

Tips for Teaching Writing:

We write to remember, to highlight, to play, to discover, to inventory, to give names to things, and so we should be teaching tools for these purposes. R. P. Clark

Roy Peter Clark, a longtime writing coach, offers these suggestions:

- Write with and for students. They benefit from seeing a teacher work through a problem or challenge presented by writing.
- Demystify the writing process for children. Teach writing as a craft. Letting students know that they all can take steps to improve their work.
- Confer with students and get them to talk about their writing. Talking about reading and writing provides them with the tools they need to grow.
- Teach students to rewrite. It may be more helpful for students to revise one story five times than for them to work on five different stories.
- Create an environment in which students can learn from each other. It is important to train students to support their fellow writers, ask good questions, and articulate specifically what works for them in a story.
- Let students discover some of their own writing ideas. Students need to see their world as a well of story ideas—and they can't do that if they get all their writing prompts from teachers.
- Emphasize writing based on real life. Children have written wonderful fiction about places they have visited, and it tends to be much more detailed and the quality of writing tends to be much better than when they just sit there and think something up.
- Publish the best work of every student. There are dozens of ways to make writing public, from reading it aloud to putting it in a class booklet to putting it on a web site.
- Teach mechanics in the context of writing. There is no reason to learn how to spell or use correct grammar unless it is to help communicate a message or to make a meaning clear and powerful.
- Don't forget to teach the kinds of writing that are for learning and discovery, such as note taking and outlining, which are valuable in all parts of the curriculum.