

# 6+1 Traits: Ideas



## Standard(s):

- Begin using characteristics of good writing: ideas and content (2, 3)
- Continue using characteristics of good writing: ideas and content (4-8)

## Pathways Cross-References:

- 1 & 2 Teacher Resource Manual, pp. 239-269
- 3+ Teacher Resource Manual, pp. 147-180
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

## Recommended Materials:

- K-2—*The Doorbell Rang*
- 3-5—*Come Back, Salmon*
- 6-8—*Hana's Suitcase*
- White Board/Markers
- Writers' Notebooks

## Suggestions for Additional Mini-lessons:

- Finding a Topic
- Narrowing the Idea
- Developing Supporting Details
- "Show" not "Tell"
- "Just Right" Description

**Please note:** This Mini-Lesson is intended to serve as a guide to assist teachers in creating their own instruction for the Writing Workshop. While a script is provided, it should not be read without personal adaptation.

## Ideas

	Connect	Explore	Practice
<b>K-2</b>	<p>Authors often get their ideas for writing from the interesting stories in their lives.</p> <p>Many interesting things happen to you as well that you could write about.</p> <p>For example, think about the last time you heard your doorbell ring. Who was at the door? What did they want? Were you surprised? You could write about this!</p>	<p>The author, Pat Hutchins, wrote the book, <i>The Doorbell Rang</i>. Let's look at the pictures and read the words that tell what happened as the doorbell rang. What is the idea that the author is writing about in this book?</p> <p>There are seven characteristics or traits of good writing that all learners should know about. One of the traits is IDEAS. Ideas are the main message that the writer wants to convey. You can begin by thinking about things you have seen or heard, or the questions you have about these things. Then, convey your ideas by drawing pictures, using letters and words, and writing about what happened to you or others.</p> <p>Let's take our writing notebooks and make a list of ideas that we could write about. Think about interesting things that have happened to you as you make your list.</p> <p>Who would like to share something on their list? We'll write them on the board and you may get some ideas for your list.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Ex. The Day My Sister Lost Her Homework The Dog Barked The Run-away Shopping Cart</p> </div>	<p>Choose one of the ideas on your list and write about what happened. As you write or draw, think about these questions: Who is in your story? Where are they? What is the most important thing that they did? How did they do it? Why did they do it?</p> <p>Use "My Story Map" to help you plan your story before writing in your writer's notebook.</p> <p>Who would like to share their story with us?</p>

## Ideas

3-5

In addition to the stories that happen to each of us, we can gather ideas for writing by observing things around us and exploring questions about these things.

I observed a peacock on a housetop in my neighborhood the other day and had these questions: What country did Peacocks come from? How do they fly since they are so large? Do peacocks come in different colors?

What have you observed that you would like to know more about?

In the book, *Come Back, Salmon*, by Molly Cone, a group of children observed and wondered about a creek in their neighborhood that was full of trash. The author recorded their observations as well as solutions. What questions did they have as they explored ways to clean it up?

There are seven characteristics or traits of good writing that all learners should know and use. They describe the qualities of good writing as well as provide a common language for us to talk about writing. One of the traits is IDEAS. Ideas are the main message or content of the writing. First, you should select an idea or topic to write about. Choose something that interests you or you wonder about. Then focus on one small part of the topic to elaborate on.

Let's conduct some observations. We'll begin by taking a walk around our school. Record in your writing notebooks questions about what you see and hear. You can make a chart as follows:

Things I noticed:	Questions I have about what I noticed:
-------------------	--

Share one thing on your list that you noticed, along with any questions about it, with your writing partner.

Choose one of the questions that you recorded to explore. Find answers to your question by using resources in our classroom, such as books or the Internet. After your research, write a response to your question in your writing notebook.

Use "My Research Map" to record information before writing in your writer's notebook.

We'll share our questions and answers in small groups when we are done.

