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Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

Title: Kindergarten Language Use and Conventions Unit

Subject: WRITING

Topics: ELA-Conventions, ELA-Writing

Grade: K-Kindergarten

Designers: Amie Wilson

Deborah Johnston

Introduction

Unit Framework Title

Kindergarten Language Use and Conventions Unit

Unit Framework Annotation

This Kindergarten Language Use and Conventions Unit is designed to teach kindergartners how to begin writing. It is intended to be taught at the beginning of the school year when kindergartners need the support of lessons centered around conventions. It is during these early weeks of school that teachers will conduct many lessons where they model writing. These modeled writing sessions will help show kindergartners that their oral language has a written counterpart. By modeling or demonstrating one's writing, the teacher helps his/her students come to understand the patterns and structures associated with written language. While this unit breaks down the process of writing into manageable chunks, it also gives students the global picture of writing for a purpose. Critical concepts covered in this unit are directionality, spacing, letter/word/sentence differentiation, alphabetic principle, letter formation, capitalization and punctuation. Although students are not expected to master these conventions in this unit, it does serve as a basis for future, content-related instruction in writing, where instruction in conventions will be embedded within the context of a genre study.

Special Notes

The elements of the writing standard that are taught in this unit will be revisited throughout the year. Although this unit is nine weeks in duration, continued instruction in the writing process and the use of conventions will be taught throughout the year.

The rubric and class profile included in this unit are designed to serve as examples of possible assessment tools that one may use. They may be modified based on the specific needs of classrooms and students.

The language that is used in the Georgia Performance Standards is taught and used throughout the unit. It is important to embed one's teaching with this language throughout the school day. When children are exposed to this language, given the meaning of unknown words, and immersed in the use of this language on a daily basis, they will understand, apply and begin to use it themselves.

This Unit Framework is differentiated for:

Special Populations

While it is impossible to forecast what types of students, personalities, and disabilities you may experience in your classroom, there are some general guidelines to keep in mind to make things easier on you and provide more

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

successful learning opportunities for all of your students. The first thing to keep in mind is to **expect mastery**. Yes, mastery. Every student in your class can and will master some skills. Some will come with many skills already and will learn many more over the course of the year. Others will come with deficits and/or disabilities that cause them to have difficulty; however, each and every one can master skills based on assessment, planning, and assessment in a repeating cycle. By limiting the number of skills (as needed) and focusing on the most foundational ones, most students can leave your class competent in basic areas of reading and writing and will have a good basis from which to add new skills. The second thing to keep in mind is that you have many resources surrounding you: special education teachers, paraprofessionals, facilitators, speech/language pathologists, ELL teachers, occupational and physical therapists, school psychologists, and veteran teachers, as well as literally thousands of books, journals, and other written media. **Ask for help**. The purpose of the recommendations/accommodations made within this unit is to spark ideas and **begin to build a “bag of tricks”** from which to draw as new challenges face you in the way of how to reach students with specific issues. This brings you to the third thing to keep in mind: **Differentiated Learning Sections – read them**. Many of the lessons you will find are conducive to supporting students at all levels; however, many suggestions have been made that might help you reach a child who is experiencing difficulty. The last thing to keep in mind is that education is inundated with acronyms, especially in the area of special education: SLD, IEP, FAPE, LEA, LRE, MIID, MOID, EBD, AUT, ASD, SLP, OHI, HI, VI, and on and on. Then, add acronyms that are related to SST, EIP and ELL. **Find out what the acronyms mean**; have someone make a list for you with a brief explanation.

Subject

- English Language Arts

Topic

- Reading/Writing/Listening, Speaking, Viewing

Grade(s)

- Kindergarten

Approximate Duration for the Unit Framework

Nine weeks ((Even though this is a 9 week unit in duration, instruction in the writing process and the use of conventions will continue throughout the year)

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Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

Standards

Focus Standards

ELAKW1 The student begins to understand the principles of writing. The student

- a. Writes or dictates to describe familiar persons, places, objects, or experiences.
- b. Uses drawings, letters, and phonetically spelled words to create meaning.
- c. Accurately prints name, all uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet, and teacher-selected words.
- d. Uses left-to-right pattern of writing.
- e. Begins to use capitalization at the beginning of sentences and punctuation (periods and question marks) at the end of sentences.

Complementary Standards

ELAKLSV1 The student uses oral and visual skills to communicate. The student

- e. Describes people, places, things, locations, and actions.
- g. Communicates effectively when relating experiences and retelling stories heard.
- h. Uses complete sentences when speaking.
- i. Begins to use subject-verb agreement and tense correctly.

