The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades K–8

Behaviors and Understandings to Notice, Teach, and Support

Gay Su Pinnell & Irene C. Fountas
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Read-Aloud and Literature Discussion</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared and Performance Reading</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing About Reading</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral, Visual, and Technological Communication</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided Reading</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level A</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level B</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level C</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level D</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level E</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level F</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level G</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level H</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level J</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level K</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level L</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level M</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level N</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level O</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level P</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Q</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level R</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level S</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level T</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level U</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level V</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level W</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level X</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Y</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Z</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix of Expanded Phonics Material</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Teachers who work together can reach the goal of high student achievement if they share a common vision. This learning continuum is designed to help educators teach from the specific body of understandings that students in grades kindergarten through eight must acquire to become highly effective users of oral and written language. With this foundation, you can set clear goals for learning and plan specific lessons across many instructional contexts.

This volume is a companion to two grade-level books: The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades K–2 and The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades 3–8. The K–2 and 3–8 volumes are organized by grade level (or by text level A–Z) for teacher convenience; each grade or level section contains continua that list characteristics and goals appropriate to the specific grade or level. This K–8 volume contains the same text characteristics and goals as the K–2 and 3–8 books, but here they are organized by continuum; each continuum section contains characteristics and goals lists for each level from kindergarten to grade eight.

As an administrator, lead teacher, literacy coach, or staff developer, you can use this comprehensive continuum to provide an overall guide to the texts used in different arenas of instruction, to grade-level expectations, and to specific behaviors and understandings to notice, teach, and support in daily instruction across the school year, grade by grade. In this introduction we provide a brief overview of the content of the entire continuum and its organization. We then describe ways that teachers can use it to increase the effectiveness of instruction. We end with some suggestions on how administrators and staff developers can use the continuum to support the work of teachers.

Content of the Continuum

Across the seven continua included in this volume, several principles are important to consider:

- **Students learn by talking.** We engage students in conversation that is grounded in a variety of texts—those that students read, hear read aloud, or write—and that expands their ability to comprehend and use language.

- **Students need to process a large amount of written language.** A dynamic language and literacy curriculum provides many daily opportunities for students to read books of their choice independently, to read more challenging
instructional material with teacher guidance, and to hear teacher-selected and grade-appropriate texts read aloud.

• **The ability to read and comprehend texts is expanded through talking and writing.** Students need to acquire a wide range of ways to write about their reading and also to talk about texts with the teacher and other students.

• **Learning deepens when students engage in reading, talking, and writing about texts across many different instructional contexts.** Each mode of communication provides a new way to process the ideas learned from oral and written texts and from each other.

This continuum provides a way to look for specific evidence of learning from kindergarten through grade eight, and across seven curricular areas. To create it, we examined a wide range of research on language and literacy learning, and we asked teachers and researchers for feedback. We also examined the curriculum standards of many states. Some guiding principles were:

• Learning does not occur in stages but is a continually evolving process.

• The same concepts are acquired and then elaborated over time.

• Many complex literacy concepts take years to develop.

• Students learn by applying what they know to the reading and writing of increasingly complex texts.

• Learning does not automatically happen; most students need expert teaching to develop high levels of reading and writing expertise.

• Learning is different but interrelated across different kinds of language and literacy activities; one kind of learning enhances and reinforces others.

In this volume, we include seven different learning continua (see Figure I–1). Each of these continua focuses on a different aspect of the language and literacy framework; and each contributes substantially, in different but complementary ways, to students’ development of reading, writing, and language processes. Each of the continua is described in more detail in a separate introduction, but we briefly describe them here.

**Reading Process**

Four of the continua specifically address reading: interactive read-aloud and literature discussion, shared and performance reading, guided reading, and writing about reading. In these four we focus on strategic actions for thinking.
Within the text (literal understanding achieved through solving words, monitoring and correcting, searching for and using information, summarizing, maintaining fluency, and adjusting for purposes and genre of text)

Beyond the text (making predictions; making connections with personal experience, content knowledge and other texts; inferring what is implied but not stated; and synthesizing new information)

About the text (analyzing or critiquing the author’s craft)

See the inside back cover for a summary chart showing the twelve systems of strategic actions.

