



**SCHOLASTIC**

# Traits

# Writing™

A Complete K-8 Program from **Ruth Culham**



[scholastic.com/traitswriting](http://scholastic.com/traitswriting)



# The NEW K-8 Writing Program from Ruth Culham!

## The writing revolution is here.

Inspired by 25 years of research and best practices of thousands of teachers, **Traits Writing** is a revolutionary new writing program from Ruth Culham that helps every student become a capable, confident writer.

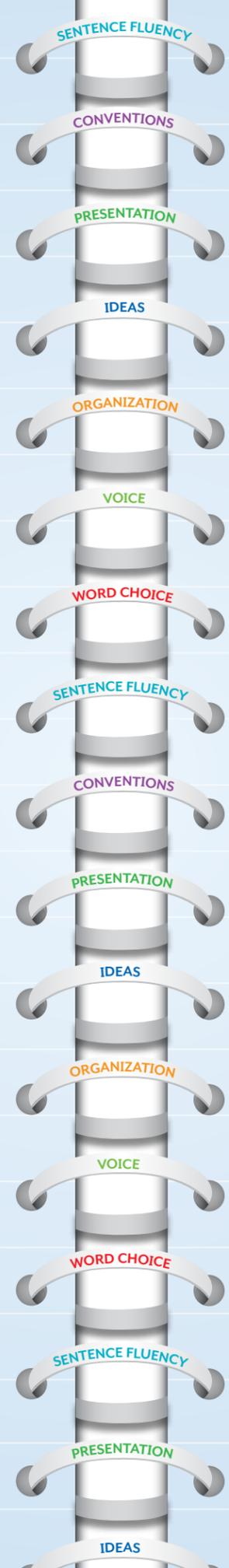
Built on the cornerstones of writing practices: writing process, writing workshop, and writing traits, **Traits Writing** with NEW grade-specific resources, can be put to work every day, week, and month of the school year. Containing carefully timed assessments based on reliable, easy-to-follow scoring guides, **Traits Writing** shows you how to inform and target writing instruction to meet each student's needs.

Finally, get clear direction on whole-class, small-group, and one-on-one writing instruction—and all the tools to carry them out with **Traits Writing**.



### Ruth Culham

is President of The Culham Writing Company and the recognized expert in the Traits of Writing. She is the author of multiple Traits of Writing books and professional resources.



In two simple words, here is why you are going to like the **Traits Writing** program: **It works.**

**It works** because it's easy to implement and reflects the combined wisdom of hundreds of thousands of teachers.

**It works** because it's research-based. All of the materials are inspired and based on twenty-five years of studies.

**It works** because it advocates using classroom assessment to drive critical decisions about what, when, who and how to teach.

**It works** because it supports teachers in improving student writing by leaps and bounds, day after day.

### What are The Traits of Writing?

The Trait Model is a well established and accurate assessment tool. It is also a simple, logical, and, most important, effective tool for planning and carrying out writing instruction. Let's take a closer look at each trait.

**Ideas:** the writing piece's content—its central message and details that support that message.

**Organization:** the internal structure of the writing piece—the thread of logic, the pattern of meaning.

**Voice:** the tone and tenor of the piece—the personal stamp of the writer, which is achieved through a strong understanding of purpose and audience.

**Word Choice:** the vocabulary the writer uses to convey meaning and enlighten the reader.

**Sentence Fluency:** the way words and phrases flow through the piece. We call sentence fluency the auditory trait because it's "read" with the ear as much as the eye.

**Conventions:** the mechanical correctness of the piece. Correct use of conventions (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and basic grammar) guides the reader through the text easily.

**Presentation:** the physical appearance of the piece. A visually appealing text provides a welcome mat. It invites the reader in.



# A Yearlong Plan Based on a Spiraled Sequence of the Traits

## A Spiraled Sequence of the Traits

The program is structured to cover the “revision traits” (Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, and Sentence Fluency) systematically and intermittently throughout the year, “spiraling” the traits and their key qualities. The “editing traits” (Conventions and Presentation) are taught on an ongoing basis, ensuring students receive comprehensive, well-rounded instruction in writing.

The program is made up of nine multi-week units:

- **1** Getting Started unit
- **7** Spiraled core units
- **1** Wrapping Up the Year unit

A five-day **Reality Check Week** appears between core units, allowing time to wrap up the current unit and prepare for the next.