ELAKR1 The student demonstrates knowledge of concepts of print. The student

- a. Recognizes that print and pictures (signs and labels, newspapers, and informational books) can inform, entertain, and persuade.
- b. Demonstrates that print has meaning and represents spoken language in written form.
- c. Tracks text read from left to right and top to bottom.
- d. Distinguishes among written letters, words, and sentences.
- e. Recognizes that sentences in print are made up of separate words.
- f. Begins to understand that punctuation and capitalization are used in all written sentences.

ELAKR3 The student demonstrates the relationship between letters and letter combinations of written words and the sounds of spoken words. The student

- a. Demonstrates an understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between print and spoken sounds.
- b. Recognizes and names all uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet.
- c. Matches all consonant and short-vowel sounds to appropriate letters.
- d. Blends individual sounds to read one-syllable decodable words.
- e. Applies learned phonics skills when reading words and sentences in stories.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

National and Local Standards

Habits and Processes:

- Writes daily.
- Chooses self-selected topics and generates content for writing.
- Writes without resistance when given the time, place, and materials.
- Uses a variety of ways to communicate and make meaning: drawings, letter approximations and other graphic representations, as well as gestures, intonations and role-played voices.
- Makes an effort to reread his/her own writing and listen to that of others, showing attentiveness to meaning by, for example, asking for more information or laughing.

Language Use and Conventions:

- Uses words in writing that he/she uses in conversation, usually represented phonetically.
- Independently creates text with words that an adult (who is knowledgeable about spelling development and about the content of the piece of writing) can decipher.
- Reread his/her own text, with a match between what is said and what is written on paper.
- Pause voluntarily in the midst of writing to reread what he/she has written.

Prints with appropriate spacing between words and sentences.

Understanding and Goals

Unit Understandings, Themes, and Concepts (provide concepts students should retain as a result of this unit)

As a result of this unit, the process of how writers go about writing will be demonstrated for kindergartners. Students' writing will begin to reflect the conventions of written English. The main purpose of this unit is to give kindergartners some tools that they will use to begin to become writers. The unit seeks to provide teachers with the necessary resources when they are confronted with students who say, "I don't know how to write a story!"

Primary Learning Goals or Essential Questions

Essential Questions:

How do you write a story?

What is the difference between a letter/word/sentence?

What do you do if you don't know how to spell a word?

Knowledge:

- Alphabetic principle- The words we speak can be represented on paper by using letters that represent sounds
- Letter and sound recognition
- Letter/Word/ Sentence differentiation
- Directionality

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

Skills:

- Represent words phonetically
- Write a story, leaving spaces between words and printing from left-to-right and top-to-bottom
- Reread own text, with a match between what is said and what is written on paper

Additional Learning Goals

Essential Questions:

What do you need to remember when you retell a story?
 What part of a book tells the story?

Knowledge:

- Complete retellings include details such as character(s), setting, and concrete details. They contain complete sentences with consistent tense usage and subject-verb agreement.
- Print carries meaning

Skills:

- Retell a story that includes the character(s), setting and details specific to that story. Use your retelling to help you remember what to write in a story.
- Produce a piece of writing that uses letters/words to tell a story



Balanced Assessments

Method/types	Informal Observations	Dialogue and Discussion	Selected Responses	Constructed Responses	Self-Assessments
Title					
Description	Running Records Student- teacher conferences about writing and reading Observe student participation in class discussion and group interactions in Reading and Writing. Language Use and Conventions Class Profile – see attached			Multiple formal reading assessments such as but not limited to (DRA) Developmental Reading Assessment, (QRI) Qualitative Reading Inventory <u>Original Narrative Text</u> Students will choose a personal experience to develop into a narrative. Students will apply author's craft to their pieces through revision. Students will use appropriate first grade conventions. Students will use appropriate speaking and listening skills as they share	Student created <u>Language Use and Conventions Rubric</u> See attached rubric

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

Language Use and Conventions Rubric

Did I do these things?

	Yes	Not Yet
Directionality 		
Spaces <u>I see a dog.</u>		
Write All The Sounds I Hear c or cat		
Picture 		
Story <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">I see a dog.</div>		
Name <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Jill</div>		
Capitalization and Punctuation !.? A or a		

Unit Performance Task(s)

Unit Performance Task Title

End of Unit Writing Prompt

Description/Directions

Description:

In this End of Unit Performance Task, the students are asked to respond to a writing prompt. The prompt calls for students to exhibit control of some of the conventions of writing in their pieces. An accompanying Language Use and Conventions Class Profile will be used to record the students' progress.

While students will not be expected to meet all elements of the writing standard included on the accompanying class profile, the data collected from the prompt will be used to plan instruction in the next, genre specific unit.

