

Writing About Place

A Teacher's Guide

Our Maine: The Way Life Is

Rich Kent, Ph.D.

Maine Writing Project

The University of Maine

Orono

©2005 Maine Writing Project

For the students who shared their stories,
for the teachers who guided their telling, and
for Debra Butterfield & Ken Martin
who made *Our Maine* possible.

Our Maine: The Way Life Is

“The fundamental need for an exchange of meaning and the sharing of human experience is a special province of the English language arts. All students share this need.”

State of Maine *Learning Results*, p.11

During the 2004-2005 academic year, students across Maine submitted manuscripts to the Rural Voices Program of the Maine Writing Project. A committee of writing project teachers selected twenty-two entries for production. On two separate late-winter days, students gathered in Readfield and Harrington to record their work. Throughout the spring, the production staff weaved student writing, music, narration, and sound effects. In June, the CD arrived and many schools celebrated their students with assemblies and receptions. Now, we invite teachers to use *Our Maine* to inspire writing and innovative production.

*"Morning comes fast in Maine
When you have to get up and get ready for the day.
You greet people while walking down to the wharf,
Hop in the skiff and begin to row."*

Joshua Ray

Rural Voices Programs of the National Writing Project

"The programs take poetry and stories out of the traditional medium of the textbook so that students hear other students' writing come to life. These experiences make writing real for students, teachers, and listeners."

Carol Brochin
South Texas Writing Project

"These programs take us back to America's roots, where language and place connect to ground listeners in the shared experience...."

Bill Moyers, PBS Host/Producer

"Writing sometimes is—a miracle! It can become just writing and then a big project that everyone can hear!"

A first-grade student
Hilo, Hawai'i

Write What You Know

As I approach my high school graduation, this is what I know: With each day that goes by, I find more and more memories that tie me to my hometown. I used to be so cool riding my bike to the elementary school, with my parents and our dog walking along. I'd stand at the top of the slide and look at the bright orange moon. I could reach out and grab it....

Colleen Herlihy

When we write about what we know and where we live, our writing rings true. The student writing in *Our Maine: The Way Life Is* reveals the spirit of community and the honesty of place-based writing. You may know this kind of writing by other names, including autobiographical, personal, or expressive, but no matter the name, when authors write about the people and places they know, or the things they do, we hear a truth.

This guide for classroom teachers offers ideas for creating place-based writing and production opportunities. Throughout this booklet you'll find writing prompts, assignments, and minilessons to complement your existing classroom writing practice. We have also included suggestions for further reading. To begin, the guidebook will suggest ways to use the *Our Maine* program. And if you're interested in producing a CD of your students' writing, the process is much easier than you may think.

Using the *Our Maine* CD

Our Maine is 29 minutes long. Photocopy the inside cover of the CD so students can read the titles of the performing students' writing. If you have the time and your students' interest, listen to the entire CD at once. If not, listen to segments over a few class periods. There are many ways to use this collection of readings in the classroom. We hope the following suggestions will help you create your own classroom activities.

Writing with Detail

Listen two or three times to one particular piece from *Our Maine*. Ask students to list the details they hear, thinking about the five senses. In the essay "That Was My Deer!" by Brandon Caron (he's the smiling boy on the back of the CD), students will list details such as these:

"three bucks at my grandfather's house in Jackman"

"one in particular with his irregular rack"

"a buck grunting in the nearby alders"

Note that Brandon uses both sight and sound to enliven his story. We hear a "buck grunting" and we see "his irregular rack." Ask your students, What might an "irregular rack" look like? Such a question will connect immediately to your students who hunt—don't be surprised if you're greeted the next day with a deer rack or photos.

Whole Class Writing Activity

Step 1 During class time play the three “I am from ...” writings by Danielle Hayes (Track 1, 0:00), Kalarr Dunphy (Track 1, 1:45), and Shawn Moleon (Track 5, 1:48).

Step 2 Using your hometown or community as the focus, invite your students to write for 10-15 minutes on “I am from”

Step 3 Ask the students to share their drafts out loud with a partner.

Step 4 After their oral readings allow students a few minutes to make revisions.

Step 5 Ask for volunteer readers to share part or all their writing.

