

students can use for reading aloud, tape recorders and blank tapes for recording, and small table lamps, flashlights, and battery powered candles.

Make sure each child has a writing notebook and folder. Spiral notebooks work best as they can be folded back and pages can be removed easily. Folders can be used to keep track of papers that have been torn out or any that are in various editing stages.

- **Wall displays**

Create a space for finished projects, as well as for a separate word wall. Word walls are easy to make and can be used year round as one of your bulletin boards—many teachers use word walls to post frequently misspelled words. If you have the space, create a word choice section on your wall and provide students with alternatives to overused words such as “said” and “nice.”

- **Classroom library**

A classroom library is important for writing centers. Many good writing ideas come from books. The larger the variety of writing styles your students are exposed to, the better they will write.



Use a word wall to help students discover alternatives to overused words. Add to or change the wall throughout the year

Generating Writing Ideas

If you are unsure about how to get your students writing, here are some simple items to include in your center to help them start.

Story starters

Story starters are exactly what they sound like—they give the start of a story and the student must finish it. Write and laminate five or six story starters and put them in your center. Stick them onto colorful construction paper or florescent copying paper. Put them in strips, cut them out in different shapes, or put them on index cards. You can keep them in a folder, box, or pin them up on a bulletin board.

Below are five story starters:

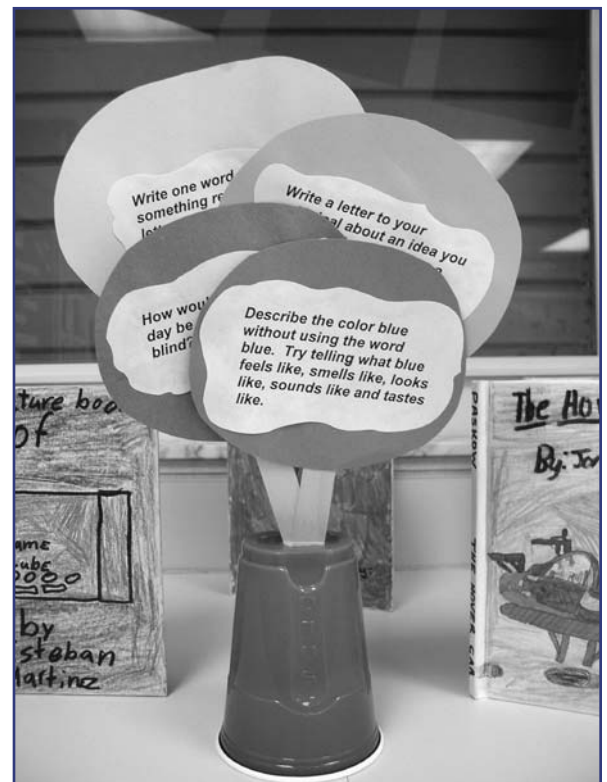
It was the first slumber party of the summer. The five girls were fast asleep after a long night of eating popcorn and watching their favorite scary movie. Suddenly one of the girls got up and began walking towards the window. Slowly the other girls woke up, not believing what they were seeing. . . .

I think my aunt is going crazy. This morning she came to pick me up from baseball practice on a motorcycle. She was dressed head to toe in black, and across her leather motorcycle jacket, written in silver studs, was "Born to Ride." "There's no time to waste," she cried, "Hop on!!!"

Today was the craziest school day ever!! It all started when . . .

I know you're not going to believe this, but as I am sitting here writing this I want you to know one thing: I'm not me. Sounds crazy, I know, but when I woke up this morning I was not in my own body—I had switched places with_____

It's not every day that you wake up and see what I saw this morning. Let me tell you, it's lucky that I'm still able to talk about it . . .



If you want students to be motivated to use your writing center, be creative in your presentation of activities.