

# Do the “Write” Thing!

## Teacher's Guide

Grades  
1-3

Writing and  
recycling lessons  
With a reproducible letter  
for parents

Brought to you by:



**American  
Forest & Paper  
Association**



[www.paperrecycles.org](http://www.paperrecycles.org)

## Dear Educator,

The *Do the "Write" Thing!* program, sponsored by the American Forest & Paper Association, aims to help you develop your students' ability to write clearly, correctly, and descriptively. This program also celebrates the beauty and uniqueness of paper products while discovering their renewable, recyclable, and sustainable nature.



To this end, we are providing lessons and a poster that encourage the art of writing and raise awareness of the importance of paper recycling. While paper recycling has reached record high levels in the U.S. (63.5 percent of the paper consumed was recovered in 2010), your students have an opportunity to help increase this level by recycling at home and at school and also helping the paper industry reach a goal to exceed 70 percent by 2020.

The activities within this guide engage students in written forms of communication in a fun and motivating way. Lesson plans are aligned to common core writing standards and can be used repeatedly. For tools and resources to assist with the lessons, please reference page 7 of this guide.

We hope this program will involve your students in authentic writing activities while they learn about the importance of recycling and the role they play in making sustainable choices for the future.

Your Friends at the  
American Forest & Paper Association



**American  
Forest & Paper  
Association**



# Activity 1

## The Right Kind of Writing

### Lesson Objective:

In this lesson, students will celebrate journal-keeping by creating a personal journal in which to keep a record of and reflect on their experiences.

### Before the Lesson:

- Ask students to bring in any journals or diaries that they or their families might have and would be willing to share. If you keep a journal yourself, be sure to bring it in to share with the class. Ask other staff members, including the school principal, to consider sharing their own present or former journal with the class.
- Source materials for students to create their own journals and prepare these for children to use. Alternatively, provide plain composition books or notebooks along with materials for students to use to create a personal cover.

Core Standard 3: Write narrative to develop real experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Core Standard 4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

Core Standard 10: Write routinely over extended time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### Time Needed:

1-2 hours

### Lesson Procedure:

- Display, share, and discuss the journals you, your students, and other staff members have brought in to school. If you have brought in a journal you have kept or are currently keeping, share with students how and why it is important to you. Encourage the students who have brought in journals to do the same.
- Examine and discuss the personal nature of paper journals, focusing on the cover, the handwriting, and any illustrations or cuttings. Ask students how these journals differ from documents written and saved on a computer.
- Explain that they are going to [make their own journals](#)<sup>1</sup> in which they can record and reflect on their experiences. Provide materials for students to create their own journals and encourage them to create a cover that reflects their own interests and personality. Alternatively, provide students with a blank composition books or notebooks and ask them to create a cover for it.
- The journals are now ready for your students to use! The approach you take is up to you. You might ask students to make a journal entry
  - every day for one week;
  - on the same day each week for a semester or year; or
  - only when an important event happens.
- Allow children to write freely in their journals, using invented spellings and a combination of drawing and writing, if they prefer. Provide time for children to share and celebrate their journal entries if they wish to. Keep a journal yourself and share entries with your class.

### Extensions:

- Celebrate with students other paper documents that are special to themselves or their families and ask them to bring in examples. These might include greeting cards, letters, postcards, or certificates. Share these documents and create a "class history quilt" to display in the classroom or hallway. This could be added to through the year, as children receive and bring in new documents.
- Create an on-going class community journal. Each week appoint two students as scribes. Provide a large notebook or scrapbook and ask them to record any important class events or experiences in this book.
- Ask children to pick an exciting entry from their journal and create a comic strip illustrating the event featured.



## Activity 2

# Writer's Workshop

### Lesson Objective:

Students will use the "writer's workshop" process to create stories using a fictional letter as a prompt.

### Before the Lesson:

- Create a "mystery" letter which will be used as a story prompt. This will consist of a sealed envelope with your address written on the front. It must be distinctive, for example:
  - "Age" the envelope and use spidery or elaborate old-fashioned handwriting.
  - Write neatly on brightly-colored paper using a silver or gold pen. Decorate the envelope using glitter or sticker.
- Source materials for printing, covering, and binding finished work.

Core Standard 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Core Standard 5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.

