# Overview: Sample Early Literacy Observation Form Focused on Writing

icon of pen in ink jar to represent author **CONTRIBUTOR**

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Icon of a document with lines of text and a folded corner**WHAT is this resource?**

This is an example of an Early Literacy Observation Form that focuses on how the teacher demonstrates engagement with complex text.  The lesson on which the observation is based can be found on this YouTube video, entitled *Summary Sentence: A 3rd grade lesson based on the work of Judith Hochman and the Writing Revolution -* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhFyTutR3LA>.

Icon of a calendar with multiple blocks to represent time **WHEN could this resource be used?**

This resource could be used during the practicum semester to show a Teacher Candidate an example of what a completed observation form might look like, particularly one where the focus is on early literacy instruction in writing.  In addition, this resource could be used in an Educator Preparation Program’s professional development to help Program Supervisors and faculty calibrate their observation reports.

Icon with a group of five people standing together  **WHO could use this resource?**

The faculty member responsible for preparing Teacher Candidates for the practicum, as well as the **Program Supervisor, Supervising Practitioner** and **Teacher Candidate** could all use this resource.

**icon with a checkmark in a circle HOW could this resource best be used?**

This resource is not only helpful for Teacher Candidates to understand the expectations for an Early Literacy observation, but this resource can also be used in the training of Program Supervisors so that they all have the same understanding of the details and notes to record during an observation, especially one in which the focus is on early literacy and the ability of a Teacher Candidate to provide instruction on writing.

***Note:*** *This resource was submitted for inclusion in the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP) Resource Hub. It is intended to serve as a reference and source of guidance for others engaged in the CAP process. While it reflects one approach, users should adapt its content to fit the specific context and needs of their own evaluations.*

## Sample Early Literacy Observation Form Focused on Writing

**Relevant Early Literacy Look Fors (Grades PreK-3) for the component of the literacy block that focuses on foundational skills on pg. 5 of** [The Early Literacy Observation Tool](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/early-literacy-observation.html)**.**

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| ***Was the teacher…*** | ***Were the students…*** | ***Notes*** |
| * Providing explicit, standards-aligned instruction in sentence structure, conventions, craft, and/or writing process using culturally relevant curricular materials? (I-A-1) * Facilitating guided practice and application of writing skills using questions and tasks that support students to actively draw upon their backgrounds, make connections, examine their own and others’ perspectives, or help advance student thinking and actions about real-world issues? (II-A-1) * Providing models (e.g., exemplar texts, student samples, sharing their own writing)? (II-A-1) * Providing feedback on students’ writing that is timely, asset-based, and actionable? (II-A-1) * **When student responds with, "New York," he draws attention to that being in the United States and focuses on capitalizing United States** * **Stops by tables to offer support, monitor progress, and offer feedback** | * Practicing and applying skills in the context of culturally relevant and meaningful writing tasks? (I-A-1) * Demonstrating agency and choice in selecting and developing ideas, topics, or styles of writing? (II-B-2) * Writing for specific and grade-appropriate purposes and audiences (opinion, informative/explanatory, or narrative)? (I-A-1) * Engaging in discourse with the teacher and peers to extend their thinking and develop ideas for writing? (I-A-1) * Incorporating feedback from the teacher and peers into their writing? (II-A-1, II-B-2) * Interacting with the teacher and peers in ways characterized by mutual trust and positive, supportive relationships? (II-B-2) * Making visible learning progress towards mastery of grade-level ELA/literacy standards? (I-A-1) * **INDEPENDENT TASK: "Your responsibility is to write a summary sentence" - reminds them that they are only allowed to use one conjunction and to take all of their information from the graphic organizer to help them form a sentence - Students were able to complete the task successfully!** | **Objective: Today we are going to be writing a complex summary sentence about key details of Thomas Edison's life (previously read text as whole group)**   * **Graphic organizer passed out to help guide and structure student responses with 5 w's and how and a space for the summary sentence** * **Uses overhead projector to model and capture ideas  - "Blurt it" as a cue for whole group response** * **Partner discussions in between each section to share ideas and collaborate  - Students use a "me-too" motion with their hands to interact with peer responses and language like, "I think, I also think", when responding** * **Students bring their writing to the overhead projector to show the class and read their sentences - other students snap their fingers as a way of celebrating their peers** |

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| **Candidate Name:** | Sample Teacher – 3rd Grade |

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| **Observation Number:** | 2 | **Observation Type:** | Announced  ü Unannounced |
| **Observed by:** | Demo Teacher | **Role:** | Supervising Practitioner |

