

Example Lesson Plan: Timed Writing Sessions

Writing fluency describes a student's ability to write accurately and quickly. Students with strong writing fluency do not have to dedicate as much cognitive energy to the mechanics of writing (e.g. writing individual letters, spelling, etc.) and are therefore able to spend more time developing complex ideas and revising what they have written. Timed repeated writing practice is one way educators can improve students writing fluency abilities. In timed repeated writing, students are given one minute to write as many sentences as possible in response to a given prompt. Students are given three successive attempts to complete this task, using an identical prompt each time. Then, students are given immediate corrective feedback. For additional information on the benefits of timed writing sessions, see our blog post ["Using Timed Practice to Promote Sentence-Writing Fluency"](#) by Dr. Derek Rodgers.

This example lesson plan models how timed writing sessions might be incorporated into the classroom. It includes sample prompts and outlines strategies for giving feedback and monitoring student progress

The text of this lesson plan is intended to serve as an example of what a lesson on this topic might look like. It is not intended to be read to students verbatim. Rather, teachers should feel empowered to use the example plan as an outline for building their own unique lesson. That said, scripted explanations of terms, concepts, and activities can be used as desired.

Sample Plan for Timed Writing Sessions

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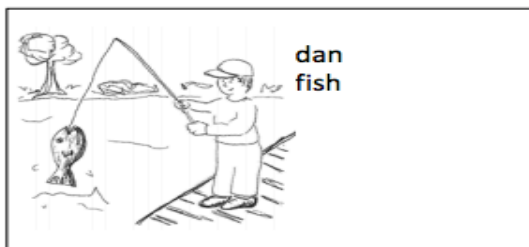
Materials: Three copies of an identical picture-word prompt per student, a modeling prompt, timer, pen/pencil, and [individualized student graph](#)

Additional Resource: For more on writing fluency, read the Iowa Reading Research Center blog post [“Using Timed Practice to Promote Sentence-Writing Fluency”](#) by Dr. Derek Rodgers.

Introducing Timed Practice for Writing Fluency Instruction & Modeling with Picture-Word Prompts

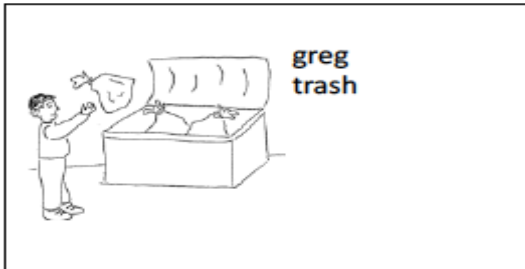
Timed practice is any exercise in which students have a specified amount of time to write. These exercises can promote writing skills, such as fluency, and typically consist of three key components: (1) repeated writings, (2) immediate and corrective feedback, and (3) individualized goals with progress monitoring.

Repeated writings involve providing students with multiple, successive opportunities to practice writing within a time limit. Teachers can use picture-word prompts to facilitate student writing. Picture-word prompts refer to a collection of ten unique images, each with two words that help describe the image. To the right of the pictures and words is a space for students to write a sentence about each image. For example, consider the following two pictures from a set of 10 picture-word prompts, courtesy of Dr. Shawn Datchuk (shawndatchuk.com/sentence-practice/).





If students do not have experience with picture-word prompts, teachers can introduce a portion of a picture-word prompt and model how to use the images and words to write a sentence. The teacher can set a timer for herself and perform a think aloud while writing with the picture-word prompt. For example, the first image in a set of picture-word prompts might be the following:



Teacher: Here is a picture of a man throwing away trash. There are two words to help me write a sentence. The words are “greg” and “trash.” I can write my sentence on the lines right next to the picture and words. I could write: Greg threw away the trash [Teacher writes the sentence and shows the student(s)]. Notice that I started my sentence with a capital letter and ended it with punctuation.

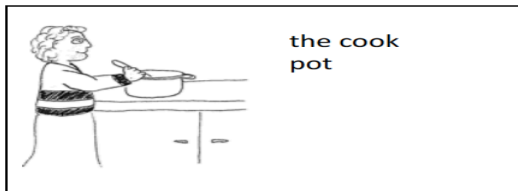
The teacher would repeat this process for each of the images in the set of picture-word prompts until the time is up. Once the timer has gone off, the teacher can explicitly identify the specific instances of appropriate grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

Teacher: Notice that I started all my sentences with a capital letter and ended them with punctuation. I also used capital letters for people’s names, and I spelled my words correctly.

Timing 1

Once students are familiar with the prompts, the teacher can begin the first of several timings. First, teachers can distribute a set of 10 picture-word prompts to each student. The prompts may include the following two images and corresponding words:





Teachers can then use the following directions to begin the timing:

Teacher: *Here is a picture-word prompt. On the left-hand side, you can see a series of pictures. There are also words related to the pictures. I want you to write sentences about these pictures. You can use the words to help you decide what to write. You will have 1 minute to write as many sentences as you can. Remember that your goal is to write 30 correct writing sequences [see [Assessing Student Writing](#) guide for information on CWS and incorrect writing sequences (IWS)] on your best timing today. Please do your own work. Take a minute to look through the pictures and words. [Teacher waits for the students to preview the images and text.] Do you have any questions about the pictures or the words? [Teacher answers the students' questions.] I will set the timer for 1 minute. You may begin.*

[Teacher starts the timer. 1 minute passes.]

