

“ In my 24 years of teaching I have never known my students so well. ”

Jenay Prytula

A special education classroom teacher who has used *First Author Writing Curriculum* and software for three years with her middle school students who are physical or otherwise health impaired



GETTING STARTED

Here is a quick look at what you will need to get started:

Lesson Time

- Space for all students to gather
- Flip chart or interactive white board

Writing Time

- Computer lab
- Writing supplies
- Writing Topic Area
- Author's Toolkit

Author's Chair

- Special chair
- Author's Board (pocket chart)
- Microphone

Research Support

“For students with developmental disabilities to develop as writers, writing instruction needs to be embedded in their daily curriculum and include accommodations such as assistive technology.”

Joseph & Konrad, 2009

LIST OF SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

Before you get started with the First Author Writing Curriculum you will need to get supplies and materials for your students and your classroom.

Order the supplies listed below.

STUDENT ITEMS	TOTAL ITEMS
One-inch three-ring binders	One binder per student
Tabbed binder dividers—five tabs	One set per student
Zippered pouches for three-ring binder	One per student
Scissors	One pair per student
Glue Sticks	One stick per student
Digital Head Shot Photo Image	One for each student
CLASSROOM ITEMS	TOTAL ITEMS
Talking Stick	One per class
Author’s Chair	One per class
Supply Caddy / Bin	One per writing table
Lined Paper	One stack per writing table
Pencils	One pencil per student
Markers	One set per writing table
Dry erase markers and board	One per student
Microphone	One per classroom (used during Author’s Chair)
One-inch three-ring binders	2-3 for school photos (e.g., field trips)
Box for storing magazines	One per classroom
Pocket Chart	One per classroom
Blank rectangular laminated cards	One for each student



Included with the *First Author Writing Curriculum* is a Teacher Resource USB drive. Located on this drive are the contents of the Teacher Tools folder and the Student Resources folder.

PREPARE STUDENT AND CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Student Materials

- Prepare an **Author's Toolkit** for each student. The Author's Toolkit is a customized three-ring binder with unique writing supports for each student. The binder has tabbed sections (located on the Teacher Resource USB drive).

Beginning writers are motivated by topics of individualized interest and personal photos, so ask for input from family members. Before the first day of instruction you should have 4-5 pictures or images placed behind the "My Topics" tab of each student's toolkit. Magazines, catalogs, and the Internet are good resources for topic inspiration. Include topic categories from:

My Life—pictures of family members, pets, images of hobbies, and favorite foods

My World—monster trucks, cartoon characters, dinosaurs, favorite TV shows and movies

If computers are being used, pictures and images can be organized in folders on a student's computer desktop.

Ask parents or guardians to send pictures or images to school, use a USB drive or have them emailed to you. (Parent letters are on the Teacher Resource USB drive.)

Personalize each Author's Toolkit by:

- Prominently display student's name on the cover
 - Include a "Head Shot" of the Author
 - Later invite students to customize their binder covers with images that represent topics they love!
- For beginning writers, print and laminate **alphabet boards**, three-hole punch them and insert into the front of the Author's Toolkit before the tabbed sections (provided on the Teacher Resource USB drive).
 - Print sets of **letter tiles**, cut them out, place into a zippered pouch, and insert into the front of the tabbed section. Some students like to glue letter tiles onto their writing. (Letter tiles provided on the Teacher Resource USB drive.)
 - Locate and print the individual student Tip Sheets for the first week of lessons (located in the Student Resources folder and on the Teacher Resource USB drive).

Author's Toolkit



Letter Tiles



Classroom Materials

- Use additional three-ring binders to create topic binders called **My School**, include fun classroom activities, teachers, other students, and photos from field trips.
- Label a large plastic box “**Magazines**” and collect magazines, catalogs, and flyers to inspire writing topics.
- Gather writing supplies including pencils, markers, scissors, glue sticks, and lined paper. Place in bins and caddies in the writing area.
- Identify your Author’s Chair. This special place is where students will share and celebrate their writing with others. Remember, it can be a special chair, quilt or archway. A small microphone can be helpful and encouraging for students.

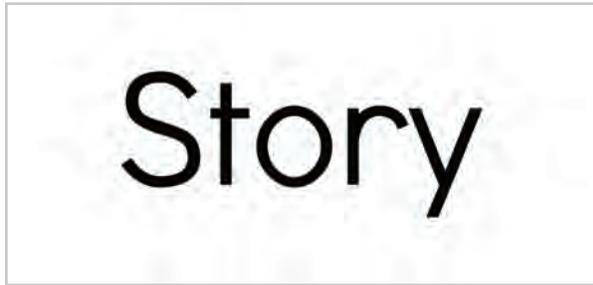
Magazine Tub of Writing Topics



Author's Chair



- Prepare materials for your Author's Board (pocket chart)–



Lesson Card

Laminate rectangular blank pieces of paper (for repeated use) that fit into the pocket (have wipe-off markers available). These lesson board cards are used during Lesson Time to collect students' ideas.



Student Photo Card

Take a special photo of each student, type or print student's first name, affix to bottom of photo, laminate. Used with the laminated rectangles during Author's Chair so the whole class can see the name of the Author along with the text type or topic of the writing being shared.



Lesson Card

The Author's Board provides a perfect venue for celebrating "Special Moments" that occur during the week. Record a student's writing, speaking, or listening accomplishment on the lesson card, place it next to the Author's name card and place it on the Author's Board.