



## Using Decodable Texts as Springboards to Writing

When students write about a decodable story, they will need to use words from the story—many of which will contain the target phonics skill. Plus, the text offers struggling students scaffolded support in selecting and writing words.

It is important to model the writing process. Begin each writing activity by talking about what students will write about. This gives them the opportunity to clarify and refine their ideas before expressing them in print. Guide students to share their responses with partners, get feedback, and revise as needed. Following are several activities to try, but there are so many more!

1. Have students write a **retelling** of the story (if fiction). Before they start, have them “walk and talk” a story path. To do this fun task, draw a story pathway on a long sheet of bulletin board paper with these labels: “beginning,” “middle,” and “end.” Students can then write key words or draw simple pictures on small slips of paper and place them along the pathway at the appropriate locations to help them remember key story events. Students then take turns walking the pathway as they orally retell the story. You or student partners can offer corrective feedback and model “look-backs” into the story to add missing details.
2. Have students create a list of **new facts learned** (if informational). Suggest that they add an illustration to accompany the list and record any new words they learned that were associated with these facts or concepts. Some can even come from your discussion rather than the text.
3. Have students write a **story extension** answering the question, “What happens next?”
4. Have students write a new story using the main characters, putting them in a new setting or creating a **new story** problem.
5. Have students write a **dialogue** between two characters that they first act out with a partner. It can be a dialogue in which the characters discuss a key event or problem in the book or a new problem that characters must solve.
6. Have students write a **letter to the author or illustrator** explaining why they liked the book, giving two or three details.
7. Have students write a **letter to one of the characters**.
8. Ask students to list **5–10 words from the story**, including several with the target phonics skill, and use some of the words to create a story.
9. List **sample words** with the target skill in columns based on spelling pattern (e.g., *\_at*, *\_an*, *\_ap*, *\_ack*, *\_ad*). Have students **generate lists of words with each pattern** (real words only). Ask them to write fun story titles using some of the words, such as “The Very Bad Cat.”