



# Write Around the Block

**Instructors:** Don't forget to make an Achievry account for each student! [Make your account for the Achievry in English](#) or [Make your Account for the Achievry in Spanish](#).

**Objective:** By the end of this lesson, your students should have some familiarity with resources from the Student Portal that help participants build writing skills.

**Grade Span:** PreK-12

**Subjects:** Writing

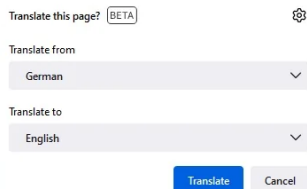
**Lesson Introduction:** Writing is a key skill that students need to succeed in school, work, and life. The earlier they start, the more they practice, and the more support they get, the more confident and capable they'll become. By giving them regular opportunities to write in different ways and helping them improve their skills step by step, we set them up to communicate clearly, think critically, and express themselves in creative ways.

**Lesson:** Your goal is to help students and families get comfortable using writing tools and resources like the ones in the [IDRC Student & Family Resource Portal](#).

**Teacher Tip:** Show students (and their parents) how to translate a web page into their preferred language from the drop-down menu in the upper right corner.

**Younger Students:** Building writing skills with young children is all about creating a language-rich environment. One of the best ways to help a child become a great writer is by exposure to high-quality literature in various forms—spoken, written, and visual—that models excellent writing. As students absorb examples of high-quality writing and storytelling, they start building the foundations for writing as they grow. Young children can begin with oral storytelling long before they have the physical abilities to write.

**Storyline Online:** Storyline Online features celebrities reading children's books aloud with animated illustrations. It supports literacy by enhancing listening skills, vocabulary, and comprehension, while fostering a love for reading.



This engaging resource helps children connect with stories and develop early language skills. Storyline Online does offer some bilingual options

[Toadstools and Fairy Dust](#): a YouTube channel offering engaging children’s stories, educational songs, and whimsical content. With lively narration and animations, it promotes early literacy by fostering a love of reading, expanding vocabulary, and enhancing listening skills in young audiences.

[The Storytime Family](#): The StoryTime Family is a YouTube channel with a wide selection of children’s books read aloud. The channel’s hosts read in an engaging, lively style, and they also often include helpful visuals for a more immersive experience.



[Story Jumper](#): Where students, parents, and teachers collaborate to publish their own storybooks.

[ABCya Writing Games](#): ABCya offers fun, interactive games that help children develop writing and typing skills. These games make learning to read and write engaging and effective. It’s now available in Spanish as well.



[FREE Pre-Writing & Tracing Sheets for Kids from TotSchooling](#): Young children need lots of pre-writing practice to develop proper pencil grip. Once they start writing letters, they also need to practice proper letter formation. Here is a collection of all the FREE Pre-Writing and Tracing printables and worksheets found on Totschooling - perfect for toddlers, preschoolers and kindergarten kids.



[Funny Fill-ins from Nat Geo](#): The National Geographic Kids - Funny Fill-In game lets kids make hilarious stories by filling in blanks with different types of words like nouns, verbs, and adjectives. It’s a fun way to help kids learn about parts of speech while laughing at the silly results. No sign-up needed—just jump in and start creating crazy stories!



### Kids getting a little older?

While resources like [Storyline Online](#) still work well for older students, it’s helpful to add in additional resources that offer a mix of reading and listening practice, creative and informative writing opportunities, and vocabulary-building games, ensuring that students stay motivated while mastering important writing skills.

[826 National](#): 826 National has tons of great online resources for both students and teachers. They offer free writing guides, fun prompts, and lesson plans to help students improve their writing. You can also find virtual workshops and events, plus tools and ideas to inspire young writers. For teachers, there are helpful curriculum guides and



tips to bring more creativity into the classroom. It's all about making writing fun and easy to access for everyone. They offer some resources in Spanish.

**Storybird:** Storybird is a creative writing platform that allows students to create and publish their own stories. Using a large library of beautiful artwork, students can write stories and poems, which they can then share with family and friends. Storybird is great for developing writing skills, story structure, and creative expression. Though there is a paid version, the free version allows students to write and publish books, making it a great tool for aspiring writers.

## Hemingway Editor



**Hemingway Editor:** Hemingway Editor is a tool that helps make your writing clearer and easier to read. It highlights things like long sentences, unnecessary adverbs, passive voice, and overly complex words. It also gives you a readability score to show how simple or complicated your writing is.

You can use it for free online, but there's also a paid version with extra features, like working offline and exporting your work. Overall, it's all about making your writing straightforward and punchy.

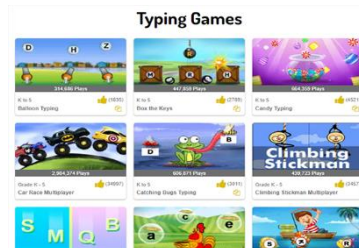
**Write & Improve:** Write and Improve is a free tool where students can submit writing samples and receive immediate, helpful feedback. It's an excellent way for students to work on improving their writing skills, as the tool provides suggestions for improving grammar, punctuation, and coherence. It's an especially helpful resource for teachers or parents looking to provide immediate, constructive feedback on students' writing.



**TED-Ed:** TED-Ed offers animated videos that explain complex topics in an engaging, accessible way. These videos can enhance literacy practice by improving listening comprehension, expanding vocabulary, and promoting critical thinking through discussion and reflection on the content.



**NaNoWriMo Young Writers Program:** NaNoWriMo's Young Writers Program offers a fun, structured way for young people to dive into writing, improve their skills, and work on a creative project in a supportive, encouraging environment.



**Typing Club:** Typing Club is a free, ad-supported typing program that starts with the basics and gradually builds skills. It includes games and activities, with a dashboard tracking your practice time, words per minute, accuracy, and other stats. And try out [Turtle Diary](#) for fun typing games.

[The Learning Network](#): The Learning Network from *The New York Times* offers current event articles, writing prompts, and lesson plans for older elementary and middle school students. The accessible content helps students practice reading and writing while engaging with real-world topics through creative activities like photo essays and quizzes.

[Merriam-Webster Games & Quizzes](#): The Merriam-Webster Spelling Games site is an excellent resource for older students looking to improve their spelling and vocabulary. It provides a competitive, game-like environment where middle and high school students can sharpen their language skills. The site features interactive activities that reinforce spelling, vocabulary, and word usage, making learning both fun and effective. Students can practice spelling while expanding their vocabulary and mastering new words.



**Keep it going!** Expand on this lesson with additional resources & Achievery lessons like:



[Creative Writing Prompts](#) (3-5): Unleash your creativity with these writing prompts presented by 826 National. Imagine new possibilities as you interview an inanimate object with author Daniel Handler (a.k.a. Lemony Snicket), invent a creative recipe, and reimagine a fairy tale for Twitter.

[Developing Your Writing](#) (9-12): Writing is a powerful tool for creating change on any level. In this lesson, you will plan a piece of writing that encourages your audience to take action on an issue you're passionate about. You will plan your writing to craft a clear, compelling message geared toward your audience.

[Place As a Character](#) (9-12): In this lesson, you will identify telling details and precise words and phrases about a place, and then write a narrative where that information plays a prominent role in the story.

[How Did You Get There?](#) (6-8): Imagine you wake up in an alien's basement: The first question you'd probably ask is, "How did I get here?" In this lesson, you will use a narrative technique called pacing to write a mystery story that develops experiences and events, for the reader.

[Misunderstood Perspectives](#) (4-5): Feeling misunderstood can lead to a lot of different thoughts and feelings. In this lesson, you will explore that idea by writing a narrative from the perspective of an animal that humans often misunderstand.

