

Writing Mini-Lesson

Trait: All

Strategy: Introducing the Traits (Year 3 – 6)

The traits provide a common language for talking about writing, and teaching each one of them helps students become stronger writers. Introducing the traits assists your students to get to know a simple framework, to analyse and discuss the work of authors, and to plan and revise their own writing.

The steps of this lesson are simple:

- Grab a picture book
- Introduce the traits using the prompts that follow
- Read the picture book
- Invite students make comments about the author's writing using the language of the traits. *What can you say about the author's use of the traits in this book?*

Remember: we're just getting started here, so the ideas your students come up with might be a little... wonky. That's terrific! They're making approximations toward using the language of the traits. Start with an introduction that's a little like this, but not exactly – you might have another metaphor for the traits. I've just spent the last three weeks trying to make my fried rice taste perfect; hence the 'secret sauce' analogy! Your analogy might have something to do with a sport, gardening, music – you get the idea.

I've just spent three weeks trying to perfect my fried rice so it's much tastier – it's usually a bit bland. It took a long time, but I found a secret sauce recipe online, and I figured out it was the ingredients in the sauce that made the difference!

Today, I'd like to reveal to you the secret sauce of writing. This sauce makes writing so much tastier! That secret sauce is the writing traits. Good writers don't just magically compose fantastic texts. They use the secret sauce of the seven writing traits to help them make their writing stronger and more effective. Here are the ingredients of the writing traits:

On your anchor chart, have the prompts already recorded – just choose one or two from here; you'll be discussing each one in greater detail as the year goes on. You'll then fill in the names of the traits, and any symbols, as you discuss. You might spend one mini-lesson on each trait. You'll know best what works for your students.

When we think about	We think about
Ideas	One topic, specific details to support the main ideas, fresh and original ideas, adding evidence or examples, how the readers' questions are anticipated and answered
Organisation	attention-grabbing leads, ends, the order, pacing (not too slow, not too fast), interesting title, smooth transitions between sections/ paragraphs
Voice	tone, the audience, fresh and original writing, emotion
Word Choice	Strong verbs, specific accurate words, interesting vocabulary
Sentence Fluency	Different lengths, different beginnings, sentences that sound good to the ears when we read them aloud
Conventions	Spelling, capitalisation, punctuation, grammar
Presentation	Handwriting, appropriate fonts and font sizes, bullets, illustrations, charts, graphs, amps, tables.



Sketch your anchor chart:



Relevant Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards

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1	
2	
3	By the end of Year 3, students understand how content can be organised using different text structures depending on the purpose of the text. They understand how language features, images and vocabulary choices are used for different effects.
4	By the end of Year 4, students understand that texts have different text structures depending on purpose and context. They explain how language features, images and vocabulary are used to engage the interest of audiences.
5	By the end of Year 5, students explain how text structures assist in understanding the text. They understand how language features, images and vocabulary influence interpretations of characters, settings and events.
6	By the end of Year 6, students understand how the use of text structures can achieve particular effects. They analyse and explain how language features, images and vocabulary are used by different authors to represent ideas, characters and events.

