Helping your child to be successful

In earlier grades, your child developed many skills in reading and writing. Although he or she is becoming increasingly independent, you can continue to help him or her on the path to being an effective reader and writer.

Understanding Provincial Achievement Standards in Reading and Writing

Helping your child to be successful

You can be involved in building your child's writing skills.

Encouragement

- Encourage your child to pursue forms of writing that interest him or her. He or she might begin an online space to share her/his ideas and events.
- Help your child if he or she has an online space, request an invitation to contribute.
- Encourage your child to ask the questions on the attached bookmark.
- Point out the specific strengths of your child's writing. For example, "I love the colourful details you used in this part."

Focus

- Help your child see that people write for many purposes (e.g., to do lists, blogs, emails).
- Write your own good penmanship and punctuation to make it easy for the reader to understand your message.
- Writers who read develop stronger writing skills. Encourage any form of reading, such as comics, graphic novels or blogs.

Recognize the Signs of a Successful Writer.

Teachers look at six areas of a student's writing to identify success, as reflected in the Provincial Achievement Standards for the end of Grade 6. The Troubled Waters story on this page is an example of acceptable writing by a student at the end of Grade 6.

Content includes the ideas and details of the piece of writing. In the Troubled Waters example, the writer has focused on a specific topic (the surfering incident) and included details to support the main idea (Melissa nodded happily...and too far from shore to be heard).

Organization involves the structure and form of the writing (letter, story, report, etc.). This includes the order and grouping of ideas. The story Troubled Waters is written in a logical order and has a clear beginning, middle and end. The paragraph divisions are appropriate and helpful to the reader.

Sentence Structure means the writer uses a variety of sentence types. In Troubled Waters, the writer used different kinds of sentences, including some complex ones (Amber was being lifted up into the ambulance when she saw Melissa).

Voice shows that the student cares about the topic and understands how to interest the reader. The writing gives glimpses of the writer's personality. (Are you going to teach me to do that corkscrew today?)

Conventions include spelling, punctuation and grammar. All of the common words in Troubled Waters are spelled correctly. Quotation marks, commas and other punctuation marks are used properly in most places.

Word Choice means that descriptive and interesting words are used. Some examples from Troubled Waters are: gleaming, noticed and crashing of the waves.

Awareness

- Help your child see that people write for many purposes (e.g., to do lists, blogs, emails).
- Writers used good penmanship and punctuation to make it easy for the reader to understand their message.
- Writers who read develop stronger writing skills. Encourage any form of reading, such as comics, graphic novels or blogs.

End of Grade 6

Be a successful writer.

Reflect on your writing by asking these questions:

- Did I select a specific topic and support my ideas with relevant details?
- Choose a form that suits my purpose?
- Include an introduction and a conclusion?
- Put my ideas in order and organize them into paragraphs?
- Use interesting and descriptive words that say what I mean?
- Write with my audience in mind and show that I care about the topic?
- Include different kinds and lengths of sentences with varied beginnings?
- Use interesting and descriptive words that say what I mean?
- Use correct punctuation?

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Tear off this bookmark for tips to help your child read and write.
Recognize the signs of a successful reader.

In Grade 6, your child will read a variety of literature and non-fiction that covers a range of topics beyond his or her personal experiences. Some of these will have more mature ideas that deal with human problems, such as war, hardship or racism.

You and your child's teacher can tell whether your child is reading successfully by watching for growth in the following reading behaviors, taken from the Provincial Achievement Standards for the end of Grade 6.

Before reading:
- Can I summarize what I have read?
- What do I already know about this topic?
- What do I think this will be about?
- What do I know about this kind of text (poem, recipe, news article) that will help me understand?

During reading:
- Are there challenging parts where I need to slow down or reread?
- Can I use context clues or other reading strategies to figure out difficult words?
- Can I use clues, such as word order and word parts (prefixes, suffixes and root words), to solve longer words in all subjects?
- What do I visualize as I am reading?