

# Fifty Nifty Picture Books and How to Use Them to Teach the Traits (K-2)

Presented by:  
Maria Walther  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher  
Gwendolyn Brooks Elementary  
2700 Stonebridge Blvd.  
Aurora, IL 60502  
(630) 375-3244  
[www.mariawalther.com](http://www.mariawalther.com)  
Twitter: @mariapwalther  
[maria\\_walther@ipsd.org](mailto:maria_walther@ipsd.org)



☞ Hanlon, A. (2012). *Ralph Tells a Story*. Amazon.  
Ralph can't think of any ideas for his story. After trying everything, including roaming the hallways, he writes his first story. Notice all of Ralph's stories on the back end papers.

## BOOKS TO SPARK IDEAS

### *Writers Get IDEAS From Life Experiences!*

☞ Lester, H. (1997). *Author: A True Story*. Houghton Mifflin.  
The author of the Tacky the Penguin series describes her challenges as a young writer and her continued struggle as an adult writer.  
(See Mini-Lesson in M-by-M Writing p. 42)

☞ Carlson, N. (2002). *There's a Big, Beautiful World Out There!* Viking.  
A young girl discovers all the beauty in our frequently scary world.  
(See Mini-Lesson on Creating an Idea Notebook M-by-M Writing p. 44)

☞ Hallinan, P. K. (2009). *The Looking Book*. (P. Barton, Illus.). Ideal.  
Kenny and Mikey don't want to go outside until mom gives them some "lookers" (eye glasses without lenses). Once outside, they discover all kinds of new things to see and experience. Read this book, and then take your class on a walk around the school to see all the possible ideas for writing.

☞ Dotlich, R. K. (2015). *One Day, The End: Short, Very Short, Shorter-than-ever Stories*. (F. Koehler, Illus.). Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills.  
"For every story there is a beginning and an end, but what happens in between makes all the difference." So begins this one-of-a-kind book where the middle of each story is told solely with illustrations.

### *Writers Get IDEAS From the Books They Read!*

☞ Allan, S., & Lindaman, J. (2003). *Read Anything Good Lately?* (V. Enright, Illus.). Millbrook.  
An alphabetical look at different places and things to read.

☞ Barroux, S. (2004). *Mr. Katapat's Incredible Adventures*. Viking.  
Mr. Katapat becomes an adventurer when he visits the library each day.

☞ Pinkney, S. L. (2006). *Read and Rise*. Scholastic.  
Shows that children can be anything they choose through the power of reading.

## READ LIKE A WRITER: COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATIONS

Turn and Talk Teaching Tips:

Before you begin, model "turn and talk" with another adult or student. Emphasize the importance of having a two-way conversation with one person speaking at a time. Assign students a "turn and talk" partner or small group.

During read aloud, stop several times at natural breaking points and pose the following queries for students to "turn and talk" about:

- **WHAT DID YOU NOTICE? WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?**
- Where do you think this author got his/her ideas for this book?
- Listen to this! Let me reread the beginning of this book. Did the lead make you want to read the story?
- Did you hear any words that you want to remember and use in your writing?
- Can you picture this setting/character/event in your mind? How did the author help you do that? What words did he or she use?
- Notice the way the sentences flow. Talk about how the author did that.
- Does this writing have voice?
- Who is telling this story? How do you know that?

Source: Adapted from Routman, Regie. (2003). *Reading Essentials: The Specifics You Need to Teach Reading Well*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

## Write About Something That's Important to You!

📖 *Arthur Writes a Story* (Brown, 1996)

📖 *The Best Story* (Spinelli, 2008)

📖 *My Map Book* (Fanelli, 1995)

A girl creates a collection of unique maps including a map of her heart!

📖 *Emily's Blue Period* (Daly, 2014)

## Map of My Heart

### MINI-LESSON

Mapping helps students organize information both visually and verbally.

- Share *My Map Book* with your students. Notice all the different concepts Sara maps including the food in her tummy, her day, her neighborhood and her heart.

- Brainstorm a list of concepts for young writers to map. Encourage creative thinking! Your list might include a map of a dinosaur (or any other animal), a planet, a favorite book, their body, Lincoln's life, and a baseball field.
- Invite students to make a map of any concept that is important to them.

