14 STEPS FOR BECOMING A BETTER WRITER

1. ## READ UP

   Regular reading is a stepping stone to better writing and helps kids' strengthen their writing skills. It helps expand children's vocabulary and shows them different ways of using words. This also makes it easier for them to use these words in their own writing. With younger children, make sure you're reading together every day and encouraging their love of reading as they grow. Start reading early—many children who devour books grow up to become strong writers themselves.

2. ## MAKE IT FUN!

   Play games and activities that encourage writing. Crossword puzzles and word games are great for everyone. Little ones will especially like the "write the word" game: where they search for items and write down the word when they find each item.

3. ## CREATE WRITING WORKSHEETS

   For young children just learning to write, try creating a worksheet where they can trace letters and words. Write out letters and words, place another piece of paper on top, and have your child trace onto the blank piece of paper. You can also create a connect-the-dots game by having your child trace along dotted lines and then tell you which letter or word she or he finds.

4. ## TRY DIFFERENT MATERIALS

   Switch it up by writing with something other than a pen or pencil. Sidewalk chalk on the driveway, finger painting, or a salt writing tray are all fun writing activities that will also help build kids' writing skills.

5. WRITE LETTERS

Today, writing letters is a bit of a lost art. Encourage your child to write letters to friends or family members. Distant family members will especially love receiving handwritten letters and it's a great way to work on improving writing skills for kids.

Pen-pals are also a fun idea, or you can even write letters to each other and leave them around the house to find!

6. ENCOURAGE JOURNALLING

Keeping a journal is a great way to express thoughts and ideas while also working on improving children's writing skills. Plan an outing to pick a fun journal with your child and encourage them to write in it as much as possible. Make it a part of his or her daily routine.

7. CREATE A WRITING SPACE

Set aside a little corner in your house that is completely devoted to writing. Having an area dedicated solely to writing will help free your child from distractions so he or she can focus on practicing writing skills.

8. INVEST TIME

Make sure your child knows you're available to help with spelling or proofreading whenever he or she needs it. When you make writing time a priority for you, it will make it easier for your child to improve his or her writing skills.

9. CONNECT THEIR INTERESTS

Think about your son or daughter's favorite book series. Or maybe he or she is obsessed with dinosaurs. Whatever his or her interests, connect them to

writing. Have your child write a new short story about his or her favorite characters, or let him or her create a story all about dinosaurs.

10. CREATE STORY PROMPTS

A fun way to improve kids' creative writing skills is to have them write short stories.

Cut out pictures from a magazine with different characters or locations, or write down different words. Place these in a container or glue them to cards to use as writing prompts for creating a unique story. This also makes a fun activity for the whole family to join in.

11. MODEL IT

There's no better way to learn something than to see someone else doing it. Let your children see you writing, often. When writing is a normal part of your daily life, it will come more naturally to them. Anything goes: a simple grocery list or letter to the teacher, holiday or thank you cards, or even a sweet note to your child.

12. USE TECHNOLOGY TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

There's no getting around the fact that technology plays a huge part in our lives. Use it to your advantage by having your child create a blog. This can help your child work on improving his or her writing skills by encouraging frequent writing habits.

13. MAKE IT PART OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

Make sure there's time each day to do some writing in one way or another. Whether it's writing a grocery list, writing in a journal or composing a letter, practicing writing every day will go a long way to improving kids' writing skills.

14. PRAISE THEIR WORK *Show lots of interest in your child's writing and stories. Ask questions, celebrate when he or she brings home a good piece from school, and encourage his or her writing as much as possible.*