### Core Units



## The Key Qualities of the Traits

Each trait is broken down into four key qualities—or core characteristics—that precise target instruction. Key qualities not only help to define the traits in detail and offer concrete concepts to teach, they are also the structural system of the program.



### Overview of a Core Week

As you'll see in this walk-through of a week's worth of instruction, Traits Writing provides abundant opportunities to work with the whole class, small groups, and individual students. It also contains opportunities for students to work with their classmates and on their own, ensuring a stimulating, supportive learning environment.

Each key quality is covered over a five-day period and instruction is based on a 40-minute daily writing block. If you don't have that much time, you'll find alternate schedules in the *Traits Writing Implementation Guide*.

### Sample from Grade 3

**Sentence Fluency**  
Fluent writing is graceful, varied, and rhythmic. It's easy to read aloud because each sentence seems to flow out of the one before it. To achieve this flow, writers must balance sentence types and lengths, use varying language patterns, and link ideas with apt sequence and transition words.

**Week at a Glance**

| DAY 1                                                                                                                                                                                                    | DAY 2                                                                                                                                                                                 | DAY 3                                                                                               | DAY 4                                                                                                                            | DAY 5                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pages 248-249<br>Introduction to Capturing Smooth and Rhythmic Flow<br>Focus Lesson: Planning Sentences<br>Writing Folder Application: Planning the Piece<br>Independent Writing: Narrative Unit Project | Pages 250-251<br>Whole-Class Warm-Up Activity: Capturing Smooth and Rhythmic Flow<br>Conventions Focus: Applying Grammar and Usage<br>Writing Folder Application: Improving the Piece | Pages 252-253<br>Differentiated Small Groups: Group A (beginning), Group B (middle), Group C (high) | Pages 254-255<br>Mentor Text Lesson: <i>If the Shoe Fits</i> by Gary Soto<br>Partner Conventions Check<br>Whole-Class Reflection | Page 256<br>One-on-One Conferences<br>Writing Folder Application: Improving the Piece<br>Independent Writing: Narrative Unit Project |

**OPENER** • Week-at-a-Glance Overview

**DAY 1** • Introductory Lesson on the Key Quality  
• Writing Folder Activities  
• Independent Writing

**Sentence Fluency**  
Fluent writing is graceful, varied, and rhythmic. It's easy to read aloud because each sentence seems to flow out of the one before it. To achieve this flow, writers must balance sentence types and lengths, use varying language patterns, and link ideas with apt sequence and transition words.

**Focus Lesson: Planning Sentences**  
Present the focus lesson to students and read aloud. Have students read the focus lesson and discuss the key quality. Then, have students plan their sentences for their writing.

**DAY 2** • Whole-Class Warm-Up Activity  
• Focus on Conventions  
• Assessment and Grouping

**Sentence Fluency**  
Fluent writing is graceful, varied, and rhythmic. It's easy to read aloud because each sentence seems to flow out of the one before it. To achieve this flow, writers must balance sentence types and lengths, use varying language patterns, and link ideas with apt sequence and transition words.

**Differentiated Small Groups**  
Group A (beginning): Project Warm-Up (15 min) Day 2 and read aloud...  
Group B (middle): Project the paragraph that Group A created...  
Group C (high): Review the warm-up program and discuss what makes their writing strong.

**DAY 4** • Mentor Text Lesson  
• Writing Folder Application  
• Independent Writing

**Sentence Fluency**  
Fluent writing is graceful, varied, and rhythmic. It's easy to read aloud because each sentence seems to flow out of the one before it. To achieve this flow, writers must balance sentence types and lengths, use varying language patterns, and link ideas with apt sequence and transition words.

**Mentor Text Lesson: If the Shoe Fits by Gary Soto**  
Read aloud the story. Ask students to listen for smooth and rhythmic flow. Discuss the key quality and how it is used in the story.

