

## Composing Versus Transcription Skills (Spelling, Handwriting)

Successful writers need to become fluent with handwriting and spelling which are described as *transcription* skills. One of the recommendations in the Institute of Education Science research report (Graham et al., 2012) is to teach students how to become fluent with handwriting and spelling.

If spelling and handwriting are not fluent and require considerable effort, students cannot focus on higher level composing skills.

The chart below identifies grade-level expectations for students, organized into two categories: composing skills and print concepts/transcription skills. Keep in mind that teachers may have children who have more- or less-advanced skills. This is why it is important to differentiate instruction and use scaffolds to meet the individual needs of every student.

EXPECTATIONS Composing Skills	EXPECTATIONS Transcription Skills
<b>Kindergarten</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Composing is expressed primarily through speaking, dictating, or drawing.</li> <li>● Students may attempt to write messages of their own and read them back.</li> <li>● Students produce complete sentences when speaking.</li> <li>● Students use frequently occurring nouns, verbs, and question words while composing.</li> <li>● Students capitalize the first word when writing a sentence.</li> </ul>	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Know that writing differs from drawing, has distinct letter forms, and can be read back</li> <li>● Know how to write at least some letter forms</li> <li>● Know that spaces are between words</li> <li>● Know that writing goes from left to right and is organized from top to bottom of the page</li> <li>● May or may not know the alphabetic principle and produce early phonetic spellings of some sounds in words</li> </ul>
<b>Grade 1</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Composing is expressed primarily through speaking, drawing, words, and gradually written sentences.</li> <li>● Students begin to produce the four types of sentences (declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory) and compound sentences when speaking.</li> <li>● Students use a wider variety of nouns, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, and verb tenses while composing .</li> <li>● Students may be amenable to adding details to drawings and text in response to feedback from peers and adults.</li> </ul>	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Know the alphabetic principle and spell by sound using alphabet letter names and sound-symbol correspondences</li> <li>● Remember the spellings of commonly used high frequency words</li> <li>● Begin to write words in sequence with word spaces, capitalize the first word, and use punctuation at the ends of sentences</li> </ul>

<b>Grade 2</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Composing is expressed primarily through speaking and writing sentences.</li> <li>● Students write compound and complex sentences, and all four types of sentences.</li> <li>● Students begin to link sentences into a basic paragraph .</li> <li>● There is more independence in generating ideas.</li> <li>● Students use more complicated forms of nouns and pronouns, irregular verbs, and a variety of adjectives and adverbs when composing.</li> <li>● Students begin to be aware of task, audience, purpose.</li> <li>● Students may be amenable to adding details and text revision in response to feedback from peers and adults.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spelling and handwriting are becoming more sufficient to focus more on the demands of composing.</li> <li>● Students apply basic capitalization rules and begin using more punctuation (e.g., commas in letter greetings, apostrophe for contraction and possessives).</li> </ul>
<b>Grade 3</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Composing is expressed primarily through writing.</li> <li>● Students write compound and complex sentences.</li> <li>● Students link sentences into multi- paragraphs.</li> <li>● Students use a wider range of vocabulary, including terms that represent abstract concepts when composing.</li> <li>● Students write with an awareness of task, audience, purpose.</li> <li>● Students revise writing with feedback support from peers and adults.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spelling and handwriting are sufficiently fluent to focus on the demands of composing.</li> <li>● Students use more complex punctuation (e.g., commas and quotation marks in dialogue).</li> </ul>