Directions:

The end of the unit writing prompt is, "Write a story about yourself. Be sure to leave spaces between your words, write from left-to-right and top-to-bottom, and represent words with all of the sounds that you hear."

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

After students have completed the writing prompt: Look at each element of the standard listed on the Language Use and Conventions Class Profile. Place a check in the + column if the student met this element of the standard, or place a check in the - column if the student did not meet this element of the standard

Rubric for Performance Task

Student Name	Writes to describe familiar persons, places, objects, or experiences		Uses drawings, letters, and phonetically spelled words to create meaning.		Uses left-to-right (and possibly top-to-bottom) pattern of writing		Leaves spaces between words	
	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-

Student Work Sample with Teacher Commentary

Growth Over Time/ Language Use and Conventions

This section actually includes two work samples from the same student. These pieces of student work are titled, "Growth Over Time 1" and "Growth Over Time 2". The first sample is a piece of writing from August 10, the very beginning of the school year. The second sample is a piece of writing from September 18. The purpose of including two pieces of writing is to show the growth that one student displayed over the course of time. Therefore, it is necessary to include a piece of writing from the beginning of the Language Use and Conventions unit and a piece toward the end of the unit.

Grade: Kindergarten

Unit/Genre: Language Use and Conventions

Title of Commentary: Growth Over Time

Analysis Contributed By: Amie Wilson

Description/Directions

Students were taught lessons contained in the Language Use and Conventions unit. They were asked to produce a piece of writing daily. The first work sample in this commentary is from the beginning of the unit, and the second work sample is from near the end of the unit.

Circumstances of the Task

Students worked independently. They were given access to a word wall. Students conferred with teachers on a regular basis (approximately one conference each week).

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten



Analysis of the Work (Commentary)

(Located under each element of the standard addressed)

Standards:

ELAKW1 The student begins to understand the principles of writing. The student

- a. Writes or dictates to describe familiar persons, places, objects, or experiences.
 - In “Growth Over Time 1”, the writer did not attempt to write or dictate to describe familiar persons, places, objects or experiences. There is no evidence of letters or letter-like forms, indicating a lack of understanding of the alphabetic principle.
 - When looking at the “Growth Over Time 2” work sample, one will instantly notice that the writer has now attempted to write a story. She included some letters (I, l, k, e, t, o, g, A, t, s) and letter-like forms (possibly a backwards “D” and a backwards “s”). She is making an attempt to describe a familiar experience (going outside) in writing. During this short period of time (from August 10 to September 18), the writer has now gained some understanding of the alphabetic principle, as indicated through her use of letters and phonetically spelled words.
- b. Uses drawings, letters, and phonetically spelled words to create meaning.
 - In “Growth Over Time 1”, the writer included some drawings (several houses and a face); however, the intent of the drawings is questionable. It is hard to determine from the drawings whether they were intended to tell a story (create meaning). It appears as if the writer felt that she was successful at drawing houses. Therefore, she drew several of them. This type of drawing is typical of kindergartners at this time of the school year. They often “write” in their comfort zone, whether it be repeatedly drawing the same object(s) or randomly writing the letters in their name. They do things that they are comfortable, and successful, doing.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

- When looking at the “Growth Over Time 2” work sample, it is obvious that the writer is now able to use a drawing, along with phonetically spelled words, to create meaning. Her drawing, which includes a sun overhead, appears to match the content of her story (going outside). Most of the story is easily decipherable by an adult who is knowledgeable of phonetic spelling (“I like to go outside.”) It appears as if the writer used a combination of strategies to write her story. A word wall was present in the room, so the writer could have used it to spell the words “to” and “like”. The sight word “like” is spelled incorrectly (lke), and this is probably a result of a copying error. The writer made an impressive attempt at the word “outside”, spelling it “atsd”. This phonetic spelling indicates that the writer is able to attend to a vowel sound (short a) and some medial sounds (/t/, /s/). The last word in the story consists of random letters. It is typical for kindergartners to shift between different stages of spelling development. In this example, the writer shifts between the precommunicative and semiphonetic stages of writing development.
- c. Accurately prints name, all uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet, and teacher-selected words.
- For the sake of anonymity, the writer’s name has been deleted from this work sample. However, she was able to correctly spell her name on both samples. However, in “Growth Over Time 1” she did include some capital letters in the middle of her name. The writer again displayed progress in “Growth Over Time 2” by correcting these capitalization errors, spelling her name correctly and using correct capital/lower case letters.
 - In “Growth Over Time 2”, the writer printed most letters correctly (I, l, k, e, t, o, g, A, t, s), only reversing a few letters (D, s).
- d. Uses left-to-right pattern of writing.
- In “Growth Over Time 1”, the writer did not attempt to write a story, so this element cannot be analyzed in this piece. However, in “Growth Over Time 2”, the author did attempt to write a story. She displayed a left-to-right progression in this piece.
- e. Begins to use capitalization at the beginning of sentences and punctuation (periods and question marks) at the end of sentences.
- Again, the “Growth Over Time 1” work sample does not include a story, so this element cannot be analyzed in this piece. The “Growth Over Time 2” piece does show some signs of an awareness of capitalization. The author wrote the word “I” with a capital letter. She did, however, write many capital letters in incorrect places. While this is an element that is introduced during the Language Use and Conventions unit, it certainly is not an expectation that the students will meet this element of the standard at this point in the school year.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten



