

Using the Developmental Writing Continuum P-6 in a Balanced Literacy Program



The purpose of the Developmental Writing Continuum P-6 is to provide teachers with a tool to align instruction and assessment when planning. This tool highlights what students should have under control by the end of grade/stage in the four overarching categories on the continuum (eg. Linking Talking, Reading, and Writing).

The act of writing is to communicate with an audience and for a purpose. All four categories within the continuum work in unison to support students in the development of effective communication skills.

When looking across the continuum, it is important to note that some practices are developmentally appropriate at earlier stages (eg. how print works in writing is most appropriately taught in the emergent and early stages of writing development). Where there are blanks in the continuum the category is either under control or has yet to be developed.

It is important when planning, and delivering writing instruction that teachers monitor and evaluate how students are doing in order to best respond to the needs of all learners. All writing instructional practices should yield measurable results and provide ongoing evidence of the impact on student achievement.

This continuum aligns with current support resources and was designed specifically to assist in the use of Nova Scotia English language arts curricula. As per the Inclusive Education Policy, additional and timely supports for students in writing will be determined and implemented with Teaching Support and Student Planning teams to ensure the on-going well-being and achievement of individual students.

Developmental Writing Continuum P-6 — DRAFT

Emergent	Early	Transitional	Fluent
Grade Primary: student can read texts that include features and structures found in level C text	Grade 1: student can read texts that include features and structures found in level I text Grade 2: student can read texts that include features and structures found in level L text	Grade 3: student can read texts that include features and structures found in level P text	Grades 4-6: student can read texts that include features and structures found in level Q-Z text
LINKING TALKING, READING AND WRITING			
understand how talk, reading and writing are related (what I say I can write, what I write I can read)	demonstrate how talk, reading and writing are related in a variety of ways	demonstrate how talk, reading and writing are related in a variety of ways	can read like a writer and write like a reader
engage in conversations about text and use the ideas in their writing (using predictable language structures, speech bubbles...)	engage in conversations about text and use new ideas in writing (author’s style, text features, character development)	examine features of fiction and non-fiction and use the new ideas in writing	use a variety of text as resources for words, phrases and ideas in their writing
use vocabulary that has been highlighted from talking and reading, in writing such as concept words (colour names, number words)	use self-selected vocabulary from talking and reading, in writing such as homophones (blue/blew)	use a variety of self-selected vocabulary from talking and reading, in writing such as onomatopoeia (buzz, plop, hiss, zoom)	recognize and use a large body of words that appear in text and are appropriate to the topic
engage actively in conversations about text such as turn and talk	use language to agree, disagree or explain reasons for their opinion related to the text discussions	extend and elaborate in discussions centered around text	use language to express critical thinking
notice and use the visual features of text in writing (spacing, punctuation...)	notice and use author’s techniques to enhance writing (photographs, drawings, labels, point of view...)	notice, talk about and experiment with author’s techniques (building suspense, humor, empathy, point of view...)	notice, talk about and use author’s techniques to enhance writing (building suspense, humor, empathy, point of view...)
notice the author’s word choice and try it out in conversation and writing	discuss a favourite author’s style and use self-selected elements in writing	select specific and precise language from text and use with audience and purpose in mind	use specific vocabulary to argue, draw contrasts, or agree/disagree
notice the illustrator’s use of pictures, detail and colour and try it out in writing	notice and use the author’s/ illustrator’s text features and try out in writing	use self-selected text features in writing	use self-selected text features in writing
VIEWING SELF AS A WRITER			
engage in choice drawing and writing daily	engage in choice drawing and writing daily	engage in choice writing and illustrating daily	engage in choice writing and attend to how illustrations enhance a text and try it out daily
write routinely throughout the day for a purpose and audience	write routinely throughout the day for a range of purposes and audiences including content areas	write routinely throughout the day (extended time frames and shorter time frames) for a range of content areas, purposes and audiences	write routinely throughout the day (extended time frames and shorter time frames) for a range of content areas, purposes and audiences
generate ideas and make writing choices	generate ideas and make writing choices	generate ideas and make writing choices	select topics and ideas from a personal collection
self-select pieces of writing from personal a writing folder and share	self-select pieces of writing from a personal writing folder for a particular purpose (revise, publish, share, try a new technique...)	self-select pieces of writing from a personal writing folder for a particular purpose (revise, publish, share, try a new technique...)	self-select pieces of writing from a personal writing folder for a particular purpose (revise, publish, share, try a new technique...)
self-evaluate writing and discuss what is good about it and what techniques were used (teacher)	self-evaluate writing using co-constructed criteria and discuss possible next steps	self-evaluate writing using co-constructed criteria and discuss possible next steps	self-evaluate writing using co-constructed criteria and discuss

