

What is Raising Literacy?

Raising Literacy, a newsletter produced by the Florida Department of Education's State Regional Literacy Directors, provides resources and information on a variety of topics, such as the science of reading, evidence-based pedagogy, literacy leadership, the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) English Language Arts (ELA) Standards and more.

CONTENT CONNECTION

Using Explicit Writing Instruction as a Bridge to Build Strong Readers and Writers

Supporting students in becoming strong readers and writers directly aligns with the design of Florida's B.E.S.T. ELA Standards as the reading and writing benchmarks were written to progress together. Joan Sedita's *The Writing Rope: A Framework for Explicit Writing Instruction in All Subjects* highlights the reciprocity of reading and writing when she emphasizes how "writing-to-learn" tasks, like summarizing and responding to texts, promote critical thinking and integrate comprehension and writing skills (p.162).

To help teachers develop effective writing assignments, Sedita created the Written Assignment Guide (WAG), which aligns with Narrative (C.1.2), Argumentative (C.1.3) and Expository Writing (C.1.4).

To help students successfully complete writing assignments, plan the writing task with these steps in mind:

- Determine the writing objective.
- Generate an appropriate writing task.
- Set clear goals.
- Provide scaffolds.
- Plan for feedback and revision.

WAG Example	
Writing Task: Clear, one sentence summary of the writing task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Include the writing type: Narrative (C.1.2), Argumentative (C.1.3), Expository (C.1.4) <input type="checkbox"/> Align the task to grade-level benchmarks 	
Audience: Who is this piece for? Is there a secondary audience?	Purpose: What is the purpose of this type of writing? What will this task accomplish?
Length: Range Directions & Requirements: (See Grades 4-6 Argumentation and Grades 4-6 Expository rubrics for requirements) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Steps to guide the writer <input type="checkbox"/> Specific requirements (e.g., certain vocabulary terms, use of transitions) <input type="checkbox"/> Formatting requirements (e.g., specific font and size, Google Doc, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback or grading rubric if applicable (e.g., Elementary Oral Communication Rubric, Conventions Progression by Grade Level, Writing Resources) <input type="checkbox"/> Time management supports (e.g., calendar with due dates, suggested timeline) 	
Writing Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> List of scaffolds (e.g., two-column notes, topic web, set of steps, writing templates, transition list) <input type="checkbox"/> Hyperlinks to electronic files 	

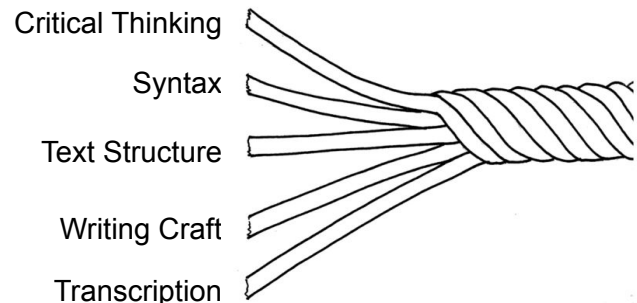
To learn more about the WAG and view classroom examples, please see [Planning Effective Writing Assignments](#).

Sedita, J. (2019). *The Writing Rope: A Framework for Explicit Writing Instruction in All Subjects*. Brooks Publishing Company.

DID YOU KNOW ?

Joan Sedita's framework of writing instruction identifies five components necessary for students to develop skilled writing. Students must receive explicit instruction on each strand of The Writing Rope. Explicit writing instruction should be aligned to B.E.S.T. ELA reading benchmarks, such as ELA.R.3.4 (rhetoric) or ELA.R.2.1 (text structure). Additionally, some strands (critical thinking, for example) can be integrated, practiced and reinforced within content areas. For more information, please see [The Writing Rope: the Strands that Are Woven into Skilled Writing](#).

The Writing Rope



Sedita, J. (2019). *The Writing Rope: A Framework for Explicit Writing Instruction in All Subjects*. Brooks Publishing Company.

LITERACY LEADERSHIP TIPS

Literacy Leadership Teams (LLTs) play a crucial role in supporting the instructional connections between the B.E.S.T. ELA Reading and Communication strands at their schools. LLTs can create school-wide systems in which the connection between reading and writing is a priority. By implementing the strategies below, LLTs lead the change to improved literacy outcomes for all students.

1. Professional Learning: Provide teachers with ongoing professional learning opportunities focused on the connection between the B.E.S.T. ELA Reading and Communication strands.

2. Resources and Materials: Provide high-quality books, writing tools and digital platforms aligned to the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards to encourage critical reading and responsive writing.

3. Instructional Time: Ensure literacy blocks intentionally integrate both the Reading and Communication strands.

4. Collaboration: Promote cross-curricular collaborative planning to reinforce the ELA Expectations across campus.

5. Literacy Coaches: Assign coaches to model strategies on particular reading and writing benchmarks, provide feedback and analyze student mastery of reading and writing benchmarks to strengthen literacy outcomes.

6. Literacy-Rich Environment: Create a culture valuing literacy through engagement opportunities such as reading challenges, writing contests and celebrations of reading and writing success.

7. Data-Driven Instruction: Use FAST assessment data to guide Reading and Communication strand instruction and address students' specific needs in each strand.

International Literacy Association. (n.d.). *Principals as Literacy Leaders*.
Olson, C. B. (2003). *The Reading/Writing Connection: Strategies for Teaching and Learning in the Secondary Classroom* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.

FEATURED RESOURCE

Are you looking for a resource that will help parents support their children's writing development at home? [Tips for Supporting Elementary Writing Skills at Home](#) by What Works Clearinghouse provides parents with information that will deepen their knowledge of writing development as well as practical ideas they can use to authentically support their children's writing. See below for example activities educators might recommend to parents to promote at-home writing opportunities and the B.E.S.T. ELA benchmarks they support.

PRIMARY GRADES

- ❑ Have a place to display children's writing in the home (EE.5.1).
- ❑ Children can practice writing letters with chalk on a sidewalk or dry-erase markers on a whiteboard (C.1.1).
- ❑ Encourage children to draw or color pictures and describe them with captions (C.1.2, C.1.4).
- ❑ Write movie or restaurant reviews with your children, stating their opinions with at least one reason. Include images that support the children's opinions (C.1.3).

INTERMEDIATE GRADES

- ❑ Encourage parents to have their children write at home for a wide range of purposes. Some examples are writing a family shopping list, keeping a journal or writing narrative stories or opinion pieces (C.1.2, C.1.3, C.1.4).
- ❑ Suggest that parents and their children keep an interactive two-way journal with each other. Parents can ask their children questions, children can write entries to their parents and then the parents can respond (EE.4.1).
- ❑ Have children practice their keyboarding skills by typing handwritten work that they bring home from school (C.5.2).

Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N. (2012). *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers: A practice guide*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.