Sequence of Instruction and Learning

List and briefly describe the sequence of teaching strategies, teaching activities, and learning activities that will guide students to attainment of the intended standards.

Sequence of Activities, Tasks, and Assessments:

Throughout this unit teachers should devote time to reading books aloud. Quality children's literature will provide students with examples of how good stories sound and all the associated elements of good narratives (setting, characters, plot, conflict, resolution...). Taking time to read narratives to which the students can relate (i.e. getting in trouble, family, friends, pets, homesick...) will help give them ideas of possible topics for their own writing. A list of optional read aloud stories is included in the Notes and Reflections section of this unit development template.

Week One

Writing

Administer Beginning Writing Prompt. Use the Language Use and Conventions Class Profile to evaluate the student work.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

The first weeks of kindergarten are very important. It is during this time that the procedures and routines associated with writing are taught. The daily writing time should be structured and unchanging. This writing time will only be as successful as the instruction that is planned around it. A large amount of time should be spent training the students on the management of writing materials. It is important for the teacher to consider the procedures associated with the management of writing materials. These procedures should be explicitly taught to the students. Some questions for the teacher to consider are, "Where will pencils and paper be stored?", "How will pencils get sharpened?", "What do students do if/when they need another sheet of paper?", "What type of paper will I use at the beginning of the school year?", "Will I let my students use markers/crayons?", "What will students do when they are 'finished'?"...

While teaching the procedures associated with writing will take the majority of time during the first few weeks of kindergarten, one important lesson format should be introduced. That lesson is called "Modeled Writing". This lesson is found in the Teaching Activity template of the Unit Builder. It is a lesson format that will be used many times (as many as 2-3 times per week) throughout the school year. In the early weeks of the school year, modeled writing teaches children that their oral language has a written counterpart (alphabetic principle). By modeling, or demonstrating, one's writing, the teacher helps his/her students come to understand the patterns and structures associated with written language.

Reading

Choose one simple big book (2-3 words per page) that contains repetitive text to revisit several times throughout the week. *A sample list of optional big books is included in the Notes and Reflections section of the Unit Builder template.* Use a pointer to point to the words as they are read aloud. Follow the "to/with/by" pattern of reading the big book over the course of several days. That is, read it "**to**" them one day, read it "**with**" them (choral reading) another day, and then give individuals an opportunity to read the book "**by**" themselves, or independently, in front of the class.

Choose a quality read aloud to share with the class. A sample list of optional read aloud books is included in the Notes and Reflections section of the Unit Builder template. Plan on revisiting it for a few days. When the students are comfortable with the read aloud, guide them through acting out the story for the class. Some optional examples include The Three Billy Goats Gruff and Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

Points to Consider

It is important to place an emphasis on the students' behavior while they are writing. The teacher should consider the following questions, "What kind of behavior do I expect from my students while they are writing?", "What will I be doing while my students are writing?", "What noise level am I comfortable with?", "If my students talk during writing time, what kinds of things should they be talking about?", "Will I allow my students to get out of their seats during writing time?...for what reason(s)?", "What will I do when I have students ask me how to spell words?"...

The tone of the first week should be positive. Remember, the goal is for children to *want* to learn to write. This is the time to set the expectation that all students are capable of writing and that they will all write everyday.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

Week Two

Writing

Continue to teach modeled writing lessons several times this week.

Another lesson that may be taught revolves around the requirements associated with writing every day. Think about what you would like your students to include on their daily papers. It is important that students begin writing their name on their papers. You will also want the date included on all student work. This will help you track their growth over time. How do you want to do this? ...have the students write it? ...a date stamp? Conduct a lesson centered around the things that need to be included in every piece of writing. Make an anchor chart with the students entitled, "How to Write Stories". Elicit responses from students, but be sure to include things such as: Put your name at the top, Write a story with words, Sketch a picture, Do your best work, Stay busy during writing time...

Reading

Choose another big book, and follow the "to/with/by" pattern of introducing the book (see Week 1 for explanation). Begin to emphasize the difference between letters and words, praising those students who are able to point to each word as it is read aloud.