*“Sitting on the cool green moss I empty out my heart
and soul into the river. I know that all my bad thoughts
will be swept away, never to be seen again.
As night comes, the river continues to sing its song.”*

Vanessa Hathaway

Reading in the Round, A Progression

Part I

Step 1 Build on the previous activity by asking all students to select one or two particularly descriptive lines from their drafts of “I am from....” They may wish to confer with their partner during the selection process.

Step 2 Invite students to read their selected lines. Once again, your students are seated in a class circle. Go from student to student without stopping, as if the collected lines were a single poem or story.

Step 3 Allow students time to revise their one or two lines, if necessary, as they think about the new context. This exercise helps student writers think of their sentence(s) as a part of a larger whole in this choral montage. In this unfolding composition, to avoid monotony, only several lines should begin with "I am from ..." or with the name of the hometown.

FYI: This work in revision is an opportunity to note that writers often must toss good lines for the sake of the whole.

Step 4 Do another practice reading after the revision and ask students to note transition or repetition issues. Talk about the transitions and sound of the piece as a whole. Discuss what characteristics of the community might be missing from the piece.

Step 5 *Our Maine* includes background music by Barbara Smith. Try a reading in the round with soft music playing.

Part II

Stage the Reading

Step 1 Emphasize the importance of cues. Ask your students to remember who preceded them in the reading in the round.

Step 2 Direct students to scatter all over the classroom, high and low, and away from the person they were sitting next to.

Step 3 Dim or shut off the lights.

*"I am from the Pine Tree State ...
in summer the days are long,
tourists swarm in like crazed mosquitoes,
and blueberries are thick for the summer's harvest."*

Kalarr Dunphy

Step 4 Ask students to read their lines in order, listening for the person who preceded them. This performance may take a few practice sessions. What your students will immediately notice is the theatrical effect of filling the room with voices reverberating from high and low.

Step 5 Add music and rehearse until you and your students agree you nailed it. I remember organizing this kind of progression with lines from *Hamlet*. We rehearsed the piece four or five times. When that perfect performance occurred, my students knew it immediately and broke into applause.

Part III

Performance: Add Costumes, Props, & Poses

Step 1 Ask students to select a single costume item or a prop from your drama closet (i.e., an eclectic collection of thrift shop pieces, including overcoats, scarves, feathers, boas, bathrobes, flannel shirts, dress shirts, long skirts, and an assortment of hats, plus a wide variety of stage articles, such as phones, cameras, clipboards, or magic wands). Encourage connecting the costume or prop to the student's reading. For example, a girl speaking about snowmobiling wears over-sized winter gloves. If a student's piece refers to duct tape, bring in a roll.

Step 2 Students will then return to their places around the room. Dim the lights.

FYI: By now, the students may be reciting their lines from memory. Encourage memorization for the final performance.

Step 3 Play the music.

Step 4 Invite students, one after the other, to move to some other area in the classroom while reciting their lines. When they complete their piece, ask them to take a pose akin to their line. The final effect will create a full-class tableau, a frozen picture with bodies. Suggest to students that if they're speaking about snowmobiling, they should try to pose as if riding a sled. If their lines are about cutting a tree, fishing, being bored, or driving a car, students should think in advance about the pose they would take to conclude their performance.

Step 5 Rehearse, review, and revise.

FYI: Using a digital video camera, you may wish to try your hand at capturing the performance on film. Make sure you use an external microphone with your camera. Since the room will be fairly dark, you may wish to use a small table lamp during filming.

Step 6 Full performance: Invite an audience, such as a colleague's class, your friendly administrators, the media center folks, the cafeteria crew, custodial staff, parent/caregivers.... Your audience will have to line the perimeter of the classroom—have the chairs arranged prior to the performance.

"Living in such a small town has its drawbacks, like having to travel 10 miles for a loaf of bread or to rent a movie. Those drawbacks are small compared to the joys that come with living in Centerville."

Elizabeth Grant

Journal Responses

Use the various readings in *Our Maine* as prompts for journal entries. Together with your students, dream up a variety of ways to respond.

Offer the following suggestions to help prime your students' thinking:

- Write a letter to the student author of an *Our Maine* piece.
- Create a graphic organizer that compares and/or contrasts the listener's experience to the writer's experience.
- List questions that come to mind about a certain place.
- Write a commercial, song, poem, or jingle about your home town.
- Sketch a brochure for your hometown, including ad copy and photo layouts.