Adapted by Maria Walther from: Spandel, V. (2001). *Books, lessons, ideas for teaching the six traits*. Wilmington, MA: Great Source.

## Math + Literature = Ideas for Writing

📖 Rosenthal, A. K. (2011). *This Plus That: Life's Little Equations*. (J. Corace, Illus.). HarperCollins.

Rosenthal uses simple equations to describe moments, manners, friendship, and more! Use this inventive book to introduce the concept of equations to your young mathematicians!

📖 Rosenthal, A. K. (2012). *Wumbers*. (T. Lichenheld, Illus.). Chronicle. "What do you get when you combine and word and a number? A wumber!" You and your students will have a lot of fun reading this creative book by an award-winning author-illustrator team. Written as a tribute to *CDB!* by William Steig, this book will keep your readers guessing!

📖 LaRochelle, D. (2010). *1 + 1 = 5 and Other Unlikely Additions*. (B. Sexton, Illus.). Sterling.

The book begins with the math equation  $1 + 1 = 3$ . Upon turning the page, readers discover the answer is  $1 \text{ unicorn} + 1 \text{ goat} = 3 \text{ horns}$ . The book continues with a lot of other unique  $1 + 1$  equations. Careful readers will notice clues in the illustrations to help them to infer the answer. (For more books on inferring see *M-by-M Reading* p. 180)

## MORE BOOKS TO INSPIRE IDEAS

📖 Barrett, J. (2001). *Things that are Most in the World*. Aladdin. Readers discover the quietest, silliest, hottest things in the world. Includes a ready-to-use class book page!

☞ Carlson, N. (1997). *ABC I Like Me!* Viking.  
An alphabet book that explores self-esteem.

☞ Carlson, N. (1988). *I Like Me*. Viking.  
A charming pig shows that the best friend you can have is yourself.

☞ Hershenhorn, E. (2002). *Chicken Soup by Heart*. Simon & Schuster.  
Rudie cooks a batch of chicken soup using Mrs. Gittel's secret ingredient: stories!

☞ Reynolds, P. H. (2004). *Ish*. Candlewick.  
Ramon's sister helps him understand that his "ish" (tree-ish) drawings are perfect!

☞ Root, P. (2003). *The Name Quilt*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.  
Sadie loves to listen to her grandma tell family stories about the people named on a quilt.

## ORGANIZING IDEAS MANY DIFFERENT WAYS

☞ Rosenthal, A. K.. (2009). *Yes Day!* (T. Lichtenheld, Illus.).  
HarperCollins.

**My Very Own Yes Day!**—Invite students to write their own *Yes Day!* book for their families and display their polished books at Open House or Curriculum Night.

**Read Like a Writer**—Enjoy reading the endpapers that display a calendar of ways that parents say, "No!"

**Back Cover Blurbs**—After reading this book for enjoyment, point out the humorous back cover blurb. Search the backs of other books for blurbs. (See *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction*, Walther & Phillips, 2009 for a mini-lesson on blurbs.)

☞ LaRochelle, D. (2012). *It's a Tiger!* (J. Tankard, Illus.). San Francisco, CA: Chronicle.

Begin reading this boldly illustrated picture book on the front flap and continue to read, notice, and laugh at the young narrator's adventures as he narrowly escapes a tiger again and again!

☞ Byrne, R. (2014). *This Book Just Ate My Dog!* New York: Holt.  
When Bella takes her dog for a "stroll across the page," he disappears into the gutter of the book along with her friend, the rescue squad, and Bella herself. Quick-thinking Bella writes a note to the readers telling them to shake the book and get everyone out.

**Teaching Ideas: Parts of a Book—Gutter (See morning message in M-by-M Reading p. 40); Reading-Writing Connection**

☞ Byrne, R. (2015). *We're In The Wrong Book*. New York: Holt.  
Bella and Ben, the characters from *This Book Just Ate My Dog* (2014), get bumped off the page and end up on a journey through books of different genres including comic books, fairy tales, and more.

