

Words that *Cook!* Parenting with children's books™

DVD Viewing & Workshop Guide

Show 8:
Finding Inspiration for Writing

www.WordsThatCook.org

About Words That Cook!

Words That Cook! is an award-winning educational media company producing and delivering innovative literacy resources that empower parents and educators to inspire and motivate children. Our products and services include educational television programming and DVDs, Web resources, accredited courseware and training, and family literacy publications.

About Words that *Cook!* Parenting with children's books™

Originating as a 13-part series broadcast on select PBS affiliates and on public access cable stations nationwide, [Words that Cook! Parenting with children's books](#) is the winner of the *International Reading Association 2005 Broadcast Media Award for Television* and is now available in DVD format.

This series celebrates the joy of reading, the art of writing, the wonder of storytelling and the magic of wordplay through a combination of interviews and live action spiced up with animated fun.

Professionals, experts, parents and children model and discuss enjoyable and practical techniques for enriching literacy experiences. Designed for educators and parents of children ages 0-12, each DVD includes an original 30-minute episode, comprised of five or six related segments, plus bonus guest material and messages from the executive producers.

About this Viewing & Workshop Guide

This guide is designed to help you get the most out of the DVD, whether you are nurturing family literacy in your home, center or school.

With the guide, you can review the many family literacy suggestions presented throughout the show, read summaries of recommended books and engage in suggested activities.

If you are a professional planning workshops for others, you'll find helpful show overview and summary information as well as appropriate discussion prompts for both parent workshops and professional staff development.

The grade levels specified for each DVD chapter and extra indicate the grades to which the topics and modeled strategies apply. When children are featured, the *italicized* grade level indicates the range into which those children fall. If other grade levels are also listed, the topics and modeled strategies are appropriate for these grades as well.

By watching, discussing and using the strategies modeled in the show, we hope you and your family, or the families you serve, will be empowered to create dynamic and exciting reading and writing experiences for children.

Summary of Show 8: Finding Inspiration for Writing

The more children learn about types of writing and sources of inspiration, the easier writing becomes. Drawing upon daily life, family trips, favorite books and authors, interesting objects, conversations and questions; this show's guests explain surefire methods for getting children's minds and pens in motion.

Show 8 Outline

Show Intro (length – 1:49)

In the Words that *Cook!* virtual living room, hosts Monty Haas and Martine Bernard introduce the theme of this show: *Finding Inspiration for Writing*.

Chapter 1: Emergent Writers (length – 3:50)

Guest(s): Dr. Miriam Marecek, Literacy Consultant

Location: Mattahunt School

Grade Level(s): *Kindergarten – Grade 2*

Topic(s): initiating writing with children's names; incorporating writing practice into daily routines; "mock writing"; interactive writing; dignifying children's writing; classroom journal writing; initiating journal writing with basic topics (e.g. colors)

Modeled Strategies: "publishing" children's writing by sharing it; practicing writing one's name; doing interactive writing; writing in classroom journals; using classroom time to practice writing independently; supporting children as they write

Recipes for Success™:

Begin writing with a child's first name

Grow into learning the last name and initials

Remember, "mock writing" precedes real writing

Write together, taking turns

When writing interactively, let children write what they know

Add what children might not know

Encourage children to write every day

Chapter 2: Introducing Home Journals (length – 1:20)

Guest(s): Angie Camillo, Mom; Dr. Miriam Marecek, Literacy Consultant

Location: Mattahunt School

Grade Level(s): *Kindergarten – Grade 2*

Topic(s): home journal writing; recognizing children's progress with writing; using home journal writing to support classroom writing; modeling writing by responding in writing to children's journaling

Modeled Strategies: reading children's journal writing together; tracking words as you read aloud

Recipes for Success:

Start a home journal

Write back in journals of new writers

Chapter 3: Advancing Writing Skills with Journals (length – 1:17)

Guest(s): Derek McMillan, Dad; Dr. Miriam Marecek, Literacy Consultant

Location: Mattahunt School

Grade Level(s): *Kindergarten – Grade 2*

Topic(s): taking note of common topics in children’s journal writing; recognizing children’s progress with writing; conveying excitement with “screamers”; making writing a daily occurrence; initiating writing with young children; making writing enjoyable

Modeled Strategies: writing in classroom journals; giving emergent writers leeway with punctuation

Recipes for Success:

Remember, writing improves with practice

Chapter 4: From Reading to Writing (length – 2:39)

