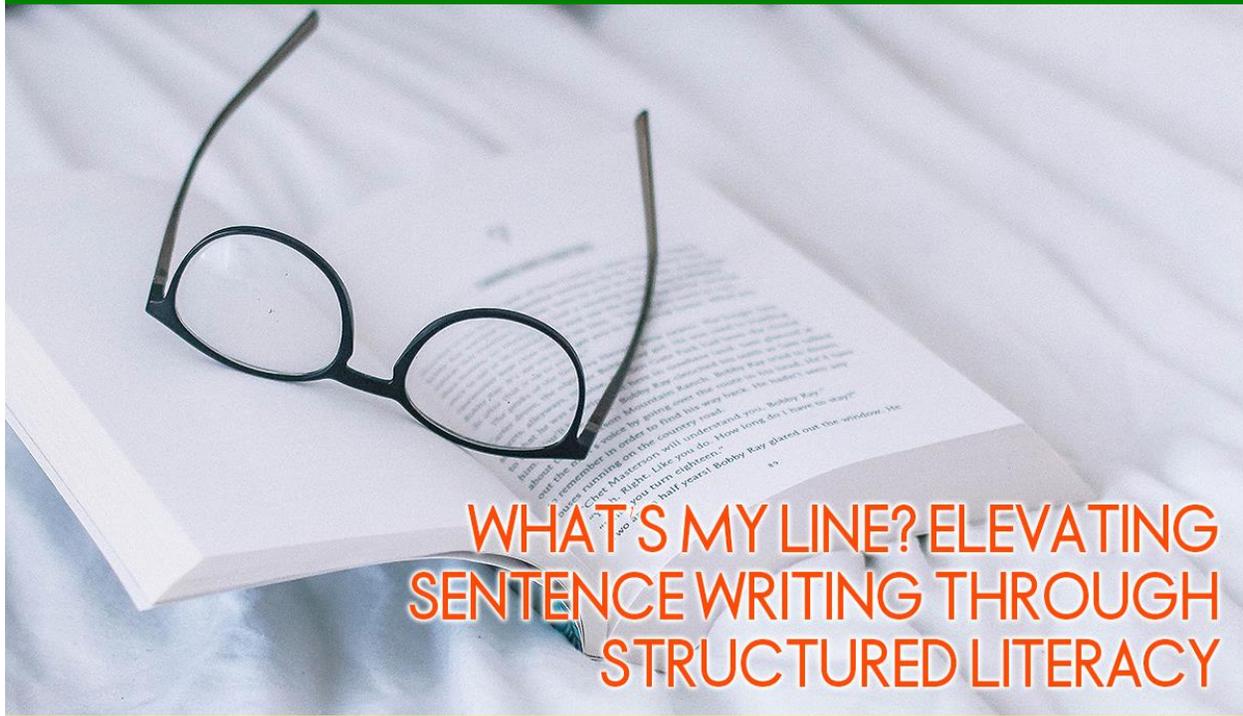




# Ready, Set, Go

Success for All

An e-Newsletter linking people and resources to support quality practices in the education of all students



## WHAT'S MY LINE? ELEVATING SENTENCE WRITING THROUGH STRUCTURED LITERACY

Over the past several years, there has been increasing momentum to shift instructional practices away from balanced literacy towards a structured literacy approach. Structured literacy has been defined by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) as an approach that is characterized by the provision of systematic, explicit instruction that integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The structure of language is emphasized across the speech sound system (phonology), the writing system (orthography), the structure of sentences (syntax), the meaningful parts of words (morphology), the relationships among words (semantics), and the organization of spoken and written discourse (The International Dyslexia Association, 2018).

While many states and school divisions have highlighted the phonemic awareness and phonics components of structured literacy, it's critical for teachers to explore and emphasize the other components of effective structured literacy, such as the structure

of sentences. Further emphasizing the need to improve practices for writing instruction, the National Assessment of Educational Progress's (NAEP) most recent writing assessment showed that only 27.3% of U.S. students performed at or above the proficient level (2011). Tracy (2013) provides teachers with the tools they need to explicitly teach syntax (sentence structure), an evidence-based practice shown to improve students' writing and reading skills.