## Ideas

	Connect	Explore	Practice			
<b>6-8</b>	<p>Authors let their eyes guide them in finding ideas to write about by observing things around them. They also use their heart to determine what they write about.</p> <p>You can look at the world through a writer’s eyes and heart as well. You begin by thinking about what matters most in the world around you. Start by choosing something that is ordinary but important to you, such as your pillow. Then think about how it is extraordinary.</p> <p>What can you write about in an extraordinary way?</p>	<p><i>Hana’s Suitcase</i> is a good example of an object that the author, Karen Levine, wrote about in an extraordinary way. She did quite a bit of research to discover answers to her questions about the suitcase that she could share in her book.</p> <p>There are seven characteristics or traits of good writing that all learners should address in their writing. Not only do they provide a common language for us to talk about writing but they allow you to become a self-evaluator. You can critique your own writing by referring to the traits. One of the traits is IDEAS. Ideas are the main message of the piece, along with all the supporting details. You will want to choose details that are interesting, important, and informative. Sometimes this will include unusual bits of information that might normally be overlooked.</p> <p>In your writer’s notebook, make a list of things around you that capture your eyes and your heart. You could perhaps create a chart such as this to record your list:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="521 1083 1261 1163"> <tr> <td>Things in My Classroom:</td> <td>Things in My Bedroom:</td> <td>Things in My Yard:</td> </tr> </table> <p>Share a couple of things on your list with your writing group. Tell why they capture your eyes and your heart.</p>	Things in My Classroom:	Things in My Bedroom:	Things in My Yard:	<p>Choose one of the things on your list to write about. You can write about what you know about the things, but you will also need to learn more about it by doing some research. Develop several questions you would like answered about the item, then use our classroom resources to find answers to your questions to include in your writing.</p> <p>Use “My Writing Map” to record what you know and learn before writing in your writer’s notebook.</p> <p>We’ll make a class book about the things you write about.</p>
Things in My Classroom:	Things in My Bedroom:	Things in My Yard:				

## Ideas

---

### *“Apply” Ideas:*

- Social Studies: Have learners bring treasured objects from home to write about. They can first tell the class or a friend why the object is special. Then have them describe it and tell why it is important as they write.
- Language Arts: Have learners discover how authors get their ideas for writing by reading biographies of writers or visiting their websites.
- Bible: Have learners choose a book or chapter of the Bible and share the idea that the author is writing about. Discuss how the author got the idea.
- Science: Have learners investigate how scientists develop their ideas by researching a particular scientist and their invention or discovery.
- Math: As you study a particular math unit, have learners articulate the essential question(s) and big idea(s) associated with the concepts and skills.

### *“Share” Ideas:*

- Make a class book of learners’ writing and display in the library area for students to read in their free time.
- Make arrangements for the learners to share their writing with another class, perhaps with an older reading buddy.
- Learners can develop a short PowerPoint on what they have learned about Writing Ideas to share on Parents’ Night.



# All About Ideas

- **Find a Topic**
- **Narrow the Idea**
- **Develop Supporting Details**
- **“Show” not “Tell”**
- **“Just Right” Description**

Ideas

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## My Story Map

Who is in the story?	
Where are they?	
What is the most important thing that they did?	
How did they do it?	
Why did they do it?	

Ideas

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## My Research Map

My Question:

Resource #1 Answer:

Resource #2 Answer:

Resource #3 Answer:



Ideas

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## My Writing Map

My Topic:

What I know about the topic:

Information from Resource #1:

Information from Resource #2:

Information from Resource #3:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Assessment Rubric: Ideas

	<b>K-2</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>6-8</b>
<b>Finding a Topic</b>	Topic is clear. 1 2 3	Topic is clear and associated with something the author observed. 1 2 3	Topic is clear with evidence that the author used their eyes and their heart to choose the topic. 1 2 3
<b>Narrowing the Idea</b>	Topic is focused on one main idea. 1 2 3	A question is used to help the author focus on one main idea. 1 2 3	Topic is approached in a fresh or extraordinary way. 1 2 3
<b>Developing Supporting Details</b>	Details add meaning to the topic. 1 2 3	Details are supported through research. 1 2 3	Details are supported through personal experience and research. 1 2 3
<b>“Showing” not “Telling”</b>	NA	Details help to create a picture or image in the reader’s mind. 1 2 3	Details help to create an image in the reader’s mind through the synthesis of personal experience and research. 1 2 3
<b>“Just Right” Description</b>	NA	NA	Details are interesting, important, and informative. 1 2 3
<i>Total Score</i>	/9	/12	/15

Note: Score each criterion on the left of the chart on a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 being low and 3 being high, for the particular grade band of the student.