

Traits Take-Home Letter

I'm writing to tell you about the Traits of Writing, the exciting instructional model I use to teach writing. The model is based on seven qualities, or traits, of good writing:

1. **Ideas:** the piece's content—its central message and details that support that message
2. **Organization:** the internal structure of the piece—the thread of logic, the pattern of meaning
3. **Voice:** the tone of the piece—the personal stamp of the writer, which is achieved through a strong understanding of purpose and audience
4. **Word Choice:** the specific vocabulary the writer uses to convey meaning and enlighten the reader
5. **Sentence Fluency:** the way words and phrases flow through the piece. Sentence Fluency is the auditory trait because it's "read" with the ear as much as the eye
6. **Conventions:** the mechanical correctness of the piece. Correct use of conventions (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, paragraphing, and grammar and usage) guides the reader through the text and makes it easy to follow
7. **Presentation:** the physical appearance of the piece. A visually appealing text provides a welcome mat. It invites the reader in

During the year, your child will learn how to apply these traits to create strong pieces of writing for many purposes and audiences. As we are learning, however, don't be too concerned if papers come home unmarked for Conventions. Rest assured, we will be working on that important trait; however, sometimes we may focus our attention on one or more of the other traits. Your child will learn a great deal about writing this year!

As we tackle each trait, I'd like to request your help. Periodically, your child will come home with a Student-to-Family Letter that contains questions about his or her writing. Please listen as your child reads the piece and then answer and discuss the questions in the letter. It's that simple. By providing a dependable ear and constructive feedback, you can play a crucial role in your child's writing success. Thank you in advance for your help and support. I welcome your comments and suggestions as our writing program kicks into gear.

Sincerely,