In interactive read-aloud and literature discussion, students have the opportunity to extend their understandings through talk. In interactive read-aloud, teachers have the opportunity to engage students with texts that are usually more complex than they can read for themselves. Teachers can take strategic
moments to stop for quick discussion during the reading and continue talking after the end. Student talk provides evidence of their thinking.

**Shared and performance reading** offer an authentic reason for reading aloud. As they read in unison or read parts in readers’ theater, students need to read in phrases, notice punctuation and dialogue, and think about the meaning of the text. All of these actions provide evidence that they understand the text and are processing it effectively. On these familiar texts, teachers have the opportunity to support and extend students’ understandings.

**Guided reading** offers small-group support and explicit teaching to help students take on more challenging texts. As they read texts that are organized along a gradient of difficulty from A–Z, students expand their systems of strategic actions by meeting the demands of increasingly complex texts. They provide evidence of their thinking through oral reading, talk, and extension through writing. The guided reading continuum is related to text reading levels rather than grade levels because we envision continuous progress along these levels. The Text Gradient chart in Figure I–2 indicates a range of levels that approximately correlates with goals for each grade level.

In addition to specific evidence of thinking within, beyond, and about a text, each of these three continua described above lists genres of texts that are appropriate for use at each grade level or text level.

The fourth reading continuum, **writing about reading**, often includes drawing and is another way for students to extend their understanding and provide evidence of thinking. Writing about reading may be used in connection with interactive read-aloud and literature discussion or with guided reading.

As you work with the continua related to reading, you will see a gradual increase in the complexity of the kinds of thinking that readers do. Most of the principles of learning cannot be pinpointed at one point in time or even one year. You will usually see the same kind of principle (behavior or understanding) repeated across grades or across levels of text; each time remember that the learner is applying the principle in a more complex way to read harder texts.

**Oral and Written Communication**

**Writing** is a way of experimenting with and deepening understanding of genres students have read. Although writing about reading is an excellent approach to help students extend their thinking and support discussion, it does not take...
the place of specific instruction devoted to helping students develop as writers. Through the writing workshop, teachers help young writers continually expand their learning of the craft, conventions, and process of writing for the purpose of communicating meaning to an audience. The writing continuum in this book lists specific understandings for each grade level related to craft, conventions, and process. It also suggests genres for students to learn how to write at each grade level.

*Oral, visual, and technological communication* are integral to all literacy processes; you’ll see their presence in all other continua. This continuum singles out particular behaviors and understandings for intentional instruction.
Finally, we include a continuum for phonics, spelling, and word study. This grade-by-grade continuum is drawn from the longer continuum originally published in *Phonics Lessons* (Pinnell and Fountas 2003) and *Word Study Lessons* (Fountas and Pinnell 2004) which is included in the appendix at the back of this book. For appropriate grades in this continuum section, you will find specific principles related to nine areas of learning: 1) early literacy concepts, 2) phonological awareness, 3) letter knowledge, 4) letter-sound relationships, 5) spelling patterns, 6) high-frequency words, 7) word meaning, 8) word structure, and 9) word-solving actions. Here, too, you will find specific understandings related to spelling, which interface with the section on conventions provided in the writing continuum.

**Some Cautions**

In preparing these continua we considered the typical range of students that can be found in kindergarten through grade eight classrooms. We also consulted teachers about their expectations and vision as to appropriate instruction at each grade level. We thought about the district and state standards we know. We need to have a vision of expected levels of learning because it helps in making effective instructional decisions; and even more important, it helps us to identify students who need intervention.

At the same time, we would not want to apply these expectations in an inflexible way. We need to recognize that students vary widely in their progress—sometimes moving quickly and sometimes getting bogged down. They may make faster progress in one area than another. The continua should help you intervene in more precise ways to help students. But it is also important to remember that learners may not necessarily meet every expectation at all points in time. Nor should any one of the understandings and behaviors included in this document be used as criteria for promotion. Educators can look thoughtfully across the full range of grade-level expectations as they make decisions about individual students.