**DAY 5** • One-on-One Conferences  
• Partner Conventions Check  
• Whole-Class Reflection on the Key Quality

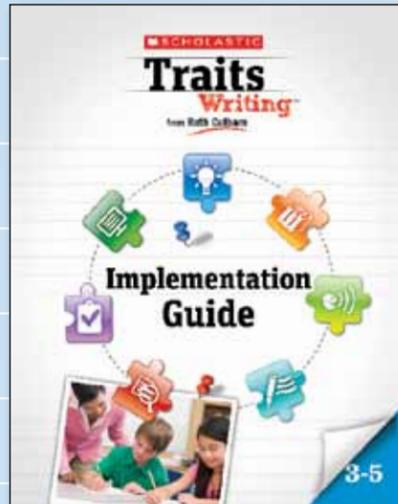
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**One-on-One Conferences**  
Have students finish working on their narrative unit project, using the Narrative Publishing Checklist in the Student Handbook. Circulate and carry out one of the following types of conferences, based on what you observe. Be sure to note in the Teacher Contact Book how you work with them.

# Traits Writing Program Components

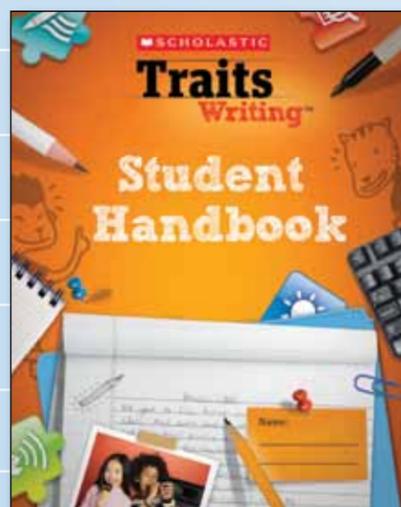
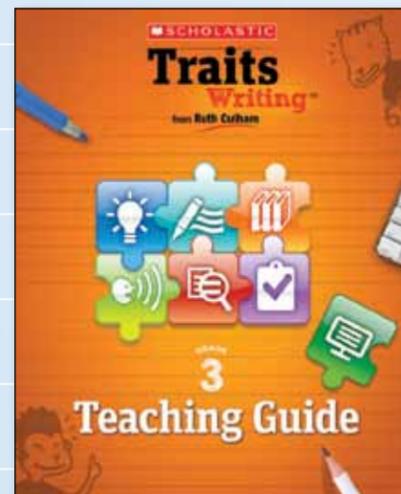
To Order Now, call 1-800-387-1437  
or visit  
[scholastic.com/traitswriting](http://scholastic.com/traitswriting) today!

Ruth Culham's Traits Writing program is made up of print and web-based resources to help you teach writing more efficiently and effectively.



**Implementation Guide:** Explains the instructional model, the research behind it, and ideas for scheduling instruction and managing the classroom. It provides detailed guidelines for assessing writing using the trait scoring guides, converting scores to grades, keeping records, and reporting progress to parents.  
**(1 copy per grade)**

**Teaching Guide:** Contains focus lessons, mentor text lessons, activities, differentiated [small-group] activities, tips for managing independent writing, and much more.  
**(1 copy per grade)**



**Student Handbook:** Includes definitions of the traits and key qualities, worksheets, write-on pages, warm-up activities, "Think Abouts," author previews, graphic organizers, tip sheets, publishing checklists, and other tools that support instruction.  
**(25 copies per grade)**

PRESENTATION

IDEAS

ORGANIZATION

VOICE

WORD CHOICE

SENTENCE FLUENCY

CONVENTIONS

PRESENTATION

IDEAS

ORGANIZATION

VOICE

WORD CHOICE

SENTENCE FLUENCY

PRESENTATION

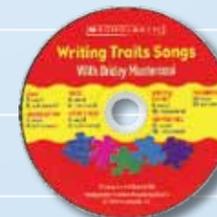
IDEAS



**Comments Book:** Contains 100 "just-right" comments, correlated to the trait scoring guides. Write the comments on papers or use them in one-on-one conferences, small groups, and whole class lessons to inspire students!  
**(1 copy per grade)**



**26 Mentor Texts:** A collection of fiction and nonfiction books and "everyday texts" serve as models for teaching the key qualities of the Traits. Books and Everyday Texts align to a lesson in the Teaching Guide and most are accompanied by a video of the writer who created it.  
**(26 mentor texts per grade)**



