

Teachers take dictation from children too young to write so elaborately so that they, too, can begin to learn to enjoy the process of writing.

Little Kids wrote weather-related poems as part of the year-long science focus on Weather for 2005-0006.

Weather Song

The violin sounds like rain.
The viola sounds like snow.
The cello sounds like a flood.
The double bass sounds like the desert cracking.
The hard sounds like a windmill.
The strings sounds like winter.
-- Leo, 5 years old

These two poems were written about the annual Sky Watch trip to see the galaxy away from city lights.

Wishing

At Lake Skinner, I'll be looking at the sky.
I will see the sky, the stars, make a constellation, see the planets – maybe Saturn,
Watch the planets,
Walk to Lake Skinner,
Whisper to Theo if I see a constellation,
Wish a wish from a star.
-- Zachary, 5 years old

The Fireballs

The sun and the stars are both made of fire.
Sun, stars, Saturn are in the sky.
I will eat pretzels while I'm watching Pluto and the other planets.
I might eat cake while I watch Cassiopeia.
-- Kaci, 5 years old

As part of a lesson about Thanksgiving, Little Kids wrote poems about what they are thankful for, giving them an opportunity to think about their material and emotional needs.

I am Thankful

I am thankful for my dog, Apollo, who keeps me company when I'm lonely.
I am thankful for my house because, when it's raining, it keeps me dry.
I am thankful for my school because it helps me learn.
I am thankful for my bed that's high off the ground where my dream monsters are.
I am thankful for water that is clean.
I am thankful for my mommy and my daddy who love me.
-- Reno, Age 6

I am Thankful

I am thankful for books because they are very educational and they are better than watching TV all day.
I am thankful for plants; they give us oxygen.
I am thankful for a house because if I didn't have a house, I would live in a trailer and I don't want to live in a trailer.
I am thankful for a mother; she makes good dinner.
I am thankful for a bed; it keeps me warm.
-- Ian, Age 7

EXCERPTS OF ALMANAC WRITING, 2005-2006

Big Kids often have prompts to help them learn about various literary forms, as in these poem prompts, "Where Do I End and You Begin?" and "Mommy Who."

Where Do I End and You Begin? (excerpt)

Where do I end and you begin?
Asked the pot of the lid
Asked mom of the kid

Where do I end and you begin
Asked the pizza of the cheese
Asked the person of the knees

Where I end and you begin?
Asked the Hawaii of the Lays
Asked the coach of the plays

Where do I end and you begin?
Asked China of the Great Wall
Asked the giant of the tall

Where do I end and you begin?
Asked the desert of the sand
Asked the fingers of the hand

...
Well I know where your heart
Meets my soul and when we are apart it takes its
toll
And that in our heart is where you meet me.

-- Kekai, age 9

Mommy Who

Mommy who goes to work, reads papers, writes papers and prints pieces of paper about other hospitals.
She cooks salmon, shell past and chicken every once in a while.
She has cool purple and white shoes. She has long hair and she has lots of shoes too.
My mom doesn't eat chocolate, doesn't drink soda.
After sports my mom always says, "Good game Blaise."
She tells me what I'm doing the next day on the way to school.

-- Blaise, age 8

Big Kids each got to write the introduction and first chapter of an imaginary book.

Dragon (excerpt)

Introduction: Taking care of dragons is a difficult and annoying task. I don't see why anyone didn't buy a puppy instead. Ah well, the reason you got this book is because you bought a dragon. Good luck taking care of your dragon. P.S. you'll need it.

Chapter 1: What Not to Feed a Dragon

Do not feed a dragon hot sauce! The consequences will be great. One of the consequences is the dragon breathes fire and burns down your house. Warning! The fire your dragon breathes hurts very much and could cause death. ...

Advice: If you catch fire, run around in 1000 circles yelling and hope it goes out.

Another thing not to feed your dragon is any pet food. They will get angry for unknown reasons and scratch you from head to toe....

Advice: Call 911 and hope you live.

--- Jonathan, age 10

As part of a lesson on writing, Little Kids worked together to write a group story. Individual students made sentence suggestions and teachers used it as a lesson in writing in first person, the need to structure stories with climax and resolution, and the way to figure out solutions to created situations in the text (what do you do when alligators chase you on a playground?). Students edited each other's sentence suggestions to work together to create the final version of the story.

What Do you Do about Alligators?
A Group Story written by the Little Kids

One day my friends, Cameron and Kaci and I were bored. We decided to go to the park. One the way to the park, we saw a pond. We noticed that there were alligators in the pond. Cameron ran away. Kaci screamed. I just looked at the alligators for a minute. Then I ran. Kaci ran away, too.

We stopped running and all met up together again. We were far away from the alligators. We decided we should go back and do something about the alligators. We headed back to the pond. We stopped a mile away. Kaci pulled out a super-long telescope. I looked through it. I couldn't see any alligators in the pond. We looked behind us and saw three giant alligators. Cameron screamed as she ran toward the pond. Kaci screamed again. I pulled a piece of chicken out of my snack bag and threw it on the ground before I ran. Kaci ran to join us.

The alligators picked up the chicken, went over to a tree, and put the chicken up in the branches for later. The alligators started chasing us back toward the pond. As we ran, we made a plan. We ran around the pond, toward the park with the alligators right behind.

As we reached the park, Kaci screamed at the alligators to distract them. Cameron borrowed a shovel from some workers who were planting a tree. She quickly dug a deep hole. When she finished, she stuck the shovel in the ground and pulled herself out of the hole.

Kaci, meanwhile, was running fast in circles with the alligators doing the same.

I ran to the play structure and pulled the pegs out of the rope web. I grabbed the ropes and took them to the hole. The three of us tried to lure the alligators into the hole by going towards the hole. It didn't work.

Kaci ran back to the tree where the alligators left the chicken to get the chicken and lure the alligators into the hole.

While Cameron and I distracted the alligators, Kaci covered the hole with leaves and put the chicken on the leaves. The alligators ran to the chicken, fell through the leaves and landed on their bottoms. Each of us grabbed a side of the rope web and put it over the hole, trapping the alligators.

Cameron ran and got the garbage truck and used the truck arms to pick up the alligators and put them in the truck. We took the alligators to the zoo where they couldn't eat us.

Boy, did we have some explaining to do.