It is also important to recognize that just because grade-level expectations exist, all teaching may not be pitched at that level. Through assessment, you may learn that your class only partially matches the behaviors and understandings on the continuum. Almost all teachers find that they need to consult the material at lower and higher levels (one reason that the guided reading continuum is not graded).
Organization of the Continuum

Seven continua are included in this document. They are arranged in the following way.

Grade by Grade

Six of the continua are organized by grade level: 1) interactive read-aloud and literature discussion; 2) shared and performance reading; 3) writing about reading; 4) writing; 5) oral, visual, and technological communication; and 6) phonics, spelling, and word study. Within each continuum section you will find a continuum for each grade level, kindergarten through grade eight. You can turn to the tabbed section for any continuum and find all eight grades.

Level by Level

The guided reading continuum is organized according to Fountas and Pinnell text gradient levels A to Z. These levels typically correlate to grades K through 8, but students may vary along them in their instructional levels. It is important for all students to receive guided reading instruction at a level that allows them to process texts successfully with teacher support.

Additional Resources

At the end of the book, we have included the expanded Phonics and Word Study continuum from which the grade-level Phonics, Spelling and Word Study continuum as well as the word work section of Guided Reading were derived. Consult this expanded version if you need greater detail to guide the teaching of phonics.

Finally, you will find a glossary of terms at the end of the book that will assist you in interpreting the continuum. For additional information on instruction, consult the texts in the references section, also found at the end of this book.

Ways Teachers Can Use the Continuum

We see many different uses for this continuum, including the following.

Foundation for Teaching

As you think about individual, small-group, and whole-group instruction, you may consult different areas of the continuum. For example, if you are planning instruction for students in guided reading at level M, use the lists of behaviors and understandings to plan introductions to texts, guide observations and interactions
with individuals, and shape teaching points. The word work section will give specific suggestions for principles to explore at the end of the guided reading lessons. You can plan embedded teaching as you examine the section on interactive read-aloud and literature discussion. The interactive read-aloud and literature discussion as well as the writing and word study continua will be useful in planning explicit minilessons.

**Guide for Curriculum Planning**

The continuum can also be used with a grade-level team or school staff to plan the language and literacy curriculum. It offers a starting point for thinking very specifically about goals and expectations. Your team may adapt the continuum to meet your own goals and district expectations.

**Linking Assessment and Instruction**

Sometimes assessment is administered and the results recorded, but then the process stops. Teachers are unsure what to do with the data or where to go next in their teaching. This continuum can be used as a bridge between assessment data and the specific teaching that students need. With assessment, you learn what students know; the continuum will help you think about what they almost know and need to know next.

**Evaluation and Grading**

The continuum can also serve as a guide for evaluating student progress over time. You can evaluate whether students are meeting grade-level standards. Remember that no student would be expected to demonstrate every single competency to be considered on grade level. *Grade level* is always a term that encompasses a range of levels of understanding at any given time.

**Reporting to Parents**

We would not recommend that you show parents such an overwhelming document as this continuum. It would get in the way of good conversation. However, you can use the continuum as a resource for the kind of information you need to provide to parents, but in easy-to-understand language.

**Guide to Intervention**

Many students will need extra support in order to achieve the school’s goals for learning. Assessment and observation will help you identify the specific areas in
which students need help. Use the continuum to find the specific understandings that can guide intervention.

**Tool for Learning About Texts**

The detailed grade-by-grade and level-by-level descriptions in the continua serve as an excellent tool for learning about the supports and challenges for readers in texts. By understanding how to look at texts, you will be able to provide more effective teaching.

**Ways Administrators or Staff Developers Can Use the Continuum**

As a staff developer or an administrator, this document will give you a comprehensive view of language and literacy learning and how it changes and develops over time. The continuum is intended to provide teachers with a conceptual tool that they can use to think constructively about their work. We want to support them in crafting instruction that will link their observations and deep knowledge of their own students with learning over time. Administrators and staff developers are the key to teachers’ support system as they grow in conceptual understanding of their work.