More Place-Based Writing Ideas

Select articles from your local newspaper and create "found poems." If you're not familiar with this genre, you might check out the lesson plan on *ReadThinkWrite* (www.readwritethink.org) created by the National Council Teachers of English and International Reading Association.

Same idea as above: Select articles from your local newspaper and create "found plays." Ask students to create a skit or miniplay with a place-based article from a local newspaper. This performance could be a well-rehearsed piece or an improvisation.

Use writing from regional publications. Portland novelist Monica Wood (www.monicaewood.com) wrote a story about Rumford for *Down East* magazine (forthcoming, October 2005). Using an article such as this one, have the students underline all the distinguishing characteristics that portray this town.

Through discussions help them recognize the power of detail in writing. Write the details of your own hometown.

The *National Geographic* article "A Way of Life Called Maine" appeared in June 1977. Have students read that article and discuss Maine now and then. Invite discussions that focus on specific detail. Students may have to research statistical differences. Ask students to think and write about Maine in the year 2035. What will have changed? What will have stayed the same?

Use place-based Maine books as models for your students. Maine has a wealth of books about place. The following is a sampling:

We Took to the Woods by Louise Dickinson Rich
The Maine Reader: The Down East Experience, 1614 to the Present
edited by Charles Shain & Samuella Shain
Make Way for Ducklings by Robert McCloskey
Country of the Pointed Firs and Other Stories by Sarah Orne Jewett
The Lobster War by Ethan Howland
Racing the Past by Sis Deans
The Maine Woods by Henry David Thoreau
The Lobster Chronicles: Life On a Very Small Island by Linda Greenlaw
Lost on a Mountain in Maine by Donn Fendler and Joseph Egon
Nature I Loved by Bill Geagan

FYI: *Because of the wide variety of reading abilities and interests of your students, you may decide that a single title for the whole class won't work well. For that reason, you might ask your library media specialist to gather a collection of Maine books for your students' use;*

perhaps your colleague could sponsor a book fair either in the library/media center or in your classroom. Team up with your library media specialist!

Kim Stafford, director of the Northwest Writing Institute at Lewis & Clark College (www.lclark.edu/dept/nwi), has gathered a rich collection of writing prompts or invitations to write about place. The following is a small collection that I have modified. As you'll recognize, some of these prompts may be adapted to fit all ages.

--Write a guide to the customs of young people or teenagers in your community (e.g., gatherings, language, taboos, loyalties...). The prompt might be "Sometimes around here we...." Students could write it as if sharing the inside scoop with a kid moving to town.

--Write in response to the following prompts:

"Sometimes I remember..."

"Have you ever noticed...?"

"There's a place by the river..."

"They'll never take away..."

--Tell a story from your family: "I remember how one time we...."

--Recall an older person who has lived in your place a long time. Describe a visit with that person. Tell about her or his house, clothing, habits, gestures, and stories she or he may tell.

--Go to a place you consider special and write down the things you never want to forget about that place, including the sounds, smells, textures, colors, the thoughts that come to you there.

Write about an incident that happened there. Maine Writing Project's own Ken Martin did just that when he wrote the following piece as an introduction to one of the National Writing Project's Rural Voices Radio Programs.

COME WITH ME

by Ken Martin

*"I am from Brooklin and my hometown lives
with the rhythm of the engines of motorboats."*

Brian Clarke & Iain Richardson

Come with me through the doors of the Davis Service Station where men meet to evaluate the condition of town roads this year.

Come with me down a pasture road to the shore when the tide is out. My black lab goes on ahead, so we will arrive just after a cloud of ducks has lifted and gone skimming across the mud flats.

Look with me across those flats to where men stand in olive hip waders: feet spread, bent at the waist, digging, pulling clams from the mud.

Come with me to a kitchen where women around the table discuss last Sunday's beano game while picking meat from crabs.

Come with me where blueberry barrens in fall take on a deep red hue— white lines of string still separating each raker's territory.

Sit with me while teenagers return from sorting berries at the factory, hands stained with a blue that will still be there after they scrub up.

Come with me to Down East Maine, where the earth breathes and we breathe with it.

--*The Pocket Muse: Ideas & Inspirations for Writing* (2002) by Monica Wood has many writing-prompt suggestions that connect to place-based writing. The following is one that I have adapted:

Make Two Lists

Everything you should know
about a place

Everything you want to know
about a place

Throughout *The Pocket Muse*, Wood uses photographs to inspire writing. Collect a series of photographs from the newspaper or investigate your local historical society for copies of photos that would capture your students' attention. Tape those photographs on 8.5" x 11" white paper and hand them out. Ask students to write about the place they see, either from experience or imagination.

