

The Publishing Cycle

Kids are motivated to go to soccer practice because they know they're going to play actual soccer games. Kids practice their lines for a play because they realize that there will be a real production before a real audience. Students write partly out of the sheer joy of expressing themselves but also because they want to communicate their thoughts to real readers. Publishing means no more than that—helping students find a wider audience for what they have written.

There are many reasons why students must go public with their written work. Publishing gives students an authentic context for using skills—editing, spelling, grammar—and for getting it right. It teaches them the concept of permanence—once their words have been published, they must live with the decisions they made while drafting. Some students need the first go-round with publishing before they truly understand the importance of revising for a distant reader.

This cycle assumes students are publishing for the first time during the school year (though they may have published during the previous year). If your students have been working with TQW for several years, you may choose not to begin with the introductory lesson.

You may decide to lead your class as a group through the publishing process the first time. Or you may prefer to begin by helping individual students or small groups of students. After this first cycle, students should publish individually when they are ready.

There are five lessons in this cycle. If you limit the publishing cycle to one week, you'll probably choose three of these lessons. Later on you can present to your class the other lessons you didn't use the first time around.

Publishing Cycle

- ◊ **P-19 Choose What Gets Published**
- ◊ **P-12 Personalize the Editing Checklist**
- ◊ **P-18 Choose an Appropriate Form**
- ◊ **P-20 Create Illustrations for the Text**
- ◊ **P-21 Reflect on Your Writing**

*I seek words,
I chase after them.
When I write I'm
trying to put the most
beautiful words in
the world down
on paper.*

Cynthia Rylant

When you think of final form, don't be limited to the walls of the classroom. Find places in the larger school and community for student writing to be read. Help students find the natural audience for what they have written. Ask them, "Can you think of a relative or someone who would like to read this?" Encourage students to send the finished piece to that person.

Some schools have publishing centers that turn out glossy books. That's a wonderful resource, but make sure students don't see this as the only way to publish. You may want to set up a publishing center in your own classroom. If you do, you will need certain materials that suggest the range of ways to present writing:

Materials for Publishing

- *Markers and colored pencils*
- *Variety of paper*
- *Guidelines for printing straight rows*
- *Various media for illustrations: watercolors, gauche, paper scraps*
- *Calligraphy pens*
- *Book-making supplies: dental floss, cardboard, wallpaper*
- *Premade blank books*

Each cycle brings its own publishing challenges and possibilities (see Appendix B). Don't be bound by these lists; use your creativity to devise other ways.

"But my students aren't ready to publish!" teachers often say. Don't fall into the trap of setting your sights too high. The publishing process gives students important knowledge that will impact their writing throughout the year. For this reason, we suggest you publish early and often.

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- **Publishing** doesn't require you to stay up till midnight binding students' books with dental floss. It can be as simple as having students do a final draft, walking down the hall, and reading it to another class. It's important that they see their words rippling out into the world.