Introduce another book to be read aloud by the teacher, and act out the story together.

Points to Consider

During these first few weeks of school, students should be encouraged to become risk takers, attempting to put some type of print on paper. All attempts and approximations should be praised. This will help to create a supportive community of writers who will eventually produce writing that is rich in both content AND conventions. Every effort should be made to teach the students that they belong to a community of writers in which writing takes place every day. Taking a few moments each day to share a couple of pieces of student writing with the entire class is a good way to accomplish this goal.

Weeks Three - Five

Writing

It is normal for some kindergartners to pose some opposition to the notion of writing, especially at the beginning of the year. Therefore, one must plan lessons centered around teaching the students how to begin to be writers. Modeled writing lessons will help give these young writers some necessary tools to begin their work as writers. Set aside a few days to conduct some modeled writing sessions. Use your own stories as topics, and be sure to use the stories of your students.

One lesson that will help give students some of the necessary tools to begin writing is called, "Stages of Writing". This lesson is found in the Teaching Activity template of the Unit Builder. During the "Stages of Writing" lesson,

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

the teacher explicitly shows the students different ways in which one may write the same story, providing examples of the different stages of writing development along the way. The anchor chart made during this lesson will serve as a reference throughout the school year. While it will initially serve as a model by which students will write, it will eventually become a tool that students will use to evaluate their own writing skills and proficiency.

Choose one student who is able to make some attempt at writing a story. This may be through random letters or through some stage of phonetic spelling. Enlarge this piece of writing (transparency, opaque projector, poster machine...), and evaluate it with the class. Ask the students, "What has this writer done well?" Expect answers such as, "He wrote his name on his paper.", "He has a picture.", "He has a story.", "His picture matches his story.", "He used letters to make words."... Add their responses to the piece of student work, and display it in a prominent location in the classroom.

One new lesson that may be introduced during this time is called, "How to Spell Words". The purpose of this lesson is to give writers some tools that they can use to begin the work of writing for a purpose. Some students will still be in the scribbling and random letter stages of writing while others will be spelling phonetically. This lesson will help all students, regardless of their level of spelling development. Make an anchor chart with the students entitled, "How to Spell Words". Elicit responses from students, encouraging them to discuss the strategies that they already use to spell unknown words. List their responses on the anchor chart. Be sure to include things such as: Use the word wall, Write all of the sounds that you hear (say the word slowly), Look around the room, Think about how the word should look... It is important that this lesson empower students to realize that they are capable of using the resources at hand to spell words independently.

Reading

Introduce another simple big book using the "to/with/by" method (see Week 1 for an explanation). Each day choose a letter that you would like the students to find in the book. Call on individual students to come to the front of the class and find the requested letter. Students may use highlighting tape, wikki stix, sticky notes, pointer... to find the letters in the big book.

During your read aloud time, start introducing the notion of retelling a story. Periodically stop during the read aloud, briefly modeling for the students how to retell what has happened so far in the story.

Points to Consider

As students begin to go about the work of writers, they will gradually gain more independence and confidence. They will become more confident as they gain an understanding of the unchanging structure of the writing time. Their ability to use materials independently will contribute to their confidence.

Reflect on the management of the writing time. Are students able to work independently? Do they know how to use the writing materials? What do students do when they encounter a problem? The answers to these questions provide teachers with valuable information for lesson ideas. When management problems occur, take time to plan lessons centered around solving these problems. Role-playing lessons, in which students act out the correct (or incorrect) way to do something, prove to be very effective when focusing on management problems.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

Weeks Six - Seven

Writing

Introduce the Language Use and Conventions rubric to the students. Familiarize them with the format and wording of the rubric. You will probably want to change the rubric to meet the instructional needs of your students. Plan several lessons in which you evaluate pieces of student writing using the rubric. This will serve as a motivation for your students because most kindergartners like for you to share their work with the class. They want to do well because they want you to choose their work to share with the class.

Continue to teach several modeled writing lessons during these weeks. You may also want to analyze an enlarged piece of student work with the class.

It may be necessary to revisit the "How to Write Stories" anchor chart that was made during week two.

It is important for students to understand that their stories matter. It is during this time that they may begin to consider possible topics of their stories. Comments such as, "I don't know what to write about" may be overheard. This is a good time to begin a class collection of possible writing topics. This resource, called a Class Writer's Notebook, will be added to throughout the school year, depending on the genre that is being studied. (A Class Writer's Notebook is easily made by stapling together sheets of chart paper.) This Class Writer's Notebook will serve as a precursor to individual Writer's Notebooks that students will develop in other grades. The introduction of the Class Writer's Notebook will help scaffold the students' understanding of the purpose behind having a Writer's Notebook. Plan a lesson in which you talk to the students about topics you have seen them write about, and emphasize the importance of writing about things that are important to them. Elicit possible topics from the students, and record these topics in the Class Writer's Notebook. Make the source book available to students during the writing time.