Guest(s): Katie Lyslo, Wellesley College Graduate

Location: Wellesley College

Grade Level(s): Grades 3 – 6

Topic(s): reading leading to writing; series books; attending book signings; benefiting from sound advice; practicing writing every day; journaling to practice writing and to develop one’s own style

Book(s): *The Baby-Sitters Club* series by Ann M. Martin

Recipes for Success:

Go to book signings

Keep writing every day

Chapter 5: A Family Tradition of Journal Writing (length – 2:56)

Guest(s): Luisa Bonillas and her 7-year-old daughter

Location: Bonillas Family Home

Grade Level(s): *Kindergarten – Grade 2*; Grades 3 – 6

Topic(s): journal writing; creating different types of journals; asking permission to read children’s journals

Modeled Strategies: parents sharing childhood journal writing; modeling journal writing; letting children choose what writing they want to share; asking permission to read children’s writing

Recipes for Success:

Share some of your writings with your children

Look for journals when you travel

Try out different styles of journal writing

Always ask for permission to read a journal

Chapter 6: Creative Bookmaking (length – 3:01)

Guest(s): Katie Frassinelli, Book Artist

Location: Holliston Mills Art Studios

Grade Level(s): Kindergarten – Grade 2; Grades 3 – 6

Topic(s): blank books; making books from found objects and household items for different purposes

Modeled Strategies: sharing homemade books

Recipes for Success:

Invent your own book covers

Come up with interesting topics for journals

Learn to make mini-books

Chapter 7: Invented Spelling (length – 1:44)

Guest(s): Laurie Joy Haas, Words that *Cook!* Executive Producer, with Honey the Cookie-Bookie Bear™

Location: Words that *Cook!* Virtual Den

Grade Level(s): Pre-Kindergarten; Kindergarten – Grade 2

Topic(s): home journals; invented spelling; supporting children's writing; when to provide correct spellings; guiding correct spelling through rhyming words

Modeled Strategies: using invented spelling; writing in journals; encouraging children with praise

Recipes for Success:

Remember, invented spelling is an important stage of writing

Support children's attempts at writing

Let children show what they know

Help children when they ask for correct spellings

Chapter 8: Developing Stories Collaboratively (length – 3:57)

Guest(s): Adrienne Ross, Author, and her 11-year-old daughter

Location: Studio

Grade Level(s): Kindergarten – Grade 2; *Grades 3 – 6*

Topic(s): story-making games; turning observations into stories; asking questions and discussing ideas to develop plots; building a story from one idea or element; building stories orally and in writing; discussing characters' perspectives; asking for and **respecting children's input**; **making books and reading part of everyday life**; **connecting books with children's interests**; **improving one's own writing by reading various styles of writing**

Modeled Strategies: **including children in adult conversations**; **respecting children's input**

Book(s): *In the Quiet* by Adrienne Ross

Recipes for Success:

Ask each other questions to develop plots

Turn surroundings into stories

Talk about characters' perspectives

See how others use similes, metaphors and vocabulary

Read to compare different styles of writing

Look for ways to improve your writing

Show Recap/Close (length – 2:42)

Hosts Monty Haas and Martine Bernard review selected Recipes for Success and present the Recommended Book List.

Extra 1: A Word from Our Producers (length – 2:15)

Guest(s): Monty Haas and Laurie Joy Haas, Words that Cook! Executive Producers

Topic(s): overview of show content and guests; parental involvement in children's education; journal writing; making books from found objects and household items

Book(s): *Bunny Mail* by Rosemary Wells

Extra 2: More Dr. Miriam Marecek – “Playing with Words” (length – 2:12)

Guest(s): Dr. Miriam Marecek, Literacy Consultant

Grade Level(s): Kindergarten – Grade 2

Topic(s): incorporating writing into playtime activities; allowing ample time and ways to practice writing; enhancing writing with artwork; using repetition to reinforce writing and spelling skills; giving children multiple opportunities to succeed; dignifying children's writing; recognizing communication skill development; giving emergent writers leeway with spelling and grammar

Extra 3: More Dr. Miriam Marecek – “Stages of Writing” (length – 1:17)

Guest(s): Dr. Miriam Marecek, Literacy Consultant

Grade Level(s): Kindergarten – Grade 2

Topic(s): developmental stages of writing; setting standards for progress in writing

Extra 4: More Dr. Miriam Marecek – “Focus on Details” (length – 1:34)