Teacher: *Please put your pencils down.*

Feedback 1

Teacher reviews the students' sentences. The teacher can:

- Praise the students for instances of writing accuracy (e.g., the appropriate use of grammar, capitalization, and punctuation).
- Identify errors in the students' writing (e.g., grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation) and alert the students to those errors.
- Verbally provide the correct response to any student errors and ask the students to correct the errors on their writing.

For example, a student writes the following:

The cook were making food.

The teacher can provide the following positive feedback and praise:

Teacher: *I see that you started the sentence with a capital letter. Good job. All sentences start with a capital letter. I also see that you ended the sentence with punctuation. That's correct. All sentences should end with punctuation.*

The teacher then identifies errors made by the student. The teacher verbally provides the correct answer and asks the student to correct the errors on her work. For the previous sentence, the teacher can say:

Teacher: *Look at the word "were." Your sentence has only one cook, but the verb you used is the plural version, as in "The cooks were making food." The correct word is "was": "The cook was making food." Which word should you have used?*

Student: "Was."

Teacher: *Correct. Please make the change on your work.*

The teacher repeats this process for any other student errors. Teachers should repeat these procedures for each of the students participating in the timing to ensure that all students are receiving individualized feedback on their writing.

Progress Monitoring 1

The teacher scores the students' writing for the number of CWS and IWS and writes their scores on the top of the students' picture-word prompts. The teacher then briefly speaks to each student and says:

Teacher: *You earned this [points to the score] on this timing. If you met your goal, write "Yes" next to the score. If you did not meet your goal, write "No."*

The teacher ensures the student completes this step appropriately. The teacher takes the completed picture-word prompts from the students and places the papers face-down on the table.

Timing 2

The teacher hands the students an identical set of picture-word prompts with the same 10 images and words used in Timing 1.

Teacher: *Here is an identical set of picture-word prompts. I want you to write sentences based on these pictures. You can use the words to help you decide what to write. You will have 1 minute to write as many sentences as you can. Remember that your goal is to write 30 CWS on your best timing today. Please do your own work. Do you have any questions? [Teacher answers the students' questions.] I will set the timer for 1 minute. You may begin.*

[Teacher starts the timer. 1 minute passes.]

Teacher: *Please put your pencils down.*

Feedback 2

The teacher reviews the students' sentences. This process is identical to the one described in Feedback 1. Consider another example student sentence based upon one of the image-word combinations from the picture-word prompt portion provided in the Timing 1 section:

Denise smith put the firewood in the Truck.

Teacher: *I see that you started the sentence with a capital letter. That's correct! All sentences start with a capital letter. Denise is also the character's name, so it will always start with a capital letter. You also ended the sentence with punctuation. Good job.*

Look at the word "Truck." You capitalized "Truck" but you forgot to capitalize "smith." Truck is not a name, so it is not capitalized. "Smith" is part of a name, so it must be capitalized. What should you have done?

Student: Write "truck" with a lowercase "t," but capitalize "Smith."

Teacher: Please make the changes on your work. [Student makes the changes, and teacher confirms.]

Progress Monitoring 2

The teacher scores the students' writing for the number of CWS and IWS and writes students' scores at the top of their picture-word prompts. The teacher then briefly speaks to each student to ask them whether they met the goal. This process is identical to the one described in Progress Monitoring 1.

Timing 3

The teacher hands the students an identical set of picture-word prompts with the same images and words used in Timings 1 and 2.

Teacher: Here is an identical set of picture-word prompts. I want you to write sentences based on these pictures. You can use the words to help you decide what to write. You will have 1 minute to write as many sentences as you can. Remember that your goal is to write 30 CWS on your best timing today. Please do your own work. Do you have any questions? [Teacher answers the students' questions.] I will set the timer for 1 minute. You may begin.

[The teacher starts the timer. 1 minute passes.]

Teacher: Please put your pencils down.

Feedback 3

The teacher reviews the students' sentences. This process is identical to the one described in Feedback 1. Consider another example student sentence based upon one of the image-word combinations from the picture-word prompt portion provided in the Timing 1 section:

What is in the cook's pot.

Teacher: I see that you started the sentence with a capital letter. That's correct! All sentences start with a capital letter. You also used an apostrophe to show that the pot belongs to the cook. Good job.

Look at the end of the sentence. I see that you used a period. Your sentence is asking a question, so it would need to end in a question mark. What should you have done?

Student: Used a question mark at the end of the sentence instead of a period.

Teacher: *Please make the change.* [Student makes the change, and teacher confirms.]

Progress Monitoring 3

The teacher scores the students' writing for the number of CWS and IWS and writes students' scores at the top of their picture-word prompts. This process is identical to the one described in Progress Monitoring 1 and 2. Teacher redistributes each of the timed writings to the students.

Teacher: *Remember that your goal for today is 30 correct writing sequences. Look at your scores at the top of each of your picture-word prompts. Find your highest score today and decide if you met your goal.*

Teacher provides students with [individualized progress monitoring graphs](#).