

Grade 3 - E2 Writing

Third graders on target to meet the standard know how to decide what to write about and how to learn more about the topics they select. They have facility in extending a piece of writing and can say more or edit out whole sections for effect. Literate third graders understand the concept of audience. They know when to stop and share their writing. They count on their classmates to listen, tell them what they do not understand, ask questions that will help clarify or add details that will make the writing more meaningful to others. Proficient third-grade writers keep writing even when they do not know how to spell a word. They know that they can come back to the spelling problem, get help from teachers or peers, and make the corrections that will make the writing understandable to the audience.

E2a: Habits and Processes

The writing habits and processes we expect in third grade are similar to those we expect in second grade. What differs is the work students produce. Third graders write longer, more complex and more varied pieces than they did in second grade, showing their deepening understanding of genres and their increasing control of written language and its conventions.

By the end of the year, we expect third-grade students to:

- write daily;
- generate their own topics and spend the necessary amount of time to revisit and refine their writing;
- extend and rework pieces of writing (for example, turn a paragraph from a memoir into a fully developed piece);
- routinely rework, revise, edit and proofread their work;
- over the course of the year, polish at least 12 pieces for an audience in and beyond the classroom;
- write for specific purposes of their own (for example, writing a thank-you letter or a birthday card for a parent or friend);
- consciously appropriate specific elements of a favorite author's craft to refine the quality of their own work; and
- apply criteria (both public and personal) to judge the quality of their writing.

E2b: Writing Purposes and Resulting Genres

Third graders meeting standards have a well-defined sense of themselves as writers. They know their strengths as poets, as fiction writers, as memoir writers, as experts about various nonfiction forms. They can talk knowledgeably about their writing and about the strategies of their favorite published writers.

Once these third-graders plan what to write about, often drawing inspiration from notebooks, they can choose from several genres a form that will allow them to develop effectively what they have to say.

E2b.1: Sharing Events, Telling Stories:

In a typical third-grade narrative, the student shows a developing sense of story. Autobiographical pieces - frequently memoirs - are drawn from important memories, and their significance often is described. Building on the skills they developed in second grade, third-grade writers are able to infuse their stories with mood and to create pace and tension. They use details carefully to create believable worlds in which their events unfold naturally, and they employ dialogue to reveal character, to advance the action and to provide readers with important understandings.

By the end of the year, we expect third-grade students to produce narrative accounts (fictional or autobiographical) that:

- orient or engage the reader (set the time, indicate the location where the story takes place, introduce the character or enter immediately into the story line);
- create a believable world and introduce characters through the precise choice of detail;
- create a sequence of events that unfold naturally;
- provide pacing;
- develop a character, often by providing motivation for action and having the character solve the problem;
- develop the plot or tell about the event by describing actions and emotions of the main characters, including descriptive details, using dialogue and other story strategies;
- add reflective comments (especially in an autobiographical narrative); and
- provide some kind of conclusion.

E2b.2: Informing Others: Report or Informational Writing

Reports are a favorite form of writing for many third graders, who love looking things up or going places and writing down what they have seen. By the end of the year, we expect third-grade students to produce reports that:

- introduce the topic, sometimes providing a context;
- have an organizational structure that is useful to the reader;
- communicate big ideas, insights or theories that have been elaborated on or illustrated through facts, details, quotations, statistics and information;
- use diagrams, charts or illustrations appropriate to the text;
- have a concluding sentence or section; and
- employ a straightforward tone of voice.

E2b.3: Getting Things Done: Functional and Procedural Writing

Functional materials are important elements in developing third-graders' own skills and in sharing their skills with others. The process of explaining the steps in how to do something has strong real-world applications. Third graders should be able to take a process apart, look at the steps involved and explain to someone else how to do it.