**Foundation for Setting School and/or District Goals**

Since this continuum is a detailed description of every aspect of the language arts, you may want to adopt the continuum as your goals for instruction. Alternatively, you may want to review the document to select goals for your school or district. Remember, too, that these grade-level expectations are consistent with national standards. Depending on local priorities, you may want to adjust them lower or higher.

**Link to State Standards**

This continuum was checked against numerous examples of state standards to assure consistency and comprehensiveness. In general, you will find *The Continuum to* be much more detailed than state standards; so, it offers a way to make your state goals more specific as a basis for instruction.
**Helping Administrators and Teachers Achieve a Common Vision**

Examining the continuum together, administrators and teachers can discuss their common expectations for students’ achievement in each curriculum area, grade by grade. They can compare current expectations with the document and focus on goals that they want their students to achieve. For example, a principal and teachers in an elementary school or middle school can work together over a few weeks or months. In grade-level groups they can examine one instructional area at a time and then share their perspectives with teachers of other grades. Looking across the grades will help them to understand a long continuum of learning, as well as to work more effectively with students who are below or above their own grade levels. Working intensively with the continuum at their own grade levels (and perhaps the level below), they can make specific plans for instruction in the particular area.

**A Basis for Instructional Coaching**

An instructional coach (often called a literacy coach) can use the continuum as a foundation for coaching conversations. It will be useful for coaches to help teachers become able to access information quickly as part of their reflection on lessons they have taught and on their planning. In other words, the coach can help teachers really get to know the continuum guide so that they can access information easily. Typically, the coach and teacher would use the guide as a reference before, during, and after the observation of a lesson. The guide enables the coach to focus the conversation on critical areas of teaching and learning—behaviors to notice, teach, and support to help students read, write, and talk proficiently. It is also an excellent tool for discussing and analyzing texts in a variety of genres and at a variety of levels. The guide will add specificity to the conversation that will extend teachers’ understandings of learning processes and development over time.

**Pre-Observation Conference**

- The coach and teacher think about and analyze their strengths, as well as their learning needs, referring to the continuum as appropriate.
- They may examine data from student assessment or the teacher’s ongoing observation, again, using the continuum expectations as a reference.
- They may look at lesson artifacts—texts they are using or student writing—and consider them in the light of text characteristics for the particular area, thinking about the learning opportunities for students.
Observation of Lessons

- The continuum is not designed to be used as a checklist. Rather it is a foundation for discussing critical areas of development.
- During observation, coaches can keep in mind the evidence of student understanding and shifts in learning. This foundational knowledge will help the coach gather evidence of student learning that can be discussed later with the teacher.

Post-Observation Conference

- The coach and teacher can use the continuum to analyze the teaching and its effectiveness in meeting the goals discussed in the pre-observation conference.
- They can discuss examples of behaviors that provide evidence of student understanding or lack of understanding.
- They can also discuss teaching interactions that supported or extended student understanding, as well as potential interactions for working with the students in the next lesson.
- The continuum will also provide a guide as to the appropriateness of texts or tasks in terms of students’ current understandings and what they need to learn next.
- Together the coach and teacher can use the guide to help set new learning goals for the students and to begin to plan for teaching.

The ultimate goals of every coaching interaction are to help the teacher expand knowledge of language and literacy learning and to analyze the effectiveness of the teaching. By talking about the ideas in the continuum guide and observing students intensively, teachers will come to understand more about the process of learning language, reading, writing, and technology. The continuum will serve as a guide that becomes internalized over time through its consistent use.
Students’ written responses to what they have read provide evidence of their thinking. When we examine writing in response to reading, we can make hypotheses about how well readers have understood a text. But there are more reasons to make writing an integral part of your reading instruction. Through writing—and drawing as well—readers can express and expand their thinking and improve their ability to reflect on a text. They can also communicate their thinking about texts to a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes. Writers can analyze effective examples of writing about reading to learn the characteristics of each form so that they can “try it out” for themselves. The models serve as “mentor texts” that students can refer to as they experiment with different types of writing.