--Tap into your local historical society. They have archives of writing and photographs as well as willing volunteers to enrich your classroom discussions.

--Weather is a classic Maine subject. Think of its visual effects, its power over the emotions, and its place in our lives. Ask your students to write about a day in which the weather created the story.

FYI: In small groups have your students listen to selections from the three Rural Voices Programs on the National Writing Project website below. Ask the students to identify the prompts used for the various pieces; invite students to select one example to introduce to the class. To extend this activity, have students write their own piece in response to the selected prompt.

www.writingproject.org/Programs/rvcs/radio.csp.

Priming Students for Place-Based Writing Activities

I've always admired the work of Vivian Gussin Paley, author of books such as *The Boy Who Would be a Helicopter: The Uses of Storytelling in the Classroom* (1990) and *The Girl With the Brown Crayon: How Children Use Stories to Shape Their Lives* (1997). I recall reading a line by Paley that went something like this: I cannot teach my students that which they don't already know. That thought has broad implications for learning and teaching. Our students are primed to write about place; they write and talk about it all the time. Our job is to raise their awareness of the genre and to help them create word pictures.

Look closely at your students' journals or recent writing assignments and take note of how many entries focus on the places or happenings in their lives. As a frontloading activity for place-based writing, why not assign your students the task of looking closely at selected writing, noting the frequent use of place.

Our Hometown

Here's a twenty-minute writing activity for helping students to connect place to experience:

Step 1 Give each student a large piece of newsprint and a marker.

Step 2 Ask students to write on the newsprint a word or a sentence about a familiar person, place, or thing in their hometown.

Step 3 Have students hang the posters around the room. Then invite them to walk around reading the posters and penciling in a thought, recollection, or connection to the original piece.

Step 4 Once students have had a chance to write on many of the posters, invite the original authors to pick up the posters and read the collection to themselves.

Step 5 Ask students to journal about what their classmates have written.

Step 6 Discuss how the people, places, and things of their hometown inspire different stories for different people.

Step 7 This connecting activity could be the precursor to a paper, short story, journal entry, skit, or small-group discussions.

Creating Your Own Classroom CD

Your school system has the technology for recording and producing CDs—in fact, if you have an iBook through MLTI (Maine Learning Technology Initiative) you have most of the technology right in your classroom.

"Out on the water I'm completely taken over by the State of Maine, which can also be a state of mind, if you really put your heart to it."

Allison Casey

Basic Steps to Classroom Production

1. Discuss a theme for your CD and come up with a working title.
2. Work with your district technology coordinator to gather necessary technology.
3. Decide whether your production needs a narrator. If so, select a narrator and decide who'll write the narration.
4. Decide as a class or as a production staff if each student's writing will be included on the CD. The reality of rejection is unpleasant, but it also reflects life beyond the schoolhouse walls. One method to include all classroom writers: By using single lines from pieces, a choral montage may be created much like the "Reading in the Round, A Progression" at the beginning of this guide. The final program will have longer readings (1 to 1.5 minutes) and one-liners. It's a technique that we used in *Our Maine*.
5. Have students write their pieces focused on the agreed-upon theme and then revise, read aloud one-on-one, revise, read aloud in small groups, revise, read aloud in full class, revise, and record. Deborah Begel, producer of the National Writing Project Rural Voices Radio Series, wrote "Tips for Radio Writing." Some of her suggestions provide explicit guidance for writers:
 - Write in short sentences.
 - Choose active verbs.
 - Focus your story—one main theme is usually enough if it's a short piece.
 - Avoid clichés.
 - Practice reading the piece out loud. If the reader tends to stumble in places, rewrite and simplify that section.
 - Remember the 4 Rs: Revise, reduce, review, and re-read aloud.

6. Find or create a quiet place to record (e.g., put up blankets on the walls of a small room or check out the music area for a soundproof practice room).
7. Select music and sound effects; both may be found in iBook software. Again, work with your school or district technology coordinator for this project. And remember, your students are a great resource when it comes to technology.
8. Edit, mix, and produce!

