

## Overview

Teaching the process of writing is so important for students of all ages. Pre-writing during the planning stage of writing helps students collect and evaluate their ideas. It also helps them focus as they write. This lesson uses a read aloud to make a connection between what happens underground to what happens before an author publishes his or her work.

## Connection

(What will you do to connect what you are teaching today to other teaching and/or knowledge outside of reading/writing?)

Let’s take a peek at our garden today. We are going to put on our artist hats and do a bit of drawing. It’s easy to see what is happening above the soil, but what do you think is happening below the soil? Spend five minutes drawing what you predict might be happening below the soil.

Allow students to participate in a quick turn-and-talk to share their drawings and ideas.

Prompt a discussion about their ideas by asking questions such as:

- How many of you drew pictures that related to what we have been learning about the life cycle of a seed? (Those steps are important to the life of our garden, even though we can’t see them happening.)
- Transition into the read aloud, *UnderGROUND*. “We are going to read a short story about other things that happen underground.”

Ask questions to connect:

- How many of you imagined ALL of that cool stuff happening underground when we were looking at our garden?
- It’s easy to forget that there are things happening all around us, even if we can’t see them. Can you think of a time when you were busy doing something, but no one saw you working?
- Let’s connect this idea of working “underground” and doing work others can’t see to writers/authors. How does this book connect to how writers work?

**Grade Level:** 3

**Subject Area:** ELA

**Materials:**

The picture book *UnderGROUND* by Denise Fleming  
Paper  
Drawing / coloring materials  
Photos of your garden to display (if you are unable to visit the garden today)  
Magazines or clipped photos of various animals

**Resources:**

Sample two-column chart

**Standards:**

NCSCoS Writing Standard 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

## Teaching Point

(State the point in a clear and concise manner. This can be reworded to fit lingo or vocabulary that works for your students. For this particular lesson, consider sharing the teaching point after the read aloud. After reading, some students may be able to make that connection on their own.)

Today, you will learn that thoughtful authors do a lot of work before they start writing a story—work that the reader never sees.

## Teach & Active Engagement

(How will you teach students to do this work [model, demonstrate, inquiry, coach]? Will you use an anchor chart, book, sample writing, etc.?)

- Discuss with students how important it is to brainstorm. New authors AND experienced authors take time to brainstorm before they write.
- Define brainstorm as a way to collect ideas and decide what to write about. Denise Fleming (the author of *UnderGROUND*) brainstormed which bugs and animals to include in her book before she started writing.
- Over the next few days, we are going to write a story about an animal that might visit our garden. Based on where you are in teaching literary characteristics and grammar rules, your expectations for this piece of writing will vary.
- Today, we are going to brainstorm using two different strategies. You will model two strategies that would work for this writing task.
- Using a large anchor chart paper, the SMART board, or your document camera, model Strategy #1—Two Column Chart
  1. Divide your paper in half vertically
  2. Tell students to pick two animals that might visit their garden. Write or draw that animal at the very top of each column.
  3. Under the animal, make a list of all the things that animal might do when they come to visit. A list is all that’s needed. Give them a set amount of time and set a timer. When the time is up, they need to switch to the next animal.

- Model strategy #2—Think Aloud
  1. Students should sit in pairs or small groups. (Students are probably accustomed to listening to you think aloud during read-alouds if you use the workshop model. Now it’s their turn!)
  2. Distribute magazines or animal pictures to each pair or group. Select a student or group to join so that you can model this conversation for them.
  3. Students should flip through photos and discuss what animals they like and what those animals might do in their garden.
  4. Reinforce discussion expectations you have already established during your modeling. Expectations might include:
    - Stay on task
    - Take turns
    - Be a good listener
    - Don’t interrupt
    - Ask questions to show your friend that you’re listening
  5. Set a timer; students could probably do this for quite a while.
  6. When the timer goes off, tell students to write down their three favorite ideas from their Think Aloud.

## Link

(Remind students of the strategy and when students will use this.)

Remind students that there are LOTS of different ways to brainstorm based on the type of writing they are doing. Ask them which strategies they used today that they could use on ANY writing task (i.e. use a timer, create lists, discuss ideas with peers)

Tomorrow, we will use your brainstorming to start planning our story. But remember, this time and every time we write creatively, it's a good idea to brainstorm first. We have to do some 'underground' work before we publish our writing for others to read.

## Possible Modifications

- No time for a read-aloud? Substitute an activity where students recall what they know or remember about how to prepare the garden for planting. You can draw parallels between planning your garden and planning your writing.
- Do you have a favorite brainstorming activity? Substitute that for either of the brainstorming activities listed.
- Have a large class with a co-teacher? Create two large groups and allow your co-teacher to model one of the strategies while you model the other.
- Did this take longer than expected with your students? Spread the strategies over two days.

## Your Notes & Ideas

## Sample Two-Column Chart



- Eat worms
- Eat seeds
- Fly
- Sing
- Make nest
- Learn to fly



- Find nuts
- Climb in pots
- Run up trees
- Play with friends
- Dig holes