



Erin R. Crome, MOT, OTR/L
www.coolbeanstherapyclubhouse.com

Writing is a demanding task building on the mastery of multiple skills including fine motor skills, visual motor skills, visual perception skills, and executive functioning skills. Writing poses many challenges including letter formation, sizing, spacing, working memory, planning, editing, grammar, and on and on. In a world where everyone is racing to be the most advanced our children are forced to learn skills quicker and earlier than their bodies are developmentally ready for. While some children are able to adapt and attain those skills, others are not given the proper time or practice to properly form those basic skills with which writing is based upon. This often leads students to dislike or avoid writing tasks at all costs; however, practicing all pieces of writing is very important in developing those necessary skills for greater ease.

When presenting your child with a writing task you'll want to make sure there is a reason (other than "I said so.") for the writing and if at all possible make it fun. By providing a need for the practice of a difficult task in a fun manner, you're giving your child some ownership and a way to "buy in" to doing the task. Here are some fun handwriting prompts and tasks for you to provide your student with when practicing writing skills.

Tips for working on handwriting:

- **Limit practice** time - Try to keep writing practice to no more than 15-20 minutes per day. Challenging tasks become more difficult the longer and more tired you are. We don't want to sacrifice effort for duration.
- **Watch for teachable moments** - It's been said before, "Practice does not make perfect. Practice makes permanent." Especially for younger writers, make sure your child is using proper formation, spacing, and linear placement. If your child is practicing handwriting, but practicing incorrectly, the only thing you'll be accomplishing is to permanently imprint the *INCORRECT* way to form those letters. This will make it more difficult to alter later. Keep an eye on your child while s/he is writing to determine if formation or spacing need to be retaught. If so, try "re-teaching" just 1 or 2 similar skills (i.e. formation of lowercase h and n). Keep statements positive and demonstrate beside your child instead of across from him/her (which would be upside down).
- **Writing Self-Checklist** - Try to have your child keep a checklist to check and correct their writing when finished. This helps with editing, problem solving, working memory, and recall for next time.

5-7 years (handwriting practice for letter formation, sizing, spacing, and linear placement):

- Send a letter and hand-drawn or hand-colored picture to a friend or relative
- Write the grocery list with assistance for spelling.
- Write out the meal plan for the week.
- Instead of Pictionary or Charades, write one-word clues to get someone to guess a word.
- Go old-school and become a pen-pal! Write letters back and forth with a friend, classmate, relative, or neighbor.
- Write fun messages on the sidewalk with chalk (for example, ask a silly question and leave chalk there for someone to answer you)
- Use dry-erase markers or dry-erase crayons to draw pictures or write messages on your windows.

Writing Prompts (for older kids and teens):

- If you got one chance to make the perfect world, what would that look like to you? Would you make the world YOUR perfect utopia or would you make it perfect for everyone? How would it be better and what problems might you have to deal with by changing things?
- If you were President of the United States (POTUS), how would you run the USA? What are your thoughts on gun rights? Are you pro-choice or pro-life? How would you deal with the Coronavirus pandemic?
- If your best friend were writing a newspaper article about you, what would the article say? What would the headline say to catch the reader's attention? How would your friend describe you? Your likes and dislikes, character, physical attributes, etc.
- Likewise, write a newspaper article about your best friend. Use the same questions to fill in the article.
- What is one thing you have never done, but would love to learn how to do and why?
- Would you rather? Why?
 - Be locked in a shark cage in shark-infested waters for 2 hours or stay overnight in the jungle?
 - Explore a pitch, black cave full of bats or a tomb with booby traps?
 - Face Darth Vader from Star Wars or Thanos from the Marvel Universe?
 - Be Indiana Jones or Optimus Prime?
 - Be a bird who flies everywhere and only eats worms or be an ant living in tunnels underground eating pieces of food?
 - Live outside only (never allowed inside again) or live indoors (never allowed outside again)?
 - Be an astronaut or a surgeon?
 - Have to talk to a stranger on the phone 20 minutes every day for a year or see your best friend 20 minutes every day for a year, but neither of you can talk at all?
 - Wear hand-me-downs or uniforms for the rest of your life?
 - Send an innocent person to prison for life or let a guilty person go free?
 - Be a bounty hunter or be wanted person on the run?
 - Know you have one year to live now or be cryogenically frozen to unthaw 500 years in the future and live another 10 years?
 - Invent time travel or a porthole to instantly travel from one place to another?
 - Help 100 people you've never met or help 1 person you know?
 - Discover the most significant historical artifact or make a super cool invention?

- Write a movie review about your favorite movie. What movie genre is it? Who are the main stars of the movie? What was the overall goal or reason for the movie? What obstacles did the main characters come across and how did they overcome them? How would you have changed the movie to make it better?
- Write a book review about your favorite book. Don't write a book report. Write a short summary to make me want to read the book. Tell me a little about the main characters, their goal, problems they encounter, and just enough about the plot to reel me in, but not spoil the book.
- If you could go into any video game for 1 day, what would it be? Why? Would you play a certain character or yourself and why?
- If you could talk to your pet, what do you think it would say to you? Describe a day in the life of your pet from their perspective.
- What is your favorite TV show? Why? Make me want to watch it!
- Watch 1 episode of a TV show you've never seen before. Review the show like it's going in TV Guide. Would you pan the show or give rave reviews? Were the characters believable? Did the storyline make sense? Should I watch it or not waste my time? Why?
- Write about 1 time you helped someone else out and didn't expect anything in return. What did you do? Who did you help? Why did you help? How did you feel after you helped?
- If you could go on a vacation to anywhere in the world that you've NEVER been, where would it be? Why? How would you get there? Who would you go with or would you go alone? What would you see or do there?
- If you could make a new holiday, what would it be called? When and what would you be celebrating? How would you celebrate?
- Write a tutorial about your favorite hobby. Explain in detail like you are teaching someone who's never seen or heard of this activity how to participate. (For example, if I were teaching someone to type on a laptop. I would start by saying you need to open the top of the laptop so the screen is facing you. The blank screen should go away and you will see a prompt to enter a password. Look in the upper, right corner of the screen to find a battery icon. This is how you know how much battery the laptop has left...)
- If you could choose between being a superhero or supervillain, which would it be and why? What would your superhero/supervillain name be? What would your superpowers be?
- If you were stranded on an island with one kind of food for the rest of your life, what would it be? Why?
- If you could be a circus performer, what would you be? What would your circus name be? What would your special talent be?
- What was the best present you ever received from anyone? Why?
- What is your ideal career? Why? What type of training or education do you need to achieve this?
- Do you believe adults should be shown respect? Why? Do you think kids and teenagers are respectful to adults? How are or aren't they? Should this change and how?
- What do you think about being politically correct? Do you think people need to be more considerate with what they say or do you think people are offended too easily? Why?
- If you could time travel into the past (before you were born), when and where would it be? Why?
- What is your favorite thing about you? Is it a physical feature, your intellect, a skill or ability, or your imagination and creativity? Why?