

'Stages of Writing Development'

1: When you hand a toddler a pen, the results may be catastrophic for his clothes and your walls and sofas. Toddlers will mark surfaces, experimenting with writing tools. And though these scribbles won't look like they mean anything at first, soon they will begin to acquire a certain deliberation. Children will use writing in 'pretend-play,' "pretending to sign a paper like they see their father do or 'pretending' to be a teacher writing on a board.

2. As children's understanding of 'writing' develops, some of their doodles will become more purposeful. They will attempt to "draw" a story, including all the "action" in one drawing. They will begin to make letter-like shapes. These won't be actual letters but unique creations that mimic the print children see around them.

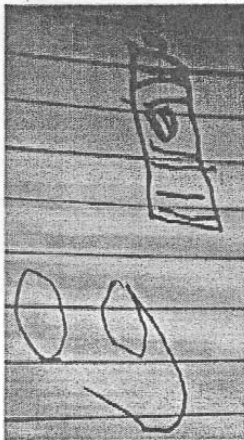
3: As children learn to write real letter shapes and to match letters to sounds often in school or with the help of a parent), their 'writing' will show further development. They will acquire a sense of directionality (that print goes from left to right in English or right to left in Urdu). They may begin to write the 'starting sound' to denote a whole word. As their sense of sound-letter correspondence improves, children will often "invent" spellings for the words they want to write. These spellings, if studied carefully, might reveal starting sounds and later, ending sounds. Their attempt to write 'whole-words' will often show missing letters.

4. The more children read and study words, the more conventional their spellings will become.
Silent Reading and Think-Pair-Share (20 minutes)

Look at the **Handout Invented Spellings** and discuss the contents of the reading with each other. What benefits might there be of allowing "invented spellings" to be used in the early years classroom?

In the last five minutes, invite students to share their thoughts with the whole class.

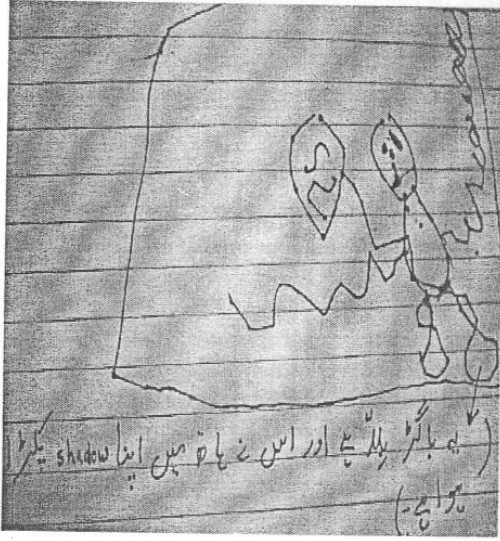
Sample 1: (Orange Juice)



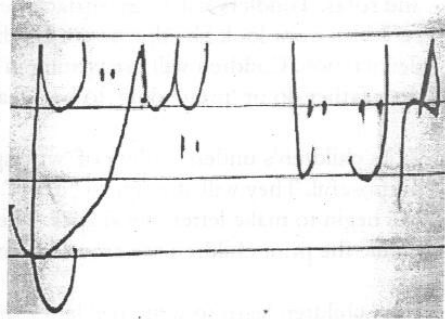
Sample 6: (Aam/mango)



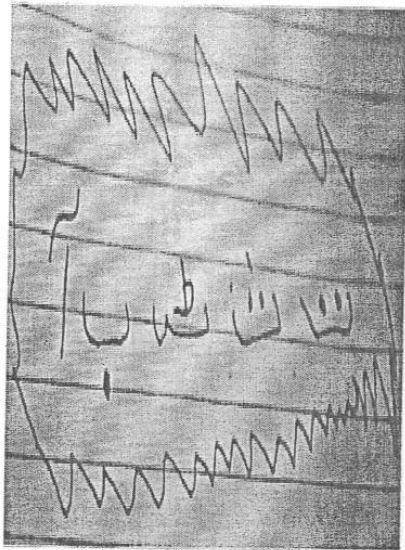
Sample 2: (Story transcribed by teacher)



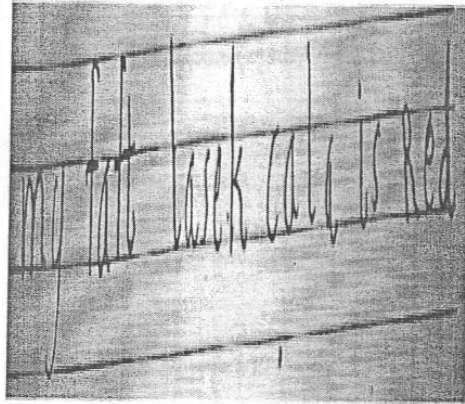
Sample 7: ('Mera naam Sireen he.')



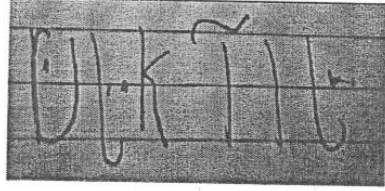
Sample 3: "Mein Urdu likh raha hoon."



Sample 8. (My favourite lipstick colour is red)



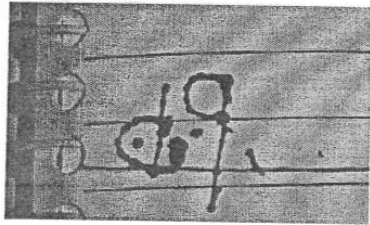
Sample 4: "Pakistan"



Sample 9: Story transcribed by teacher



Sample 5: "Dinosaur Baby"



Discuss answers to the following questions:

- What is this child trying to say or show through this 'writing'? What are you able to learn about this child based on this writing effort?
- Consult the 'Stages of Writing Development' chart (handout) to identify the phase of writing development that this child might be placed in. Support your decision with reasons and details.
- Identify ONE thing you might teach this child next.

Assignment

1. Learning to read and learning to write are parallel processes that support each other.
2. By carefully studying a child's independent efforts at reading and writing, a teacher discovers what the child already knows, what the child is trying to do, and how to help this child climb to the next step of development. (This is called assessment-based instruction.)

Ask students to think about and begin writing a (150-200 word) reflection-paper that describes their understanding of **one or both** these statements. Suggest that students add examples from what they've learned in class as well as observations from their life