Report Writing

> Report writing is based on people, events, places, animals or objects. It includes a series of facts as well as some ideas that might be surprising to the reader.

Characteristics of report writing include:

- a title
- a general statement opening
- facts organized by headings and/or subheadings
- information that is factual
- information that is non-chronological
- writing in the present tense
- concise and clear sentences
- action words
- linking verbs
- vocabulary that is specific to the topic
- questions that are used to capture the reader's attention
- boldface, underlining, or capitalization to highlight key words
- often concludes with a summarizing comment
- an index, glossary, notes, references, table of contents (optional)
- illustrations, diagrams and/or tables (optional)

Examples of report writing include:

- general descriptions of animals, insects, space, machines, plants, the human body, the seasons, etc.
- specific descriptions of an animal, an insect, space, machine, a plant, the five senses, a country, etc.

Lessons at a Glance and Suggested Timeline

Week 1
Investigate

- The teacher and students brainstorm and list ideas on a chart.
- The teacher and students generate questions and list them on a chart.
- The teacher and students create an anchor chart outlining the characteristics of report writing.
- Students join in a shared reading of a report to determine the organizational structure.

Weeks 2-5
Experiment and Practise

- The teacher shares a personal example and models brainstorming on chart paper.
- In small groups, the students select an animal and begin to brainstorm their ideas.
- The teacher models how to use the graphic organizer to draft, expand and organize ideas.
- Students use their graphic organizers to draft, expand and organize their information.
- Students share their ideas with classmates.
- The teacher returns to the graphic organizer and models how to add information.
- Students pair up to add information to their graphic organizers.
- The teacher and students revisit the information on the graphic organizer and add information using the anchor chart on reports.
- Students return to their writing groups and revise the information on their graphic organizers.
- The teacher models how to return to a draft to edit for capital letters and periods. Question marks are introduced.
- The teacher demonstrates how to use the information on the graphic organizer to create a model book.
- The students and teacher number the pages of the booklet and then create a table of contents.
- Together we create a cover for our model book, including an illustration, title, author, and illustrator.
- Students celebrate by reading their finished work to students in a younger or older grade.
- The teacher and students continue to brainstorm topics using texts from *The Porcupine Collection*.

Beginning Writers
The teacher will model and demonstrate as required, recognizing that not all students will reach the same stage.

Weeks 6-8
Apply

• Using other topics of interest, students independently practise applying the strategies they have learned.

These *Porcupine* texts are some examples of report writing:

SET	TITLE	EIL	GR	DRA
Set 1	*Trucks* by Fran Johnson	1	A	1
	A Maple Leaf by Susan Burroughs	2	B	2-3
	The Computer by Fran Johnson	2	B	2-3
Set 6	*Skunks* by Sam Likely	5-6	D	6
	Beavers by Pat Etue	5-6	D	6
	Raccoons by Pat Etue	9-10	F	10
	Squirrels by Susan Burroughs	9-10	F	10
Set 12	*Barn Owls* by Mary Labatt	13-14	H	14
Set 15	*Chipmunks* by Mary Labatt	15-17	I	16
Set 19	*Living in the Country* by Lise Hawkins and Ivor Sinfield	21-22	K	20
	Living in the City by Lise Hawkins and Ivor Sinfield	21-22	K	20
Set 20	*City Transportation* by Janet Intscher and Pat Etue	21-22	K	20
	Fiddleheads by Joanne LeBlanc-Haley	21-22	K	20

EIL= Early Intervention Level   **GR**= Guided Reading   **DRA**= Developmental Reading Assessment

Investigate

Instructional Focus:
• The Writing Process: Planning
• The Elements of Writing: Ideas and Organization

• **The teacher and students brainstorm and list ideas on a chart.**

My students and I begin by creating a chart noting animals we know a lot about. I tell them that we all have areas of interest we may know quite a bit about. I note my own example (budgies) and continue by adding information provided by the students, being sure to note individual names in brackets beside each response. I can later return to this chart to track students' contributions.

• **The teacher and students generate questions and list them on a chart.**

I tell students that today we are going to pretend we are reporters. If possible, we watch an interview from television or Internet news. After watching, I ask the students what they noticed a reporter does during an interview. We discuss how reporters ask questions to learn more information. Together we generate questions to ask one another about our animals and list these questions on an anchor chart. By interviewing a student, I model how I use these questions to collect information. Next, I ask students to select animals they know a lot about from the chart we had created earlier. I then encourage them to share their ideas with their partners by questioning one another in the same way reporters do.