We do not recommend simply “assigning” writing about reading. When working with young children, usually the teacher introduces a genre through demonstration or shared/interactive writing, and students experience many examples. They get a chance to participate in composition and construction (actual act of writing) before they are expected to produce it independently. So as you look at the writing about reading continuum for kindergarten and grade one, consider group writing. Very young children experience the genres mostly through shared and interactive writing, which are defined below:

- **Shared writing**, the teacher and students compose a text together. The teacher is the scribe. Often, especially with younger children, the teacher works on a chart displayed on an easel. Children participate in the composition of the text, word by word, and reread it many times. Sometimes the teacher asks children to say the word slowly as they think about how a word is spelled. At other times, the teacher (with student input) writes a word quickly on the chart. The text becomes a model, example, or reference for student writing and discussion. (See McCarrier, Fountas, and Pinnell 2000.)

- **Interactive writing**, an approach for use with young children, is identical to and proceeds in the same way as shared writing, with one exception: Occasionally the teacher, while making teaching points that help children attend to various features of letters and words, will invite a student to come up to the easel and contribute a letter, a word, or part of a word. (See McCarrier, Fountas, and Pinnell 2000.)
After students are confident with a form of writing through the analysis of effective examples, whole- or small-group discussion can support their independent writing about reading. Discussion reminds writers of key characteristics of the text and the author’s craft.

In this continuum, we describe many different forms of writing about reading in four categories: functional writing, narrative writing, informational writing, and poetic writing. The goal is for students to read many examples in each category, identify the specific characteristics, and have opportunities to apply their understandings in independent writing.

**Functional Writing**

*Functional writing* is undertaken for communication or to “get a job done.”

During a literacy block, a great deal of functional writing takes place around reading. Students make notes to themselves about written texts that they can use as a basis for an oral discussion or presentation or to support writing of more extended pieces. Or they may write notes or letters to others to communicate their thinking.

Second graders can begin with a simple blank notebook. Minilessons help them understand the various kinds of functional writing they can place in the notebook. (See Fountas and Pinnell 2001 and 2006.) Some examples of functional writing about reading are:

- notes and sketches—words, phrases, or sketches on sticky notes or in a notebook
- “short-writes”—a few sentences or paragraphs produced quickly in a notebook or a large sticky note that is then placed in a notebook
- graphic organizers—words, phrases, sketches, or sentences
- letters—letters written to other readers or to the author or illustrator of a book
- diary entries—an entry or series of entries in a journal or diary from the perspective of a biographical subject or character

A key tool for learning in grades two through eight is the reader’s notebook, in which students reflect on their reading in various forms, including dialogue letters that are answered by the teacher.

**Narrative Writing**

*Narrative writing* tells a story. Students’ narrative writing about reading might retell some or all of a plot or recount significant events in the life of a
biographical subject. Or students might tell about an experience of their own that is similar to the one in a text or has a similar theme. Some examples of narrative writing about reading are:

- summary—a few sentences that tell the most important information in a text
- cartoon/storyboarding—a succession of graphics or stick figures that present a story or information

**Informational Writing**

Informational writing organizes facts into a coherent whole. To compose an informational piece, the writer organizes data into categories and may use underlying structures such as description; comparison and contrast; cause and effect; time sequence; and problem and solution. Some examples of informational writing about reading are:

- author study—a piece of writing that provides information about an author and his or her craft
- illustrator study—a piece of writing that provides information on an illustrator
- interview (with an author or expert)—a series of questions and responses designed to provide information about an author or expert on a topic
- “how-to” book—an explanation of how something is made or done
- “all about” book—factual information presented in an organized way

**Poetic Writing**

Poetic writing entails carefully selecting and arranging words to convey meaning in ways that evoke feelings and sensory images. Poetry condenses meaning into short language groupings. It lends itself to repeated readings and to being read aloud for the pleasure of listening to the language. Poetic writing about reading includes poetry written in response to a prose text or to reflect or respond to a poem.