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| **Required Focus Elements** | Observed (Yes/No) |
| I-A-1 Subject Matter Knowledge | Yes |
| II-A-1 High Expectations and Support | Yes |
| II-B-2 Safe Learning Environment | Yes |

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| --- | --- |
| **Optional Elements** | Observed (Yes/No) |
| I-C-2 Adjustments to Practice |  |
| II-A-3 Inclusive Instruction | Yes |
| III-C-1 Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-Being |  |
| IV-A-1 Reflective Practice |  |

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| **Date of Lesson/Activity Observed:** |  |
| **Modality of Observation:** | In-person  ü Virtual, synchronous (Announced Observations only)  Virtual, asynchronous (Announced Observations only) |
| **Start Time:** | 11:15 am |
| **End Time:** | 11: 45 am |
| **Format:** | ü Whole Group  Small Group  One-on-One  ü Other (please describe below) PARTNER WORK |
| **Content Topic or Lesson Objective:** | Write a complex summary sentence about key details of Thomas Edison’s life |

**Active Evidence Collection** (may be entered below or on a separate form)

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| \*On separate writing look-fors form |

**Synthesized Evidence**

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| Element | Synthesized Evidence |
| I-A-1 Subject Matter Knowledge | The teacher demonstrates strong subject matter knowledge in writing instruction by effectively implementing a writing strategy to support students in composing complex summary sentences. The use of a structured graphic organizer shows a clear understanding of how to scaffold sentence construction using key details from a nonfiction text. The teacher models how to extract and organize information and highlights conventions (e.g., capitalizing “United States”), reinforcing grammar and content knowledge simultaneously. |
| II-A-1 High Expectations and Support | High expectations are evident in the structured, step-by-step approach to sentence writing, as well as in the consistent use of academic language and expectations for complete, accurate responses. Students are reminded to use only one conjunction and to rely on evidence from their organizer, which fosters precision and clarity in writing. The teacher consistently provides real-time feedback, monitors student understanding through partner talk, and guides students to focus on the most relevant information. Clear routines, such as partner discussions and response cues, are in place to maximize student engagement and accountability. |
| II-B-2 Safe Learning Environment | The teacher has established a supportive and inclusive classroom culture where students confidently engage in partner discussions and whole-group sharing. Norms for participation are clear—students use respectful phrases like “I think…” and “I also think…” and hand motions to indicate agreement. The use of affirming classroom rituals (e.g., snapping for peer responses) and playful teacher language (e.g., using “utensils” for pencils) helps create a positive, risk-friendly learning space where students feel valued and encouraged to share their ideas. |

| Element | Optional Elements, include if observed: |
| --- | --- |
| I-C-2 Adjustments to Practice | Not Observed |
| II-A-3 Inclusive Instruction | The teacher uses inclusive strategies by providing visual supports like a graphic organizer and encouraging partner discussions to engage all learners. Clear routines and participation cues foster a safe, predictable environment where students confidently share ideas. Individualized feedback during independent writing ensures students receive needed support. Celebratory gestures and authentic language instruction create a positive, respectful classroom culture that values diverse contributions and encourages academic risk-taking. |
| III-C-1 Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-Being | Not Observed |
| IV-A-1 Reflective Practice | Not Observed |

**Actionable Feedback**

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| **Area(s) of Strength:** | Structured writing support, student engagement through clear routines, Real-time feedback |
| Specific strategies or recommendations to continue to reinforce these strengths: | You effectively supported student writing by using a structured graphic organizer from *The Writing Revolution*, which helped students extract and organize key details to compose complex summary sentences. Continue modeling how to connect textual evidence to writing tasks, and reinforce grammar and conventions through meaningful, context-based instruction. Your consistent use of academic language, clear routines, and structured partner talk promotes high expectations and student engagement. Maintain your practice of providing scaffolded support and real-time feedback, as it fosters student confidence and supports skill development. The positive, inclusive classroom culture you’ve established encourages respectful dialogue and peer celebration, which supports a safe environment for academic risk-taking. Keep leveraging these strategies to sustain student motivation and participation. |
| **Area(s) for Growth:** | Balancing guided and independent practice, extension opportunities for advanced learners |
| Specific strategies or recommendations to improve in these areas: | To strengthen student independence during writing tasks, consider incorporating additional scaffolds or check-ins to support students as they transition from modeled instruction to independent work. This will help ensure that all students are confidently applying the skills you've taught. Reviewing pacing and ensuring clear transitions between guided and independent practice can also support student readiness and focus. Additionally, offering extension opportunities—such as sentence expansion challenges or follow-up prompts—can further engage students who complete tasks quickly and are ready for deeper application of skills. |