money to buy something that you really wanted, and so on.

**2. Achieving a Goal:** Write about a time when you achieved a personal goal -- you might have killed your first caribou, learned a new skill, won an award, etc.

**3. The Good and the Bad:** Write about an event in your life that seemed bad but turned out to be good. Maybe you got injured and while you were waiting for your broken leg to heal, you learned how to use a computer. What makes the event change from bad to good may be something that you learned as a result, something that you did differently as a result, or something that happened that wouldn't have occurred otherwise.

**5. Standing Up:** Write about a time when you did something that took a lot of nerve, a time when you didn't follow the crowd or a time when you stood up for your beliefs. Whatever you choose, think about the details of the event and write a paragraph that tells about what happened.

Topic Sentence

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## Writing Ideas

### Supporting Sentences

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### Closing Sentence

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## Writing Techniques and Ideas

### Handout 14

# Helpful Writing Techniques for Stories

## Titles

- Keep your titles short and snappy. A good general rule is to keep your titles from one to three words, no more than five.
- A good title gives the reader a hint of what the story is about.
- The title is your first chance to grab the attention of a reader.
- Has your title been used? Check with Books in Print (at your library), or do a search on [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com).

## Word choice

Be specific. Choose colorful, detailed words that paint pictures. Instead of using a general word like "flower", be specific. Which type of flower? A rose? A daffodil? A petunia? For example, which sentence do you like better?



1. "Some rabbits lived with their relative under a tree."
2. "Once upon a time there were four little rabbits and their names were-Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail, and Peter. They lived with their mother underneath a very big fir-tree."



## Description

- Use the five senses.
- Avoid wordiness. Keep your sentences short.
- Keep paragraphs short.
- Keep your writing active by using lots of verbs.





### The hook

- Jump right in. You need to grab your reader's attention from the very beginning, or he/she may not keep reading.
- Introduce your main character, a setting, and a problem, and then keep your story moving.
- Use dialogue. Young readers like lots of dialogue, so get your characters talking

### Characters



- Use active characters.
- Good main characters are likable but not perfect.
- Show your character's personality by repeating gestures and mannerisms or speech or dress.
- Pick character names with care. A reader can tell a lot about a character just by his name. Nicknames are especially good. To help your readers keep your characters straight don't use names that are too similar in spelling or sound. Some good sources for names: baby books, phone books for last names.

Harold, Lucy,  
Jo-Jo, Moon,  
Little Tree,  
Kindred

### Plotting plots

To outline or not to outline, that is the question. Some writers outline their stories before they begin. Other writers start writing with no idea how it will end until they get to the ending. There is no "right" way.

Have a strong plot. The more tension there is in a story, the stronger the story. Give your character a problem right from the start, add some complications along the way, get him to solve the problem, and you have a plot.



## Endings

Endings need to rap everything up. Endings should leave the reader feeling satisfied. A good way to learn what makes an ending work is to take a big stack of books and read only the endings. Just read the last lines or the last paragraphs. After awhile you will get a feel for how a story should end.



## Point of view

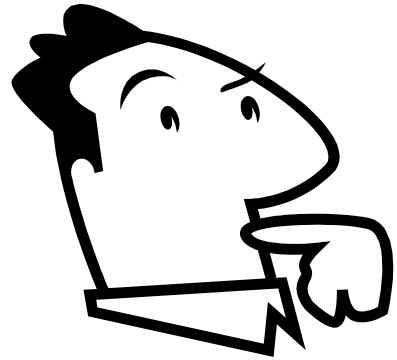
Generally younger children's books are written with a single point of view. This means that the story is told through the eyes and thoughts of the main character.

Most books for young readers are written in the third person (he said, she said.) A few are written in the first person (I said.). This is hard when the main character is a child.

## Revision

Here are some things to ask yourself while you are revising:

- Have you chosen each word carefully?
- Is your title catchy?
- Does your beginning hook the reader?
- Is there a problem or goal in the beginning of your story?
- Are your characters well-developed?
- Is there plenty of dialogue?
- Does your main character solve the problem?
- Is the solution believable?
- Is the ending satisfying?



