

POWER Writing Strategy

Type of Writing Supported:

All Types

Grade Level: **Grades 1-8**
Elementary to Middle School

Stage of Writing Supported:
Revising and Editing

PURPOSE:

What does this strategy help students do?

Empowers students to write with clarity and confidence by breaking the process into manageable steps, integrating learned strategies, and fostering independence and organization.

Why is this strategy effective?

It leverages a memorable acronym to support executive functioning and aligns with research-based practices for learners with disabilities.

P

Plan

What do I want to say?

O

Organize

What order makes the most sense?

W

Write

How can I say it clearly and completely?

E

Edit

Did I check for grammar and spelling?

R

Revise

Can I make it better or clearer?

TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

How to Introduce:

- Link to familiar strategies (OREO, Hamburger, COPS/CUPS, ARMS).
- Model with think-alouds + POWER chart.
- Use real-life parallels (e.g., planning a trip = planning an essay).

Scaffolding:

- Sentence starters reduce cognitive load, build confidence, and support academic language.
- Color-coded organizers support clarity, reflection, and differentiation.
- Layer supports to help students think independently, especially those with memory or processing challenges.

Practice Ideas:

- Apply POWER across genres (informational, persuasive, narrative).
- Combine sentence starters + organizers for guided writing and revision.
- Use prompts like “This helps the reader because...” to deepen reflection and improve idea quality.

DO'S

- ✓ Spark ideas with visuals, prompts, and choice
- ✓ Structure thinking with color and clear sections.
- ✓ Build confidence—content first, polish later.
- ✓ Guide self-checks with color-coded tools.

Grow ideas with focused, student-led changes.

DON'TS

- ✗ Don't expect ideas without scaffolding.
- ✗ Don't skip structure or overload formats.
- ✗ Don't correct mid-draft or demand perfection.
- ✗ Don't edit blindly—tools and focus matter.

POWER Strategy: Tips for Implementation

How to introduce the strategy

- This strategy would work best if students are already aware of other strategies such as: OREO (persuasive writing) Hamburger, editing and revising strategies such as COPS, CUPS for editing and ARMS for revising. These strategies will help with the implementation of each step.
- [POWER example for Informational writing](#)
- [POWER example for persuasive writing](#)
- [POWER writing example for Narrative Writing](#)
- Use a think-aloud to model each step
- Anchor the strategy with a visual poster [POWER Chart](#)
- Connect each step to real-life tasks (eg. planning a trip = planning an essay)

Scaffolding for different learners

Use sentence starters.

- Examples: "I remember a time when..."
- "This reminds me of..."
- "It all started when my dog barked at..."
- "I grabbed his favorite treat to try and..."
- "It was supposed to be pizza night, but..."

This benefits students by:

- **Reducing cognitive load:** Gives students a starting point when generating ideas or constructing sentences.
- **Support language development:** Helps students model academic language and internalize writing structures.
- **Build confidence:** Students feel empowered when they don't have to face a blank page alone.
- **Encourage reflection:** Prompts like "This idea helps the reader because..." foster deeper evaluation.

Use Color-Coded Graphic Organizers.

This benefits students by:

- **Visual clarity:** Color coding (like green/yellow/red) helps students assess and categorize ideas intuitively.
- **Multi-sensory engagement:** Combines visual and kinesthetic learning for better retention.
- **Promotes self-monitoring:** Students begin to recognize the quality and relevance of their thoughts.
- **Differentiates support:** Flexible enough to match various levels of readiness within one classroom.

By layering these scaffolds, we're not doing the thinking for students—we're giving them tools to think more **effectively and independently**. These strategies are especially helpful for learners who struggle with working memory, processing, or organizing their thoughts.

✓ Activate Ideas Before Writing

- Use visual brainstorm webs with icons and chunked categories
- Encourage verbal sharing or sketching before writing
- Offer picture prompts and sentence starters to spark thinking
- Provide choices to reduce blank-page anxiety

✓ Support Structured Organization

- Model graphic organizers with color coding and realistic examples
- Break ideas into labeled sections (e.g., beginning, middle, end)
- Teach transition words using visuals or word strips
- Use sequencing tools like sticky notes or sentence tiles

✓ Build Confidence During Drafting

- Promote “write now, fix later” to encourage fluency
- Use sentence frames, scaffolded templates, and paragraph guides
- Allow assistive support: scribing, voice typing, or peer rehearsal
- Celebrate content even if conventions are off

✓ Guide Editing with Tools and Modeling

- Use a color-coded checklist (COPS: Capitalization, Overall format, Punctuation, Spelling)
- Model editing with shared samples and think-alouds
- Provide highlighters or bookmarks for guided self-editing
- Pair students for structured peer support

✓ Teach Revision as Idea Improvement

- Introduce ARMS moves one at a time: Add, Remove, Move, Substitute
- Use visual revision menus and “Before & After” examples
- Let students choose revisions to build ownership
- Highlight and annotate changes to show growth
- Allow revision to happen more than once

✓ Explicitly Teach Each Step of the POWER Strategy.

- Break down each phase with modeling and practice
- Use visuals, examples, and tools to scaffold understanding
- Reinforce the purpose of each step through repetition and reflection

✗ Don't Treat Writing as a One-Step Task

- Jumping straight to drafting skips the cognitive work of idea generation
- Students need time and tools to explore before committing to paper

✗ Don't Assume Students "Just Know" How to Organize

- Structure isn't intuitive for many learners – it must be taught and practiced
- Unlabeled or inconsistent organizers can confuse rather than clarify

✗ Don't Let Perfectionism Stall Progress

- Overcorrecting early drafts can shut down creativity
- Students may avoid risk-taking if they fear constant critique

✗ Don't Rely Solely on Teacher Corrections

- Red pen feedback without student involvement limits ownership
- Editing should be interactive, scaffolded, and student-driven

✗ Don't Confuse Revision with Editing

- Revision is about improving ideas, not just fixing mechanics
- Treating it like a checklist misses the deeper thinking involved

✗ Don't Expect Transfer Without Explicit Teaching

- Students won't internalize POWER steps through exposure alone
- Each phase needs direct instruction, modeling, and guided practice

Publication Details

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What is the Writing Classroom?

The Writing Classroom was developed to help educators apply effective, evidence-based writing interventions. Originating at the University of Kansas with funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, this initiative supports instructional strategies for all students, especially those who struggle with writing.

What is AI SCORE?

AI-SCORE enhances writing competency for students with learning disabilities by:

- Integrating evidence-based instructional strategies
- Providing immediate AI-generated feedback
- Personalizing the writing process to improve outcomes

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Learn More

[WritingClassroom.org](https://writingclassroom.org)

[ProjectAIScore.org](https://projectaiscore.org)

[KUCRL.KU.edu/aplm-online](https://kucrl.ku.edu/aplm-online)

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