Students record their questions in their *Thoughts in My Pocket* notebooks.

• **The teacher and students create an anchor chart outlining the characteristics of report writing.**

After enjoying one of the *Porcupine* texts through a teacher read-aloud, I ask students what they notice about report writing. My role is to record what they notice and add any information that is missing in order to build our anchor chart. Students need to understand that reports share factual information and don't express personal feelings.

Rather than have students copy this chart, teachers may provide students with individual copies to place in their Thoughts in My Pocket *notebooks.*

What We Notice About Report Writing

• A report has a title.

• It has an introductory sentence.

• It can be about animals, objects, interests, vehicles, weather, events, buildings, and more.

• It teaches us about something that is real.

• It provides facts and information, such as: where animals live, different kinds of trucks, different kinds of transportation, places to live, and a lot more.

• It has illustrations, photographs or diagrams.

• It is not about the author's personal feelings.

Students record the characteristics of reports in their *Thoughts in My Pocket* notebooks.

- Students join in a shared reading of a report to determine the organizational structure.

Students join me in a shared reading of the text *Beavers* by Pat Etue. After reading the text aloud, we engage in dialogue to determine how the author has organized the facts for the reader. We label the various parts of the text, using a dry erase marker, by referring to our anchor chart entitled *What We Notice About Report Writing*. This is followed by the students labelling their own copies of the shared reading selection entitled *Beavers* (see Reproducible 3). Based on this information, I introduce students to the *Graphic Organizer for Report Writing*. Together we complete the graphic organizer using the shared reading selection.

Students store the report writing sample entitled *Beavers* in their *Thoughts in My Pocket* notebooks.

Graphic Organizer for Report Writing
Topic: Beavers

What does a beaver look like?	What can a beaver do?	What do beavers like to eat?	Interesting facts for the reader
• Beavers have brown fur. • Beavers have flat tails. • Beavers have big teeth.	• Beavers can swim. • Beavers can swim fast. • Beavers like to swim. • Beavers can cut down a tree with their big teeth. • Beavers can make a house with the branches. • Beavers can make a dam with the branches, too. • Beavers like to work at night.	• Beavers like to eat bark and branches.	• A baby beaver is called a kit.

Students record the characteristics of reports in their *Thoughts in My Pocket* notebooks.

Experiment and Practise

Instructional Focus:
- The Writing Process: Brainstorming, Drafting, Revising, and Editing
- The Elements of Writing: Ideas, Word Choice, Organization, and Conventions

- The teacher shares a personal example and models brainstorming on chart paper.

After recording their ideas, I share an example of my own. I model how I return to the chart of ideas that we brainstormed earlier. I tell students that I know a lot about budgies because I have a budgie. I jot everything that I know about budgies on chart paper. We engage in a shared reading of these facts.

- In small groups, the students select an animal and begin to brainstorm their ideas.

I invite the students to join me in a shared reading of the information on the graphic organizer we had completed about budgies. In pairs or in small groups, each student chooses a topic and brainstorms facts about this topic, making notes in the *Thoughts in My Pocket* notebook.

- The teacher models how to use the graphic organizer to draft, expand and organize ideas.

I show my students how I return to my graphic organizer to determine if I have included enough information on my topic, or if there are gaps in my knowledge. I do this by taking the ideas that I had brainstormed and organizing them under the corresponding questions.

- Students use their own graphic organizers to draft, expand and organize their information.

I refer students to the *Graphic Organizer for Report Writing* (see Reproducible 4 or 4a) they have already stored in their *Thoughts in My Pocket* notebooks. In pairs or small groups, students use their individual graphic organizers to organize the ideas they had brainstormed. Each student in the group should have opportunities to contribute ideas. If someone doesn't have an idea to share, they indicate this by saying "pass." During this time, I circulate among the groups to ensure that students are on task. When necessary, I offer support by joining a group and acting as a contributing member.

- Students share their ideas with classmates.

After each group has a collection of ideas recorded on their individual graphic organizers, students share their facts with the rest of the class by engaging in a tableau. Each student in a group creates a still position demonstrating a fact for their classmates to guess.

- The teacher returns to the graphic organizer and models how to add information.