Guest(s): Dr. Miriam Marecek, Literacy Consultant

Grade Level(s): Kindergarten – Grade 2

Topic(s): guiding children to recognize and include details in their drawings; using children’s book illustrations as models for detailed drawings; asking questions (e.g. what’s missing?) as reminders when children are engaged in drawing

Extra 5: More Katie Lyslo – “Ramona as Role Model” (length – 1:21)

Guest(s): Katie Lyslo, Wellesley College Graduate

Grade Level(s): Kindergarten – Grade 2; Grades 3 – 6

Topic(s): families joining book clubs; enjoying reading aloud; identifying with characters in books

Book(s): The *Ramona* series by Beverly Cleary

Extra 6: More Luisa Bonillas – “A Journal Tour” (length – 4:05)

Guest(s): Luisa Bonillas and her 7-year-old daughter

Grade Level(s): *Kindergarten – Grade 2*; Grades 3 – 6

Topic(s): keeping and revisiting old journals; creating different types of journals; connecting journals with children’s interests; journal writing; modeling journal writing; giving blank journals as gifts

Modeled Strategies: addressing children respectfully; letting children choose what writing they want to share; asking permission to read children’s journals

Extra 7: More Katie Frassinelli – “Making Mini-Books” (length – 11:38)

Guest(s): Katie Frassinelli, Book Artist

Grade Level(s): Kindergarten – Grade 2; Grades 3 – 6

Topic(s): a hands-on bookmaking demonstration; “publishing” homemade books

Modeled Strategies: conducting a demonstration step-by-step; describing materials and processes as you go; checking on participants’ progress throughout demonstration; providing instructions overview before actually doing each step; describing in words what you are doing in actions; guiding without taking over

Show 8 Recommended Book List

For Ages 0 to 3:

The Neighborhood Mother Goose

Written and photographed by Nina Crews

With this collection, Nina Crews brings more than 40 centuries-old nursery rhymes and verses to life in a new and exciting way. Each rhyme is accompanied by bold photographs featuring multicultural children and parents in neighborhood homes, parks and stores. Some of the photographic illustrations are quite realistic – two girls playing pat-a-cake in a bakery, a little boy staring out of a window wishing the rain away. Others are more artistic in their representation – a little boy jumping over a candle set in what appears to be a giant cupcake, multiple children frolicking in and around an old woman’s shoe. This fresh and innovative approach is simply delightful and certain to bring the joy of Mother Goose to a whole new generation.

Tomie’s Three Bears and Other Tales

Written and illustrated by Tomie dePaola

Adapted from *Tomie dePaola’s Favorite Nursery Tales*, this book contains three classic stories – *The Three Bears*, *The Little Red Hen* and *The Three Little Pigs*. Enhanced by Tomie’s whimsical and colorful artwork, these retellings are perfect for the youngest listeners and readers. The simple, short texts are engaging and charming and sure to become a fast favorites. Since this is a board book, it will stand up to years of wear and tear.

For Ages 3 to 6:

Bunny Mail

Written and illustrated by Rosemary Wells

Max desperately wants a red Sand-Spitter motorcycle, and when his sister Ruby mails out invitations to a picnic, Max gets a brilliant idea. He writes to Santa in letters containing tire tracks, the color red and sand. The letter carrier can’t figure out who the letters are for, so he delivers them to Max’s grandma. Will she be able to decipher the clues?

With flaps to lift and letters to reveal, this book is a conceptual and tactile delight. You and your children will have great fun “opening” the letters as you follow the story and instinctively connect with good old-fashioned mail. You can also point out how pictures and objects communicate ideas when they are put down on paper.

Dear Mr. Blueberry

Written and illustrated by Simon James

Emily is convinced a whale has taken up residence in her pond. Since she is on vacation from school, she must write to her teacher, Mr. Blueberry, to get his advice. Mr. Blueberry tells Emily that a whale could not possibly live in her fresh pond. Still, she believes and continues to exchange letters with her teacher until her whale disappears. While Emily is sad about the whale’s departure, she has one last happy surprise to share with Mr. Blueberry.

Children will be enchanted by this unusual story and will learn, through Simon James’s imaginative and subtle text, some basic facts about whales and the nature of written correspondence.

For Ages 6 to 9:

The Day Eddie Met the Author

Written by Louise Borden

Illustrated by Adam Gustavson

Eddie's school is about to get a visit from an author. Everyone is abuzz with anticipation, especially Eddie. He has an important question to ask, one that will surely affect his future. At the assembly, so many children have questions that the author runs out of time before calling on Eddie. Can he still find the answer he so desperately wants?

