

No Tech Options: Six Trait Strategies: Spandel, V. (2001). *Write Traits: 6 Trait instruction and assessment*. Wilmington, MA: Great Source Education Group, Houghton Mifflin

Ideas:

- Use pretend binoculars to teach “focus”
- Use literature that illustrates good ideas
- Teach students to discriminate intriguing, interesting ideas from irrelevant or overly-general ideas
- Help struggling writers gather-collect-list their ideas and select the best ones that provide focus and clarity
- Teach students how to ask questions to develop ideas

Organization:

- Teach students to discriminate good leads from not-so-good leads
- Mix up the steps in a recipe. Reorder them and discuss the importance of good sequencing
- Have students sequence the events in a story
- Have students write 3 or 4 different endings and discuss which one is best and why
- Model a piece of writing that has sentences with unnecessary fillers.
- Teach students how to group ideas
- Replace “And then”; teach transition words

Voice:

- Read aloud from books that have a strong voice
- Match writings to their intended audiences (e.g., letter to a friend, business letter)
- Play “who’s voice is it?” matching the voice of the text to popular characters from television
- Have students write an event from different perspectives e.g., (a house fire from the perspective of a child, an adult, a fireman)
- Attach a “voice” to people in photographs
- Write letters of complaint

Word Choice:

- Word walls of favorite lively words
- Burying tired, overused words
- Read aloud from books with strong, powerful words
- Write a simple description of an object, then rewrite it with stronger words
- Write about a color but don’t use the name of the color.
- Replace the verbs to make a paragraph stronger

Sentence Fluency:

- ❑ Teach students how to combine short choppy sentences
- ❑ Find run-on sentences and fix them
- ❑ Have the students count the number of words in their sentences, and write the first word in each sentence to see if there is a variety of sentence beginnings.
- ❑ Teach a variety of sentence starters
- ❑ Teach connecting words such as “however”, “therefore”
- ❑ Use early emergent books and rewrite them to improve sentence fluency.

Conventions: (Spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization)

- ❑ Teach conventions based on what kids need to learn given their age and ability
- ❑ Conventions need to be focused upon one at a time, at a minimum of 3 times per week, in short 15 minute lessons with repetition and practice.
- ❑ Teach basic editing symbols
- ❑ Don't ask students to edit all conventions at once
- ❑ Students below 4th grade need to revise one trait at a time. Struggling writers who are older than 4th grade should focus on only 2-3 traits at a time.

Low Tech Options:

- ❑ Use discussions to activate background knowledge
- ❑ Provide time for brainstorming prior to beginning writing
- ❑ Classroom charts that specify tasks to structure the writing process
- ❑ Daily in class writing opportunities
- ❑ Provide extra time for writing assignments
- ❑ Provide models of what writing projects should look like
- ❑ Provide checklists to prompt the use of targeted writing traits
- ❑ Provide charts that post rules for punctuation, capitalization, spelling
- ❑ Teach proofreading and editing at the students' level of ability
- ❑ Use highlighters or colored pencils to focus on specific conventions (e.g., parts of speech, punctuation, capitalization)
- ❑ Peer editing or older student mentors
- ❑ One-to-one writing conferences to focus the revision of one or two traits at a time

High Tech Options:

- ❑ Outline/ graphic organizing software
- ❑ Interactive writing software
- ❑ Document templates that are structured for different writing tasks
- ❑ Use thesaurus features to prompt the use of stronger verbs, adverbs, adjectives
- ❑ Talking word processors to provide feedback on what was written