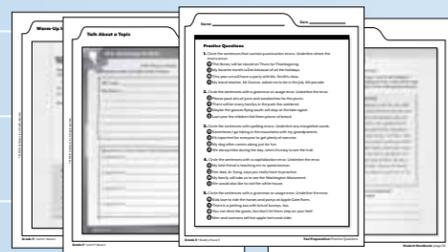
**Music CD** with lively, trait-specific songs to share with your students—two songs for each trait, a vocal version and an instrumental version—with lyrics included in the Student Handbook and on Traitspace.  
**(Grades K-2)**

# Traits Writing Program Components

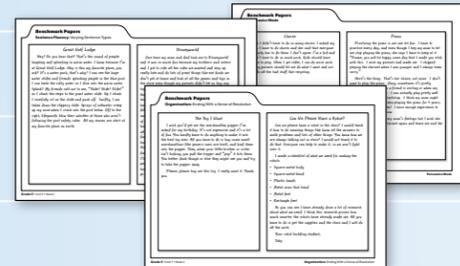
## TraitSpace™

**Web Resources:** Every program comes with access to TraitSpace™, a password protected, easy-to-navigate website that includes:

- Video interviews with authors of Mentors Texts
- Student materials including warm-up activities, worksheets, “Think Abouts”, checklists and graphic organizers!
- Benchmark Papers & Assessment Tools
- Record Keeping Forms and much more!



**Student Materials** such as worksheets, warm-up activities, Think Abouts, checklists, graphic organizers, tip sheets, and other tools that support instruction in the Teaching Guide. Print out materials for distribution to individual students or project them on a whiteboard for use in whole-class lessons.



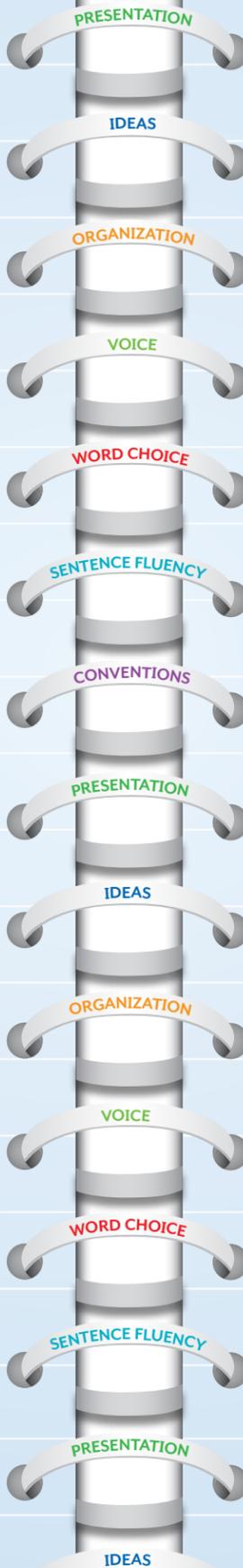
**Benchmark Papers**—a pair of student-written papers, one high, one low, for each key quality. TraitSpace™ also contains high and low benchmark papers for each mode of writing (expository, narrative, and persuasive).



**Assessment Tools**, including a scoring guide for each trait to pinpoint students’ strengths and weaknesses. You’ll also find a Student-Friendly Scoring Guide for each trait which enables students to assess their own work and reflect on themselves as writers.



