

EXCERPTS ONLY

MIDDLE SCHOOL



WRITE BRAIN™ A³

ACTIVE, AUTHENTIC, AUTHORSHIP:
A SUPPLEMENTAL ELA & ELD
LITERACY PROGRAM

Narrative & Creative Writing
English Language Arts & Development
Scaffolded Project-Based Literacy
Collaborative & Independent Authoring
Imbedded Social-Emotional Learning
Writing, Reading, Speaking, Listening
Tangible & Digital Publishing of Student-Authored Books

ROBUST ACTIVITY PLANS



PART ONE: Group Authorship		Student Collaboration		Middle Educator's Guide	
Pace	Activity Title	Objective	Materials	Page	
Activity 1	From Words to Winners	To activate communication skills, comprehension of ideas, and making connections.	Pre-project survey sheet, Story Builder card for each group, paper	10	
Activity 2	Every Picture tells your Story	To increase student comprehension, connection, and collaboration	Sheet of paper & pencils for each, story builder cards for each	11	
Activity 3	Group Book Selection- Who is our Artist?	To Help kids understand collaboration and commitment as they dive into the group authoring process!	3 different WB books for each group	12	
Activity 4	Get Your Game On!	To feel safe to share and create	Story Builder Cards Gamesheet, story cards, Adjective Alley Word sheet	13	
Activity 5	Characters & Creative Vocabulary	To give kids a sense of connection to their work, their readers, and their fellow authors.	Story cards, Adjective Alley Word sheet	14	
Activity 6	Creating Characters	To develop comprehension and critical thinking.	Group WB Books, Character development worksheet, adjective alley worksheets,	15	
Activity 7	Starting with Story line	To experience heightened creativity, connection, and critical thinking.	Story planning worksheet, character development worksheet,	15	
Activity 8	Hidden Moments-Stretching Story Points	To experience creativity, collaboration, and communication.	WB books	16	
Activity 9	Words Paint Places	Nothing is more important than how a story starts and ends!	SAMPLE snapshot passages on the Describing Settings - Sample Texts, Leads & Conclusions worksheets, familiar children's book	17	
Activity 10	Dynamic Dialogue	To understand that writers often change their ideas or get new ones throughout the writing process	Group WB books	18	
Activity 11	Spelling & Punctuation Pass	To continue to exhibit ways to fine tune writing	WB Books, Basic Punctuation & Grammar Chart	19	
Activity 12	Know your audience: Who's reading our story-book?	To listen to see if the story flows, makes sense, and is exciting for a young reader	Group WB book	19	
Activity 13	Giving Feedback	To experience confidence and connection while critically thinking and communicating opinions and concepts.	Group WB books	20	
Activity 14	Titles and Dedications	To inspire emotional connection and collaboration.	Write Brain books, Dedication & About the Author Worksheet	21	
Activity 15	Prepare to Present!	To elevate student courage and commitment. The act of speaking or presenting publicly elevates self-esteem and confidence while enhancing communication and connection.	Write Brain books	22	
Activity 16	Time to Type!	To review and edit with a grammatical focus	WB books, digital Book Builder and directions, digital camera	22	
Activity 17	Relax and Reflect	To elevate self-esteem and confidence	Reflective Personal Essay Worksheet	23	



