

What Are Nellie Edge Writing-to-Read "Heart Words?": How Does Kindergarten Writing Support Phonics Instruction? Updated February 2024



Nellie Edge writing-to-read "heart words" invite kindergartners to write **heart-connecting sentences** such as "I love you..." early in the year to build **circles of writing mastery!** (I see the..., I like my..., I can ..., I have a ...) When several sentence starters are automatic (with good handwriting), the brain has the memory space to fearlessly encode sounds to print for unknown words. Building engaged and motivated writers supports phonics proficiency.

- Writing provides powerful, authentic phonics practice
- The best way to assess phonics knowledge? Look at student writing!

What Are the Research-Based Principles That Guide Our Teaching of Writing-to-Read Heart Words?

- **Children learn best when you give them a crystal-clear achievable target** to work towards and you acknowledge and celebrate their success: Each new color-coded set has 16 words! Student, parent, and teacher all know what the next learning target is! We teach for mastery. (See Dr. Hattie's research: Visible Learning.)
- **The brain is a musical brain:** singing releases happy chemicals. We sing, sign, spell, and write "heart word" sentences for mastery.
- **Multisensory instruction with fingerspelling accelerates learning** of "heart words" and phonics-based words for ALL learners.
- **Emotional engagement is the key** to powerful learning: We make writing real and personally motivating.

- **ABC Phonics Immersion with fingerspelling is part of a comprehensive writing program** that allows us to systematically reinforce phonemic awareness and phonics instruction throughout the day.

“I love you” Becomes the First Circle of Kindergarten Writing Mastery, followed by “I see, I like, I can, I have...”



Three things young writers know for sure:

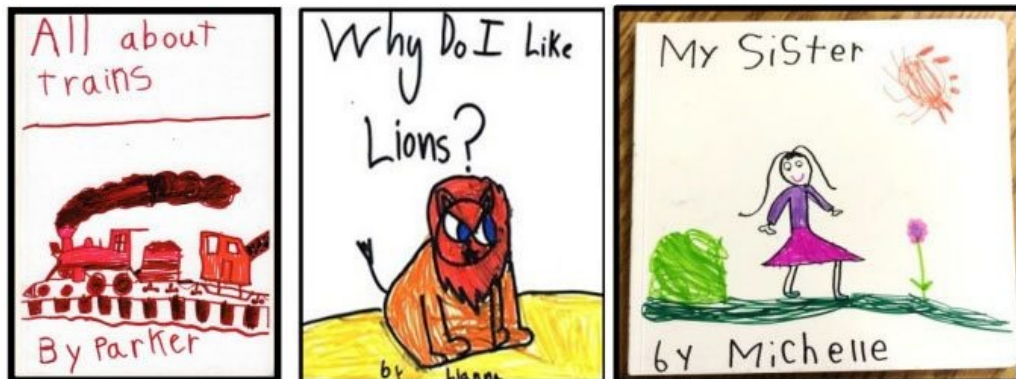
1. If I practice writing “heart word” sentences with good handwriting every day, my writing is going to get really good!
2. *The more I practice phonics-based spelling, the better I get!*
3. If I keep listening for sounds and stretching through words, soon I will be able to **fearlessly tackle any unknown word!**

This Is What Kindergarten Heart Word Sentence “Fluency Practice” Looks Like by the End of the Year

<p>FINLEY LUNA</p> <p>I can write 5 different heart word sentences!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I love My Panda! 2. I See a Bee? 3. I like Bunnies! 4. I can swim? 5. I have a PikaBo! <p>Why do I practice writing “heart word” sentences? If I practice this every day, my writing is going to get really good! <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heart words spelled correctly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good handwriting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spaces between words <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a period at the end of each sentence * I am an expert at 5 heart word sentences! *</p>	<p>Colton Wallace Juneo</p> <p>I can write 5 different heart word sentences!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I like cats. 2. I love Dogs. 3. I see a fox. 4. I can run. 5. I have a cat. <p>Why do I practice writing “heart word” sentences? If I practice this every day, my writing is going to get really good! <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heart words spelled correctly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good handwriting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spaces between words <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a period at the end of each sentence * I am an expert at 5 heart word sentences! *</p>
<p>Kachill</p> <p>I can write 5 different heart word sentences!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I love you. 2. I see a cat. 3. I like my Mom. 4. I can see a dog. 5. I have a dog. <p>Why do I practice writing “heart word” sentences? If I practice this every day, my writing is going to get really good! <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heart words spelled correctly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good handwriting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spaces between words <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a period at the end of each sentence * I am an expert at 5 heart word sentences! *</p>	<p>Caroline Roth</p> <p>I can write 5 different heart word sentences!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I love art! 2. I See the Cardinals. 3. look at the Cars! 4. I Can see a tree. 5. I have a house. <p>Why do I practice writing “heart word” sentences? If I practice this every day, my writing is going to get really good! <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heart words spelled correctly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good handwriting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spaces between words <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a period at the end of each sentence * I am an expert at 5 heart word sentences! *</p>



Kindergartners are absolutely able to write and illustrate 8-page books by the end of the year! **All students deserve a comprehensive writing program!**



[Follow Nellie Edge on YouTube for Heart Word Writing-to-Read Lessons](#)

[See Writing photo essays on Nellie Edge Kindergarten](#)

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**Nellie Edge Writing-to-Read
Heart Word Curriculum
Bundle**

a.k.a. kindergarten Sight Word Program

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"This is such a great, motivating way to build young writers! I am amazed at the children's art." -TPT quote

**Best Practices for Teaching Kindergarten
Writing-to-Read "Heart Word" Sentences**

a.k.a. Nellie Edge Sight Word Sentence Program

Integrate ABC Phonics, handwriting, and heart word sentences to build circles of writing mastery for writing workshop.

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