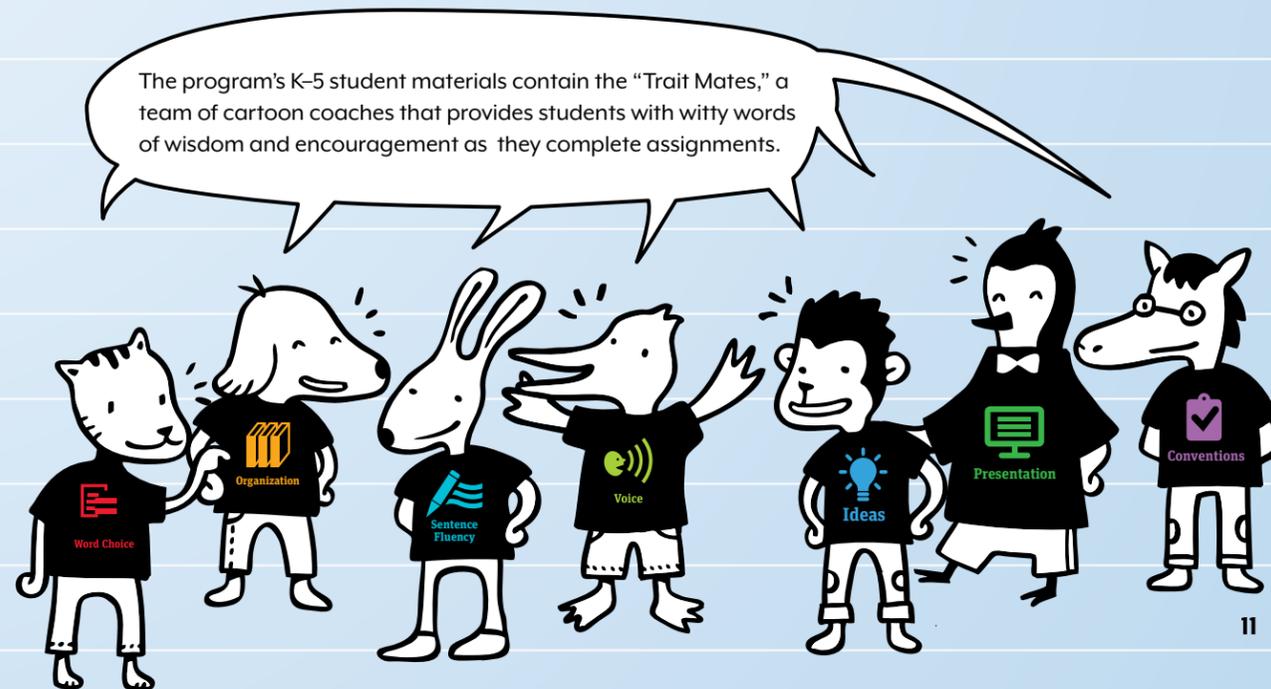
**Record-Keeping Forms**—handy resources for keeping track of students when conferencing and for documenting scores on projects for the whole class and individual students.



**25 Writing Folders:** that provide a place for students to stash works in progress. Pockets inside prevent papers from sliding out and the Editing Marks chart on the back provides a handy reference. **(Grades 3–8)**



**7 Trait Posters:** Cool and colorful grade-appropriate posters, one for each trait, that remind students of key qualities to think about as they draft, revise, and edit their work. Each one showcases a “Trait Mate” from the Student Handbook.



# The Traits and the Common Core State Standards

The lessons and activities in Traits Writing meet specific state writing standards as well as those recommended by the Common Core State Standards Initiative. These Standards are divided into the following categories:

## 1. Text Types and Purposes standards:

These standards concentrate on the modes of writing (expository, narrative, and persuasive). At least two units each year in the traits program focus on each mode (e.g. Units 2, 5, and 8 focus on expository; units 3 and 6 focus on narrative; and units 4 and 7 focus on persuasive).



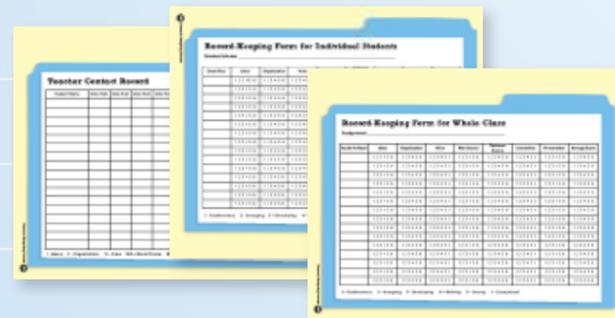
## 2. Production and Distribution of Writing standards:

These standards focus on revising (traits: ideas, organization, word choice, voice, sentence fluency), editing (trait: conventions) and publication of work using technology (trait: presentation). All seven traits are covered within these standards.

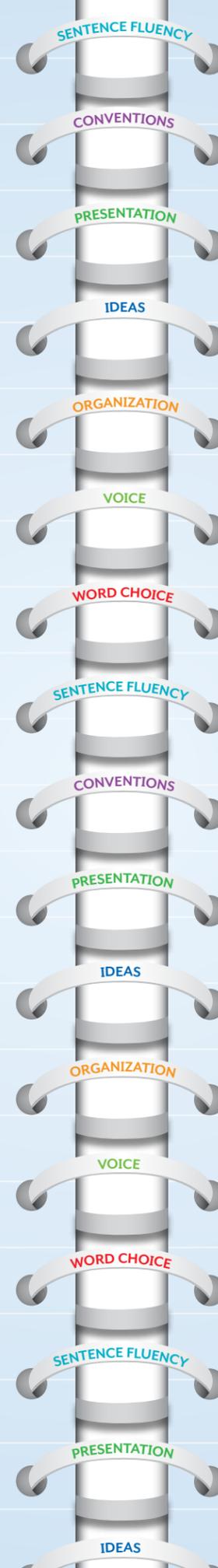


## 3. Research to Build Writing standards:

These standards focus on writing to learn. Throughout the traits program, students write to demonstrate learning (using information collected from multiple sources) and to express opinions and ideas about texts read (supporting with textual evidence).



