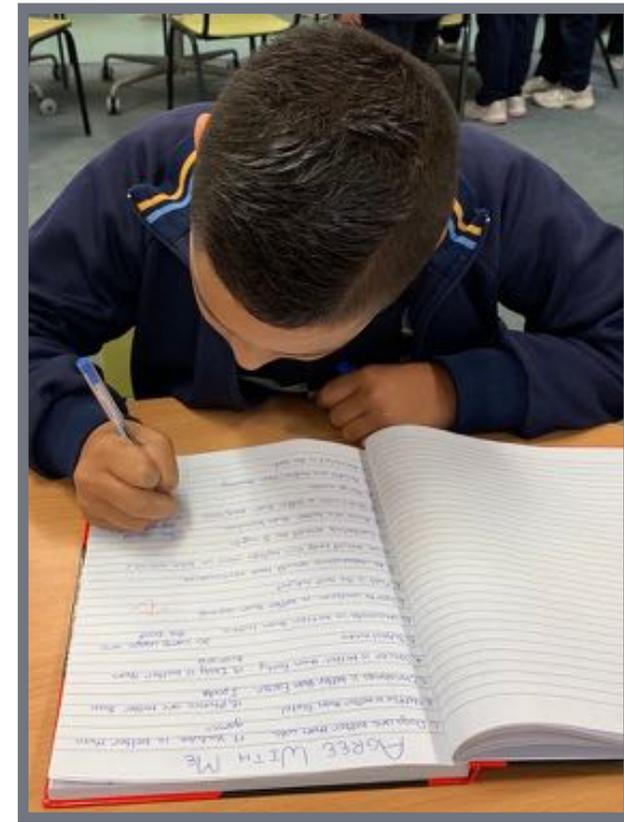
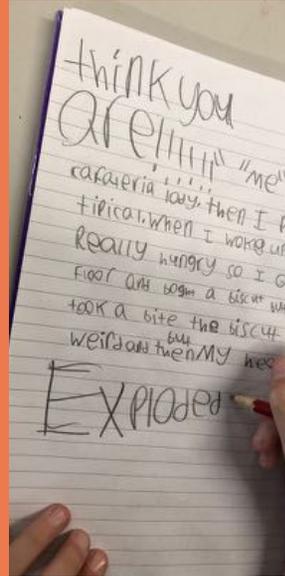
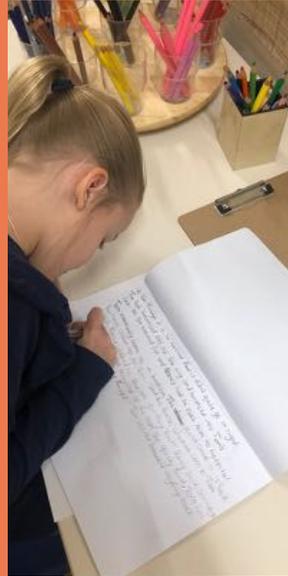


## Some things you might hear from young writers:

Novice writers learn to 'read like writers', noticing devices that writers and illustrators use to engage the reader, so they can try these in their writing too.

- **Grabber Lead** - devices to use intentionally that hook your reader in (beyond the 'One day...')
- **Sentence Fluency**- crafting a mix of sentence lengths and sentence beginnings to make writing easy and enjoyable to read aloud.
- **Show not Tell** - help your reader infer by showing details rather than telling the obvious (e.g.: "Tears ran down his face" vs. "He was upset.")
- **General to Specific**- using specific word choice (e.g.: Tim Tams vs. biscuits) to help the reader visualise.
- **Power of 3** - words, phrases or ideas are repeated 3 times on a page or in a text to provide rhythm when reading.
- **Diagrams with labels and captions** that teach the reader information.
- **Elaborating** by adding action, speech, thinking or comparison.
- **Topic Specific word choice** to give an authoritative voice (e.g.: 'snout' not 'nose' when describing native animal.)



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## What is a Writer's Notebook?

CHILDREN SEE THEMSELVES AS WRITERS

Lisa Burman  
Education Consultant

# Big Ideas

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A **Writer's Notebook** is a playground for ideas and words. It's where writers create, innovate and collect their ideas. It mirrors the ways many professional writers work and supports children to:

- see themselves as writers
- do the big, intellectual thinking of writing learn
- ways of thinking like a writer so they use their skills in many different ways and in different places (transference)
- develop critical and creative thinking
- be empowered to create texts that communicate their ideas
- build strong positive dispositions towards reading and writing

**Writer's Notebooks** are used within a **Writing Workshop**. The Workshop includes explicit, intentional teaching, 1:1 conferencing (like meeting with your editor for feedback) and time to share and reflect on the decisions made as writers. It builds a culture of thinking and a community of writers who support each other.

**Publishing** means making your writing public: sharing it with a wider audience. Not every piece of writing will be published, but teachers provide different opportunities throughout the year to share writing that is in-process, as well as some pieces that are lifted from the Notebook, developed, revised, edited for spelling and punctuation and then published. There are many ways to publish, from reading aloud, to creating an audio text, a picture book, an infographic or produce a play from an original script!

## Why we don't correct children's spelling:

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It's important to understand the role that **approximation** plays in learning. Think of a time you learnt something new - like driving a car, how to knit or learning to dance. My guess is you approximated quite a bit as you were learning. Remember those times of over-steering around a corner! We all approximate as we learn - it is a highly effective learning strategy.

Children use approximations in their writing as they learn more about how the English language works. In Primary schools, teachers engage children in learning about letters, sounds, morphemes (like base words, suffixes and prefixes) and the grammar of the English language through Word Study. **The Writer's Notebook** is where children practise the things they are learning about words. As their knowledge grows, so will their approximated spelling grow closer to conventional spelling.

**Spelling left uncorrected, does not mean that spelling is not being explicitly taught.**

Becoming an accurate speller also follows some developmental tracks. It begins with lines on a page and your toddler saying they are words. Then we start to notice more letter-like shapes, then random letter strings, spacing, initial and final sounds represented and some well-known words. Teachers assess a child's growth as a speller in many ways, including analysing these spelling approximations for what is known and any confusions and uncertainties.

## How do we assess a Writer's Notebook?

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When children see themselves as the writer, they are more likely to want to write. If everything you write is corrected, the focus becomes correct spelling, not creative and critical thinking. It often shuts down the bigger intellectual thinking and young writers become 'safe writers' - they only choose the words they can spell rather than the rich word choice devices they have been taught.

It's also important to understand that a lack of marking does not mean a lack of **assessment**. Teachers assess the entries in a **Writer's Notebook** in various ways and keep notes that help them know what to teach next. They map a child's growth as a writer over time, largely by assessing the writing in a Writer's Notebook. The Notebook give us an eye into what a child *really* knows and understands, because we know they have written this themselves.

**Conferences** are an essential part of Writing Workshops. They are a 1:1 conversation between writer and editor (teacher). Teachers analyse the writing process and entries, give feedback to the young writer and suggest a writing goal that helps this young writer grow. It is very personalised for YOUR child. Goals will be different for every child as the teacher sees the big picture and is able to prioritise what's most important for each child at that particular time.