FOURTH GRADE WRITING
Notes by Patti Connolly

Objectives:
1. Student-generated writing 50-75% of main lesson entries, 25-50% dictated entries (teacher says, students write down in rough draft form and then correct).
2. Students write every day.
3. Individualize spelling assignments as much as possible.

Learning to write their own paragraphs and compositions needs a ‘scaffolding’ process:
• Always review the topic with the whole class orally to ‘prime the pump’. You can show them how to write words and phrases (‘mental map’) on BB as a visual representation of what they remember.
• First they create a paragraph as a whole class with you writing it on the BB. Emphasize the use of capital letters, punctuation, topic sentence, supporting sentences, and conclusion as you are writing. Guide this well; it can bog down unless you keep the pace. (I began this in 1st grade.)
• Then move to more independence. Ask a volunteer to give the topic sentence and write on BB. Have them write the supporting sentences and conclusion in groups of 3 (more than 3 is too big for equal participation), pairs or individually. Be specific as to minimum of sentences expected. Move around room helping them. Read appropriate sentences from willing writers that others could add to their paragraphs.
• Some students need even more of your help. Tell them that you will become their ‘secretary’ and have them talk to you about the subject. You write down what they say-mention that writing is just ‘talking on paper’. Hand over the pencil to the student as soon as possible.
• Move to writing independently from your instructions. Give more specifics at first.

Vary their writing experiences!
• Dictation at least once a week. This is crucial for practicing spelling and punctuation!
• Small group or pairs write together
• Give the beginning of the writing assignment and have them complete it
• Poetry assignments in zoology, history, mythology
• First person story writing assignments in Norse mythology and history blocks
• Journaling and letter writing assignments in history blocks
• Sometimes have them write just outlines, lists, single sentences with drawings, diagrams with labels, etc.