PART TWO: Individual Authorship		Student Creativity & Empowerment		Middle Educator's Guide	
Pace	Activity Title	Objective	Materials	Page	
Activity 18	Take it to the Mat!	To spark critical thinking and curiosity in your students.	WB story mats (1 for each student), student journal or paper, WB worksheet sets for each student	24	
Activity 19	Get intense! Past vs. Present	To experience and explore the writing process.	Yesterday's story mats, directions on pg. 25 of manual	25	
Activity 20	Musical Books	To reflect, collaborate and discuss ideas in a safe environment.	Student appropriate music, Full set of WRITE BRAIN books,	26	
Activity 21	Worksheet Workout	To have time for quiet, focused creativity and critical thinking.	Individual WRITE BRAIN books (worksheets), student notebooks	26	
Activity 22	The First Draft	To increase sense of confidence and continue to grow as writers.	WB book Drafts, student notebooks	27	
Activity 23	Peer Editing	To increase sense of confidence and continue to grow as students present and communicate verbally with their peers.	WB book Drafts, Positive Feedback Worksheet	27	
Activity 24	Story Stretching-Making More of Moments	To enrich student critical thinking, and communication skills.	WB books, Adjective Alley Word Sheet,	28	
Activity 25	The Last Pass!	To demonstrate understanding of persuasive and critically review work for punctuation/grammar.	WB books, Basic Punctuation and Grammar Chart, Story Cards	28	
Activity 29	Dedication and Author's Bio	To explore the author's story and who to dedicate the book to.	WB Books, Dedication & About the Author Worksheet, Author's Certificates	29	
Activity 30	From Pencil to Page	To heighten creativity while transferring the story from notes in notebook to legible writing in the WB Workbook.	WB books, digital Book Builder	30	
Activity 31	New Authors Present	Authors read their books aloud to one another! To build comprehension and confidence while learning to express new ideas.	White board, WB books, projector	31	
Activity 32	Relax and Reflect	To reflect in writing about the authoring experience.	Author Journal, WB book	31	
Activity 33	Publishing Individual Books	To upload the complete spell checked version.	Digital Book Builder, WB books	32	
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Hello!

Welcome to the WRiTE BRAiN BOOKS — a whole new world of exciting writing experiences!

This program is designed to introduce your students to a creative writing process unlike any other. Your students will develop written communication skills as they plan, author, and edit original stories inspired by the vivid illustrations in our books. The sequential images created by our artists sidestep the most daunting aspect of creative writing—the blank page—and provide a jumping-off point for children to express themselves on paper. The tangible nature of our books entices even the most tech-savvy kids to take a step back from their screens and immerse themselves in the task of writing by hand. The open-ended format will appeal to each individual child's learning strengths while assisting you in identifying where there is room for growth.

"Disguised Learning"

Warning: Students become personally invested in the act of writing when they are given creative freedom. Don't be alarmed if your students - driven to have their stories heard and understood - take a sudden interest in grammar, spelling, and vocabulary!

Students Will:

- Author stories inspired by WRiTE BRAiN's compelling, colorful, and sequential book illustrations
- Learn to give and receive peer feedback
- Learn to work collaboratively and independently
- Learn to consider the "reader" of their soon-to-be completed book
- Activate under-developed parts of the brain
- Improve handwriting skills
- Learn to present their work aloud, both clearly and creatively
- Have their completed stories professionally published into books they can have, hold, and share with family, friends, and perhaps even their own children later in life

Students Will Develop Skills in the Following Areas (and More):

- Storytelling
- Creative writing
- Reading comprehension
- Collaboration and critique
- Cursive and print handwriting
- Vocabulary
- Use of descriptive language
- Outlining
- Sequencing and plotting a storyline
- Sentence structure
- Spelling
- Grammar and punctuation
- Presenting aloud
- Thesaurus and dictionary use
- Proofreading and editing
- Peer editing



Group Authoring Sample Activity: Creating Characters & Creative Vocabulary

1. In order to generate ideas about character development, ask the class to talk about characters they know and love from books, movies, and TV shows. Have students share aloud.

Sample Questions:

- Who are some characters you will never forget? Why won't you forget them?
 - What are the personality traits of these characters?
 - Think about one character you admire. What does this character LOOK like? How would you describe this character?
2. Explain that while they are creating characters, descriptive words will help them be more specific and detailed in their writing.
 3. Give each group their WRiTE BRAiN BOOK and let them take a few minutes to look through it and remind themselves of the images and visual story.
 4. Have each group brainstorm a list of adjectives that describe the main character and secondary characters.
 5. Pass out copies of the [Adjective Alley Worksheets](#) and tell them they can keep and reference the word sheets in other classes during their school day.
 6. Ask the students to compare the list of descriptive words they brainstormed with the list on the handout. Instruct them to search for words that may describe the characters even more fully than the first words they thought of.