**Using the Writing About Reading Continuum**

All the genres and forms for writing about reading will give you evidence of how students are thinking and will help them become more reflective about their reading. The continuum is organized by grade. First, we list the genres and forms that are appropriate for students to be writing at the grade level. Then we specify behaviors and understandings to notice, teach, and support as students think...
within, beyond, and about a text. (Note that you can find evidence in both illustrations and writing.) Remember that genres and forms are demonstrated and co-constructed through the use of interactive and shared writing with young writers before they are expected to produce them independently as assignments. After experiencing the genres or forms several times with group support, young students will be able to produce them on their own. Older writers are able to analyze “mentor texts” as they learn how to write about reading by examining effective examples. Gradually, students build up a repertoire of ways of writing about reading that they can select from according to their purpose.
Writing About Reading

Selecting Genres and Forms

Genres and forms for writing about reading are demonstrated through interactive, shared, or modeled writing, often with close attention to mentor texts. Children learn how to respond to reading in different forms and for a variety of purposes and audiences. After they learn about the forms in a supported experience, they use them independently as they respond to books they read.

**Functional Writing**
- Sketches or drawings that reflect content of a text
- Interesting words or phrases from a text
- Short sentences responding to a text (for example, stating a prediction, an opinion, or an interesting aspect of the text)
- Lists to support memory (characters, events in a story)
- Simple tables (graphic organizers) to show comparison or sequence
- Letters to other readers or to authors and illustrators (including dialogue letters in a reader’s notebook)
- Labels for photographs or any kind of drawing
- Written directions (sometimes with drawings) that show a simple sequence of actions based on a text

**Informational Writing**
- List of facts from a text
- Short sentences and/or drawings reporting some interesting information from a text
- Summaries of information learned with headings to show sections
- One or two simple sentences with information about an author or illustrator
- Representations (through writing and drawing) of a sequence of actions or directions from a text
- Labeling of drawings that represent interesting information from a text

**Narrative Writing**
- Simple statements telling the sequence of events
- Drawings showing the sequence of events in a text (sometimes with speech bubbles to show dialogue)
- Simple statements summarizing a text
- Innovations on known texts (for example, new endings or similar plots with different characters)
### Selecting Goals

#### Behaviors and Understandings to Notice, Teach, and Support

**Thinking within the Text**
- Write short sentences to report or summarize important details from a text
- Represent a character through drawing or writing
- Represent a sequence of events through drawing (often with labels or legends)
- Notice and sometimes use new words from a text
- Notice and sometimes use interesting language from a text
- Use the names of authors and illustrators

**Thinking beyond the Text**
- Reflect both prior knowledge and new knowledge from the text
- Predict what will happen next in a text or what a character will do
- Infer how a character feels
- Reflect what a character is really like
- Express opinions about stories or poems
- Compose innovations on very familiar texts
- Produce innovations on a text by changing ending, series of events, the characters, or the setting
- List or write sentences and opinions about new information learned from a text
- Write or draw about something in the reader’s own life when prompted by a text

**Thinking about the Text**
- Create texts that have some of the characteristics of published texts (cover, title, author, illustrator, illustrations, beginning, ending, events in a sequence, about the author page)
- Sometimes borrow the style or some words from a writer
- Express opinions about a story or poem
- Notice the way a text is organized and sometimes apply organization to writing (for example, sequence of events or established sequence such as numbers or days of the week)
- Differentiate between informational and fiction texts
- Notice and sometimes use interesting language from a text
- Prove some simple graphic representations of a story (for example, story map or timeline)
- Use specific vocabulary to write about texts (author, illustrator, cover, title character, problem, events)
Grade 5  