Reading

Continue using big books to work on letter recognition and letter/word differentiation.

Continue modeling retelling during read aloud time. Begin to call on students to help you with the retelling. Use words such as "character", "setting", "plot", "problem" and "solution".

Points to Consider

At this time, there may be some students who are apprehensive about committing their thoughts to paper. It is appropriate at this time to introduce the notion of "writing without resistance". Students must know that the expectation in writing is that they all must write, and they must do so without any resistance. Of course, some students will still be apprehensive about such a notion, but it is important at this time to begin embedding the idea in their heads that they are all writers. Consider small things that may be done during the day to reinforce the notion that the boys and girls are writers. Incorporating daily share sessions is a good way to encourage apprehensive writers. By choosing students of differing abilities to share their writing, the teacher sends the message to students that writing is something that can be done successfully by all students. It is also important to

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

note that writing without resistance may need to be introduced before this time. If there are many students in the class who are apprehensive about writing (even after some of the lessons that have been taught) it may be necessary to address this prior to weeks 6-7.

Continue to monitor the behavior during writing time. Plan lessons centered around any problems that may be occurring.

Weeks Eight - Nine

Writing

Continue to teach modeled writing lessons during this time. You may also want to analyze an enlarged piece of student writing with the class.

Revisit the "How to Spell Words" anchor chart. Teach specific lessons centered around each strategy listed on the chart. For example, a lesson on using the word wall may need to be taught. Several lessons centered around sounding out words may need to be taught during this time.

Administer the End of Unit Performance Task, which can be found in the Performance Task template of the Unit Builder. Use the Language Use and Conventions Class Profile to evaluate the pieces of student work.

Reading

Continue using big books to work on letter recognition and letter/word differentiation.

Continue focusing on retelling during read aloud time. Gradually release the responsibility of the retelling to the students, asking them to tell the "characters", "setting", "plot", "problem," and "solution".

Complete a story map with a read aloud. Read the book one day, and complete the story map the next day. Ask students to identify narrative elements such as characters, setting, and events in the story.

Points to Consider

It is wise to take these weeks to reflect on the progress your students are making. Take time to plan specific lessons to meet their needs. Pay close attention to their behavior, as well as their writing progress.

Helpful Hints

SPELLING

One important thing to think about in kindergarten is the issue of spelling. Those students who have little knowledge of the alphabet and letter sounds present specific challenges to their teachers, and teachers become concerned about how to help these students become writers. It is through rigorous instruction that teachers help these students make the connection between letters and sounds. This is a gradual process, and students move toward this understanding at their own pace. The goal is to help students become

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

independent. When students ask how to spell a word it is important to help them learn how to use strategies for spelling unknown words. When teachers start spelling words for students, the students begin to use this as a crutch, thereby foregoing the important thought process behind using strategies to spell unknown words. Ask prompting questions such as, "What do you hear in that word?", "What letters would you expect to see in that word?", "Do you hear that sound in (student's) name?", "Where could you look to figure out how to spell that word?"... It is important to give guidance, not answers.

WRITING PAPER

Paper choice is a very important factor in conveying expectations in writing. Consider the expectations that are associated with a blank piece of paper as opposed to a piece of lined notebook paper. The lined paper suggests that a lengthy story is to be written, while the blank paper conveys more open-ended expectations, possibly placing more of an emphasis on drawing a picture. It would be quite overwhelming to give most kindergartners a piece of narrowly lined paper at the beginning of the school year. While there is no "right" choice for paper, it is important to consider changing the paper throughout the course of the school year. It is suggested that the beginning writing paper be merely a blank sheet of copy paper. After a few days or weeks introduce paper with a few lines. Gradually increase the number of lines on the paper and decrease the amount of space included for a sketch. The goal is for the paper to help keep students in their zone of proximal development.

Web Resources (optional)

The web resources listed below contain information on the stages of writing development.

<http://gkestner.com/WritingStages.htm>

<http://wwwstatic.kern.org/gems/calpin/StagesofWritinghandout.pdf>

<http://www.lindaslearninglinks.com/earlywrtgdev.html>

http://cfbstaff.cfbisd.edu/chienv/stages_of_writing_development.htm

Additional Elements

Sample List of Appropriate Resources (optional)

Alborough, Jez. 2000. *Hug*. New York: Scholastic.

