

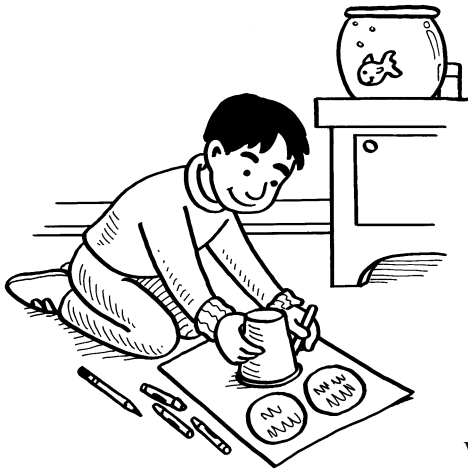
# Budding Writers



Where do stories come from? You can help your young writer turn a seed of an idea into a story in full bloom with this step-by-step guide to the writing process.

## Pick a topic

A great story grows from a great idea. That's where *pre-writing* comes in. You can explain this to your youngster as "getting ready to write." Have him try these activities to come up with story topics he likes.



### Idea bubbles

On a large sheet of paper, let your child trace around a cup with crayons to make different-colored "bubbles." When he finishes, ask him to think of his favorite things (pet goldfish, baseball). He can write the words or draw a picture for each topic in the bubbles.

### Phone-a-friend

Talking to another person may help your youngster come up with a story idea. Have him call a friend or relative for inspiration. A minor incident from the person's day, like getting caught in a downpour, could turn into a nice story for your child.

### Newspaper art

Suggest that your youngster cut pictures from newspapers or magazines. One of them might spark an interesting tale. For example, an airline ad could lead to a story about traveling to the North Pole or the Australian outback.

## Write a rough draft

Once your child decides on her topic, the next step is to get her thoughts on paper. Let her use one of these strategies to get her story rolling.

### Play acting

Imaginary play can help your youngster determine what will happen first, next, and last in her story. Have her use toys as characters and props to act out the scenes. *Example:* "Once upon a time, there was a bear who loved to ride trains." Offer to write down her story as she tells it, or help her write it when she's finished.



### Coloring-book tale

Ask your child to choose a few pages from different coloring books, or print coloring pages from the Internet. She can color the pictures and put the pages in any order she likes. Then, she could use the pictures to write a rough draft. Combining pages from a variety of coloring books will encourage her to make connections among people or items that don't seem similar at first.

### Sticker stories

Does your youngster like stickers? Let her use them to make a *rebus* story—a story where pictures replace some words. Give her a few sheets of stickers, like bugs, animals, and stars. She can choose some to include in her story. For instance, she might use bee, flower, and kitten stickers in the following sentence: "The [bee] buzzed to the [flower]. Then the [bee] buzzed to the [kitten]. The [kitten] got scared and ran away."

*continued*



## Make improvements

After your child finishes his rough draft, it's time for him to try to make it better. Have him read it aloud to see how it sounds. Are there things he wants to change? Encourage him to add details and make revisions with these ideas.

### Detail dice

Details make a story more specific and interesting. Suggest that your youngster roll a die three times. Each time, he should add a detail to his story based on the number he rolls. 1: Size or shape ("The *gigantic* ship sailed across the ocean"). 2: Color ("The dog wore a *blue* collar"). 3: Time ("We moved *in the spring*"). 4: Place ("My team played soccer *at a field behind the school*"). 5: Emotion ("She was *sad* when she dropped her ice cream cone"). 6: Anything goes! Let your child add any type of detail he wants.

### Repair shop

A pad of sticky notes is a good tool for rearranging a story so it flows logically. If a sentence seems out of place, your youngster can write it on a sticky note, put it in a new spot, and try reading the story with it there. Still doesn't sound right? He could move it and read again. Tell him to leave the note in place to use when writing his final draft.



### Last check

Your child's story isn't finished until he has checked spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Ask him to look over his

work three times—once for each kind of mistake. If he spots a misspelled word or a missing period, he can circle it in red ink or mark it with a highlighter so he'll remember to correct it when he rewrites his story.

## Publish it

It's fun for your youngster to see her words in print. Let her neatly write a final draft of her story and illustrate it. Or she might type the story on a computer, leaving space for illustrations, and draw pictures after she prints out the pages. Staple the pages together to create an easy homemade book. Or suggest one of these creative ideas for "publishing" her work.

### Poster sentences

Have your child count the number of sentences in her story. Then, help her draw lines to divide a poster board into sections—one for each sentence. She can write a sentence in each box and illustrate it. Hang the poster on a wall in her bedroom or in your basement. *Note:* For a longer story, she may need to add another poster board.

### Coffee-table book

Make a book jacket by cutting off the front and back of a cereal box. Your youngster can decorate the plain sides with crayons. Next, help her hole-punch the covers and the pages of her story. She could thread ribbon or yarn through the covers and the pages to bind her book. Finally, ask her to leave her book on the coffee table for family members and visitors to read.



### Slide show

Take a digital photo of each page of your child's story, and upload the photos to a computer. Or scan the pages using a scanner. She can share her tale by emailing the photos to friends and relatives. If she writes a longer story, take a picture of each page, and help her use a free slideshow program like *smilebox.com* to create an e-book.

*Tip:* Some publications print stories, poems, and jokes by young writers. Find a list at [katyisd.org/students/Pages/Student\\_writing.aspx](http://katyisd.org/students/Pages/Student_writing.aspx). You can also look for writing contests at [pbshkids.org/writerscontest/parents-and-teachers.php](http://pbshkids.org/writerscontest/parents-and-teachers.php), and on websites of children's magazines, such as [owlkids.com/contests](http://owlkids.com/contests), [spidermagkids.com](http://spidermagkids.com), and [askmagkids.com/contest](http://askmagkids.com/contest).