HELP ME WRITE BETTER

STUDIO™ / WRITING RESOURCES

EDUCATOR TOOLKIT

BEFORE WE ASSESS, WE MUST TEACH.

A practical classroom toolkit for modelling, scaffolding and developing independent writers.

MODEL. SUPPORT. RELEASE. REFLECT.

MADE FOR

Teachers • Writing Centres • Professional Learning

Practical pages you can use, adapt and revisit. Build the writer through modelling, meaningful choices and independent practice.

Developed by the Help Me Write Better Studio™ team.
Created and developed in Barbados. Built for writers everywhere.

TEACH THE MOVE BEFORE ASSESSING THE RESULT

The responsibility shifts

Every step should make the next independent writing attempt more possible.

I DO

MODEL ALOUD

Write one sentence and explain why you chose its topic, detail and order.

↓

WE DO

WRITE TOGETHER

Invite learners to suggest, compare and justify possible changes.

↓

YOU DO

WRITE INDEPENDENTLY

Withdraw a scaffold. Let learners decide what stays and what comes next.

A 40-MINUTE TEACHING RHYTHM

05 MIN	10 MIN	10 MIN	10 MIN	05 MIN
Notice	**Model**	**Co-write**	**Independent**	**Reflect**
Display a model	Think aloud	Discuss choices	Try the move	Name the gain

SCAFFOLD 01 / CONTROLLED SENTENCE CHOICES

Change the words. Keep the structure.

Start with a complete model; vary one choice at a time, then build independence.

TEACHER MODEL

The little dog ran across the green field.

CHOICE BANK

SIZE

Model: little

Try: fluffy • big

ANIMAL

Model: dog

Try: cat • rabbit

DESCRIPTION

Model: green

Try: grassy • muddy

PLACE

Model: field

Try: garden • yard

STUDENT TASK

Choose at least two new words. Say the sentence aloud and check whether every word still fits together.

REMOVE THE SCAFFOLD

Write a new sentence about something you have seen. The structure may change, but the idea must be yours.

SCAFFOLD 02 / PARAGRAPH REBUILDING

Rebuild a paragraph with choices

Use a model for structure. Let learners supply the person, detail and personal meaning.

MODEL / A SPECIAL PERSON

My grandfather is one of the most important people in my life. He is tall and has a gentle smile. Every Saturday, we work in the garden together. I admire him because he is patient and teaches me something new.

MAKE FOUR CHOICES

PERSON	mother • aunt • brother • neighbour
DETAIL	kind • cheerful • curious • gentle
ACTIVITY	cooking • fishing • reading • planting
REASON	encourages • teaches • listens • helps

TEACHER CONFERENCE

Ask: Which sentence sounds like your experience? What else happened? Why does this person matter to you? Check pronouns and verb forms after the meaning is clear.

SCAFFOLD 03 / INDEPENDENT NARRATIVE

Change the story. Keep the craft.

Move from a shared narrative structure to an original event and ending.

SHORT MODEL OPENING

It was a bright Saturday morning when two friends reached the beach. Suddenly, they heard a strange sound from behind the rocks.

01 **CHARACTERS**

Who is in your story?

02 **SETTING**

Where and when does it happen?

03 **CHANGE**

What unexpected event occurs?

04 **CHOICE**

What does the character decide to do?

05 **ENDING**

What changes, and why does it matter?

Independent move: Change the model completely. Keep a clear beginning, meaningful change and purposeful ending.

EXPERIENCE BEFORE ASSESSMENT

The observation challenge

A quick lesson in why exposure, models and guided attention matter.

Teacher preparation: bring an age-appropriate, properly licensed image of a pangolin. Do not show the image at first.

01 DRAW FROM THE NAME

60 seconds: learners draw a pangolin with no reference. No evaluation.

02 LOOK, THEN LOOK AWAY

30 seconds: display the image. Remove it. Invite a second attempt.

03 NOTICE MORE

Point out the tapered snout, overlapping scales, curved tail and short legs.

04 DRAW AGAIN, THEN DISCUSS

What improved? What did observation make possible? How does this connect to writing?

TRANSFER THE INSIGHT

A child may recognise a storm in a film yet not know how an author builds that scene on the page. Show the craft, name the choices, then ask for an independent attempt.

FEEDBACK FOR THE NEXT ATTEMPT

Assess meaning, not only mechanics

Respond to what the writer communicates before focusing on small errors.

TEACHER NOTE

Begin with the writing itself: consider the writer's ideas, meaning, organisation and development before correcting individual errors. Give learners feedback they can act on. For formal grades, always use your school's current approved rubric.

LOOK FOR EVIDENCE OF...

CONTENT	A specific idea and relevant details

Try asking: What event or example reveals your point?

ORGANISATION	A clear sequence of connected ideas

Try asking: Where could this detail belong?

LANGUAGE	Words and sentences that communicate meaning

Try asking: What did you want the reader to picture?

MECHANICS	Readable spelling and punctuation

Try asking: Which error most affects the reader?

Feedback routine: Notice one strength. Ask one question about meaning. Suggest one next move. Let the student revise.

REUSABLE LESSON PLANNING SHEET

Plan a scaffolded writing lesson

A planning sheet teachers can copy and use with any writing topic.

YEAR GROUP / TOPIC

THE WRITING MOVE I WILL MODEL

WHAT WE WILL BUILD TOGETHER

WHAT STUDENTS WILL TRY ALONE

WHAT EVIDENCE I WILL COLLECT

Exit reflection: What can the student now do independently that previously required a model or scaffold?