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talk about oneself as a writer	talk about oneself as a writer and participate in conversations that foster a writing community	talk about oneself as a writer and participate in conversations that foster a writing community	talk about oneself as a writer and participate in conversations that foster a writing community
think of what to work on next as a writer	seek on-going feedback on writing and goals	articulate goals as a writer and seek feedback to attain them	establish goals as a writer, seek feedback from peers or teacher and make plans to improve the writing
UNDERSTANDING HOW PRINT WORKS IN WRITING			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> directionality (left to right and top to bottom on a page, return sweep) print gives the message writing and drawing are related concept of word concept of letter identify first and last part of a story spacing between words one-to-one matching when reading their writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> print gives the message writing and drawing are related identify first, middle and last part of a story examine the purpose of punctuation use many letter-sound relationships (blends, digraphs, long and short vowels) use text features such as bold print, table of contents, glossary, headings/sub-headings, maps, drawings) 	begin to use new paragraphs when starting a new idea/topic	Use paragraphing for transitions in writing
WRITING PROCESS (STRATEGIC PROCESSING)			
Pre-Writing			
generate and expand on ideas in response to provocations that support curiosity and storytelling	generate and expand on ideas in response to learning experiences that support curiosity and storytelling	generate and expand on ideas in response to learning experiences that support curiosity and storytelling	generate and expand on ideas in response to learning experiences
orally tell stories from beginning to end and begin to identify audience	plan for writing based on purpose and audience orally and then in writing (i.e. graphic organizers, webs)	plan for writing based on purpose and audience orally and then in writing (i.e. graphic organizers, webs)	use sketching, webs, lists and free writing to think about, plan for and try out writing
tell a story from their point of view	talk about whose point of view the writing will represent	experiment with different points of view	develop writing from different points of view
realize that pictures and words on a page support and extend each other	plan a layout where pictures and words support and complement each other	plan a layout for writing appropriate to purpose and audience	choose helpful tools such as apps, webs, sketches, outlines and flow charts to plan a layout
generate ideas and topics from personal experiences	generate ideas and topics from personal experiences, interests and the work of others	generate relevant ideas and topics from experiences, interests, the work of others and the world around them	generate ideas and relevant details from experiences, interests, the work of others and the world around them
generate questions for further exploration of a topic	generate questions for further exploration of a topic and locate relevant sources for information	generate questions for further exploration of a topic and locate information from a range of relevant sources	generate questions to explore and locate sources for information about a topic, characters and/or setting
understand that writers write about things they know and share thoughts, feelings, and opinions	plan to write about things they know and share thoughts, feelings, and opinions	combine information from a variety of sources to think differently about a topic and use it in the planning stage	gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources and assess for credibility, bias and prejudice
draw pictures and record information to help develop and share ideas	draw pictures or record information to develop ideas for writing as appropriate	draw pictures and/or record information to develop ideas for writing as appropriate	sketch or record information to create an outline for writing