Core Standard 6: With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing.

### Time Needed:

2-3 hours

### Lesson Procedure:

- Explain to students that you received something very exciting in the mail that morning. Show students the "mystery" letter and ask them what they notice. Note any important vocabulary on the flip chart or white board. Ask them whether the envelope gives any clues about what the letter might be about or who it might be from. Look at the handwriting, the paper, and any decoration.
- Explain to students that you are not going to read the letter to them. Instead, they will use their imaginations and write the letter they think is in the envelope. First ask them to brainstorm in pairs:
  - Who do they think the letter is from?
  - What do they think it says?
- Then review with them the steps in the [writing process](#)<sup>2</sup> and explain that ultimately they will create a published class "book" from their letters. Ask them to begin their first drafts.
- When students have completed their finished copies, bind them together to create a book using the "mystery" envelope on the front cover.

### Extensions:

- Repeat this activity using other "mystery" envelopes, a letter in a bottle, greeting cards, or postcards. Build up a "library" of published books by your class and encourage other classes to borrow them.
- Ask students to create original artwork for their book in the form of collages, drawings, or paintings.
- Enroll your students in a [pen-pal program](#)<sup>3</sup> to encourage the development of their letter-writing skills and to help them learn about the lives of children in other parts of the country or the world.



## Activity 3

# New Paper from Old

### Lesson Objective:

In this lesson students learn how paper is made, make their own paper, and create “how to” guides on paper-making for others to follow.

### Before the Lesson:

- Collect a few examples of materials made from paper and paper-based packaging products, including notebook paper, newspaper, pictures and cereal boxes.
- Source some sawdust, woodchips, or a sapling.
- [Read instructions and prepare materials for creating paper](#)<sup>4</sup>.
- Prepare materials for [constructing accordion books](#)<sup>5</sup>.

Core Standard 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

Core Standard 4: With guidance and support from peers and adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

### Time Needed:

2 hours

### Lesson Procedure:

- Place a bowl of woodchips and sawdust on one side of a table and examples of paper products on the other side. Ask children to explain the link between the woodchips and sawdust and the paper. Discuss with children the fact that paper is made from wood which comes from trees. Focus on the paper products that children have been using in their writing activities and also on the paper products you have brought in to class, and discuss the wide variety of paper products we use every day.
- Explain that trees are a renewable resource that can be and are replanted and also that the paper industry reuses old paper to create new paper products. Discuss the word “recycling” and show children the “recycling” symbol on some paper products.
- Tell children they will now create their own recycled paper. This could be done as a demonstration or in small groups, depending on the availability of adults to help supervise. If it is done as a demonstration, try to allow all children the chance to participate.
- After the activity, review the steps in the paper-making process. Ask students to create step-by-step “how to” guides using an accordion book format. Encourage other classes within the school to utilize these guides and try out the activity for themselves.

### Extensions:

- View this AF&PA [paper making video](#)<sup>6</sup>.
- Ask students to bring in different items made from paper. Create a display in the hallway showing the huge variety of paper products we use every day.
- Consider taking [a field trip](#)<sup>7</sup> to learn more about how paper is made. Alternatively, watch video from a [construction paper factory](#)<sup>8</sup> (at about the 19:00 minute countdown mark) and then, as a class, make a diagram to show how the paper is made.
- Extend your students’ paper-making expertise and try creating decorative paper by including colorings, colored thread, leaves, tissue paper, and other items in their paper.



## Activity 4

# Better Letters

### Lesson Objective:

In this lesson, students will find out about how the paper industry recycles paper and write an informative and persuasive letter to a school principal.

### Before the Lesson:

- Ensure access to a video showing how [recovered paper](#)<sup>9</sup> is recycled.
- Collect paper in a box in your classroom for one week.
- Provide materials for letter-writing.

Core Standard 1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons or information.

