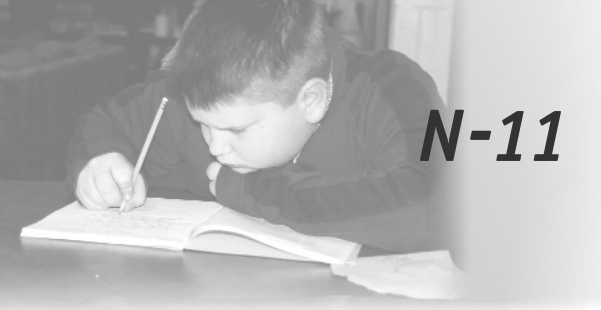




Starting a Seed Idea



THINKING **point** Nurturing a “seed idea” is a kind of directed, purposeful writing that takes place within the covers of the writer’s notebook. This is not playful writing for writing’s sake but writing with an eye to a possible finished product. Though we categorize this as a sustaining lesson, it foreshadows the transitioning lessons that will come later.

PREP **point**

- “Harvest Moon” notebook excerpt by Ralph Fletcher
- Audio segment #4

TEACHING **point** Often you’ll find that you’re just writing entries, experimenting, and collecting ideas in the writer’s notebook. But at certain times you’ll hit on an idea where you say to yourself: “Hey, I know I can really do something with this one.” When that happens, you’ve got what we’ll call a “seed idea.” It’s your job to help that seed idea grow.

Ralph Fletcher had a seed idea in his writer’s notebook that was related to the harvest moon. Let’s take a look at it.

- Show students the “Harvest Moon” notebook excerpt.

Ralph Fletcher eventually wrote a picture book about the harvest moon. Do you think he used all these entries in the finished book? Some? Which ones do you think he used?

Let’s hear Ralph Fletcher talk about developing a seed idea.

- Play audio segment #4 and discuss as appropriate.

Let’s say you’ve got a seed idea you’re excited about: “Going Mushrooming with Grandpa.” You’re thinking maybe that could be a picture book or a collection of poems. The first thing you’ll want to do is give yourself space in your writer’s notebook. Write that title at the top of an empty page, and then leave the following two or three pages blank so you can continue adding entries about mushrooming.

With a seed idea, you probably won’t write everything down in one sitting. A seed idea develops over time. In other words, you might write about a mushrooming memory today. Then tomorrow, when you go visit your

Grandpa and he shows you some of his dried mushrooms, you’ll probably add a new entry. You might write entries related to the seed idea over several weeks or a month before you’re done.

I invite you to try this. Remember: not every entry is a seed idea. A seed idea should be something that interests you enough to live with it over time.

FOLLOW UP **point** The process of nurturing a seed idea doesn’t always go smoothly. Don’t be surprised when some seed ideas fizzle out.

If you have time, share the published picture book *Hello, Harvest Moon* with your students. They’ll notice the lines from the author’s notebook that ended up in the finished book.

Conference Questions:

You have many entries in your writer’s notebook. Why did you choose this one as a possible seed idea?

What other entries might you write that are connected to this idea?

Harvest Moon

Something is stirring
at the edge of the ~~the~~ world;
something is rising
to win the trees.

Like a celestial shortstop
the moon ~~see~~ catches light from the sun
and throws it to earth.

lunar → lunatic!

with silent slippers
the harvest moon climbs night's stairs

The moon rises
pauses over the house
of Neil Armstrong
and continues on its way.

You can read at night
with only moonlight.

moonshine, moonlight,
be sure to wear your moonscreen
or you might get moonburned tonight!

Ancient women and men
prayed to the harvest moon
but feared it was a god's
one unblinking eye.