By the end of the year, we expect third-grade students to produce functional writings that:

- engage the reader by establishing a context for the piece;
- identify the topic;
- provide a guide to actions;
- show the steps in an action in considerable detail;
- include relevant information;
- use language that is straightforward and clear; and
- may use illustrations detailing steps in the procedure.

E2b.4: Producing and Responding to Literature

The literature that third graders write reflects what they have learned in their genre studies of poetry, memoir, fiction and nonfiction. They have developed a repertoire of writing strategies and can identify specific elements of particular genres. They read and understand the variety of possibilities within a genre, and they discuss what strategies an author has used and whether these strategies work. All of this knowledge contributes to their writing repertoire.

By the end of the year, we expect third-grade students to:

Produce literature:

- write stories, memoirs, poems, songs and dramas – conforming to appropriate expectations for each form;

- produce a piece that incorporates elements appropriate to the genre after engaging in a genre study; and
- build on the thread of a story by extending or changing the story line;

Respond to literature:

- support an interpretation by making specific references to the text;
- provide enough detail from the text so the reader can understand the interpretation;
- go beyond retelling;
- compare two works by an author;
- discuss several works that have a common idea or theme; and
- make connections between the text and their own ideas and lives.

E2c: Language Use and Conventions

Control of conventions is an important issue for third graders who want their writing to be read appropriately. Third graders recognize the relationship between syntax and having readers read with the correct expression. They are able to explore a variety of syntactic patterns to create rhythm and tone that support meaning in their writing. They are equally adept with word choice – often reaching for words that they only partly control but that reflect a desire to give their writing substance and style.

E2c.1: Style and Syntax

Students meeting standards when they leave third grade have a strong “sentence sense.” They use more “writerly writing,” modeling and responding to the increasingly complex kinds of reading they are doing. Their style and syntax show an awareness of the choices a writer makes to produce a particular effect or to produce a certain kind of reading.

By the end of the year, we expect third-grade students to:

Use one's own language:

- use appropriately a variety of syntactic patterns (for example, equal weight in compound sentences) to show relationships of ideas;
- incorporate transition words and phrases appropriate to thinking;
- embed phrases and modifiers that make their writing lively and graphic;

Take on the language of the author:

- use varying sentence patterns and lengths to slow reading down, speed it up or create a mood;
- embed literary language where appropriate; and
- reproduce sentence structures from various genres they are reading.

E2c.2: Vocabulary and Word Choice

By the end of the year, we expect third-grade students to:

Use one's own language:

- use words from their speaking vocabulary in their writing, including words they have learned from reading and class discussion;
- make word choices that reveal they have a large enough vocabulary to exercise options in word choice (for example, more precise and vivid words); and

Take on the language of the author:

- extend their writing vocabulary by using specialized words related to the topic or setting of their writing.

E2c.3 Spelling

By the end of third grade, students should have a strong enough base of spelling knowledge that the rules are starting to make sense to them and they can catch on to spelling instruction. These children use phonetic spelling correctly for regular and irregular words most of the time. They know and use word chunks, word families, spelling patterns and basic spelling rules to generate conventional or close-to-conventional spellings.

By the end of the year, we expect third-grade students to:

- notice when words do not look correct and use strategies to correct the spelling;
- correctly spell all familiar high-frequency words;

- correctly spell words with short vowels and common endings;
- correctly spell most inflectional endings, including plurals and verb tenses;
- use correct spelling patterns and rules such as consonant doubling, dropping *e* and changing *y* to *i*; and
- correctly spell most derivational words (for example, *-tion*, *-ment*, *-ly*).

E2c.4: Punctuation, Capitalization and Other Conventions

By the end of third grade, children should be using punctuation that makes sense, even if it is not always completely correct.

By the end of the year, we expect third-grade students to:

- use capital letters at the beginnings of sentences;
- use periods and other end punctuation correctly nearly all of the time;
- approximate the use of quotation marks;
- approximate the use of commas;
- use question marks;
- use capital and lowercase letters; and
- use contraction