Core Standard 4: with guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose

Core Standard 7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic

### Time Needed:

2-3 hours

### Lesson Procedure:

- If your students have completed Activity Three of this guide, review with them the way in which they created recycled paper. Then watch a video about how the paper industry recycles recovered paper into new products. Pause the video at critical points to discuss the process with students and discuss what happens to paper that is not recovered. Stop the video after the section on paper recycling.
- Explain to students that today in America, much more paper is recycled than goes to landfills.
  - In fact, in 2010 63.5 percent of paper used was recovered for recycling. This can be demonstrated to children by showing them a pile of a hundred sheets of paper and counting out 63 sheets, tearing one more in half to demonstrate the final half-a-percent.
  - However, the paper industry wants to recover even more paper, in fact they hope to increase this to 70 percent (or 70 out of 100 sheets of paper) by 2020, and that they can help to do this.
- Look through the paper that has been collected during the week in your classroom. Discuss whether this paper could be recovered for recycling. Take a class “field trip” around the school to assess the paper recycling that is already taking place.
- Ask students to write a letter to their own school and to other school principals in the area encouraging them to promote recycling within the school environment. Younger students might use drawing as well as writing to create a persuasive letter.
- Ask students to draft, peer review, rewrite, and finally publish their letters.
- Use the envelope contained with your program materials to mail the finished letters.

### Extensions:

- Take time to share replies to the letters. Use these replies to assess the effectiveness of the letter-writing campaign and to plan next steps.
- Send small groups to other classrooms in the school to act as “paper ambassadors” providing information about the paper projects they have completed, paper recovery, and paper recycling.
- Enter your school in the [American Forest & Paper Association’s Recycling Awards](#)<sup>10</sup>!

## Activity One:

1. Making Journals:  
<http://www.makingbooks.com/freeprojects.shtml>

## Activity Two:

2. Writing Process:  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/implementing-writing-process-30386.html>
3. Pen-Pal Program:  
<http://k6educators.about.com/od/languagearts/l/aa090201.htm>

## Activity Three:

4. Creating Paper Instructions:  
<http://www.wipapercouncil.org/makepaper.htm>
5. Constructing Accordion Books:  
<http://www.booklyn.org/education/accordion.pdf>
6. Paper Making Video:  
[http://www.paperrecycles.org/school\\_recycling/index.html](http://www.paperrecycles.org/school_recycling/index.html)
7. Field Trip:  
[http://www.tappi.org/paperu/admit\\_one/fieldTrips.htm](http://www.tappi.org/paperu/admit_one/fieldTrips.htm)
8. Paper Factory Video (19:00 minute mark):  
<http://pbskids.org/video/?category=Mister%20Rogers'%20Neighborhood&pid=Ex3Kee31gpDWzQCQGUVdvGoOxqTjXWZE>

## Activity Four:

9. How Paper Is Recycled Video:  
<http://www.oprah.com/world/How-Paper-Glass-and-Cans-Get-Recycled-Video>
10. AF&PA Recycling Awards:  
<http://www.paperrecycles.org>



## Dear Parent or Guardian,

The American Forest & Paper Association invites you to participate alongside your child in the *Do the "Write" Thing!* program. This is a school-home initiative in which children participate in meaningful paper-based writing activities while becoming knowledgeable about the sustainable nature of paper production and actively engaging in the recovery of paper for recycling.

Your child is already engaged in writing activities at school as part of the program. If you would like to *Do the "Write" Thing!* at home, then chose one or more of the activities below to complete with your child. By participating in this program, you will know that you are helping to enhance your child's writing skills and encouraging an awareness of the importance of recycling in the next generation.

- **Write a Letter!** You know how the morning seems much brighter when you receive a personal letter in the mail. Unfortunately, this doesn't happen as often as it once did. Brainstorm a list of family friends or relatives who you seldom see and write them a letter, postcard, or greeting card. They will be delighted to receive it and, you never know, you might receive a response in return!
- **Make your Opinion Felt!** Encourage your child to write to a local newspaper or television station about the issue of paper recovery and recycling in your community. Help them to format and phrase their letter appropriately and to find the relevant address. Or, if you and your child have seen particularly good or bad examples of paper recycling (at a local restaurant, at a park, etc.) write a letter together to let the management know.
- **Check Out Local Recycling!** Check out recycling in your area and encourage all family members to recycle. Maybe you already have paper recycling curbside in your neighborhood or there may be a convenient drop-off point. If not, you and your child could write to local government to promote increased recycling services.

We hope that you will enjoy joining your child in the *Do the "Write" Thing!* Program! For more information about the American Forest & Paper Association, please visit <http://www.paperrecycles.org> and [www.afandpa.org](http://www.afandpa.org).

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