Adapted from *Bethany Roberts' Writing for Children Workshop: Writing Tips on Writing for Children*  
([http://www.bethanyroberts.com/writing\\_for\\_children\\_tips.htm#titles](http://www.bethanyroberts.com/writing_for_children_tips.htm#titles))



## Writing Contest Tips and Ideas

One way to encourage writing in your community or school is to hold a writing contest. Several communities in the NWT have held yearly writing contests and they have been very popular. They have asked their local grocery store to provide gift certificates as prizes or asked the NWT Literacy Council for book prizes. They have also published a book with all the winning stories. Check out this site to view Fort Resolution's Writing Booklets <http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/adultlit/adultlit.htm>.

This section has:

- Steps to organizing a community writing contest
- Community writing contest rules
- Community writing contest entry form
- Posters for advertising
- Mini-posters for handouts
- Certificate of achievement



# Steps to Organizing a Community Writing Contest

## Running a Community Writing Contest

1. Find volunteers in your community to help organize and run the writing contest. You will need someone to promote the contest, receive entries, judges, and people to organize the celebration of writing at the end.
2. Set a deadline for entries to the writing contest and assign a person who will accept the entries. Depending on the number of entries, you may have to set up a way of keeping track of the entries.
3. Decide on your contest rules, age categories, and writing categories. You may want to have authors include drawings as part of their entry. We have included a sample to get you started.
4. It is nice to give out prizes for your community writing contest. Prizes can be books, pencils, or bookmarks. You can ask local businesses for donations or contact the NWT Literacy Council at 867-873-9262 if you would like book prizes.



## Promoting Your Writing Contest

5. Put together information packages with the contest rules, categories, and entry form and distribute them to schools, college, library, band office, etc.
6. Put posters up around the community, advertise on the local radio station, or green screen, and hand out personal invitations at the school, library, adult education centres, Elders' centre, and health centres. Tell everyone about it! Posters and mini-notices are included in this package.
7. You can build some excitement for the contest by having a special event with local authors. You could also invite an Elder to tell a traditional story.





### Ideas for Judging a Writing Contest

#### 8. Set categories for the entries

There are a number of different categories you can have in your writing contest:

- Fiction
- Non-fiction
- Poetry
- Legends
- French entries
- Entries written in an Aboriginal language

You can also have age groups within each of the different types of categories. The NWT Writing Contest used the following:

- Children Age 5
- Children Ages 6-7
- Children Ages 8-9
- Children Ages 10-11
- Youth Ages 12-14
- Youth Ages 15 – 19
- Adults (20+)
- Adult Education Learners

#### 9. Set some basic guidelines for judging the entries

The guidelines you set should recognize that most writers in community writing contests are not professional writers but have a good story to tell. Don't worry too much about grammar and spelling. Focus on content and the amount of effort that goes into the writing. Spelling and grammar can always be edited. Originality, creativity, and effort can't.

If you suspect an entry has been plagiarized, talk about it with other judges and the contest organizers. Plagiarized work should not be rewarded.

#### 10. Judging Process

- Make photocopies of all the entries and sort them according to age group and category.
- Identify your volunteer judges and pair them up in teams of two.

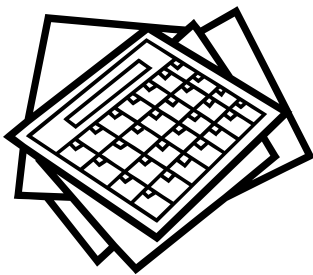


## Celebrate Literacy in the NWT

- Assign a category to each team of judges. For example, one team will read all children's poetry categories. Another team will read all youth non-fiction categories etc.
- Both judges read all the entries in their category and age groups and decide on their top three - five choices.

### Celebrating the Winners

11. Have a community event to celebrate the writers in your community. One community holds a coffee house after each writing contest and winners read their stories. You could give out certificates and prizes to the writers.
12. Ask the local paper to do a story about the community writing contest and print the winning entries.
13. You could publish the winning entries in a little booklet, make copies, and have it available in the community.
14. The NWT Literacy Council wants to know about your writing contests. Send us an email to let us know how it went. We'd love to receive any publications that you do.
15. You can send an electronic file with your winning entries to the NWT Literacy Council and we will put them on our website at [www.nwt.literacy.ca](http://www.nwt.literacy.ca).
16. Thank your sponsors on the radio and by writing them a letter.