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<i>Drafting and Revising</i>			
write about a wide variety of topics	choose from a variety of genres and forms to write about a meaningful topic and explain your choice	choose from an expanded variety of genres and forms to write about a meaningful topic and explain your choice	choose from an expanded variety of genres and forms to write about a meaningful topic and explain your choice embed genres within the text to create hybrid text
write about a single idea	expand writing using supportive details and examples, using simple and compound sentences	expand writing using supportive details and examples, using simple, compound and complex sentences	strengthen the writing by rereading and adding additional details that provide further explanation, clarify points and add interest
place titles and headings in the appropriate place on a page	use illustrations and text features (labeled pictures, diagrams, scaled drawings, headings, page numbers) to guide the reader	use illustrations and text features (scaled drawings, headings, diagrams, captions, table of contents, index, glossary, graphics, placement of text) to guide the reader	incorporate a range of book and print features to create a hybrid text
use known oral language in writing even if unsure how to spell some words	apply a wider range of spelling strategies resulting in more conventional spelling of increasingly complex words	apply a wider range of spelling strategies to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spell increasingly complex words monitor own spelling by noticing when words do not look right 	apply a wider range of spelling strategies to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitor own spelling by noticing when words do not look right take apart and spell multisyllabic words use common prefixes, suffixes, inflectional endings, contractions, plurals and compound words and homonyms correctly
write unfamiliar words by recording prominent sounds	apply spelling strategies to write unfamiliar words	apply spelling strategies to write many unfamiliar words conventionally	apply spelling strategies using word patterns (prefix, suffix and root) to write unfamiliar words
write high frequency words accurately	vary word choice so that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> high frequency words are not overused transition words connect ideas language describes how something looks, smells, tastes, feels, or sounds 	vary word choice to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a variety of simple and complex sentences interesting description and dialogue a variety of connectives (although, therefore, unless, whenever) a range of descriptive words to enhance meaning strong verbs and nouns sensory images 	vary word choice to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interesting description and dialogue a variety of connectives (although, therefore, unless, whenever) transitions are skillful and varied to achieve better flow a range of descriptive words to enhance meaning strong verbs and nouns sensory images content words and academic vocabulary
show evidence of using language from mentor texts that have been read aloud	show evidence of using language from mentor texts that have been read aloud	learn from other writers by emulating their use of words, phrases and sentences	learn from other writers by emulating their ideas or techniques
use vocabulary appropriate to the topic	use memorable words or phrases appropriate to the topic	use memorable words or phrases appropriate to the topic	use phrases or sentences that are striking or memorable
recognize and experiment with new vocabulary	develop and use the language of different genres	use the vocabulary specific to the genre, the topic or a content area	vary language used and vocabulary as appropriate to audience and purpose
include details in the drawings or writing that the audience needs to know	understand the importance of the lead in a story or a non-fiction piece and experiment within writing	use a variety of leads in a story or a non-fiction piece	use a purposeful and engaging lead appropriate to the story or non-fiction piece

