

Introduction

W*rite about Me* and *Write about My World* can be used together for a full grade 1 writing program; either can also be used alone to introduce writing as time permits. Use *Write about Me* at the beginning of the school year when students are getting to know their teacher and their classmates. Completing and sharing these activities together can be a great way for new classmates to get to know each other and compare interests, ideas, or interesting facts about themselves. In the second half of the school year students are more comfortable with the writing process and ready for more advanced writing activities. *Write about My World* encourages students to observe the world around them as they write descriptive and interesting accounts of their experiences in the book and in their own personal journals.

The thinking, drawing, and writing activities in *Write about Me* and *Write about My World* introduce a wide variety of meaningful topics to students. Both books encourage students to use pictures as a starting point for writing. In *Write about Me*, young writers are asked to think about themselves and to examine their own environment. This is what they know best. A cardinal rule for all writers is write about what you know. Students are advised to be careful observers by **looking** and listening. They learn how adding details to their pictures and writing makes both more vivid. *Write about My World* builds on the strategies in *Write about Me* and moves students' focus into the world around them. Keeping a journal is introduced as a way to gather ideas and build writing fluency. Students are also introduced to the editing process and very basic writing mechanics.

This Guide provides suggestions for introducing and extending topics and activities in *Write about Me* and *Write about My World*. In general, it is best for teachers to read, explain, and discuss each new concept with the class, practicing with examples before beginning the exercises. Many of the concepts can be introduced by reading a book that models a concept clearly. Numerous book suggestions are offered along the way. Also, please notice that both books list the difficult words for early readers on the last page. If you introduce them gradually, the students become familiar with the words when they meet them in the workbook.

Word Banks appear frequently throughout the *Write about Me* and *Write about My World* books. Word Banks are thematic lists of words that students can use to get ideas for writing or to craft more descriptive sentences. Students are encouraged to think of Word Banks as tools for writing, available for their use when they need them. Each time a new Word Bank is introduced, review the word lists with the class, ask volunteers to suggest additional words for that topic, and encourage students to add favorite words to the Word Bank in the book or to a personal dictionary.

Personal dictionaries and journals make excellent companion materials for *Write about Me* and *Write about My World*. Personal dictionaries like *Words I Use When I Write* (Modern Learning Press) give students the freedom to direct their own learning, as they improve writing vocabulary and reinforce **spelling** skills. All-purpose journals like *My _____ Journal* (Modern Learning Press) are safe places for students to reflect on new

Discuss with students what it means to "outgrow" something. Ask them what kinds of things they have outgrown: toys, clothes, cribs, books, interests, hobbies, behaviors, etc. Students with younger siblings may think about things that were once theirs but have been passed down to brothers or sisters.

My Neighborhood

Page 6.

Discuss the word *neighborhood* with your students.

What does it mean? Do all students in the class live in the same neighborhoods? Ask volunteers to describe the people and things that make up their neighborhood. Remind students that they can refer to the Word Bank that is provided as they decide what to include in the picture of their neighborhood.

After drawing a picture of the people, pets, and neighborhood, ask the students to choose one picture and add more details. Suggest that each student ask another student for a detail.



Eloise by Kay Thompson, illustrated by Hilary Knight

Jobs Around My Neighborhood/Oficios en mim Vecindario
by Gladys Rosa-Mendoza, illustrated by Ann Iosa

*The Green Truck Garden Giveaway: A Neighborhood Story
and Almanac* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin, illustrated by
Alec Gillman

Harlem by Walter Dean Myers, illustrated by Christopher
Myers

My Day

Page 8.

Bring an alarm clock to class and have it start ringing. Ask if students are awakened by a clock or if someone wakes them up. Who? How? Do they jump right out of bed or turn over for five minutes? Have students draw something about their morning on page 8. Do something similar with afternoon and talk about the different parts of the afternoon, lunch, before the last school bell rings, after school. Finish with night.



Write about My World

This book is an extension of Write about Me. Students continue to write about themselves, but they are asked now to observe themselves within the context of the world around them. This book helps young writers continue to develop strategies that provide a structure so that writing is less threatening. The emphasis throughout the book is to observe, to use details, and to convey ideas in words. Journal writing is introduced to help build fluency. A companion piece, My ____ Journal, is an all-purpose journal that has space for drawing or graphic organizers followed by lines for writing. Again, keeping a personal dictionary containing frequently used words with space for adding more words is very helpful.

Write about My World is organized as a series of structured, brief mini lessons. The writing exercises provide practice.

My World

Page 1.

The students are asked to label something. Label is a word that might benefit from a little classroom discussion. To label things in a picture is to let others know more about the picture.

Drawing and writing are emphasized to enhance visualizing and help students see that using details can enrich both drawings and writing.

Adding a label helps the picture convey information to the reader. Later, labeling will become a useful **skill** in a variety of projects: science, geography, social studies.

Page 2.

This is a good time to review the senses: what they are and how we use them.

Before starting the Journal section, you could invent a game of clues. Describe a place such as the beach or the forest, without telling what or where it is. See if the class can guess what it is by **picking** up on the clues. The purpose—to remind your students how the **clues/details** help to identify the location.

Journals

Pages 5–6.

This is the first time the students are introduced to journal writing. Journal writ-

Write about Action

Pages 13–19.

This section introduces verbs, but they are called action words. While much of *Write about Me* focuses on details, *Write about My World* interprets details as word choice. In addition to looking at the Action Word Bank (p.15), this is a good time to have students use their *Words I Use When I Write* books.

Action Word Bank



| | |
|-------|------|
| jump | wash |
| kick | bark |
| swing | push |
| dive | rake |



The Ant and The Elephant by Bill Peet

The Complete Adventures of Curious George
[or any other *Curious George* title] by H. A. Rey

Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak

When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry
by Molly Bang

Some Things Are Scary by Florence Parry Heide,
illustrated by Jules Feiffer

Word Choice Activity: Action Words

Write the following paragraph on the board and underline the word *went* each time it appears.

Last year I went with my brother to my Aunt Flo's house. We went up to the attic because we wanted to see her old sports trophies. When we went up the stairs they creaked and wobbled. I was nervous. We went over to an old trunk. Darn! It was locked.

Read the paragraph with the class and ask students to notice how many times you've used the word "went." Explain that they can make this story better by replacing "went" with different words—action words. Go through each sentence and ask students to replace *went* with a word or phrase that will make the sentence more lively and interesting. If necessary, provide students with some alternatives for *went* (traveled, sneaked, climbed, tiptoed). Point out how a well-chosen action word can improve the sentence and make the story more exciting.