**Make the event a yearly event.**



**Ask the local band office, Co-op, Northern Store, local business, or the NWT Literacy Council for donations of prizes.**



# Community Writing Contest Rules

(A sample of the rules from the NWT Writing Contest)

## How To Enter

1. Fill out an **official entry form** with each entry you send in. Entries without an entry form will not be considered.
2. Your entry must be mailed or dropped off by (date) \_\_\_\_\_.

## What You Can Enter

1. Your entry must be original. A person who submits an entry that is plagiarized will be disqualified from the contest. Plagiarism is copying someone else's words and/or their ideas and saying they are your own.
2. Only unpublished material will be accepted. Copyright remains the property of the author.
3. Your entry can be in any of the official languages of the NWT. They are Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, Inuinnaqtun, North Slavey, and South Slavey.
4. Your entry can be on any topic and in any form, such as a poem or short story.
5. You can send in more than one entry: but you can receive only one prize.
6. Your entry must be typed or handwritten very clearly, double-spaced, on 8-1/2 x 11 inch paper.
7. Your entry can only be a maximum of 5 pages long. Entries longer than 5 pages will not be considered.

## Who Can Enter

1. This contest is open to all residents of the community of \_\_\_\_\_, NWT.
2. Only the author has the right to submit an entry.



### **How Entries are Judged**

1. A panel of judges will judge the entries.
2. Each entry will be judged for content, originality, style, and effort.

### **Winners and Prizes**

1. All authors of winning entries will be contacted.
2. All authors of winning entries will receive a prize.

# Community Writing Contest Entry Form

Author's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Is your entry: Fiction \_\_\_\_\_ Non-fiction: \_\_\_\_\_ Poetry \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature shows you agree with and accept all the contest rules.

## Mail entries to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contest Deadline is \_\_\_\_\_



# Writing Contest



## Enter Today!

Deadline for entries: \_\_\_\_\_

Drop off your entries at: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information call: \_\_\_\_\_

# Writing Contest

## Enter Today!



Legends

Fiction

Poetry

Non-fiction



Prizes

Deadline for entries: \_\_\_\_\_

Drop off your entries at: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by: \_\_\_\_\_

For information call: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Writing Contest

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Legends

Fiction

Poetry

Non-fiction



Prizes

Deadline for entries: \_\_\_\_\_

Drop off your entries at: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by: \_\_\_\_\_

For information call: \_\_\_\_\_



# 2006 Community Writing Contest

presents

This certificate is presented to you in recognition of your entry in the  
2006 Community Writing Contest.



Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Publishing Your Winning Stories

Once you have chosen the selected winners for your writing contest you can publish their stories in a booklet. You may have three top winners and some finalists. You can publish just the winners or you can include all the finalists in the booklet. You can create your own booklet by using WORD or some other word processor or you can get it published professionally. One community asked a local artist to make drawings for each story for the booklet. The pictures really added to the stories and celebrated the artistic talent in the community.

This section has information on:

- Fort Resolution's Writing Contest Winning Stories
- Tafford Publishing, an on-demand publishing company in BC.



## Fort Resolution Writing Contest Booklets

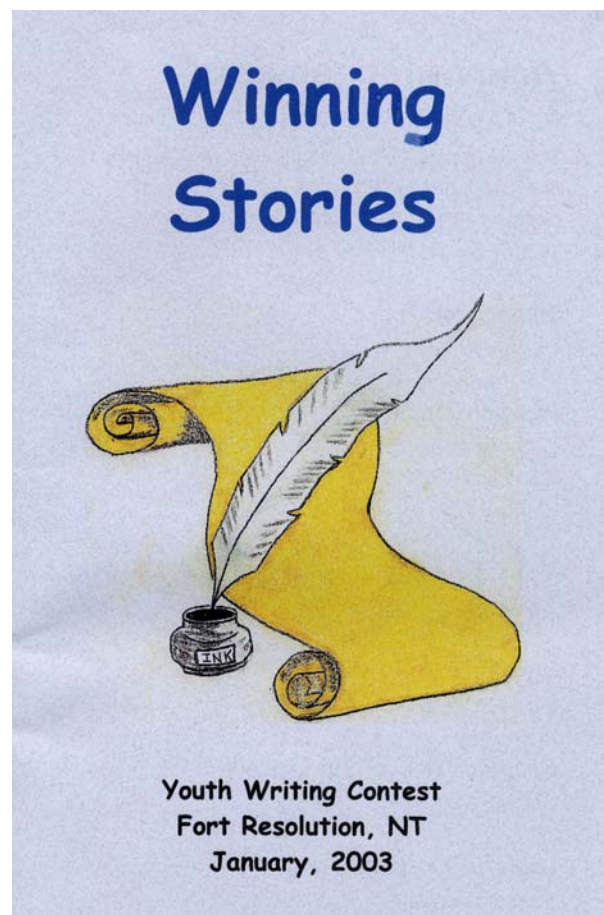
Fort Resolution has held several writing contests over the past several years. They have held Elders, youth and adult writing contests. They gave out gift certificates from their local co-op as prizes. They had a great response from the community with many entries. The next several pages are excerpts from their youth writing contest in 2002.