On another day, we revisit my graphic organizer on budgies. I draw attention to the fact that I now have new information to add. I explain that these facts might come from further reading or from my own thoughts and experiences with budgies. I want to be sure to include more details because they will make my writing interesting and might provide some surprises to my reader such as, "My budgies like to hang upside down from the top of the cage like acrobats!" We discuss the best place to add this information.

- Students pair up to add information to their graphic organizers.

Now each student will pair with another student from a different group. The purpose of this meeting is to add information to their individual graphic organizers. During this time, students share their facts with a buddy. Then they collect additional ideas from their buddy to add to the graphic organizer.

- The teacher and students revisit the graphic organizer example and add information using the anchor chart on reports.

In this shared writing activity, I involve students in helping me add descriptive details for each of my ideas I wrote when brainstorming. I do this by sharing the pen. We might revise for adjectives, writing "Budgies have colourful feathers." instead of "Budgies have feathers." On another day we might revise for adverbs, writing "A budgie can climb upside down." instead of "A budgie can climb." These additions are made in a different colour so that the revisions stand out. I stress how important it is not to get "stuck" on spelling at this stage in the writing process, and I have students recall the spelling strategies we know. It is not necessary to complete this shared lesson entirely in one sitting. The goal is to return to the writing over many days, reading through a few sentences each day to make necessary additions. Essentially, I want my students to realize that revising takes time. I work through this process by alternating between modelling revision in my writing and having students revise their own writing.

- Students return to their writing groups and revise the information on their graphic organizers.

The students now return to their groups and revisit the information on their individual graphic organizers. They make any necessary changes in a different colour so that the revisions will stand out. My role during this time is to circulate among all students and support or clarify their understandings. I encourage them to make use of a combination of pictures and words according to their developmental level. I am sure to leave enough time for students to share their changes within the large group in order to provide feedback for improvement.

- The teacher models how to return to a draft to edit for capital letters and periods. Question marks are introduced.

Over the next few days I model how I edit my writing, using the editing checklist below:

Editing Checklist
- capital letters
- periods
- word wall words

As we work through this editing stage, I introduce students to the use of question marks.

Students return to their editing checklists in their *Thoughts in My Pocket* notebooks and add question marks.

- The teacher demonstrates how to use the information on the graphic organizer to create a model book.

Next, I model how I take the information from the graphic organizer to create a booklet for my report on budgies. This involves using one 8 ½ by 11 sheet of paper for each fact. I create a supporting illustration on each page to begin designing my booklet. This process will take many days, especially since I want students to include details in their own illustrations. I usually work on one or two facts per day and then direct the students to return to their graphic organizers and engage in a similar process with their topics. As students become more proficient, it may not be necessary to meet with the entire class each time. This frees me to meet with students who may still require support.

- The students and teacher number the pages of the booklet and then create a table of contents.

Now I invite my students to assist me in numbering the pages of our class book on budgies. To do this, I select one of the *Porcupine* books and talk about where the page numbers are placed. Next we discuss how the table of contents is organized. I draw attention to the fact that the table of contents helps readers to locate information. We create an anchor chart including our observations of the table of contents. The students return to their own writing to create a table of contents for their individual books. As they work on this, I briefly meet with individual or groups of students to ensure that they are on track.

What We Notice About A Table of Contents

- A table of contents has a title.
- It may include an illustration or photograph.
- It may include the names of authors and illustrators.
- It has a list of topics.
- It has page numbers.
- It helps the reader know what the book will be about.
- It helps the reader to find information.

Beginning Writers
The teacher may provide students with individual copies of the class anchor chart to glue into their Thoughts in My Pocket *notebooks.*

Beginning Writers
The teacher may decide to select only one or two checklist items for editing.

Students make copies of the anchor chart in their *Thoughts in My Pocket* notebooks.

- **Together we create a cover for our model book, including an illustration, title, author, and illustrator.**

We meet as a large group, and I ask students what we should include on the front cover of our book about budgies. To do this we refer to one or more of the *Porcupine* mentor books in order to create an anchor chart. We discuss that the illustration on the cover is based on the main topic of the text to help the reader determine what the book will be about. I model how I create the front cover for my report on budgies based on their suggestions. This is followed by students returning to their own writing to create covers for their individual books.

What We Notice About Front Covers of Books

- The front cover includes a title.
- It has an illustration to help readers know what the book will be about.
- It has the word "by" and then the author's name.
- It has the words "illustrated by" and then the illustrator's name.