Writing About Reading

Selecting Genres and Forms  
Students learn different ways to share their thinking about reading in explicit mini-lessons. Using modeled or shared writing, the teacher may demonstrate the process and engage the students in the construction of the text. Often, the teacher and students read several examples of a form, identify its characteristics, and try out the type of response. Then, students can select from the range of possible forms when responding to reading (usually in a reader’s notebook).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Functional Writing</th>
<th>Narrative Writing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sketches or drawings to represent a text and provide a basis for discussion or writing</td>
<td>Cartoons, comics, or storyboards to present a story or information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short write-ups responding to a text in a variety of ways (for example, personal response, interpretation, character analysis, description, or critique)</td>
<td>Plot summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes representing interesting language from a text or examples of the writer’s craft (quotes from a text)</td>
<td>Scripts for readers’ theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes to be used in later discussion or writing</td>
<td>Storyboards to represent significant events in a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grids that show analysis of a text (for example, graphic organizers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graphic organizers that show relationships among different kinds of information or that connect more than one text (for example, comparisons, timelines, webs)</td>
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<td>Letters to other readers or to authors and illustrators (including dialogue letters in a reader’s notebook)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labels and legends for illustrations (drawings, photographs, maps)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poster or advertisement that tells about a text in an attention-getting way</td>
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**Functional Writing**

- Sketches or drawings to represent a text and provide a basis for discussion or writing
- Short write-ups responding to a text in a variety of ways (for example, personal response, interpretation, character analysis, description, or critique)
- Notes representing interesting language from a text or examples of the writer’s craft (quotes from a text)
- Notes to be used in later discussion or writing
- Grids that show analysis of a text (for example, graphic organizers)
- Graphic organizers that show relationships among different kinds of information or that connect more than one text (for example, comparisons, timelines, webs)
- Letters to other readers or to authors and illustrators (including dialogue letters in a reader’s notebook)
- Labels and legends for illustrations (drawings, photographs, maps)
- Poster or advertisement that tells about a text in an attention-getting way

**Narrative Writing**

- Cartoons, comics, or storyboards to present a story or information
- Plot summaries
- Scripts for readers’ theater
- Storyboards to represent significant events in a text

*How to Write a Book Review*

- Include the title of the book and its author at the beginning. Talk about the genre and/or theme.
- Start with a good lead.
- Tell the reader enough information about the story so he/she understands what the book is about.
- Don’t give away all the surprises!
- Give your opinion on the book.
- Use details and rich words (examples from text).
- Sell the book to your reader!
- Include publication information: title, author, illustrator, publisher, number of pages, and price.
- Revise, revise, revise!

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84 The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades K–8: Behaviors and Understandings to Notice, Teach, and Support

Selecting Genres and Forms

**Informational Writing**

- Book recommendations
- Projects that present ideas and opinions about texts or topics in an organized way (using text and visual images)
- Reports that include text and graphic organizers to present information drawn from texts
- Book reviews
- Biographical sketch on an author or the subject of a biography
- Illustrator study, reflecting knowledge of biographical information or response to one or more books by an artist
- How-to articles that require the writer to be an expert who explains to readers how something is made or done
- Drawings or photographs with labels or legends illustrating information from a text
- Outlines that include headings, subheadings, and sub-subheadings to reflect the organization of the text
- Interviews with an author or expert (questions and responses designed to provide information)

**Poetic Writing**

- Poetic texts written in response to a prose text
- Poetic texts written in response to poems (same style, topic, mood)

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**One of Tara's dialogue journal entries for Wishes, Kisses, and Pigs**

```markdown
Dear Mrs. G,

The book Wishes, Kisses, and Pigs by Janet Tronstad tells about a girl named Louise who finds a mysterious blue-eyed piglet on her porch. I have only gotten that far.

I think that Louise will soon realize that the pig is her brother. I will tell you in my next letter.

I'm right? I went to the library and brought my mom about the cover and probably try talking to the pig. I might have a talking pet pig, but that, my mom

I think that her brother turning into a pig will help Louise get closer to him.

In Wishes, Kisses, and Pigs, I noticed that problem started at the beginning. Does that mean it is worse or worse? Does it depend? Please try to help me.

Sincerely,

Tara
```