Performances Beyond the Classroom

Many communities in Maine have local access television stations. Station managers will welcome your classroom CDs, especially those focused directly on your community. Local radio stations may also be enticed by these productions; however, since radio stations are often for-profit, they may not be as willing to air the shows. Approach station managers to inquire about the possibilities.

The National Writing Project site “About the Rural Voices Radio Series Bringing Rural Student Voices to the Airwaves” shares a wealth of information about producing writing for radio. As the site information reveals, “Rural Voices Radio is the first spoken-word production of the National Writing Project. The thirteen-part series features original writings by students and teachers from diverse rural regions throughout the United States.” The series now contains three volumes. The Rural Voices Radio series is available at no cost to educators and non-commercial radio stations. You and your students may also listen to and download these online programs.

References

- Kent, Richard. 2000. *Beyond Room 109: Developing Independent Study Projects*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, Heinemann.
- National Writing Project, (n.d.). About the rural voices radio series bringing rural student voices to the airwaves. Retrieved Jul. 28, 2005, from Rural Voices Radio Web site:
www.writingproject.org/Programs/rvcs/radio.csp.
- Paley, Vivian Gussin. 1990. *The Boy Who Would be a Helicopter: The Uses of Storytelling in the Classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Paley, Vivian Gussin. 1997. *The Girl With the Brown Crayon: How Children Use Stories to Shape Their Lives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wood, Monica. 2002. *The Pocket Muse: Ideas & Inspirations for Writing*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Writers Digest Books.

Suggested Reading from the National Writing Project (www.writingproject.org/Publications/books/)

Writing Our Communities: Local Learning and Public Culture
edited by Dave Winter and Sarah Robbins (2005) \$20.00

Emphasizing student inquiry and writing, this rich collection offers teachers ready-to-use classroom resources with a sound basis in best practice. Student engagement with community becomes the centerpiece of the book, an engagement that takes place across disciplines through projects involving history, environment, culture and more. These lively, classroom-tested lessons are easily adapted to different teaching levels and settings. The book also effectively addresses curricular guidelines specific to local, regional and state settings, as well as to national standards. (Co-published with National Council of Teachers of English)

Rural Voices: Place-Conscious Education and the Teaching of Writing
edited by Robert E. Brooke (2003, Teachers College Press) \$16.00
(\$21.95 list)

Robert Brooke and his colleagues at the Nebraska Writing Project offer classroom-based essays written on the premise that “real accountability emerges when education teaches how to live well, actively, and fully in a given place.” Grounded in the rural schools and communities where these teachers work, this book—an outgrowth of research led by the Rural Voices, Country Schools project of the National Writing Project and funded in part by the Annenberg Rural Challenge—will inspire and instruct educators everywhere.

Where I'm From by George Ella Lyon (1999, Absey & Company)

Gr. 9 and up. In a combination memoir and how-to book, a popular children's author conducts a personal journey through her creative writing process—with mixed results. Using her own poems as examples, Lyon discusses themes, sound, rhythm, language, and line breaks. Chapters address using play, images, shapes, other people's words, and personal stories to inspire poems. The section “Voices” offers particularly sensible, accessible advice on developing characters. Beginning writers may find the sometimes rambling, simile-and metaphor-laden explanations and exercises confusing and difficult to follow. However, the text comes alive through Lyon's personal recollections of Appalachia, its people, and her own childhood experiences, all of which lend insight into the author's other writings. Fans of Lyon's works will no doubt enjoy learning more about her, and novice poets will appreciate her encouragement and enthusiasm for a challenging genre. Shelle Rosenfeld, *Booklist*.

Breakthroughs: Classroom Discoveries About Teaching Writing
edited by Amy Bauman and Art Peterson (2002) \$15.00

[This book] makes a unique contribution to the discussion of teaching writing. The text takes a step back from general concepts and practical lessons to ask, "Where do good teaching ideas come from?" In twenty-five essays, National Writing Project teachers take readers on the journey that led them to ask and answer such questions as "How can students find the stories that advance their ideas in essays?" and "How can students be prodded to continue to work beyond a first draft?"

Cityscapes: Eight Views from the Urban Classroom
by members of the National Writing Project Urban Sites Network
(1996) \$12.50

K-12 teachers who work with urban youth, as well as other teachers who work in a multicultural environment, have strong praise for this book. *Cityscapes* has become particularly popular in teacher preparation classes and in college-level classes focusing on teacher research.