Alborough, Jez. 1994. *It's the Bear!*. Cambridge: Candlewick.

Bang, Molly. 1999. *When Sophie Gets Angry- Really, Really Angry...* New York: Scholastic.

Bunnett, Rochelle. 1995. *Friends at School*. New York: Scholastic.

Curtis, Jamie Lee. 1993. *When I Was Little: A Four-Year-Old's Memoir of Her Youth*. New York: Scholastic.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

- Everitt, Betsy. 1992. *Mean Soup*. New York: Scholastic.
- Henkes, Kevin. 2000. *Wemberly Worried*. New York: Scholastic.
- Intrater, Roberta Grobel. 1995. *Two Eyes, a Nose, and a Mouth*. New York: Cartwheel Books.
- Johnson, Angela. 1993. *Julius*. New York: Trumpet.
- Keller, Holly. 1991. *Geraldine's Blanket*. Atlanta: Houghton Mifflin.
- Lichtenheld, Tom. 2003. *What Are You So Glumpy About?*. New York: Little Brown and Company.
- Marshall, James. 1988. *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. New York: Scholastic.
- McGeorge, Constance W. 1996. *Boomer Goes to School*. New York: Scholastic.
- McKee, David. 1968. *Elmer*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepherd.
- Munsch, Robert. 1998. *Andrew's Loose Tooth*. New York: Scholastic.
- Munsch, Robert. 1992. *Purple, Green and Yellow*. New York: Annick Press Ltd.
- Munsch, Robert. 1993. *Wait and See*. New York: Annick Press Ltd.
- Rockwell, Anne. 2001. *Welcome to Kindergarten*. New York: Scholastic.
- Shannon, David. 1998. *No, David!*. New York: Scholastic.
- Vail, Rachel. 2002. *Sometimes I'm Bombaloo*. New York: Scholastic.
- Viorst, Judith. 1972. *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. New York: Scholastic.
- Waddell, Martin. 1975. *Owl Babies*. Cambridge: Candlewick Press.
- Sample list of appropriate big books (optional):**
- Cowley, Joy. *Baby Gets Dressed*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.
- Cowley, Joy. *Big and Little*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.
- Cowley, Joy. *The Birthday Cake*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

Cowley, Joy. *I Can Fly*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *I Can Jump*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *The Farm Concert*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *Huggles' Breakfast*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *Huggles Can Juggle*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *Huggles Goes Away*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *Ice Cream*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *Little Brother*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *I Love My Family*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Technology Connection/Integration (use of any available technological resources)

- Desktop Publishing Software
- Web Site(s)

General Classroom Accommodations

There are specific suggestions for scaffolding and accommodating at-risk students, students with exceptional needs, and students who speak other native languages under each of the instructional tasks as well as learning profiles and other resources. Be sure to check out the Differentiated Instruction for help in addressing the needs of individual students. There is always more than one way to meet a need. The techniques and strategies provided are just a sampling. Here are a few things to consider when setting up and organizing the learning environment.

- 1. Picture Dictionaries:** From the most simple to the elaborate, picture dictionaries support a wide range of students from language impoverished homes, to students with exceptional needs, to students learning to speak English.
- 2. Highlighting and color-coding** are two strategies to use when trying to focus on one aspect of an element or standard and are especially helpful for visual learners, students with attending difficulties, and students struggling with specific skills.
- 3. Limit the scope of expectations** for each piece of writing as dictated by the student's disability or areas of weakness. For example, during character development under the writing standard, focus on the student's ability to understand and provide consist samples of character development and perhaps dialogue. However, the student may have difficulty with the punctuation of dialogue and complex sentences. It is often hard for the teacher to

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

focus on just one or two skills at a time with an individual student, but in the long run, the student reaches proficiency, builds confidence, and is better able to add new skills. Focusing on several skills at the same time will overwhelm some students, and they tend to either act out or shut down. Either way, we are at risk of losing them.

4. Expect mastery from all students and work toward that end, acknowledging that not all students are at the same level or progress at the same rates. Also, use the language of the standards as students are going to learn whatever vocabulary used to express the concepts to be learned. By teaching the language of the standards from the beginning, students will progress through the years with consistent terminology and understandings.

5. Plan for what is acceptable to do when a student is finished with his/her work. There will always be students who work fast for whatever reason and need to have productive tasks to do when their work is complete.

6. Allow for choices to be made by students, especially students who are dealing with emotional or behavioral issues. Many times, giving an overwhelmed or emotionally charged student a choice about which task to tackle next, gives him/her power over his/her circumstances. Many students feel powerless about events or situations that are going on in their lives, so by giving them a choice between two tasks allows them to maintain a semblance of control and will often times help them move into a productive role rather than a negative role.