Set in a multicultural elementary school full of supportive teachers and staff, this story reveals the quest of one sensitive boy. Eddie will inspire children to listen to their hearts and work hard to follow their dreams. Written with powerful yet unassuming text alongside beautiful, evocative paintings, this book will be a treasure for aspiring writers and dreamers.

Even More Parts: Idioms from Head to Toe

Written and illustrated by Tedd Arnold

As the back jacket of this book warns, "Be careful: You just might laugh your head off!" And it's true. In this, the third in a series of body-part idiom books by Tedd Arnold, Chip is determined to protect himself against all of the crazy expressions he hears, like "I lost my head" and "I sang my heart out." Zany drawings depict Chip and his toys engulfed by literal interpretations of idioms, but this little boy develops an ingenious plan to hold onto all of his parts. This book is sure to trigger lots of laughs and provoke young minds to think more deeply about words and language.

Speak to Me (And I Will Listen Between the Lines)

Written by Karen English

Illustrated by Amy June Bates

Karen English captures six distinct voices on one day in the lives of six child characters of her own creation: Malcolm, Brianna, Lamont, Rica, Tyrell and Neecy. Children get to slip into the mindset of each character as they read his or her poems or journal entries. The emotions behind the writings come through and range from caring to jealous, from satisfaction to frustration. Set in a San Francisco Bay Area school, most of the third-grade characters are African American. Each child has his own perception or her own opinion, and whether the children's words are lush and masterful or plain and honest, their voices matter and their messages are important. This book could be a wonderful catalyst for encouraging children to write.

For Ages 9 to 12:

Heartbeat

Written by Sharon Creech

These exquisite and insightful poems expose the many changes in 12-year-old Annie as she tries to find her own rhythm and understand how it fits with the rhythm of life. Through her eyes and her voice, children will get to know Annie's family and friends as well as her struggles with the sport of running, a new baby in the family, friendship, secrets and the art of drawing apples. These enduring characters and themes along with the repeated use of the onomatopoeic phrase "thump-thump, thump-thump" and Annie's adventures in language (including footnotes and synonyms) will keep children constantly engrossed. In Annie, Sharon Creech has created a compelling and endearing character who makes readers care and feel with her. This book truly shows the power of writing.

In the Land of Words: New and Selected Poems

Written by Eloise Greenfield

Illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist

In the “land of words,” thoughts, memories and dreams conspire to generate the language of delightful poems. This book is separated into two parts: “The Poet/The Poem” and “In the Land.” In Part I, Eloise Greenfield introduces each poem by sharing her inspiration for it. By doing this, she demonstrates the many forms that poetic inspiration can take and ways to work with the resulting ideas. In Part II, the verses celebrate the pure wonder and joy of books, words, stories, jokes and poetry itself. This collection is a sheer salute to, and a tremendous tool for helping children connect with the vitality of language.

Sky Tree: Seeing Science Through Art

Written and illustrated by Thomas Locker

With questions and answers by Candace Christiansen

In this unique perspective on the changing seasons, art and science come together in a moving and impressive way. Thomas Locker’s lavish and brilliant oil paintings appear alongside his gentle, simple text describing the changes in the tree, the sky and some of the surrounding creatures. The images behind the text carry over a piece of the sky from the opposite page. In smaller print along the bottom of the pages, you will find questions devised by Candace Christiansen to prompt children and adults to notice and talk about differences, colors, feelings and more. The closing pages of the book revisit each of the stages of the Sky Tree and the related questions, with more details about the method and colors used in the paintings as well as the science behind the changes.

For Parents:

Wondrous Words: Writers and Writing in the Elementary Classroom

Written by Kate Wood Ray

As described by the author, Wondrous Words is a “loud” book filled with the voices of writers of all ages and levels of experience. With classrooms stories, examples of student writing and illustrations, Katie Wood Ray translates academic theories into accessible and practical terms, tackling essential issues like prewriting and reading aloud. She invites readers into her personal library and provides ideas for using books by authors such as Cynthia Rylant, Eve Bunting and Gary Paulsen to help teach writing. Wondrous Words intertwines process and premise together to convey vital knowledge about the teaching of writing to teachers and parents.