Group Authoring Sample Activity: Hidden Moments – Stretching Story Points

1. Tell your student authors that stretching out and embellishing important parts in stories is important.
2. Read this sample passage:

“Vonetta shrieked, then stuck her thumb in her mouth. Fern bit down on Miss Patty Cake’s pink plastic arm. I kept my whimper to myself. It was bad enough my insides squeezed in and stretched out like a monkey grinder’s accordion – no need to let anyone know how frightened I was.”

- *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia

3. Engage students in conversation about making thoughtful choices as to which moments to stretch.
4. With their book’s theme in mind, ask your students to work together to expand the narrative by revealing “hidden moments” in their WRiTE BRAiN BOOK.

ASK THEM:

- a. What is happening in the story that is NOT on the page in the pictures?
 - b. What are the characters thinking and feeling?
 - c. What might have happened between the characters that we can’t see?
5. Send the groups off to continue collaborating and working in their notebooks.
 6. Ask them to be conscious of stretching big moments as they work.
 7. Invite students to read their stretched story moments to you for feedback.
 8. Ask for volunteers to read their story stretchers aloud with the whole group.

Students experience **creativity, collaboration, and communication**.



Group Authoring Sample Activity: The Artist & Author Partnership

1. Students will use their worksheets for reference as they write.
2. Writers often change their ideas from the planning stages to first draft writing, so encourage students not to worry about mistakes, cross-outs, and revisions along the way.
3. Ask students to discuss the artists who illustrated their stories and what it means to respect the artwork. Explain that although they are expected to write on the lines provided, they are not expected to add to the drawings. "How would you feel if someone began to draw on a piece of art you had carefully created?" "Why should we respect our partners, the illustrators?" *Although this may seem obvious, it is an important discussion to have.*
4. Have students volunteer to introduce the group's illustrator by name and perhaps share something they learned about their illustrator by reading the "About the Illustrator" section at the back of their group book.
5. Ask students to share something they appreciate about the style of their illustrator. All of this reflection and sharing builds on the importance of the relationship each student is building with the illustrator.

Students will gain a sense of **commitment** to the illustrator and to the project itself.

The responsibility your students will feel to tell the story as best as they can is intensified when they learn to see themselves as an equal partner with the illustrator.

Teacher's Prep:

Have as many dictionaries on hand as possible. One for each group is ideal.



Writing Tools Application Week

Make a new set of copies of the WB worksheets and hand them out to each student. They will be thrilled to have and apply tools they are now familiar with as they make their own stories come to life on the pages of their WRiTE BRAiN BOOKS.

Block Five

Activity: Take it to the Mat!

1. Give a WRiTE BRAiN Story Mat to each student. They will each also need a sheet of paper.
2. Tell the students to examine the large image on their Story Mat. Then, tell them to use their imaginations (and what they see) to generate a list of ideas about the characters, setting and what's happening in the image. They should write the word "Now" at the top of this list.
3. Invite students to share their "Now" lists aloud with the rest of the group. Next, students will repeat the list-making process with the smaller "Before" image at the bottom, generating ideas about what might have happened before the moment in the image.
4. After they have completed their "Before" lists, students will repeat the process for the smaller "After" image.
5. Next, tell students to take their lists labeled "Before," "Now," and "After," and combine their ideas to craft a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end.
6. As an optional final step, give students a few additional minutes to revise their first draft stories by adding a few sensory details, including colors, sounds, smells, and sensations.
7. Finally, invite students to present their descriptive second draft stories to the rest of the class.
8. Have them write their final short stories on their mats, and ask them to use their best handwriting.

Hang all of the Story Mats on the wall or in the hall to create a colorful STORY GALLERY!



This activity will spark **critical thinking** and **curiosity** in your students.

Note: While this activity plan states that each student handwrite the final draft of their short story directly onto the Story Mat, we encourage you to have them write all versions notebook paper so that you may collect and redistribute a different Story Mat to each student. This allows for every student to author a story for every illustrated Story Mat before they handwrite onto the Story Mat they will add to the Story Gallery your class will hang for all to see and read!