### Winning Stories

#### Forward

The Fort Resolution Community Writing Contest for 10 – 14 years olds was held in November, 2002. Rowan Cardinal's "Christmas Eve" was the first prize story. Charlene Giroux's "My Camping Trip" won second prize, and Jennifer Sanderson's "Drugs and Alcohol" earned third prize.

Contest entries were judged for grammar and structure as well as content and creativity. The purpose of the writing contest was to inspire the development of writing skills. The ability to express ideas and convey information in writing is and always has been crucial to academic and professional success. Hopefully, other young Northerners will follow the excellent example set by the three authors of this booklet and discover the power and the joy of writing well.



## Contest Winners



From left to right: Jennifer Sanderson, 10;  
Charlene Giroux, 12; Rowan Cardinal, 12.



## Christmas Eve

It was Christmas Eve, back in 1952. My grandmother was to give birth to her fourth child. My grandmother was getting ready for the new arrival; she scrubbed the floors, did the laundry, washed the dishes and bathed the three older children.

She tucked the children into bed and, of course, they played around since they were all in one big bed. She had to get them into bed because there was no more firewood to heat the house, and she put the last log in the woodstove.

1

The children continued to play, and all of a sudden the door swung open. Foof! The cold air billowed into the small house. By this time, my grandmother was also in bed and couldn't get out of bed because the baby was close to being born.



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## Trafford Publishing [www.trafford.com](http://www.trafford.com)

### Why consider a print-on-demand publisher?

Trafford Publishing provides a cost effective and time efficient option for teachers or other people interested in publishing a book. Trafford Publishing provides a multitude of services, which save time and money. They also provide support and expertise to ensure that your book meets industry standards.

Make sure you carefully read all the details related to your publishing package and Trafford's services. Trafford provides detailed information about their Print-On-Demand publishing services online @ [www.trafford.com](http://www.trafford.com)

### What services does Trafford Publishing provide?

- It provides promotional material like bookmarks, postcards and posters
- It promotes the book through the company announcements to the book industry and a webpage
- It provides royalties to your school or organization. The company issues royalty cheques quarterly based on books sold at the retail price.
- You can buy additional books at the 'print cost' price for fundraising purposes.

### Other benefits:

- Authors control the book design, appearance and retail price.
- You keep your copyright, and all other marketing rights.
- Trafford handles publishing's administrative and legal requirements.
- Choose between six publishing packages.

### Trafford's support personnel

- Trafford assigns a support person to work with you throughout the project.
- A Toll Free number is available.





## Celebrate Literacy in the NWT

### Proofs and sign off

- You receive a 'proof copy' of the book for final approval. Review your book at this time to ensure everything is exactly as you want it.
- When you are satisfied with the book complete a 'sign off' form and send it to Trafford.
- They will print your complimentary books with any additional purchases you might wish to make. In addition, Trafford will prepare your promotional material and webpage.
- The books, postcards, posters and bookmarks arrive about three weeks after the 'sign off.'

### Costs

- The publishing packages run between \$799.00 for the most basic service and \$2549.00 for more advanced services. Depending on the package, you will receive between 10 and 40 books. If you need more copies, you can order any quantity at any time, and pay 40% of the retail cost.



### Additional costs for consideration

The Publishing Package cost covers all your publishing expenses. You may need other funds for:

- Special paint, tools and/or paper for illustrations (not required)
- Purchase of additional books
- Purchase of additional promotional material
- Postage for your additional purchases
- Purchase of additional advertising packages
- Promotional items and expenses for your book launch activities