



10 Strategic Steps to Help Children Learn to Write

Use these 10 strategic steps to help children learn to write. These incremental steps help children become comfortable and confident writers. The ages mentioned show you how early you can start. However, the ages aren't as important as the order of steps. Begin when you and your child are ready!

Time Frame

Each of these writing activities lasts no more than 30 minutes. It's so important that you sit next to your child during these activities. The time you spend with your child now, can produce a confident and independent writer which will save you a LOT of time (and heartache) later.

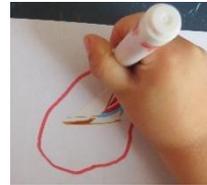
Once your child has developed a routine of [drawing regularly](#), you can start turning their drawing strokes into letter strokes.

Materials

Use markers and white copy paper or 2 small whiteboards, dry erase markers and erasers.

1. FOCUS ON THE LETTER 'O'.

This is a continuation from when you taught your child how to draw circles. Always start at the top, draw counterclockwise to complete the circle that forms the letter "O".



2. DRAW CAPITAL LETTERS

Beginning at age 3 or so, intermixed with regularly drawing, start showing your child how to draw capital letters, top to bottom, left to right. Draw the letter yourself. Then, give your child a chance to write each letter. Say the strokes for him/her to write, such as, "down, cross the top, cross the middle" for the letter F.



The size of the letters doesn't matter at this stage. They can be HUGE! What's important is that the child is forming the letters with the [proper letter strokes](#).



As your child builds stamina, have him/her draw each capital letter once a week. This can be done all in one day if your child is interested, or over the course of a few days (4-5 letters a day). My children did this on a small whiteboard. I had my own small whiteboard also.



3. LABEL DRAWINGS WITH BEGINNING LETTER SOUNDS



G for Girl

4. WRITE 3 LETTER WORDS-Consonant-Vowel Consonant



This is a good time to begin introducing short vowel sounds.

CAT, HAT, MAT, PAT, RAT, SAT: I'm sure this spelling pattern is extremely familiar to you. However, you may not have heard it call the CVC pattern. CVC means the word begins with a consonant (C), has a short vowel (V) in the middle and ends with another consonant (C).

Short Vowel Sounds

Begin by showing, speaking, writing and drawing the 5 short vowel sounds
A for APPLE, E for EGG, I for IGLOO, O for OCTOPUS, U for UMBRELLA





Then, have students start writing CVC words. Begin with the short A sound:

CAT-HAT-RAT-SAT
MAN-PAN-RAN-VAN
DAD-SAD-MAD etc.

Next, continue with: The short O, HOT-POT-MOM,
The short E, WET-NET-PET,
The short I, BIG, DIG, WIG
The short U, UP-CUP-PUP.

Slowly say each sound of one word, C-A-T. The child writes each letter as you say it's sound.

In one sitting, the child may only write 1, 2 or 3 words. The more they practice, the more words they can write in one sitting.

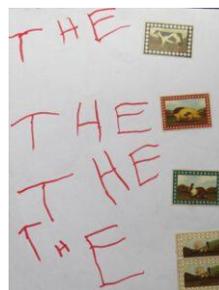
5. WRITE the THREE ARTICLES, A, AN and THE

Children enjoy this activity because after they write an article, they get to place a sticker. If you don't have stickers, try to draw simple pictures for your child or have them draw the pictures

Start with the article A. Teach the child that the letter A can be a letter OR a word. Show the child the words A DOG or A CAT. Have the child write the word "A", then place a sticker of a noun. After a week or two of practicing the word, "A", move to "AN" and "THE".



In the previous step, children learned to write the beginning sound of words. You can take this activity a step further and have the child write the beginning sound of the sticker like the example above, or leave this step out like the samples below. Work according to the interest and stamina of the child!





6. LABEL DRAWINGS WITH PHONETICALLY SPELLED WORDS



Have your child phonetically spell words next to a drawing, magazine picture, sticker or calendar picture. This means, the child writes all the sounds that he or she hears in the word. The word most likely won't be spelled correctly. The goal is for the child to slowly say the word and write the sounds that he/she hears.

7. BEGIN WRITING SIGHT WORD SENTENCES



Next, use sight word sentences to help children learn to write. I have found writing [sight word sentences](#) to be the easiest and most effective spelling strategy for parents and teachers to conduct and students to complete. I explain how to begin this spelling strategy most simply in my post titled, [“An Easy and On-Going Spelling Strategy.”](#)

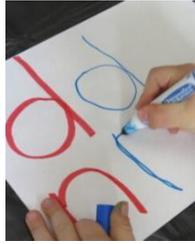
How Sight Word Sentences Work

In short, the child writes a sentence such as “This is a ____” or “I see a ____.” under his/her drawing on the same page or on a second page. The sight words should be spelled correctly. Those are words that the child is learning and practicing.

The blanks are for words that are spelled phonetically, where the child writes letters that represent the sounds. The words in the blank may or may not be spelled correctly. Store the drawing and writing in a [binder](#) to read and review later.

8. DRAW LOWER CASE LETTERS

By age 5, or earlier, start “drawing” lower case letters with him/her. Speak out the strokes. For example, say, “circle, stick” for the lowercase letter d.

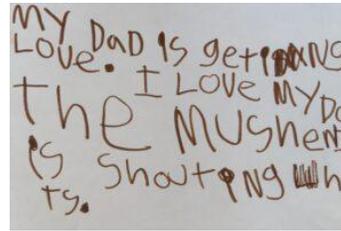


Keep in mind, that it's very common for Kindergartners and also 1st Graders to mix capital letters in with lower case letters in their writing.

The key is to help them develop a habit of writing all of their letters with the [proper letter strokes](#). It will make their lifelong writing easier and more fluid.

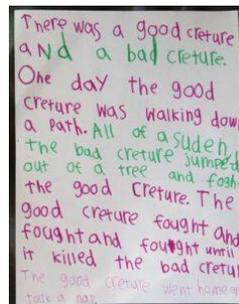
9. WRITE 2-3 SENTENCES

Here, the child writes 2-3 sentences about a drawing, magazine or calendar picture. The sentences can be as simple as, "This is a _____. It is _____. It is _____."



6 yrs. old

10. WRITE A STORY!



7 yrs. old

At this point, a child knows letter sounds and can phonetically spell any unknown words. Additionally, the child knows how to write a list of [sight words](#) (high frequency words). In short, using those two skills, the child can write much of what he/she would "say" if telling a story out loud. Allow your child many opportunities to write stories using these two skills, spelling sight words correctly and phonetically spelling unknown words.