Interactive Writing: How Language and Literacy Come Together, K-2

Written by Andrea McCarrier, Gay Su Pinnell and Irene C. Fountas

Interactive Writing focuses on the early phases of writing that are especially relevant to working with children in Pre-Kindergarten through grade 2. In a straightforward, step-by-step approach, the authors show how interactive writing can be used to teach a range of basic literacy skills by sharing the pen (and the pride) with young writers. With real world examples of children’s writing, photographs of classrooms and children’s work, concrete tips and advice for incorporating children’s books and art into writing education and a look at applying interactive writing across all subject areas, the authors provide teachers and parents with substantial valuable and understandable information for using a new approach to the writing process.

Suggested Literacy Activities

Enable children to write letters – real letters, that is, not E-mails. An adult or older child can transcribe what a pre-writer dictates. With emergent writers, try writing interactively: taking turns with the pen, having the child write what she is able to and the adult or older child writing what the younger child cannot. Even when older children can write letters independently, try making it a classroom or family activity just the same. To ensure a timely response, you may want to check with a designated relative or friend ahead of time. Parents and teachers can also write letters back-and-forth with children, using actual envelopes and even making mailboxes for these special deliveries. This can also be done by pairing emergent and independent writers.

If your school age child is interested in writing, enjoys books in general and/or likes a particular author, consider taking him to author readings and book signings in your area. Check with local libraries and bookstores, which often host such events.

At The Children's Literature Web Guide (www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/), you will find a link for Authors on the Web. This leads to a listing of Web sites connected to a number of children's book authors and illustrators. Often, these Web sites provide a glimpse into the lives of authors and/or illustrators and answer the question of how they find ideas and inspiration.

For some terrific online writing workshops, visit www.teacher.scholastic.com and click on Online Activities. Under Writing in the Language Arts areas for grades 3-5 and grades 6-8, you will find Writing with Writers and Writing Workshop links covering a wide range of genres and types of writing, such as Biography, Myths and Persuasive Writing. The Writing with Writers workshops are "led" by accomplished and respected children's literature authors, including Virginia Hamilton, Patricia and Fredrick McKissack and Jane Yolen.

Encourage children to express themselves through journal writing. Journaling allows children the freedom to set down their innermost thoughts and feelings. Journals like the *Judy Moody Mood Journal* (Candlewick Press) by Megan McDonald can be terrific inspirational tools that get children thinking, laughing and writing.

As a parent, if you currently keep a journal or still have journals from your childhood, consider sharing excerpts with your child. Journaling can also become an ongoing classroom or family activity if you schedule time to do it together every day or at least once a week. Have on hand photos, stickers, markers, etc. – whatever art supplies children enjoy and can incorporate into their journaling.

Check out Reading Planet at www.rif.org. Within the Game Station you will find Writers' Blocks (for school age and middle school children), which lets children write stories with other kids; Poetry Splatter (tailored to children from ages 3 to 14), which splashes words on screen for children to choose to fit into a poem and Story Maker (tailored to children from ages 3 to 15+), which asks children to choose a setting and answer some questions that are then turned into a story starter. At this site there are three additional areas with reading and writing activities: Activity Lab, Book Zone and Express Yourself.

Additional Words That Cook Resources

Words That Cook develops resources for professionals and parents that help to motivate and inspire children to learn and to love reading, writing, storytelling and wordplay. At our Web site (www.WordsThatCook.org) under Free Resources, you will find valuable information derived from the television series, including activity and additional reading ideas connected to each recommended book. Also at the Marketplace of our site, you can learn more about our other literacy-related products and services.

For Professionals

Discussion prompts and group activity ideas for teacher/staff workshops

Discuss how the concept of interactive writing could be used in your classroom, even with older children who are able to write independently.

Select and discuss some of the modeled strategies and Recipes for Success.

Separate into small groups of participants. Have each group write a brief story and write down the topics they discuss and questions they ask in developing the characters and plot. Share the steps of story development and the stories with the whole group and discuss how this type of exercise could be done in the classroom.

Discussion prompts and group activity ideas for parent workshops

Discuss ideas for making writing a daily routine – whether through journaling, playtime activities, grocery lists, projects or other means – and how parents can dignify a variety of children’s writing.

Select and discuss some of the modeled strategies and Recipes for Success.

Lead a bookmaking activity in which each parent makes a mini-book. Make sure you have on hand instructions for reference and the required materials. Encourage participants to include a message or short story to read to their child. Share the mini-books with the whole group.

When working with ESL/ELL families, help them to understand the value of learning and applying literacy strategies in their primary language. Encourage them to also apply strategies in English if it is comfortable and if the adult has developed the English language skills to sufficiently challenge their child.

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