**Teaching Ideas: Read Like a Writer; Introduction to different writing genres**

| Mentor Texts with a List Structure                               |   |
|--|---|
| Fiction  | Informational   |
| <i>Beetle Bop</i> (Fleming, 2007)                                | <i>Move!</i> (Jenkins & Page, 2006)                                 |
| <i>Chicken Cheeks</i> (Black, 2009)                              |   |
| <i>I Like Books</i> (Browne, 1989)                               |   |
| <i>Lots of Dots</i> (Frazier, 2010)                              |   |
| <i>Things I Like</i> (Browne, 1989)                              |   |
| Mentor Texts With a Question-Answer Structure                    |   |
| <i>Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother, Too?</i> (Carle, 2000)         | <i>What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?</i> (Jenkins & Page, 2003) |
| <i>Where Is the Green Sheep?</i> (Fox, 2004)                     |   |
| <i>Yes Day!</i> (Krouse Rosenthal, 2009)                         |   |
| Mentor Texts With a Days of the Week Structure                   |   |
| <i>Always in Trouble</i> (Demas, 2009)                           | <i>Creature Features</i> (Jenkins & Page, 2014)                     |
| <i>Cookie's Week</i> (Ward, 1988)                                |   |
| <i>Pigs to the Rescue</i> (Himmelman, 2010)                      |   |
| <i>The Wolf Who Wanted to Change His Color</i> (Lallemant, 2012) |   |
| Mentor Texts With a See-Saw Structure                            |   |
| <i>Fortunately</i> (Charlip, 1964)                               | <i>First the Egg</i> (Seeger, 2007)                                 |
| <i>Good News Bad News</i> (Mack, 2012)                           |   |
| <i>That's Good! That's Bad!</i> (Cuyler, 1991)                   |   |
| <i>Tough Boris</i> (Fox, 1994)                                   |   |
| Cumulative or "Add-On" Stories                                   |   |
| <i>The Book That Zack Wrote</i> (Long, 2011)                     |   |
| <i>My Friend Rabbit</i> (Rohmann, 2002)                          |   |
| Circular Stories   |   |
| <i>When a Monster Is Born</i> (Taylor, 2006)                     |   |

## BOOKS TO MODEL ORGANIZATION

☞ Auch, M. J., & Auch, H. (2009). *The Plot Chickens*. Holiday. When Henrietta decides to write a book, she finds a helpful guide to composing a story that lists eight rules including:

1. You need a main character
2. You need to hatch a plot
3. Give your main character a problem
4. Develop your plot by asking, "What if?"

☞ Bullard, L. (2007). *You Can Write a Story: A Story Writing Recipe for Kids*. (D. H. Melmon, Illus.). Two-Can. Details the ingredients and steps to writing a fictional story. Bullard has filled this "how-to" book with a wealth of ideas and examples.

☞ Duke, K. (1992). *Aunt Isabel Tells a Good One*. Dutton. Penelope and Aunt Isabel craft a story with all the right ingredients.

☞ Fisher, C. (2008). *The Snow Show*. Harcourt. "Welcome to The Snow Show!" where Chef Kelvin and Jack Frost cook up a fresh batch of snow. This clever book, written like a recipe, describes the steps in making snow. Funny anecdotes in the illustrations are sure to keep readers interested.

☞ LaRochelle, D. (2007). *The End*. (R. Egielski, Illus.). Arthur A. Levine. A backward fairy tale, begins with the ending and continues in a cause and effect pattern to reveal the events that led to the "The End."

☞ King, P. & Thomson, R. (2005). *Start Writing Adventure Stories*. Chrysalis Education. This book guides children through each stage of writing a story. Also available: *Start Writing About Things I Do*, *Start Writing About People and Places*, *Start Writing Amazing Stories*.

📖 Kroll, S. (2001). *Patches Lost and Found*. Marshall Cavendish.  
Jenny draws then adds words to a story about losing and finding her pet guinea pig.

📖 Leedy, L. (2004). *Look At My Book*. Holiday House.  
The author shows children how to plan, write, design and illustrate their own book.

📖 McDonald, M. (2005). *Stink, The Incredible Shrinking Kid*. Candlewick.  
The adventures of Judy Moody's kid brother, Stink, where each chapter ends with a comic strip.

