

Traits Take-Home Letter

Dear _____:

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 content of your child's piece—its central message
- 2. Organization:** the internal structure of the piece
- 3. Voice:** the tone of your child's piece—his or her personal stamp
- 4. Word Choice:** the vocabulary your child uses to convey meaning
- 5. Sentence Fluency:** the way the text looks and sounds as it flows through your child's piece
- 6. Conventions:** the mechanical correctness of your child's piece (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, basic grammar)
- 7. Presentation:** The physical appearance of your child's piece

You may think, "This is a lot for a young student to learn." But I have every confidence your child will learn it because I will be introducing aspects of each trait gradually over the year. As a result, your child will use his or her growing knowledge of the traits to become a powerful, skilled writer. I have already begun by gathering a sample of your child's work—and I'll gather more samples to share with you throughout the year. By the end of the year, I'm sure we'll be delighted by the improvement we see. It's exciting work.

As your child brings home writing to share with you, please know that we are working on Conventions all the time. Not every piece will have perfect spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. Your child will be learning about each of these important editing skills on an ongoing basis, and you will see his or her ability to handle these skills grow over time. One of the most helpful things you can do for your child is point out what he or she has done well in writing.

On that note, 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,