**Get Ready** to become familiar with the components of structured literacy and the elements that are linked to proficient sentence writing skills. Additionally, learn how structured literacy honors several [High-Leverage Practices](#) identified by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), in partnership with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR). Specifically, [HLP 16](#), which describes the importance of explicit instruction and [HLP 12](#), related to systematically designing instruction towards a learning goal, are key elements of structured literacy.

#### Article

- [Structured Literacy Approaches to Teaching Written Expression \(p 22\)](#)

#### Video

- [ORtl Louise Spear-Swirling Webinar: Transforming the Family Tree Through Literacy \(45:00\)](#)

#### Website

- [IDA Infographic: What is Structured Literacy?](#)

**Get Set** to learn how instruction in sentence structure and sentence-level writing can increase students' quality and quantity of writing and reading comprehension.

#### Articles

- Judith Hochman & Natalie Wexler: One Sentence at a Time: [The Need for Explicit Instruction in Teaching Students to Write Well](#)
- Tim Shanahan: [Why We Need to Teach Sentence Comprehension](#)
- Joan Sedita: [Syntactic Awareness: Teaching Sentence Structure \(Part 1\)](#)
- Joan Sedita: [Syntactic Awareness: Teaching Sentence Structure \(Part 2\)](#)

#### Videos

- Florida Center for Reading Research- Assistant Professor Sonia Cabell, TED talk [Writing into Literacy](#)(16:24)
- William Van Cleave: [Syntax: The Link Between Sentence Writing & Sentence Comprehending](#) (21:09)

## Websites

- What Works Clearinghouse's [Practice Guide: Teaching Secondary School Students to Write Effectively](#)
- What Works Clearinghouse's [Practice Guide: Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers](#)

**Go** explore these resources to incorporate explicit sentence structure instruction into your structured literacy routines.

## Book

- Judith Hochman & Natalie Wexler Book: [The Writing Revolution: A Guide to Advancing Thinking Through Writing in All Subjects and Grades](#)

## Websites

- Iowa Reading Research Center Lesson Plan: [Sentence Expanding: Helping Students Build Strong Sentences](#)
- LD Online: [Sentence-Level Concepts and Skills, An Introduction](#)
- REL Southeast & IES Infographic: [Instructional Strategies for Teaching Writing to Elementary Students](#)
- Iowa Reading Research Center: [Sentence Expanding: Helping Students Build Stronger Sentences](#)
- Reading Rockets: Classroom Strategy: [Sentence Combining](#)
- [Roll a Sentence with Magical Creatures Activity](#)

## References

Datchuk, S. M., & Kubina, R. M. (2013). A review of teaching sentence-level writing skills to students with writing difficulties and learning disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education, 34*(3), 180-192.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932512448254>

Graham, S., & Hebert, M. A. (2010). *Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading. A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act Report*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Haynes, C. W., Lambrecht Smith, S., & Laud, L. (2019). Structured literacy approaches to teaching written expression. *Perspectives on Language and Literacy, 45*(3), 22-28.  
<https://mydigitalpublication.com/publication/?m=13959&i=607758&p=28&ver=html5>

Hochman, J. & Wexler, N. (2017). *The Writing Revolution*. Jossey-Bass.

International Dyslexia Association. (2018). *Knowledge and practice standards for teachers of reading*.

<https://app.box.com/s/21gdk2k1p3bnagdfz1xy0v98j5yt11wk>

Myhill, D., Jones, S., & Lines, H. (2018). Supporting less proficient writers through linguistically aware teaching. *Language and Education*, 32(4), 333-349.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2018.1438468>

National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *The Nation's Report Card: Writing 2011 (NCES 2012-470)*. Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

Saddler, B. (2005). Sentence combining: A sentence-level writing intervention. *Reading Teacher*, 58, 468-471.

Tracy, K. N. (2013, October 21). Write to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading. *International Literacy Association*.

<https://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-now/2013/10/21/writing-to-read-evidence-for-how-writing-can-improve-reading>

This e-Newsletter is a collaborative effort of the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Training and Technical Assistance Centers (TTACs) at George Mason University and James Madison University. This issue was prepared by the staff at the VDOE TTAC at George Mason University. For questions about content, please contact Meaghan Sekinger, [msekinge@gmu.edu](mailto:msekinge@gmu.edu), or Dr. Cindy Buckley, [cbuckle8@gmu.edu](mailto:cbuckle8@gmu.edu).

[TTAC @ GMU](#)

[VDOE](#)

[TTAC Online](#)

[VA Family Website](#)