## CAREFULLY CHOOSING WORDS

📖 Steinberg, L. (2003). *Thesaurus Rex*. Cambridge, MA: Barefoot Books.  
A playful dinosaur introduces readers to the world of synonyms.

### Let's Do a Word Exchange

#### MINI-LESSON

- Choose a word that is driving you crazy! Write it in the middle of a small piece of chart paper.
- Model how to use a thesaurus to choose more effective words.  
(See Word Exchange Morning Messages in M-by-M Writing p. 37)

### Adding a SPLASH! to your piece

#### MINI-LESSON

- Discuss the definition of onomatopoeia - a word that sounds just like the noise it is describing (pop, chomp, slam, crunch, etc.)
- Enjoy the book *Slop Goes the Soup* by Pamela D. Edwards with your class. Remind children to listen for onomatopoeias.
- Make a list of onomatopoeias that students can use as they revise their pieces.
- Students revise by adding an appropriate onomatopoeia to their piece.

📖 Edwards, P. D. (2001). *Slop Goes the Soup*. Hyperion.  
A clumsy warthog's sneeze begins an onomatopoeic chain of events.

📖 MacDonald, R. (2003). *Achoo! Bang! Crash!: The Noisy Alphabet*. Roaring Book Press.  
An alphabet book of onomatopoeic words.

## MORE BOOKS TO IGNITE WORD CHOICE

📖 Banks, K. (2006). *Max's Words*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.  
Max collects, sorts, and organizes his word collection to create thoughts and stories.

📖 Cottin, M. (2006/2008). *The Black Book of Color*. (R. Faría, Illus.). Publishers Group West.

Imagine for a moment how you would describe the color red to a person who is blind. In this groundbreaking book, Thomas describes colors using his senses of touch, taste, smell, or hearing. The illustrations are raised black line drawings on black pages and the written text is also translated into Braille. This book is a wonderful mentor text to model how writers paint a picture with words.

📖 Joosse, B. M. (1996). *I Love You the Purplest*. Chronicle.  
A mother uses colorful description to tell each of her sons how much she loves them.

📖 Ryan, P. M. (2001). *Hello Ocean*. Scholastic.  
The author uses the five senses to describe the ocean.

## PUTTING WORDS TOGETHER FLUENTLY

### AND-I-TIS

Thanks to Mary Dolan 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher at Owen Elementary School for sharing this engaging and effective mini-lesson!

I begin this mini-lesson by saying to the children, "Boys and girls I have a terrible disease that some writers get, it is called *AND-I-TIS*." Then I share a piece of writing on the overhead (see below). I continue, "When writers get this disease they have a few options. First, they can cross out *AND* then replace it with a period or they can use 'connecting words.' Connecting words help build a bridge from one sentence to the next. Let's make a list of connecting words to help us next time we have *AND-I-TIS*."

Yesterday I went to my friend's  
birthday party and we went to Chuck  
E. Cheese and we played games and I  
won 300 tickets and we opened  
presents and we ate pizza and my  
friend blew out the candles and we  
ate chocolate cake and we had a  
marvelous time and we went home.

It snowed yesterday so I called  
my friends and we went outside  
and played in the snow and we  
made a snowman and we made a  
fort and we had a snowball fight  
and we got cold and we went inside  
and we had hot chocolate and it  
was a fabulous day.

Using "and" effectively:

☞ Henkes, K. (2006). *Lilly's Big Day*. Greenwillow.  
When Mr. Slinger announces he is getting married Lilly is sure she is going to be the flower girl!

## BOOKS TO FUEL FLUENCY

☞ Beaumont, K. (2005). *I Ain't Gonna Paint No More!* Harcourt.  
In the rhythm of a familiar folk song, a child paints his body from head to \_\_\_\_!!

☞ Czekaj, J. (2010). *Hip and Hop Don't Stop*. Disney/Hyperion.  
Hip, the turtle raps s-l-o-w while Hop, the rabbit raps fast, fast, fast. The two rappers live in different parts of Oldskool County and don't socialize until they decided to practice together for a rapping contest. (See Fluency Fun Lesson in *M-by-M Reading* p. 71)

☞ DeGroat, D. (1996). *Roses Are Pink, Your Feet Really Stink*. Morrow.  
Gilbert writes some nice and some nasty poems for Valentine's Day.