Thinking within the Text

- Include appropriate and important details when summarizing texts
- Provide evidence from the text or from personal experience to support written statements about a text
- Purposefully acquire vocabulary from text and use new words in talk and writing (including technical words)
- Notice, comment on, and actively work to acquire new vocabulary and intentionally use it (including complex and specialized words)
- Record information to support the memory of a text over several days of reading (notes, chapter summary statements)
- Make note of important or new information while reading nonfiction
- Access information from both print and graphics
- Write summaries that reflect literal understanding of a text

Thinking beyond the Text

- Represent important information about a fiction text (characters, problems, sequence of events, problem resolution)
- Provide details that are important to understanding the relationship among plot, setting, and character traits
- Provide evidence of understanding complex plots with multiple events and characters in responses to reading and in text summaries
- Continuously check with the evidence in a text to ensure that writing reflects understanding

- Make connections between historical and cultural knowledge and a text
- Support thinking beyond the text with specific evidence from the text or personal knowledge
- Make a wide range of predictions using (and including) information as evidence from the text
- Predict what will happen in a text or after a text ends
- Predict what a character might do in other circumstances
- Infer characters’ feelings and motivations, and include evidence from the text to support thinking
- Record background information and formulate expectations and questions prior to reading a text; record new information learned from a text
- Make connections among the ideas in a text and among other texts on the same topic or by the same writers
- Specify the nature of connections in discussion and in writing
- Show connections between the setting, characters, and events of a text and reader’s own personal experiences
- Infer the meaning of the writer’s use of symbolism
- Make hypotheses about the significance of aspects of setting in the characters’ or subjects’ feelings, attitudes, and decisions
- Reflect diverse perspectives, especially when a text sneak insights into other cultures and parts of the world
- Interpret the mood of a text using language, illustrations, or the integration of both
- Reflect awareness of the author’s underlying messages (themes)
## Grade 5

### Writing About Reading

#### Selecting Goals

**Behaviors and Understandings to Notice, Teach, and Support**

**Thinking about the Text**

- Describe how the illustrations add to the meaning, mood, and quality of a text.
- Analyze the picture book as an artistic whole, including how the illustrations and text work together to create meaning and mood.
- Provide specific examples and evidence (either orally or in writing) to support written statements about the quality, accuracy, or craft of a text.
- Comment on how layout contributes to the meaning and effectiveness of both fiction and nonfiction texts.
- Critique the quality or authenticity of a text, including author’s qualifications.
- Note specific examples of the writer’s craft (leads, dialogue, definition of terms within the text, division of sections, use of descriptive language, interesting verbs, endings).
- Comment critically on the authenticity of the text, including the writer’s qualifications.
- Show how a text is organized (narrative and expository).
- Recognize and comment on aspects of narrative structure (beginning, series of events, high point of the story, ending).
- Show awareness of temporal sequence, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and problem and solution.
- Note the different ways the nonfiction writer organized and presented information.
- Identify and record the genre of a text (realistic and historical fiction, fantasy, traditional literature, biography, informational).
- Use knowledge of genre to write about the quality or characteristics of a text.
- Use genre to interpret a text or make predictions about it.
- Comment on the writer’s use of words precisely to convey meaning or mood (subtle shades of meaning).
- Comment on the writer’s use of figurative language and sensory imagery.
- Show awareness of a writer’s use of figurative language and sensory imagery.
- Recognize the narrator and discuss how the choice of first or third person point of view affects the reader.
- Write statements of the underlying message or theme of the story and include examples from the text or rationales.
- Comment on how the author has revealed the underlying message or the theme of a story through character, plot, events.
- Use specific vocabulary to write about text: title, author, illustrator, cover, dedication, endpapers, author’s note, illustrator’s note, character, main character, supporting characters, character development, setting, problem, events, resolution, theme, story, nonfiction, genre, main events, timeline, captions, legend, accuracy and authenticity, names of genres, poetry, table of contents, topics, subject of biography, sections, subheadings, categories, index, glossary.