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reread writing each day for meaning or before adding to a piece of writing	reread each day to <ul style="list-style-type: none">maintain the thread of writing from previous daysclarify meaning	reread and reflect each day to <ul style="list-style-type: none">provide further explanationclarify meaningadd interest and supporting points	reread and reflect each day to <ul style="list-style-type: none">think about what to write nextprovide further explanationclarify meaning and purposeadd interest and supporting pointswork on transitions to achieve better flow
use drawings to support memory and help in planning	use drawings and sketches to <ul style="list-style-type: none">support memory and help in planningcapture details important to a topic	understand the difference between drawing and sketching and use them to support drafting and revision	use sketching to create a quick representation to hold thinking
make decisions about where to place drawings and words on a page	make decisions about where to place text features such as photographs with legends, side bars and graphics	make decisions about where to place text features such as photographs with legends, inserts, side bars and graphics	make decisions about where to place text features such as photographs with legends, inserts, side bars and graphics
add to drawings to expand on a single idea	add labels or sentences to drawings as needed to increase the reader’s understanding	add labels or sentences to drawings as needed to increase the reader’s understanding and interest	add details to drawings to add information or increase interest
draw or write with a beginning, middle, and end	write a story that has a beginning, a series of things happening and an ending	write stories that have a beginning, a series of events and an ending	write an engaging lead, a descriptive middle, and a satisfying conclusion
draw or write an information text with a single idea	write an informational text that has introductory and summary sentences	write informational text that provides interesting supporting details particular to the topic (types of dogs, features of dogs, jobs dogs do)	write informational text that help readers think in new ways about a subject or topic
understand that writers can change their writing in response to feedback	reflect on and make decisions in response to peer or teacher feedback	reflect on and make decisions in response to peer or teacher feedback	reflect on and make decisions in response to peer or teacher feedback
reorganize and revise writing to better express their meaning (reorder drawings or pages or cut and paste)	understand that revision makes written messages stronger and clearer to readers	understand that revision makes written messages stronger and clearer to readers	understand that when revising the writer makes decisions of how to communicate meaning to the reader
use a variety of words to indicate dialogue	use a variety of words to indicate dialogue of multiple characters	use a variety of words to indicate dialogue of multiple characters	understand how to transition dialogue between characters
<i>Editing and Proofreading: using Co-constructed Criteria</i>			
edit for <ul style="list-style-type: none">spacingspelling approximations by making another attemptnotice letters/words that do not look right and make another attemptcorrect letter formation or orientation and periodscapital letters (beginning of sentence, names and “I”)	use an editing and proofreading checklist to edit for <ul style="list-style-type: none">capitals, end punctuation and sentence structureconventional spelling of known wordsspelling errors by circling words that may not look right and use reference tools (personal word list, word wall, peer, text) to make another attemptcapital letters (beginning of sentence, names and “I”, proper nouns, titles)	use an editing and proofreading checklist to edit for <ul style="list-style-type: none">capitals, punctuation and sentence structureconventional spelling of known wordsspelling errors by circling words that may not look right and use reference tools (personal word list, word wall, peer, text) to make another attemptcapital letters (beginning of sentence, names and “I”, proper nouns, titles, as a text feature or to impact the reader and emphasize a thought)	use an editing and proofreading checklist to edit for <ul style="list-style-type: none">capitals, punctuation and sentence structurequotation marks that indicate dialogue and direct quotesconventional spelling of known wordsspelling errors by circling words that may not look right and use reference tools (personal word list, word wall, peer, text) to make another attempt

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use tools such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cross out words with a pencil or marker add or remove pages in a self-made book add words letters or phrases using a caret or sticky note 	reorder the information in a text to make the meaning clearer by cutting apart, cutting and pasting, laying out pages and using technology	add words, letters or sentences using a variety of techniques (caret, sticky notes, technology)	use standard symbols for revising and editing
confer with peers or teachers to ensure that writing can be read by others	confer with peers or teachers to ensure that writing can be read by others	confer with peers or teachers to improve the writing	confer with peers or teachers, consider suggestions and make final editing changes
<i>Publishing</i>			
when finished a piece of writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> talk about it to others read it aloud to others 	understand publishing as the sharing of a piece of writing with a purpose and an audience in mind	understand publishing as the sharing of a piece of writing with a purpose and an audience in mind	understand the purpose of publishing and the various forms it can take
use labels and captions on drawings/illustrations that draw attention to detail	in anticipation of an audience, add book and text features to the text during the publishing process	in anticipation of an audience, add book and text features (cover page, citing sources of information ...) to the text during the publishing process	in anticipation of an audience, add book and text features (cover page, citing sources of information, illustrations and other graphics, dedication, about the author, headings and sub headings ...) to the text during the publishing process
in collaboration with others, create illustrations to enhance a piece of group writing	select best pieces of writing from one’s own collection and give reasons for the selections	select best pieces of genre writing from one’s own collection and give reasons for the selections	select best pieces of genre writing from one’s own collection and decide options for publishing (poster, brochure, video with storyboard ...)
share a self-selected drawing or piece of writing with others	self-select a piece of writing to publish and present to an audience	use a variety of ways to publish and share pieces after each unit of study such as websites, blogs, plays, video, books, magazines, info-graphics etc.	use a variety of ways to publish and share pieces after each unit of study such as websites, blogs, Twitter, plays, video, books, magazines, info-graphics etc.