☞ Fox, M. (1997). *Whoever You Are*. Harcourt.  
People around the world experience similar emotions such as joy and love.

☞ Grossman, B. (1996). *My Little Sister Ate One Hare*. Crown.  
A rhythmic counting book about a girl who will eat anything except a pea!

☞ Harter, D. (2000). *The Animal Boogie*. Barefoot Books.  
Jungle animals and a jazzy tune help teach the kids how to do the animal boogie.

☞ Locker, T. (2000). *Cloud Dance*. Harcourt.  
This lyrical text introduces children to the world of clouds.

☞ Perkins, L. R. (2003). *Snow Music*. Greenwillow.  
The music of a snowy day is cleverly captured in this interactive tale.

☞ Prelutsky, J. (2005). *Read a Rhyme, Write a Rhyme*. Alfred A. Knopf.  
A collection of poetry with "poemstarts" to get kids writing!

☞ Roberts, S. (2003). *We All Go Traveling By*. Barefoot Books.  
Sing about all the different ways children travel to school.

## ADD IT ALL UP AND YOUR WRITING HAS VOICE!

### Animals have VOICE too! MINI-LESSON

- Build background knowledge by talking about dogs and cats. Make a web of dog and cat characteristics.
- Share the story *I am the Dog, I am the Cat*. Discuss the differences in the voice of the dog and cat.
- Students write similar version of the story using different animals. For example: "I am a mouse. I love to scamper and eat cheese. Don't try to catch me because I'm too fast." Encourage students to show their animal's voice in their piece.
- Invite students to share their piece without telling the animal's name, see if their classmates can guess their animal by listening carefully for its voice.

📖 Hall, D. (1994). *I am the Dog. I am the Cat*. Dial.  
A dog and a cat take turns describing what makes each of them unique.

📖 Cronin, D. (2003). *Diary of a Worm*. HarperCollins.  
A hysterical journal that describes the daily life of a worm.

📖 Cronin, D. (2005). *Diary of a Spider*. HarperCollins.  
A young spider discovers there's a lot to learn about being a spider.

## MORE BOOKS WITH VOICE

📖 Czekaj, J. (2011). *Cat Secrets*. HarperCollins.

If you are looking for an interactive read aloud to engage young readers, reach for this humorous book where three felines try to determine if their readers are cats so that they can reveal their "Cat Secrets."

📖 Glasser, R. P. (2006). *Fancy Nancy*. (J. O'Connor, Illus.). HarperCollins.

📖 Kachenmeister, C. (1989). *On Monday When It Rained*. Houghton Mifflin.

In text and photographs a boy shared the different emotions he experiences.

📖 Laden, N. (1994). *The Night I Followed the Dog*. Scholastic.  
A boy details his adventures following his dog to the "dog club". (1<sup>st</sup> person)

📖 Long, M. (2003). *How I Became a Pirate*. Harcourt.  
Jeremy joins a pirate crew and finds out about pirate life. (1<sup>st</sup> person)

📖 O'Malley, K. (2005). *Once Upon a Cool Motorcycle Dude*. Walker & Co.  
A girl and boy tell a fairy tale to the class with two very distinct voices.

📖 Willems, Mo. (2003). *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* Hyperion.  
The pigeon tries to convince the reader to let him drive! (1<sup>st</sup> person)