Activity: Get inTENSE! Past vs. Present

1. **Read this passage aloud to your students:** *The young warrior wants to fight the dragon more than anything. She is determined to do it, so she finds a way. She works secretly at night to practice the sword fighting moves she has observed the men practicing during the day.*
2. **Now read this passage aloud:** *The young warrior wanted to fight the dragon more than anything. She was determined to do it, so she found a way. She worked secretly at night to practice the sword fighting moves she had observed the men practicing during the day.*
3. Ask students to reflect on the difference they heard between the two passages written in present and past tenses.
4. Have students identify the tense of the Story Mat tale they wrote. Using the Story Mat, ask students to rewrite the same story in a different tense. (If they wrote the first story in the past tense, this version can be written in the present tense, or vice versa.)

Activity: Musical Books!

IDEALLY, YOU HAVE MUSIC YOU CAN PLAY FOR THE FIRST PART OF TODAY'S SESSION. Perhaps you have songs in the music library on your cell phone. Make sure the song you play is appropriate for students. If you can't access music, you can clap rhythmically to create a "musical chairs" device.

1. Set all of the WRiTE BRAiN BOOKS (cover down, so the image is NOT showing) on the desks/tables, one in front of each student. *If there is an open space in the room, you can also put all of the books face down on the floor, forming a large circle of books!*
2. Have your middle-schoolers each stand in front of one of the books and instruct them NOT to pick up the book in front of them and not to flip it over to see the cover artwork.
3. **Ask if anyone knows how to play the game Musical Chairs.** In this case, students will move around the room or circle while you play a song (or clap rhythmically), and the second the music or clapping stops, they must find themselves in front of one of the books you set out.

Activity: Pointing to Perspectives: Flexible Thinking

1. Start the day by forming groups of 4 or 5 students.
2. Give each group one Story Builder Card and give each student one piece of paper.
3. Have the groups discuss the two images on the Story Builder Card they were given and to choose one of the illustrations. Each writer in the group will craft a short story for the image they are all looking at.
4. SET A TIMER FOR ONLY 3 MINUTES AND INSTRUCT EVERYONE TO WRITE!
5. When time is up, ask for 2 volunteers from each group to read their version of the Story Builder Card they had, while a member of their group walks around showing the image to the others. Tell them to listen for all the DIFFERENCES between the stories corresponding to the exact SAME pictures.
6. Start a discussion about perspective! Two different people wrote different stories about the same exact image. Each person brings his or her own lens to each moment and experience.
7. Discuss with students what it means to be a flexible thinker. Being flexible thinkers can enable us to be more effective problem solvers and problem finders, help us to foster creativity and innovation, and allow us to identify and realize promising opportunities.

Explain that in every area of life there will always be more than one point of view, since every person is unique and the most important part of this activity is making sure the students grasp the concept of perspective. We may not like someone's point of view, but we want to be able to accept it.

Note: STORY CARDS FOR ALL!

At the end of your WRiTE BRAiN BOOKS program, send each student home with a Story Card and a copy of the Story Builder Cards Gamesheet in this curriculum guide. Encourage them to play some of the writing and storytelling games they did in class. Motivate them to share the double-sided illustrated card with a sibling, parent, or other family member and to teach them to do what they themselves learned in the authoring process. Your students become mentors and educators at home!



Worksheet Examples

Setting Snapshots Support Sheet

High School Level Writing Prompts

Use the prompts and questions below to guide you in note taking and development of your setting/environment for different scenes in your WRITE BRAIN BOOK.

SETTING DEVELOPMENT:

What feeling is the illustrator trying to invoke with the images on the first few pages of your book?

When you look at the illustrations, does the environment depicted in the work provoke a sense of hope, happiness, fear, worry, sadness, excitement?

Write a list of descriptive words that describe the setting. Use all of your senses. Consult a thesaurus or the Adjective Alley sheets for expanded vocabulary.

