

As an author, Ronda Friend's writing workshops and books fit beautifully into Core Curriculum Standards for all ages. She begins with seven key elements in writing stories by the use of an acrostic and alliteration. The seven key elements are suspenseful story line, purposeful plot, innovative ideas, colorful characters, knowing kids, edit - edit - edit, and a terrific title.

Ronda collaborates with students in creating a story together with the use of an innovative card game. The class will select at random a main character, setting/location, action, dilemma, and a character trait. This will empower the students to think and create outside the box as they develop an ingenious plot.

After creating a story, the class, utilizing a computer, will write the story together. Depending upon the storyline created, the class will either write their story in informative/explanatory text by introducing a topic, using facts and definitions to develop points, then conclude their story.

For the majority of the workshops the storyline will be written in the narrative. Students will recount the story line using details to describe actions, thoughts and feelings. Ronda feels strongly that each story should make a child a better person for either writing and/or reading the story, therefore the story will come to an end by highlighting a life lesson and/or a moral to the story.

Most schools select 45 minute sessions for 3-8th grade. Those can be small groups and or groups up to 120. Smaller groups benefit more because of the student interaction in this particular workshop.

If utilized as an artist in residence, the teachers, along with the students in the class, will take the story to the next level (depending on the length of residency) by rewriting and editing the existing storyline. They may choose to add a simple song - a simple poem - new vocabulary words - and of course a creative title. They will also work on their verbs and adjectives to make sure they are the best ones for their particular storyline. Older students will be encouraged to implement paronomasias (puns), play on words, alliterations, idioms, neologisms, similes, metaphors, onomatopoeias, etc. Depending on length of stay, these stories will continue to be revised and edited. The session will conclude with either a student and/or Ronda sharing the very first story written and then the final draft to share with the students the importance of re-writing and editing their own stories.

Ronda has conducted hundreds of writing workshops all over the United States encouraging teachers to create a story parentheses using her innovative writing card game (together as a class each year) and go back to that story once a month-improving-adding-rewriting-editing-illustrating-until they have written the story nine different times. At the end of the school year the teacher reads their original story from September-puts aside the next seven rewrites-and reads the final story written in May of the school year. This will dramatically show students the importance of collaborating with peers to produce and publish writings that will not only amaze and entertain but will also emphasize the importance of writing and editing their stories.

Tennessee English Language Arts Standards emphasized would depend upon what age group and length of stay with writing workshops therefore Writing Standards would vary with ages. But the following are some that would be covered:

W.T.TP - write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using an effective technique, such as a descriptive details and clear event sequences.

W.PDW. - produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.RBPK - include evidence from literary or informational textbooks to their writings.
W.RW - write routinely over extended time frames with guidance and support from adults, engage routinely in writing activities to promote writing fluency.