- **The students celebrate by reading their finished work to students in a younger or older grade.**

Each year I pair my students with an older grade to form Reading Buddies. I meet ahead of time with the teacher of the older students to discuss partnerships that will work best based on personality and academic skills. We also decide how regularly students will meet and what they will do, so that the experience is as meaningful as possible. The meeting time can range from once a week to once a month. The older student signs out a book to read to the younger student. Following the reading, both students discuss the text using these comprehension strategies: making connections, asking questions, visualizing, inferring, determining important ideas and synthesizing. (More information on these strategies and how they work can be found in *Reading with Meaning*, by Debbie Miller or *Strategies that Work* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis.) At other times, the younger students read to the older students, choosing books they are confident to read-aloud, including their own completed books.

- **The teacher and students continue to brainstorm topics using texts from** *The Porcupine Collection*.

I invite students to sit in a circle and I distribute the *Porcupine* texts highlighted at the beginning of this chapter. Together we engage in a dialogue sharing the various topics these authors have chosen that we might use to write reports. Next we classify the texts into categories, such as: places, animals, etc. The texts are displayed in a prominent place so that students as

well as the teacher can refer to them to clarify, for example, what a table of contents looks like, or what a front cover includes, or how a book is organized.

Students record these ideas in their *Thoughts in My Pocket* notebooks.

Apply

- **Using other topics of interest, students independently practise applying the strategies they have learned.**

Now that students have had the experience of modelling and shared practise with the teacher and their peers, they are ready to work on report writing with some independence. Over the next couple of weeks, I ask each student to do the following tasks:

- Brainstorm additional possible topics in your *Thoughts in My Pocket* notebook.
- Select a topic and rehearse it with a partner.
- Brainstorm everything you know about your topic.
- Create your own draft report using pictures and words (the word wall words as well as invented spelling).
- Share your draft with your peers for feedback using the *What We Know About Report Writing* anchor chart.
- Add information based on teacher feedback as well as peer feedback.
- Edit, using the editing checklist.
- Create a table of contents for your report.
- Create a cover page for your report.

I explicitly review this process with students and provide them with copies of the list of tasks to help them keep track of where they are in the writing process.

Conferencing for Assessment and Growth

During all these stages of writing, I circulate among my students to observe them in their writing process and to offer support. I bring students together as a small group based on need to offer focused support for about ten to fifteen minutes. Then I move to another group to do the same. My support might focus on:

• clarity of ideas	• use of feedback provided by the teacher and peers
• missed words	• creating illustrations to support the writing
• brainstorming	• using a graphic organizer
• invented spelling	• providing a surprise for their readers
• using the word wall	• creating a table of contents
• getting their ideas on paper	• creating a cover page

Additional books to model report writing:

Damon, Emma, *What Is Peace?* (Mantra Lingua Global House 2004)

Ehlert, Lois, *Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z* (Harcourt Brace and Company 1989)

Gibbons, Gail, *My Soccer Book* (Harper Collins 2000)

Glasser, Linda, *It's Fall* (Millbrook Press 2001)

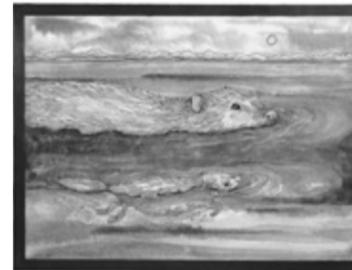Grassby, *Donna,* A Seaside Alphabet (Tundra Books 2000)

Beavers
by Pat Etue

Beavers have brown fur.
Beavers have flat tails.

Beavers can swim fast.
Beavers like to swim.

A baby beaver is a kit.
A kit can swim.

Beavers have big teeth.
A beaver can make a house with the branches.

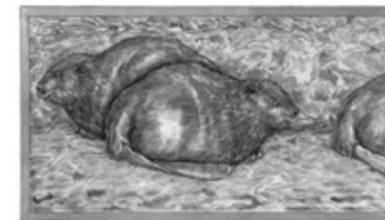Beavers can make a dam with the branches, too.

Beavers like to eat bark and branches.

Beavers like to work at night.

Beavers like to sleep all day.

Graphic Organizer for Report Writing
Topic _____
Writer _____

What does the animal look like?	What can the animal do?	What does the animal like to eat?	Interesting facts for the reader

Graphic Organizer for Report Writing
Topic _____
Writer _____

What does the animal look like?

What can the animal do?

What does the animal like to eat?