

Reading and Writing ... the Most Important Thing

As a primary teacher, the most important thing you will do is to teach your students to read and write, and to enjoy doing both. What will your classroom look like?

- There will be a comfortable out-of-the-way area for children to read
- There will be shelves full of interesting, exciting books to read, at many levels
- There will be a bulletin board full of *real* things to read ... cartoons, newspaper headlines, sports scores, advertisements, movie posters ...
- Students' desks will contain story books they have checked out of the library.
- There will be charts on the walls recording books that students have read, favourite poems, and other classroom activities
- Paper and pencils will be readily available around the room for all the writing that goes on. Every once in a while the teacher will provide 'special' writing materials just for fun ... special pens, postcards, markers, chalk, pink stationery ...
- There will be whiteboard slates for individual students to practice writing.
- There will be a computer with appropriate software for writing stories, and programs that help with reading.
- There will be an old typewriter in the corner for 'special' stories.
- There will be posters stuck on walls around the room displaying students' writing and art work. And of course, there will be cards posted showing the alphabet, and posters illustrating things the class has learned, and classroom rules.
- There will be a shelf containing 'Big Books' for shared reading.
- The teacher will read many things to the class during the day. She will read stories, items from the school newsletter, magazine articles, recipes, poems, ... anything relating to what subject is being taught at the moment.
- There will be books 'made' by the class and by individual students ... ones they have written and illustrated themselves.
- The teacher's desk will contain books she likes to read.
- There will be regular visitors to the classroom to read stories to the students ... the Principal, the Superintendent, the caretaker, parents, maybe even community members who work in the town.
- There will be visits by classes of older students, each of whom will find a partner in your classroom and read to them.

Everything that happens in your classroom all day long should involve some reading and writing.