**4. Range of Writing standard:** This standard focuses on short- and long-term writing projects. Each week students write smaller pieces as well as work on their mode-specific unit project, thereby meeting this key writing standard.

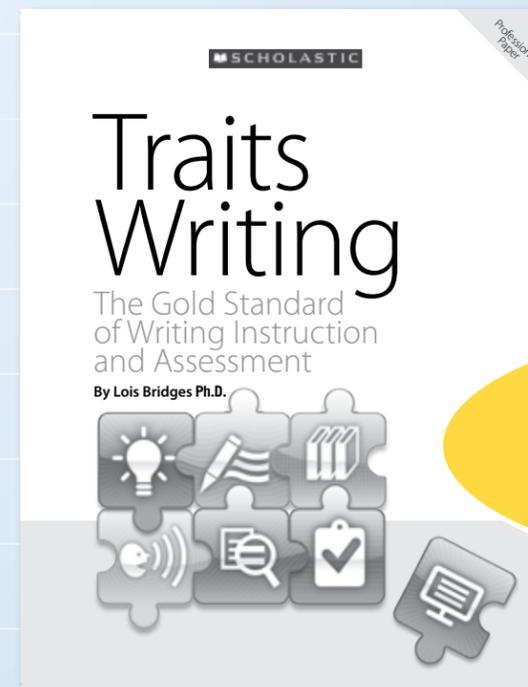


# The Traits and the NAEP Standards

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Traits Writing is also aligned to the following NAEP Writing Assessment Framework and its three primary purposes for writing—narrative, informative, and persuasive:

- Students should write for a variety of purposes (narrative, informative, and persuasive).
- Students should write on a variety of tasks and for many different audiences.
- Students should write from a variety of stimulus materials and within various time constraints.
- Students should generate, draft, revise, and edit ideas and forms of expression in their writing.
- Students should display effective choices in the organization of their writing. They should include detail to illustrate and elaborate their ideas and use appropriate conventions of written English.
- Students should value writing as a communicative activity.



Professional Paper

For more information on standards and for the downloadable professional paper, visit [scholastic.com/traitswriting](http://scholastic.com/traitswriting)

# Looking for more Traits resources from Ruth Culham?

From Professional Books to DVDs to the best-selling

Trait Crates, go to:

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key word: Traits of Writing



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## ORDER FORM

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| TRAITS WRITING GRADES K-8 COMPLETE SET | UNH526398 |      | -\$11,180.10 | \$5,895.00 |        |

**Grades K-5 available August 2011**  
**Grades 6-8 available Spring 2012**

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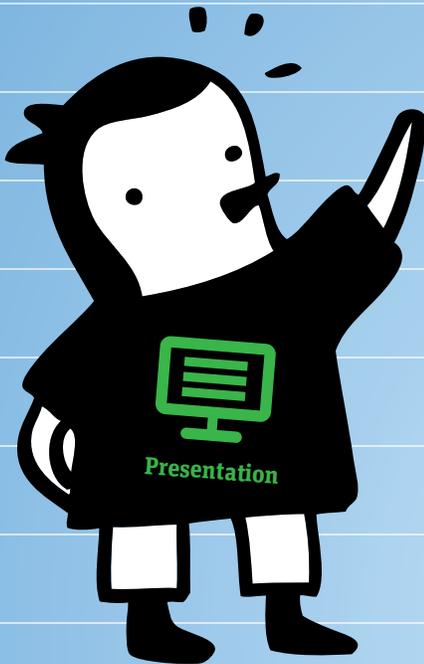
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For more information including an interview with Ruth Culham, videos, program samples, and research base, please visit [scholastic.com/traitswriting](http://scholastic.com/traitswriting)

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