



Write it Right

Writing is an art but as like any other form of art, it has to be learned and practised with the right tools. Author In Me founder, Monica Sood, discusses the importance of writing eloquently and shares some tools for effective learning



By Monica Sood



it. But for many students, that's not enough. They may be able to read and appreciate writing that flows well and varied sentence structure, but that doesn't mean they can figure out how to write that way themselves. For them, the techniques of good writing are a mystery they just aren't able to resolve.

So, how can we help children write lucid, coherent paragraphs, with one well-structured and informative sentence leading seamlessly to the next?

First and foremost, to make their writing better, they need to practice a series of exercises that specifically target the skills they haven't yet mastered, while building on the skills they already have, in a gradual, step-by-step process. They also need clear, direct feedback that helps them identify their mistakes and monitor their progress. But these should be done in manageable chunks otherwise they may not absorb what we are trying to make them understand. I have listed below a few strategies that we use in **A- I-M courses and workshops** to improve writing skills.

Practice writing varied sentences

Sentences are the building blocks of any piece of writing. Children should practice writing sentences that vary structure, and use complex syntax and vocabulary. Crafting an effective sentence is a useful and important exercise, irrespective of a child's age and ability, they should continue to practice sentence-level activities in order to enhance their writing abilities.

Younger children can practice their spelling and vocabulary words by writing original sentences whereas more able children should learn to craft sentences for various purposes such as to compare, contrast or persuade. Various exercises such as elaborating a simple sentence into a complex one, trying out different connectives to join up sentences, starting a sentence with a verb or connective instead of noun or pronoun can improve their ability to write varied sentences.

Summarising a topic in their own words

Summarising the content, they're studying can help them to learn to formulate in-

formation and produce their own interpretations along with strengthening the writing skills. This process helps them absorb and retain information of what they're writing about and the vocabulary that goes with it.

Planning

Making a road map before they begin to write can help them decide on their purpose: who their audience is, what they want a

reader to know, and what ideas they want to present. They should make a plan, jot down a few words, sketch out the points they will touch on and deciding in what order to present them.

Planning is equivalent to accumulating all the ingredients before creating a recipe. It makes writing a hassle-free activity.

Revising and editing

Revising and editing are two different tasks that shouldn't be mixed up. Revising is when they read the piece of writing from a reader's point of view and make amendments to make it more comprehensible and captivating whereas editing is when they look for the grammatical errors, sentence structure and better vocabulary to replace the repetitive words in their writing. Editing is polishing their draft to make it presentable. These two activities combined together and carefully executed can help them synthesise their final master piece of writing.

Inculcating these simple strategies in every day writing regime can profoundly enhance writing ability in children. My only suggestion is to avoid overdoing, gradual and consistent efforts will definitely reap results for them.

Of course, we want children to enjoy writing and use it as a means of self-expression, without making it a daunting task for them. It is an important skill that we need to equip our children with to give them confidence as writers and enable them to express themselves in a way that others can comprehend and enjoy.

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Effective writing is essential for success in school and the workplace. No matter what profession we choose in life, the ability to communicate our thoughts in writing in a way that others can easily understand is crucial. It is a vital skill that needs to be nurtured in children for them to be successful in any field. Many studies have revealed that when children learn to express their ideas coherently, not only do their academic abilities blossom but they also learn to think creatively and analytically.

It is generally assumed that if a child reads enough, they'll simply pick up writing skills, through a kind of osmosis. Undoubtedly, children are benefitted from reading in many ways however they don't pick up writing skills just by reading. Instead, they need to be taught how the conventions of written language differ from those of spoken language. It has been observed that many students who are good readers struggle when it comes to writing coherently.

I was even dismayed when I realised the difference in how we teach writing as opposed to reading. When we teach reading, we don't give children a book and say, "Read this." We use well-researched methods, carefully sequenced activities and follow a daily reading routine until a child starts to read fluently and accurately. But when it comes to writing, arguably a far more difficult task, we do not provide the tools they need. If their writing falls short, as it often does, we simply ask them to "make it better" or "add more details." Clearly, that isn't enough.

Even In schools, children are provided with the description of the elements of a good story, or essay, or perhaps a sample piece of writing and are then encouraged to emulate



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