I Can Write What's on My Mind: Theresa Finds Her Voice
by Sherry Seale Swain (1994) \$10.50

Readers will not find a more concise and reader-friendly account of the principles of reading-writing workshop than *I Can Write What's on My Mind*. Though the book is a must-read for teachers of primary students, all teachers and parents interested in this subject will learn from it.

A Poem for Every Student: Creating Community in a Public School Classroom by Sheryl Lain (1998) \$11.00

A Wyoming high school teacher and director of the Wyoming Writing Project, Sheryl Lain demonstrates her personal take on school reform, one classroom, one student at a time. Lain's vehicle is "a poem for every student," and here she introduces the mixed bag of kids she is writing about through poignant portraits and the moving poems she writes for them. The humane insights that inspire Lain will show teacher-readers—including those who don't write poetry—ways to create more student-friendly spaces in their own classrooms. Though this book resonates particularly with middle and high school teachers, it has been used with great success as a discussion text in teacher education classes.

Writing America: Classroom Literacy and Public Engagement
edited by Sarah Robbins and Mimi Dyer, foreword by Paul Lauter
(2004) \$18.00

This book tells the story of how Georgia-based National Writing Project teachers and their students used the study of their community to build their own community—one committed to the stewardship of communal spaces and ideas. The book details the students' inquiry-based studies of topics as diverse as the area's Cherokee heritage and the redevelopment of Atlanta. Readers will be inspired to help their own students create engaging projects that take literacy from an isolated skill to a socially relevant enterprise. (Co-published with Teachers College Press)

Writing Your Heritage: A Sequence of Thinking, Reading, and Writing Assignments by Deborah Dixon, foreword by Sheridan Blau (1993)
\$8.00

[T]he book outlines a framework and suggests activities useful and usable by teachers at all grade levels. As the title suggests, the book is a sequence of lessons developed to not only increase students' understanding of their roots, but also to move students to higher levels of thinking skills as they read, write, work in groups and develop a final project. Dixon's strategies for fostering academic success among these students are apparent throughout *Writing Your Heritage*.

30 Ideas for Teaching Writing
by the National Writing Project

Teaching students to write well is one of the most challenging tasks in education. Writing itself is complex, often disorderly, and frequently frustrating. When teachers compare notes and approaches, they invariably conclude that they need more than a fixed or single approach to teach writing, particularly if they are to address the needs of all students.

Because Writing Matters
by the National Writing Project and Carl Nagin

"At last a book that is both comprehensive and up-to-date on the status and importance of writing in America."

—Donald Graves, Professor Emeritus, Education
University of New Hampshire

Writing is the single most important skill for students' academic and professional success. Yet in the last twenty years, it has received little attention in our nation's schools, and national assessments show that just one in four American students is able to write proficiently.

Because Writing Matters, a new book by the National Writing Project and Carl Nagin, affirms that writing must be a central focus in all classrooms if schools are to improve student performance.

*"Here in the deep sweet woods I meditate.
The buzz of life surrounds me and the ocean
breeze refreshes me. Here I am one with myself,
nature, and the arts...."*

Patrick Keith

*"I've been raised in Pittsfield. My parents were
raised here, their parents lived here, and their
parents lived here as well. Pittsfield is your
average small town in Maine."*

Libby Newhouse

About the Maine Writing Project

The Maine Writing Project (MWP) was established within the College of Education and Human Development at The University of Maine in 1997 and became a full affiliate of the National Writing Project in 1998. Dedicated to the improvement of the teaching and learning of writing across the curriculum at all grade levels, the writing project advocates that successful teachers are the most effective teachers of teachers.

Each year, the Maine Writing Project invites sixteen outstanding educators— kindergarten through post-secondary in all curriculum areas—to attend its summer institute, a six-credit graduate course. Over 200 Maine educators have become teacher-consultants of the Maine Writing Project/National Writing Project and sponsor a wide variety of programs:

- A statewide fall conference
- Spring workshops
- Advanced Adolescent Literacy Institutes
- Rural Voices Programs
- Young Authors' Camps
- Inservice workshops for Maine schools

About the National Writing Project

The National Writing Project is the premier effort to improve writing in America and consists of 189 sites across 50 states, Puerto Rico, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands. NWP sites conducted 6,871 programs in 2004. All sites are located on university campuses and serve over 100,000 teachers annually. NWP continues to add new sites each year, with the goal of placing the writing project within reach of every teacher in America.