Use the following prompts:

Setting Snapshots Worksheet

Author's Name _____
Illustrator's Name _____

Page # _____ Snapshot _____

Page # _____ Snapshot _____

Positive Feedback for the Author Worksheet

Positive Feedback

Reviewer

Self Assessment Checklist

(Please make copies for all students)

Student Name _____

Date _____

GROUP AUTHORSHIP	Complete	Incomplete	Teachers Comments
Collaboration skills			
Compelling lead			
Consulted reference materials			
Theme clearly embedded			
Setting Snapshots incorporated			
Clear plotline			
Utilizing new vocabulary			
Characters are fully developed			
Thoughtful word choice (descriptive language)			
Enhanced moments in the story			
Thoughtful conclusion			
Self-edited for punctuation and other conventions			
Story pace and tempo is intentional			
Respecting your illustrator's point of view			
Group feedback process			
Clear understanding of a children's audience			
Well thought out title, bio and dedication			
Reflective Essay is introspective and has clear expression			
INDIVIDUAL AUTHORSHIP	Complete	Incomplete	Teachers Comments
Self-directed writing			
Stories tense is past or present			
Engaged-Share-Focus-Listen			
Self-Edit: punctuation and spelling			
Presented aloud to others			

Pliable Plotlines Support Sheet

High School Level Writing Prompts

Consider these questions and use your answers as a guide to map out your book's plotline in your notebook. Use this Support Sheet for both group and individual authoring.

- Who are the characters and how are they related to each other?
- Where is this story taking place?
- Does the setting change from the beginning to the end of the story?
- What is the problem or conflict in the story?
- Who is struggling or in need of something in this story?
- What is happening in or need of something in this story? Will it happen next?
- What is the built up excitement?
- How do the characters react to the excitement?
- What do the characters do?
- How can you help the characters?
- Are the characters happy?
- How does this change or not change?
- What lessons are learned?
- What purpose does the story serve?

Creating Character Support Sheet

Use the questions below to guide you in note taking and development of your main and secondary characters in your Write Brain Book. You can make notes on this sheet and in your notebooks.

- What are the qualities and personality traits of the character in your book that draw you to them?
- What can you write in your story that would make a few characters memorable?
- How would you describe the behaviors or personality of characters of your storybook?
- What do these characters SAY (words) that will stay in the reader of your story?
- How do YOU relate to each character in your storybook?

Am I a WRITE BRAIN THINKER?

(Pre- and Post-Project Survey for Grades 9th, 10th, 11th & 12th)

Student Name _____

Date _____

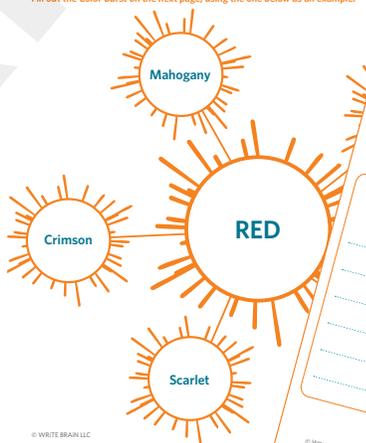
Use this pre and post survey to measure student skills in English and Language-Arts before you begin using the WRITE BRAIN program and following the presentation at the end of the WRITE BRAIN program. Have students read each sentence and check the box that applies to them.

	ALWAYS	MOST TIMES	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
I am confident in my writing skills					
I can organize my ideas in a helpful manner					
My ideas are worth sharing					
I use words and language to create specific details					
I work well when collaborating with others					
I like to use informational texts (encyclopedias, etc.) to support my writing					
I like to use the plotline of a story					

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: COLOR BURSTS

Step 1: Look at a Story Card, Story Mat, or page of your Wordless Book and list all of the colors you see in the images.

Step 2: Now, be more specific in describing the different shades of each of the three colors you listed in Step 1. Fill out the Color Burst on the next page, using the one below as an example.



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: CREATE YOUR COLOR MAPS

Step 1: Flip through the pages of your wordless book and write a list of all the colors you see in the images.

Step 2: Now, be more specific in describing the different shades of each of these three primary colors.

Blue:
Shades (eg. teal):

Orange:
Shades (eg. pumpkin):

Yellow:
Shades (eg. lemon):

Reflective Personal Essay

Author's Name _____



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