7. Safe Zone: Every class of students is a complex myriad of personalities, issues, strengths and weaknesses. Any student can have an off day, and many students have hair triggers and may have difficulty with self-control. By providing a “safe zone” within the classroom, you can support students in learning self-recognition of impending negative feelings/behavior and in learning to help themselves by moving to a safe zone to cool off, to have quiet, and/or to be able to focus on a task. A safe zone is just a designated place in the room (i.e. study carrel, beanbag, carper square, empty desk, or rocking chair) where a student can move to when he/she recognize that he/she is becoming overwhelmed, angry, frustrated, or unable to focus. Keep the spot away from as many distracters as possible such as pencil sharpeners, doors, windows, heavy traffic areas, toy center, etc. It would be great (if possible) to have softer light and something of comfort (stuffed bear or a small fluffy pillow) for the student to clutch. Most students who have been patiently taught how to use the safe zone will return to the class or group activity within a short time. Again, they are able to exercise some control over their lives.

Note: In a kindergarten setting, a support person can also act as a “safe zone” if appropriate. A student may be allowed to move next to the paraprofessional, adult volunteer, or other adult. At 3rd grade, you may be able to work out a silent signal between you and a student so he/she can quietly go to the drinking fountain or other such designated place for a brief break.

Notes and Reflections

Sample list of professional resources (optional):

Sample list of professional resources (optional):

Calkins, Lucy McCormick. 1994. *The Art of Teaching Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Calkins, Lucy, and colleagues. 2003. *Units of Study for Primary Writing: A Yearlong Curriculum (K-2)*.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

Portsmouth, NH: Firsthand.

Fletcher, Ralph, and JoAnn Portalupi. 2001. *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ray, Katie Wood, with Lisa Cleaveland. 2004. *About the Authors: Writing Workshop with Our Youngest Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Solley, Bobbie A. 2005. *When Poverty's Children Write: Celebrating Strengths, Transforming Lives*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Sample list of appropriate read alouds (optional):

Alborough, Jez. 2000. *Hug*. New York: Scholastic.

Alborough, Jez. 1994. *It's the Bear!*. Cambridge: Candlewick.

Bang, Molly. 1999. *When Sophie Gets Angry- Really, Really Angry...* New York: Scholastic.

Bunnett, Rochelle. 1995. *Friends at School*. New York: Scholastic.

Curtis, Jamie Lee. 1993. *When I Was Little: A Four-Year-Old's Memoir of Her Youth*. New York: Scholastic.

Everitt, Betsy. 1992. *Mean Soup*. New York: Scholastic.

Henkes, Kevin. 2000. *Wemberly Worried*. New York: Scholastic.

Intrater, Roberta Grobel. 1995. *Two Eyes, a Nose, and a Mouth*. New York: Cartwheel Books.

Johnson, Angela. 1993. *Julius*. New York: Trumpet.

Keller, Holly. 1991. *Geraldine's Blanket*. Atlanta: Houghton Mifflin.

Lichtenheld, Tom. 2003. *What Are You So Glumpy About?.* New York: Little Brown and Company.

Marshall, James. 1988. *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. New York: Scholastic.

McGeorge, Constance W. 1996. *Boomer Goes to School*. New York: Scholastic.

McKee, David. 1968. *Elmer*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepherd.

Munsch, Robert. 1998. *Andrew's Loose Tooth*. New York: Scholastic.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

Munsch, Robert. 1992. *Purple, Green and Yellow*. New York: Annick Press Ltd.

Munsch, Robert. 1993. *Wait and See*. New York: Annick Press Ltd.

Rockwell, Anne. 2001. *Welcome to Kindergarten*. New York: Scholastic.

Shannon, David. 1998. *No, David!*. New York: Scholastic.

Vail, Rachel. 2002. *Sometimes I'm Bombaloo*. New York: Scholastic.

Viorst, Judith. 1972. *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. New York: Scholastic.

Waddell, Martin. 1975. *Owl Babies*. Cambridge: Candlewick Press.

Sample list of appropriate big books (optional):

Cowley, Joy. *Baby Gets Dressed*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *Big and Little*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *The Birthday Cake*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *I Can Fly*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *I Can Jump*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *The Farm Concert*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *Huggles' Breakfast*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *Huggles Can Juggle*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *Huggles Goes Away*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *Ice Cream*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *Little Brother*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Cowley, Joy. *I Love My Family*. Desoto, Texas: Wright Group.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for English/Language Arts – Kindergarten

Materials and Equipment:

- Chart paper
- Easel
- Markers
- Student Writing Materials (paper, pencils, etc.)

Appropriate Read Alouds (See optional list in the Sample List of Appropriate Books)