## Superb Resources for Teaching Budding Writers

- Behymer, A. (2003). Kindergarten writing workshop. *The Reading Teacher*, 57 (1), 85-88.
- Bellamy, P. C. (Ed.). (2005). *Seeing with new eyes: Using the 6 + 1 trait writing model* (6th ed.). NWREL.
- Bellamy, P. C. (2004). *Picture books: An annotated bibliography with activities for teaching writing with the 6 + 1 trait writing model* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). NWREL.
- Calkins, L. (2003). *Units of study for primary writing: A yearlong curriculum (K-2)*. Heinemann.
- Corgill, A. M. (2008). *Of primary importance: What's essential in teaching young writers*. Stenhouse.
- Culham, R. (2014). *The writing thief: Using mentor texts to teach the craft of writing*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Culham, R. (2008). *Inside the writing traits classroom: K-2 lessons on DVD*. Scholastic.
- Culham, R. (2006). The trait lady speaks up. *Educational Leadership*, 64 (2), 53-57.
- Culham, R. (2005). *6+1 traits of writing: The complete guide for the primary grades*. Scholastic.
- Culham, R., & Coutu, R. (2009). *Getting started with the traits: Writing lessons, activities, scoring guides, and more for successfully launching trait-based instruction in your classroom*. Scholastic.
- Culham, R., & Coutu, R. (2008). *Using picture books to teach writing with the traits*. Scholastic.
- Cunningham, P. M. (2009). *Phonics they use: Words for reading and writing* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Dorfman, L. R., & Capelli, R. (2009). *Nonfiction mentor texts: Teaching informational writing through children's literature, K-8*. Stenhouse.
- Dorfman, L. R., & Cappelli, R. (2007). *Mentor texts: Teaching writing through children's literature, K-6*. Stenhouse.
- Duke, N. (2014). *Inside information: Developing powerful readers and writers of informational text through project-based instruction*. Scholastic.
- Duke, N. K., & Bennett-Armistead, S. (2003). *Reading and writing informational text in the primary grades*. Scholastic.
- Fletcher, R. (2010). *Pyrotechnics on the page: Playful craft that sparks writing*. Stenhouse.
- Fletcher, R., & Portalupi, J. (2007). *Craft lessons: Teaching writing K-8* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Stenhouse.
- Fletcher, R., & Portalupi, J. (2001). *Writing workshop: The essential guide*. Heinemann.
- Fuhler, C. J., & Walther, M. P. (2007). *Literature is back! Using the best books for teaching readers and writers across genres*. Scholastic.
- Heard, G., & McDonough, J. (2009). *A place for wonder: Reading and writing nonfiction in the primary grades*. Stenhouse.
- Hoyt, L., & Therriault, T. (2008). *Mastering the mechanics: Ready-to-use lessons for modeled, guided, and independent editing*. (K-1), (2-3). Scholastic.
- Jacobson, J. (2010). *No more, I'm done!" Fostering independent writers in the primary grades*. Stenhouse.
- Johnston, P. H. (2012). *Opening minds: Using language to change lives*. Stenhouse.
- Johnston, P. H. (2004). *Choice words: How our language affects children's learning*. Stenhouse.
- McCarrier, A., Pinnell, G. S., & Fountas, I. C. (2000). *Interactive writing*. Heinemann.
- McGill-Franzen, A. (2006). *Kindergarten literacy: Matching assessment to instruction in kindergarten*. Scholastic.
- McMahon, C., & Warrick, P. (2005). *Wee can write: Using 6 + 1 trait writing strategies with renowned children's literature*. Portland, OR: NWREL.
- Portalupi, J., & Fletcher, R. (2001). *Nonfiction craft lessons*. Stenhouse.
- Ray, K. W. (2010). *In pictures and words: Teaching the qualities of good writing through illustrator study*. Heinemann.
- Ray, K. W. (2004). When kids make books. *Educational Leadership*, 62 (2), 14-19.
- Ray, K. W., & Cleaveland, L. B. (2004). *About the authors: Writing workshop with our youngest writers*. Heinemann.
- Rickards, D., & Hawes, S. (2006). Connecting reading and writing through author's craft. *The Reading Teacher*, 60 (4), 370-373.
- Routman, R. (2005). *Writing essentials*. Heinemann.
- Scharer, P. L., & Pinnell, G. S. (2008). *Guiding K-3 writers to independence*. Scholastic.
- Spandel, V. (2001). *Books, lessons, ideas for teaching the six traits*. Great Source.
- Spandel, V. (2007). *Creating young writers* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Stead, T. (2002). *Is that a fact? Teaching non-fiction writing K-3*. Stenhouse.
- Walther, M. P. & Phillips, K. A. (2009). *Month-by-month trait-based writing instruction*. Scholastic.
- Walther, M. P. (2015). *Transforming literacy teaching in the era of higher standards*. Scholastic.

