

Teach Sentence Skills in Three Easy Stages

Children learn to write sentences easily and proficiently when handwriting instruction follows the three stages of learning.

- 1. Imitate the Teacher:** This is the easiest stage. The teacher shows students how to write each letter, word, space, and punctuation mark. As the teacher writes, children imitate.
- 2. Copy a Sentence:** At the second stage, children look at a sentence and copy it, trying to match the model.
- 3. Write a Sentence Independently:** At this stage, students must work without a demonstration or a model. The transitional activity requires the teacher to dictate each letter, space, and punctuation. Finally, children will write a sentence independently.

By following this procedure when teaching sentences, children will quickly learn how to write letters within a word as well as when and how to use spacing and punctuation. When children have acquired this necessarily skill, their own creative writing will flourish!

Sentence Lessons

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Use capitals, spaces, and punctuation in a sentence.
- Write legible sentences using proper letter formation.

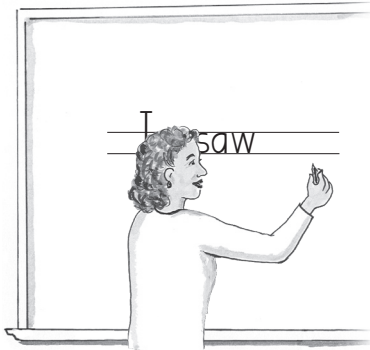
Duration

10 minutes per stage

Separate stages for kindergarten students

You Need

- A large board marked with writing lines



- Children facing the board
- *Letters and Numbers for Me*, page 51
- Lined paper



Procedure

Stage 1: Imitation

Tell them...

We are going to read the sentence together, **I saw a cow**. Now I am going to show you how to write each letter in every word. I will say, **Watch me it's my turn**. When I have completed the letter, I will say, **It's your turn**. Write the letter under the same letter in your workbook.

How do I teach this?

You model each letter, each space, and all punctuation. Help students by teaching letter size and placement (*Kindergarten Teacher's Guide*, p. 54) and using consistent language. Ensure that each student watches you and does not just 'copy' the sentence. Students are learning letter formation by watching your movements.

Stage 2: Copy

Tell them...

I think you are ready to copy the next sentence. Remember to start your letters correctly and leave a space when you need to. Copy the sentence: **I saw a goat**.

How do I teach this?

If you are in a classroom, walk around and observe children as they are doing this. Assist if you notice they are having difficulty.

Transitional Activity

The transition from copying to independent writing can be a challenge for some students. Use the following activity to help students make the transition smoothly.

Tell them...

Are you ready to write a mystery sentence on your lined paper? Get ready... The first word begins with the capital letter __. Next to that letter, I want you to write the lowercase __.

How do I teach this?

You dictate each letter, each space, and all punctuation. Dictate a sentence similar to the ones that students previously completed (e.g., **I saw a cat**).

Stage 3: Independent Writing

Tell them...

Now it is your turn to write a sentence on the lined paper. You can write a sentence that you make up on your own or you can write: **I saw a boy**. Use a capital letter at the beginning, spaces between words, and punctuation at the end.

How do I teach this?

Write the word "boy" on the board. If you are in a classroom, walk around and observe children as they are doing this. If a student has difficulty with this stage, return to stage two. Write: **I saw a boy** on the lined paper and have the student copy it.

As you collect these papers and workbooks from your students, observe their progress at each stage of learning.